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Justice education in a multicultural city: A kids' stuff?

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GLOBAL CITIZEN EDUCATION:

New Paths to Social Inclusion for Safer Cities

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Introduction

The title of this statement '*Justice education in a multicultural city': a kids' stuff?'* may sound like an oxymoron, as if this title contained contradictory terms of 'easiness' and 'justice', had there after the word 'stuff' been no question mark. For, in reality, it is <u>not</u> a 'kids' stuff' (that is 'an activity or piece of work that is very easy'[i]) to attain a universal sense of justice in a multicultural city like Vienna – a social laboratory, amid the new conditions in which this is taking place right now. In this statement I only will focus on four points that may be helpful for this Vienna exercise under way (academic, field-based, UN-related, related to the Vienna kindergartens).

Universal sense of justice

First, I will start on a "light & high" note - from the tertiary-level perspective on justice education. There is a good news brought from the experimental field in Vienna concerning a common sense of justice among university students. There is one!

This news comes as a result of a very famous econometric experiment from the game theory, called the 'Ultimatum Game', that proves it. It measures 'fairness' (or justice for that matter) in interactive decisions among three strangers dividing money.

Two of them are allocated a sum of money, by a third one. If the offer is accepted, the sum is divided accordingly by a third player ('proposer'). If a responder rejects it, neither of the players receives any money ('take it or leave it').

In several iterations of this 'one-time' transaction, those two who had to 'take or leave' the money agreed to take the money when the offer ranged between 42-48 %, with the 50 % as the most common (and modal) offer[ii].

The results do not even change with rather high stake sizes, and can be found in different cities and cultural areas. These results have been replicated by hundreds of trials with thousands of students in Europe, the Middle and Far East, and the USA: In Ljubljana, Jerusalem, Tokyo, and Pittsburgh.

But they have also been confirmed in Vienna. At the Vienna University experiment[iii], although players were instructed that they are free to spend <u>any</u> amount between 5 to 10 euros, they could not be effectively manipulated to change their mind, even if they were mutually briefed about themselves, thus becoming less strange to themselves or more socially and individually related. Players accepted almost every offer with a proposed 50/50 split. This result expresses the deepest attempts at changing the world according to our common desires.

Human rights through Environmental Justice

Second, and following our common desires, it appears to me that in real life, cities like Vienna can also be a social laboratory for a new approach to multiculturalism that finds itself on the cross roads. So, laboratory experiments aside, now I would like to give a real-life

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example from the City of Zürich (Switzerland). The City of Zürich with 42,5 % of immigrants (Vienna – 27, 4 %) experiments through various city projects with civic rights and duties of their multicultural residents with the aim of making sustainable living. Zürich is a city with a 30-year old history of Environmental Justice education that takes place in the city's forest schools. Zürich has 80 parks and urban forests, altogether 43% of the municipal area (Vienna – 35, 4 %).The Zürich forest schools have a splendid reputation for the pedagogical approach. Drawing on their pedagogical input, researchers conducted in Zürich an empirical survey of intercultural socialization among 437 primary schools pupils and secondary schools students (aged 10 through 17), by involving them in that forest schooling. Among the pupils and students in those general schools they were from 16 to 81 % of immigrants, on the average, 48.5 %[iv] (Vienna - > 25%).

The study investigated their level of social inclusion/exclusion (or socializing) in Zürich's green spaces. In fact, it really looked into the right to dignity in a multicultural society. The study asked youth and teachers (of whom most of the latter had never been with their classes to the forest) about leisure activities like meeting friends, talking, have a grill party, walking, playing football or other games, or gymnastics.

The Zürich study found the relationship between the main activities in forests and parks on the one hand, and the frequency of cross-cultural circles of friends on the other.

Specifically, the study showed that walking in forests was positively related to the percentage of that youth reporting cross-national friendships. The positive relationship between socialising and talking with friends in parks and the percentage of youth reporting cross-national friendships was almost significant, and youngsters who engaged in ballgames other than football also tended to report more cross-national friendships than those who did not play such games in parks. Finally, the study pointed that multiculturally enjoying time outdoors is connected with caring for public space by city authorities. They should create public urban green space that fosters social functions through green space architecture from both European and non-European cultural traditions. The Zürich researchers recommend that given that urban landscapes are representations of culture, making various cultural traditions of green space visible might help make all youths feel 'at home'. Indeed, this is an important feeling of place identification ('a sense of belonging') – a precondition to social cohesion or inclusiveness and vice versa[v]. Therefore we should not wonder why in Vienna on Wagramerstrasse where the United Nations is housed there are palms in-between the streets, why Kopa Kagrana is so named or why on the Danube island we have so many grill places ('compensation place'). The City should be commended for this.

