

# EMPOWERING CHILDREN, EMPOWERING CITIZENS

---

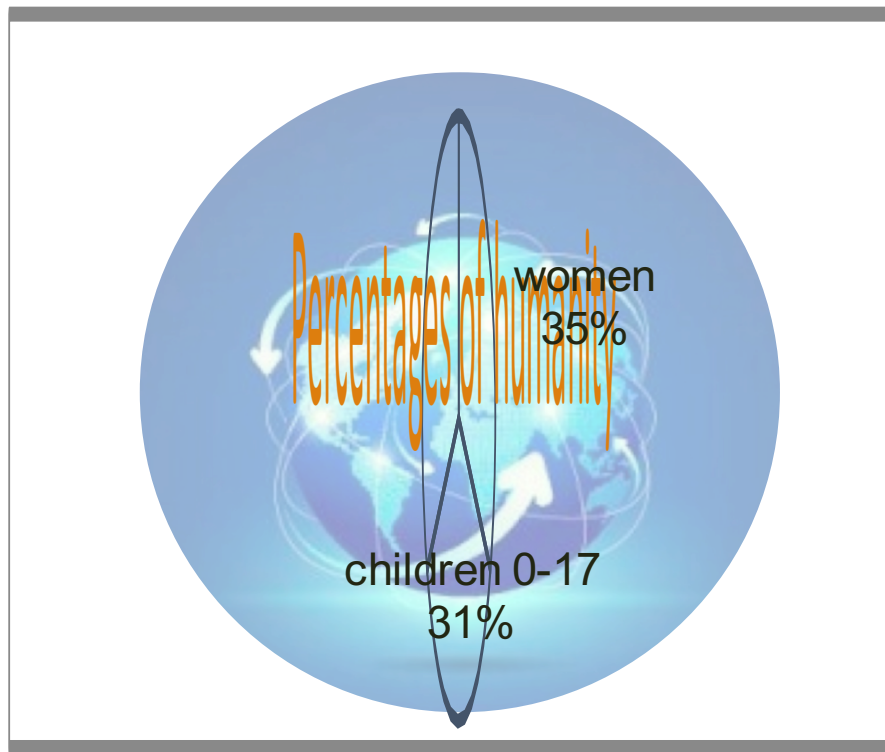
Human Rights in an Interdependent World

John Wall  
Rutgers University

Tazim Ali



Not only do children need citizenship, but  
citizenship needs children



# Children show that citizenship really means inclusion in interdependent networks of power

## Independent citizenship

Enlightenment modernity onwards



## Interdependent citizenship

Twenty-first century post-modernity

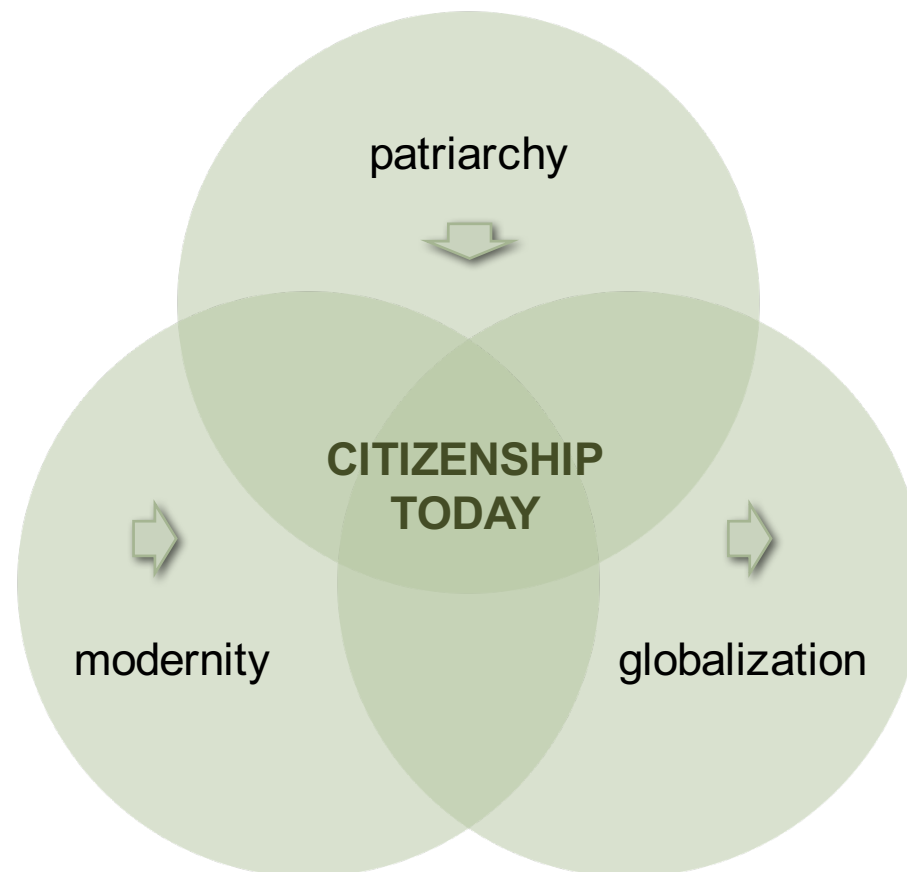


# THE PROBLEM

---

Citizenship imagined in primarily adult terms

Three  
converging  
forces





# Patriarchy

The assumption that the (male) adult is the model of the human



Malala Yousafzai  
speaking at the United Nations  
July 2013

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eme25t1Add0>

## 1989 CRC Article 12.1

States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

