Theorizing children's global citizenship: Reconstructionism and the politics of deep interdependence

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Abstract
Global citizenship is a much disputed term, involving a variety of competing neoliberal, cosmopolitan, and postcolonial framings. Much of this debate, however, assumes a hidden normative adulthood, just as did traditional understandings of citizenship in nation states. This article argues that attending to children's experiences through a lens of childhood studies or childism opens up the possibility for more complex and profound theorizations of global participatory citizenship for all, both children and adults. In particular, the argument is advanced that global citizenship is better understood as a politics of reconstruction based on the aesthetic practice of interdependent political creativity. The key lies in understanding global political interdependence in a deep rather than superficial way as responding to children's triple bind: their struggle all at once for self-empowerment, overcoming normative exclusions, and responsiveness from others.

What does it mean to understand the third of humanity who are under 18 years old as participatory global citizens? On one hand, childhood studies scholars have developed multiple models of children as agential citizens making real and meaningful differences in their political environments. On the other hand, global studies scholars have attempted to understand the implications of what Arjun Appadurai (2000) calls "a new crisis for the sovereignty of nation-states" (p. 4) for the concept of citizenship on a global scale. But these two academic discourses are rarely put into conversation with each other. Concepts of children's citizenship in childhood studies assume for the most part, albeit with some exceptions, a local or national framework. Concepts of globalization largely ignore childhood as a distinct political experience and construction.

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This article seeks to bridge this gap on the level of political theory. That is, it develops a conversation between childhood studies and global studies in order to theorize in a grounded and complex way children's global citizenship. In the process, it offers a critique of both the concept of children's citizenship that is rooted in more traditional ideas of political agency, as well as of concepts of political globalization that remain adultist or adult-centered in their construction. Positively speaking, it advances what John Wall (2010) calls a "childist" theorization that responds to children's marginalized differences by imagining a more inclusive global citizenship for all. Since children are more profoundly affected by new forces of globalization than perhaps any other large group, their perspectives are vital for fully understanding global citizenship as such. It is also important that empirical studies of children's global citizenship, to which this article is not a contribution, are able to view their subjects through sufficiently complex theoretical frameworks.

To make this argument, the article first examines global citizenship from the sides of both childhood studies and global studies, and then forges a mediating discourse of what I call a politics of reconstruction, that is, a conception of global citizenship in which all persons, child and adult, are empowered in their deep rather than superficial political interdependence.

Global citizens in childhood studies

The academic field of childhood studies has opened up new space in which to understand children's citizenship as more than just passive membership in political regimes. The field's emphasis on children's agency, voices, and participation makes it possible to understand and examine children and youth as active contributors to political life (Conrad, 2009; Invernizzi and Williams, 2008; James and Prout, 1997; Roche, 1999; Thomas, 2007). Particularly in the past decade, an emphasis in the field on children's political "participation" had generated many fruitful studies of the ways in which children and young people are exercising citizenship on their own behalf, such as through civil rights, social media, grassroots campaigning, children's commissioners, child and youth parliaments, children's labor movements, and the like (Austin, 2010; Cockburn, 2013; Hartung, 2017; James, 2011; Smith and Bjerke, 2009).

These discussions of children's participatory citizenship have made several inroads into questions of globalization. Some researchers have examined the global implications of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, showing, for instance, how its participatory rights such as to freedom of expression both empower children as global citizens but also control and discipline them on an adult-dominated global stage (Duhn, 2006; Ennew, 2008; Gadda, 2008). Others have examined international children's citizenship through a "cosmopolitan" lens that reveals, for instance, that a "recognition of interdependence is a foundation stone of a civic society that is vibrant, tolerant and welcoming" (Cockburn, 2013: 232). And others still suggest the need for "postcolonial" interpretations of children's citizenship as practiced in the majority world, that is, conceptions freed from European bourgeois ideals of individual autonomy and grounded instead in alternative political imaginations in which, for example, "various hierarchies of caste, gender and class continue to frame people's everyday interactions with each other" (Balagopalan, 2011: 293).

