

Hürol, Y., Özgür, M., (2003) "Learning from the Democracy and Hegemony in Architectural Design Education." *International Conference on Higher Education Innovation. Abstracts.* Society for Higher Education Innovation. Kiev. May 16-19.

Learning from the Democracy and Hegemony in Architectural Design Education

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According to I. Wallerstein, the level of ambiguity will gradually increase and it will be effective on the general human understanding by the year 25, when another power relationship will be established among the nation-states of the world. This indicates to a delicate point that, students enrolled in any kind of education, will most probably be faced with an ambiguous world, and the demand of the market from the professionals will also depend on ambiguity. And, this is not all. It can as well be assumed that, traditional education styles which depend on authority figures will be apt to criticisms of not only the students, but also the professionals, for being un-democratic and out of date. This paper intends to point to an idea that integrating or adding design education in the body of any sort of education might increase the quality of that education when democracy is considered. Thus, the authors of this paper believe that, sharing the opinions of tutors from architectural design education about ambiguity and difference would be very meaningful. The research objective of this paper will be to name the democratic and hegemonic characteristics of architectural design education in order to form a conceptual guide for other types of education that might benefit from the notions related to ambiguity. The question that will be answered in this paper is "how can one keep democracy and eliminate hegemony in design education?" A conceptual model will be presented for this purpose. This model which relates the general concepts of difference and hegemony to the formation and realization of any design concept which is a holistic design idea covering functional, technical and aesthetical solutions to the architectural design problem. The perspective of the paper draws its strengths from a designerly perspective, which can never be fixed to any understanding. It represents a point of view, which is open to all sorts of differences, but still, even this is never enough. The first part of the paper will cover a number of concepts of "difference" in general theory, and it will open up some new concepts of "difference" as they appear in various types of design concepts relevant to architecture. As related to the general theory; the understanding of difference according to W. Benjamin, Tolstoy, G. Deleuze/F. Guattari, J. Derrida and M. Foucault will be introduced. Levels of ambiguity of different types of design concepts will be studied in relation to their power of producing difference. Any beginning idea which considers the whole design is accepted as a concept, as it is a must in any democratic design education. The types of design concepts that are mentioned in this paper can be listed as:

- a. 3D concept,
- b. Analogy with a thing or concept
- c. Image of design,
- d. Architectural analogy,
- e. Space organization concept.

The possibility for each type of design concept to produce differences will be discussed and these differences will be compared with the concepts of difference in general theory. Can this comparison lead to the creation of fresh/brand new concepts of difference? The authors of this paper think it can. The second part of the paper will be about the concept of hegemony in general theory, and hegemony in the content of architectural design education. Hegemony contained in the architectural design theory is discussed through a discussion about the relation between the production of hegemony and the ambiguity of different design concepts. The concept of hegemony is defined with the help of theories of E. Laclau, C. Mouffe, B. Aschcroft, G. Griffiths, H. Tiffin, and J. Torfing. It will be shown that, in architectural education the base of hegemony appears with the co-existence of rational and irrational. The relation between rational and irrational causes a dishonest difference between consciousness and action of the design educators. How does the formation of hegemony work through different types of design concepts? In other words, how do rational and irrational appear in different types of design concepts? It will be shown in this paper that all types of design concepts are clearly and radically irrational, except one of them which can relate rational and irrational to each other. It will also be shown that the content of architectural design education can be either democratic or hegemonic depending on the type of use of this design concept which forms a bridge between rational and irrational.