# Modernity

## Citizenship as the right to public independence



**Locke:** the right to pursue one's own rational self-interest; children not yet developed sufficient rationality

**Rousseau:** the right to participate in forming a society's general will; children to be protected from public corruption

**Kant:** the right to be included in rational debate; children too beholden to their irrational wants and desires

**Civic-republican citizenship:** the right to act freely in political affairs; children thought to lack impartial civic capacities

**Liberal-individualist citizenship:** the right to state protections to pursue self-interest; children thought to lack knowledge of their own best interests

# Globalization

Accelerating economic, technological, and cultural interconnectedness



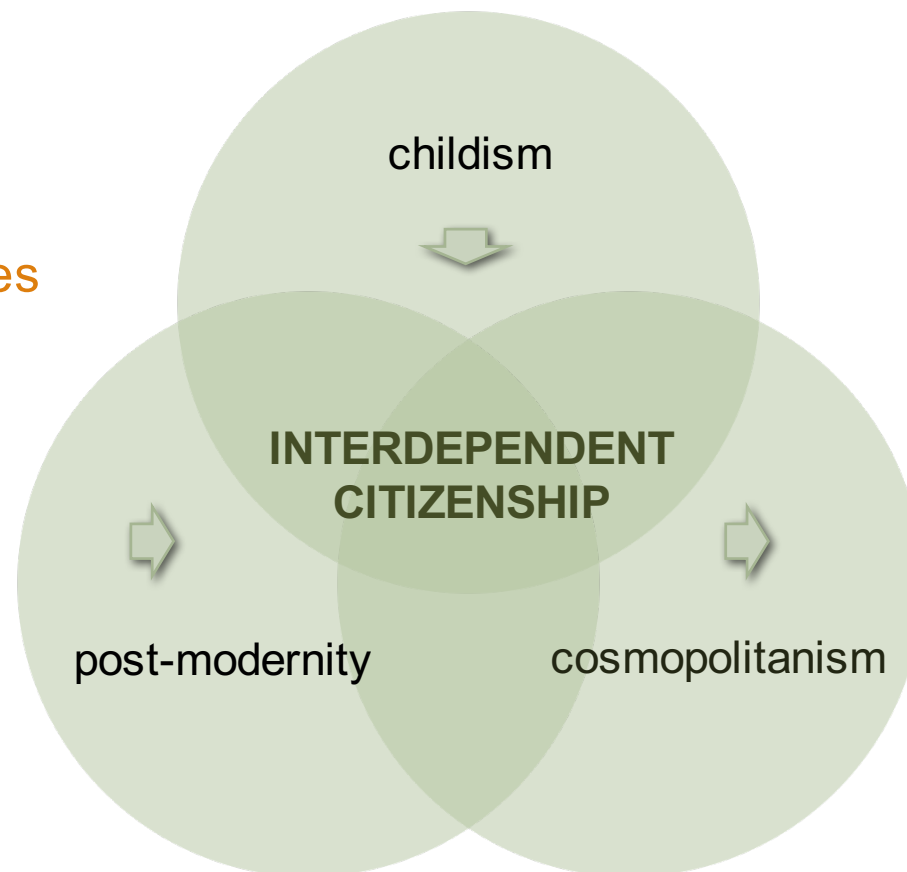
Girl tobacco worker in Kazakhstan, Human Rights Watch, 2015