These inroads advance a broader desire in the field of childhood studies to transcend its historical neglect of majority world and global childhoods (Nieuwenhuys, 2013). However, a concern for globalizing the scope of childhood studies is not exactly the same thing as a concern for understanding processes of globalization as such. With some exceptions, as we will see below, childhood studies examinations of children's citizenship have yet to engage in a systematic way the global studies field as a whole, much less drawn upon that field's innovations in globalization theory. What is more—and as a result—childhood studies insights and perspectives have yet to challenge the global studies field to recognize its own adultism and respond conceptually to the particular

lives of children. It is to this broader global citizenship literature that we now turn, with an eye toward its normative lacunae when it comes to the citizenship of children.

Neoliberalism

Neoliberal theories of global citizenship rarely consider children explicitly and are the easiest to critique from a childhood studies point of view. Such theories imagine global citizens as rationally self-interested individuals who are free to take advantage of a worldwide network of regulated free market exchange (Logsdon and Wood, 2005; Schattle, 2008; Sklair, 2002). Global citizenship, from this perspective, is governed by international policies and nongovernmental organizations whose aim is to render economic and technological marketplaces as free, open, fair, and efficient as possible.

The most well-known application of this concept can be found in what John Williamson (1989) terms "the Washington Consensus," that is, the creation of global infrastructures by bodies such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, and wealthy nations to encourage free markets through such means as fiscal discipline, tax reform, deregulation, trade liberalization, and the privatization of state enterprises. As William Robinson (2004, 2007) describes it, global citizenship from this neoliberal point of view means participating in a "transnational state" (TNS) that subordinates traditional nation state functions to global policy-making bodies such as the Trilateral Commission, the World Economic Forum, the Group of Seven, and the World Trade Organization. This TNS exists "to serve the interests of global over national accumulation processes" by producing "'transnational state cadres' [that] act as midwives of capitalist globalization" (Robinson, 2007: 131).

Childhood studies scholars have found various drawbacks to this model. While free global markets might potentially increase global wealth overall, in the absence of non-market modes of global empowerment they will tend to exacerbate rather than reduce existing global inequalities, and the most globally unequal group of all is the young (Minujin and Nandy, 2012; Newhouse et al., 2017). On the whole, the younger you are, the fewer opportunities you are likely to find to take advantage of free market liberties and resist economic exploitation. What is more, global marketplaces are likely to only further weaken even those provisions and protections for minors that nations currently enforce, as witnessed, for example, in declining state investments in primary education and higher rates of labor exploitation for children than for adults (International Labour Organization (ILO), 2013).

In addition, the neoliberal model tends to deepen children's marginalization by prioritizing economic over political, social, and cultural dimensions of global citizenship. As Karen Wells (2014) argues, it "constructs healthy childhood as one that orientates children towards independence rather than interdependence … and separates them from the wider forces of politics, economics and society" (p. 21). Even in the area of cultural citizenship, in which the young might be expect to excel, neoliberalism enforces adult-centric values of individualism and competition. According to Dafna Lemish (2015), "as a global phenomenon, [children's] media promote mainly what has been termed as *late modernity* values, typified primarily by commercialism, globalization, privatization, and individualization" (p. 6). Children's sources of support, organization, and expression are all too easily subordinated to and distorted by adult-dominated projects of capital accumulation.

Overall, neoliberal theories of global citizenship tend to highlight individual freedoms over relational dependencies, thus further empowering the already empowered. They do not tend to include strong measures "to counter the disabling effects of global capitalism" in many children's lives (Katz, 2004: xiv), such as global political supports and means of empowerment. What is

more, neoliberalism tends to co-opt children into future market projects, so that "the ideal child is produced by, and in turn produces, neo-liberal discourses, such as the child as global citizen in the making" (Duhn, 2006: 192). A purely free-market perspective on global citizenship is unable to reign in the production of global social inequalities that already disempower children more than adults.

Cosmopolitanism

The most common set of alternatives proposed to global neoliberalism can be grouped under the term cosmopolitanism, which I define here as the theory that global citizenship means membership in a world of equal and universal human rights. Cosmopolitan citizens participate in an international system of rights and responsibilities that promote shared human dignity and peaceful coexistence, including respect for social and cultural differences. As David Held (2010) influentially defines it, cosmopolitan citizenship "recognizes each person as an autonomous moral agent entitled to equal dignity and consideration" (p. 15).