Right to the city, urban safety, risk assessment tools and civic responsibilities

Third, the above example of urban inclusiveness brings us to the penultimate point of this statement. Ever since the UN emerged from the ashes of the Second World War, the Organization charts the human rights approach to multiculturalism.

It does so with increasing commitment sand impetus, but not always with progressive results. 'Right to the city', about which is this part of my statement, is one of the more recent <u>very progressive</u> slogans which is <u>not</u> in   the formal   inventory of the United Nations crime

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prevention and criminal justice standards relevant to a very vibrant urban life and safety. Ideally, as per the World Charter for the Right to the City (2005)[vi] , it is a grass roots, secular, radically libertarian manifesto, loftily appealing to principles of solidarity, freedom, equity, social justice, to <u>the right to development</u> and to the respect for different urban cultures with corresponding civic responsibilities.

As a former UN official involved among many more important than me actors in formulating those standards and norms, I find the World Charter breath-taking, for it promises almost anything under the sun. However, I remain somewhat sceptical on the viability of pursuing such an orchestrated 'right to the city' on the UN urban safety agenda, at least for the time being if not for longer. Not only because that city-right is not fully in tune with immigrant youth's exclusion from the labour market, but also because it incorporates the aforementioned contentious 'right to development'. In the UN history of that latter right, its contentiousness originally ensued from putting in it the wellbeing of countries' elites over self-development of individuals. Originally, that right facilitated the unfettered use of natural resources by those elites. Eventually abuse of that right, in which also the transnational corporations were implicated, contributed to the matters recently discussed in Paris at the 2015 UN Climate Change Conference.

Regarding the other content of 'the right to the city', my scepticism is because of the current and increasingly strong xenophobic feelings related to immigration and the fear of terrorism that prompts safety over individuality. For one or another reason, both rights, that is the right to development and the right to the city, lack therefore a viable broad political recognition and consensus worldwide. Anyhow, since there is no time here to explain almost a 70-year old UN battle over 'the right to development'[vii] and a 50-year old history of 'the right to the city', we can only conclude in terms of today's urban conference that 'the right to the city' may be too narrow a street, perhaps leading to the *cul de sac*. We need to rethink its content and I dare to say that faith-based organizations ('FBOs' in the UN lingo) must in a civic way be taken into account through the local safety audits, and other sustainable development initiatives for distributive justice. <u>This is not a 'resaclarization' of public space</u>. That space should remain secular. Through various approaches and instrumentalities, these public spaces should strongly project Vienna's social and place identity, as this should also be for other such cities.

At the same time, Vienna's public space <u>is the 'space' for the United Nations sustainable development ecumenical concept invoking 'shared responsibility' or 'co-responsibility' for safety. This is a co-responsibility which the FBOs bear with others for safety and many more social justice priorities, as per the majority rule</u>[viii]. Urban participatory risk assessment tools, and local safety audits may be an instrument facilitating this co-responsibility and be a measured, mature response to a rather culturally and emotionally motivated actions of self-styled 'honour patrols' controlling Muslim women's dress codes in line with the *Shari'a* law. Reportedly, in 2016 this was the case in Vienna – a signal that may suggest the emergence in public urban space of "no-go zones", similar to such ones in some other Western European cities.

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Single as this signal may or should be, it may also suggest the inroad for city managers and residents to look for peace and justice in communities through such risk assessment tools as local safety audits. <u>This is because 'honour crimes' may be a matter of as much impulsive conduct as safety issues are on the other side of the city-life spectrum. Local safety audits in this instrumental fashion may facilitate to reach the 'nerve' which animates 'honour crimes', and may channel the local reaction in a civic way</u>. Whether these crimes involve 'honour killings' or less culturally-motivated violations of customs (e.g. other forms of domestic violence), in this way the city managers may draw the residents' strong communal interest in safety and other common needs.

This helps to reduce the interest of such residents in likewise strongly culturally-motivated uncivil customs, if not also in reducing other crime justified by 'honour'- misunderstood as dignity for and by men only. As city residents, we simply and merely cannot obsessively claim our 'right to the city' by banking on our peculiarities and religious freedoms, as if other men and women would not have been entitled the same for their own religious sake. As reminded by Judge Paul Lemmens (European Court of Human Rights),'*The existence of fundamental responsibilities is an essential feature of a democratic society, in which individuals or groups of individuals must be prepared to make concessions, for the benefit of society as a whole*'[ix]. Not making such concessions on the rights' side undercuts confidence in common goals and make a city sectarian with "no-go" zones. In short and still in other words, a local safety audit is a secular confidence-building measure that helps to balance out culturally misguided conceptions about living together in a city and responsibilizes every resident.