# THE SOLUTION

---

Rethinking citizenship as interdependence

Three  
emerging  
opportunities



# Childism

Revising assumptions about the human in light of childhood



Responding to patriarchy



Interdependence = independence +  
dependence



# Post-modernity

Citizenship as inclusiveness of the other

For example, child labor unions:



"If I don't work, I don't eat or study!!"

- March of Union of Working Boys, Girls, and Adolescents (CONNAT), Asuncion, Uruguay, April 2014



"We are able to work and study but under conditions of dignity"

- March of Child and Adolescent Union of Peru (MNNATSOP), Lima, Peru, July 2015



"Yes to work with dignity, no to exploitation! Yes to work protection, no to mistreatment! Yes to work recognition, no to exclusion!"

- March of Child and Adolescent Workers (NNAT), Chiapas, Mexico, May 2015



# Cosmopolitanism

Citizenship as grassroots global interconnectivity



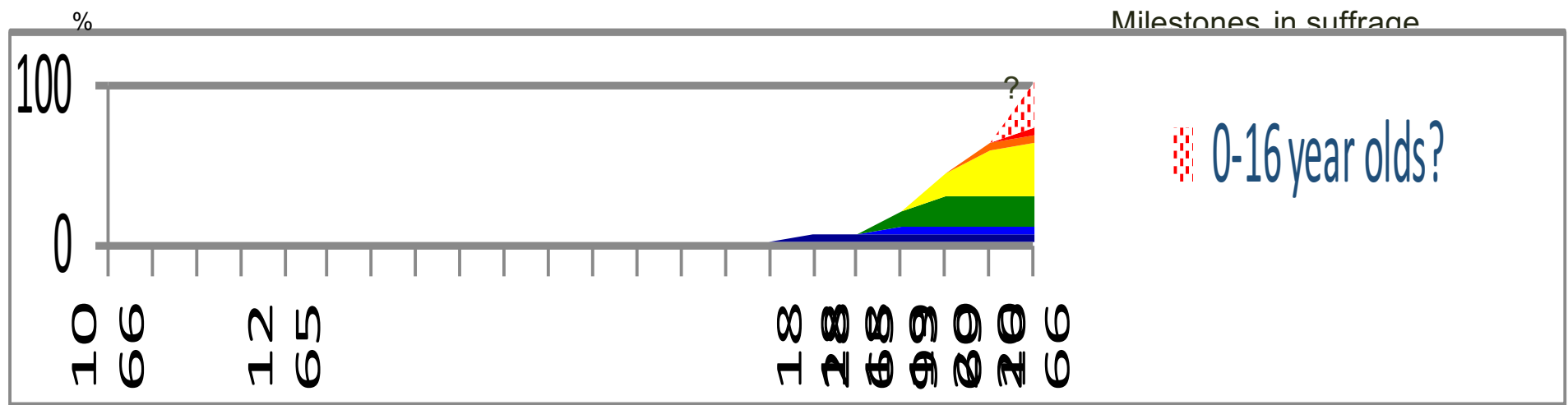
# Interdependent citizenship

Empowerment through interconnected networks



# Example: children's right to vote

Interdependent political empowerment through a “proxy-claim” vote



16-year olds voting in Germany



5-12-year old child parliament in India



Youth parliament at the UN

# EMPOWERING CHILDREN, EMPOWERING CITIZENS

---

Human Rights in an Interdependent World

John Wall  
Rutgers University

<https://johnwall.camden.rutgers.edu>  
[johnwall@camden.rutgers.edu](mailto:johnwall@camden.rutgers.edu)