Sustainable livelihood in this context is in its letter and spirit about 'shared responsibility' for public spaces - the same responsibility that should prompt us to preserve our natural resources for future generations. Hence the question: If we should teach rural youth how to take pride in being stewards of the land, should we not educate city dwellers about keeping cities' green and public spaces in order?[x]. The answer is: 'Shared responsibility' for the city involves social resources for a common safety in public spaces. It begins with caring for our cities' habitat, or - simply put - with not littering public spaces.

This is a very simple commitment and a very simple responsibility that transfers the letter of human rights into a deed. This deed is not only for the sake of Environmental Justice, but of the respect to our city's habitat, its all partakers. They should not tolerate among themselves customary practices that contribute to uncivil behaviours in the public space, if not also among themselves in private space. Caring for urban space is a precondition to more serious civic responsibilities and to residential satisfaction in general, as a part of caring for one's and others' immediate and bigger environment. First, second or third-generation immigrants are here among the main actors who should be encouraged, involved and obliged to contribute to our safety according to their age, city's civic precepts and its statutes. Those people should not be excluded and there should be no divorce of community-based social process from its environmental context[xi]. The young ones should not form gangs, walk the streets in vigilantes' groups ('honour patrols'). The immigrants should be among the employees who work for the cities' and countries' prosperity, indeed

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for 'shared prosperity', as per SDGs 8, 10 and 11 of the 2016-2030 United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda.

The immigrants from the FBOs should be among the law enforcers who bring peace and justice into the community, as envisioned by Goal 16 of the Agenda (SDG 16). We know that at the face value, this may sound naïve, if not also weak. But SDG 16 also calls for 'strong institutions'.

Institutions are really strong when they enjoy public trust. Trust in police, prosecution, criminal justice agencies, country's democratic principles and laws, etc. We further know that building trust in this way is not easy and the success rate is debatable, especially when immigrant youth feel deprived of their legitimate life chances. And yet, there is no choice but to continue engineering such chances. This should be done not only for the sake of peaceful and inclusive cities, but for the sake of those cities' overall prosperity as well. This should be a "win-win" situation, called for by the UN General Assembly in its 2016 "New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants". Much of this is city authorities' responsibility that must be exercised in a co-ordinated interdepartmentally comprehensive and steady fashion with which through their trained staff of the same ethnic origin they gradually reach the minority groups, are consulted by them and accounted for as city governors within the limits of the majority rule.

From "no-go zones" to bedrooms, nurseries and kindergartens as a natural environment for global civic education

This leads to the fourth and final point of this statement on *'Justice education in a multicultural city': a kids' stuff?'* Initially, this statement aimed at the education in justice in the Vienna kindergartens. This is because after bedrooms and nurseries in a cradle-to-grave chain of civic rights and responsibilities the kindergartens are very important in the educational life-long learning process[xii].

In this context, as Organizers of this conference we failed to attract to it the interest of the City of Vienna, most precisely *Magistrat Abteilung* 10 and 11. We tried hard to get these two offices on board. They are responsible for the Vienna kindergartens, but at this conference they had no topical statement about quality education in those kindergartens (SDG 4). From both offices we wanted to learn how in the Vienna human habitat these kindergartens may and can serve as a venue for educating immigrant children in 'Environmental Justice', so these children feel – using the expression from the Zürich study – like 'at home'. In the future envisioned by the 2030 UN Sustainable Development Agenda these kindergarten-age children should eventually not be a part or victims of 'honour patrols'. Instead, with their constructive and progressive sense of belonging to a multicultural city environment, they should be a part of legitimate urban chances and enjoy a dignified life.

The 'kids' stuff' in multicultural justice education for young children nowadays in Vienna is not a simple matter. But we hope that in today's contributions of other participants the City of Vienna will find inroads to advance civic education in the city's public spaces and relevant institutions. We expect the City to let the civil society organizations know about the present

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and prospects of civic education in the kindergartens, hopefully, a "win-win" result that meets the goals of the United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda.

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[x] UNEP, *Environment, Religion and Culture in the Context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* 2016:15.

[xi] Uzzell et al., 50.

[xii] S. Redo, M. Platzer, The United Nations role in crime control and prevention: from "What?" to "How? In P. Reichel, J. Albanese (Eds.), *Handbook of Transnational Crime and Justice*, Second Edition, Thousand Oaks 2013 Sage Publications: 283-302; M. Mores, W.S. Barnett, The role of early childhood education in social behaviour of children. In H. Kury, S. Redo, E. Shea (Eds.), *Women and Children as Victims and Offenders: Background – Prevention – Reintegration. Suggestions for Succeeding Generations,* vol. I, Berlin-Dodrecht-Heidelberg, Springer 2016:175-194.