Cosmopolitan citizenship can be theorized in various ways. Martha Nussbaum (1996), for example, argues that persons are "above all, citizens of a world of human beings, and … they have to share this world with the citizens of other countries" (p. 6). Kwame Anthony Appiah (2006) defends a cosmopolitan citizenship ethic by which "we have obligations to others, obligations that stretch beyond those to whom we are related by the ties of kith and kin, or even the more formal ties of a shared citizenship," including the recognition that "people are different … and there is much to learn from our differences" (p. xv). Or, for Peter Singer (2004), cosmopolitan citizenship means "doing the most good you can do" as a member of a shared planet regardless of geographical proximity. What all these theories hold in common is the view that a basic level of dignity and respect is due to all persons globally rather than just within local, national, or regional borders.

Arguably the most visible effort to realize this kind of cosmopolitan citizenship is the United Nations (UN), founded in 1945 to respond to the atrocities of World War II by building a universal global human rights infrastructure. As described in the UN's foundational 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), "recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world." This cosmopolitan ideal has also inspired regional structures of citizenship such as the European Union and the African Union. It undergirds much of the work of international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs), international civil society, and global labor organizations and activists (Oxley and Morris, 2013: 308). As Will Kymlicka (2007) argues, INGOs such as UNESCO and the International Labour Organization (ILO) pursue a cosmopolitan ideal of "liberal multiculturalism … understood as a concept that is both guided and constrained by a foundational commitment to principles of individual freedom and equality" (p. 7).

Cosmopolitanism is an improvement over neoliberalism when it comes to the citizenship of children, but only to an extent. It largely repeats both the opportunities and the drawbacks for children embedded in traditional citizenship models from modern nation-states. Children are likely to benefit from cosmopolitan efforts to provide resources and protections to all, regardless of their particular circumstances. For example, INGOs like UNICEF and Save the Children have helped to make significant strides that would be difficult for nation-states alone to achieve, such as in reducing global child poverty, infant mortality, malaria, and malnutrition. But children are also likely to find themselves less empowered than adults when it comes to active global citizen participation. As Nigel Thomas (2007) has argued when it comes to children's national citizenship, "it is legitimate to ask what democracy currently has to offer to children and young people, who are probably the most markedly dominated group in society" (p. 216). Because it largely extends national

citizenship to the global arena, cosmopolitanism more easily imagines children as objects of passive political concern than as subjects exercising political power in their own right.

This ambiguous helpfulness of cosmopolitan theory is well illustrated by the UN's most widely ratified treaty of all time, the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The CRC constructs a particular image of the global child citizen (Cregan and Cuthbert, 2014; Wyness, 2006). On the one hand, as Susan Mapp (2011) has argued, "the rights guaranteed to children in the Convention on the Rights of the Child are the *minimum* necessary in order for children to achieve their full adult potential" (p. 167). And, as Gerison Lansdown (2010) shows, the CRC's general affirmation of participation rights—such as to freedom of expression and assembly—has functioned as a major driver of children's political involvement such as through children's parliaments and labor unions. On the other hand, the CRC tends to imagine children as not yet independent enough to share equally in global governance themselves (Stern, 2017). Its signature participation right, Article 12, calls for children's freedom of expression, but only under limited conditions that the UN does not impose on adults: only for "the child who is capable of forming his or her own views"; only in "matters affecting the child"; and only with "due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child" (United Nations, 1989). As Addressa Gadda (2008) puts it, the "CRC is knowledge produced by the UN that reinforces the concept of an ideal childhood as developed by and for a Western audience" (p. 11). Such restrictions are familiar from existing European citizenship rights for children within nations, who are understood as not yet independent enough for equal citizenship status.

Postcolonialism

A third imagination of global citizenship, one that emerged in reaction to both neoliberalism and cosmopolitanism, can broadly be termed postcolonialism. Postcolonial theory aims to deconstruct systemic oppressions in order to empower historically marginalized voices, particularly but not only those in the majority world. It "focuses on contemporary forces of oppression and coercive domination" (Young, 1999: 34). It takes the broadly poststructuralist and neo-Marxist view that traditional European discourses of globalization represent expressions of hegemonic power and thus need to be challenged and revised from a diversity of ethnic, gender, class, and other positions of global difference. As the postcolonial feminist theorist Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988, 1999) asks, "Can the subaltern speak?" Supposedly "universal" conceptions of global citizenship must be critically examined for who they actually empower and who they implicitly silence.

Postcolonial theory has been adapted in various ways into conceptions of global citizenship. Perhaps most influentially, Arjun Appadurai argues that global citizenship must contend with globalization as a process of "flows" of diverse objects, persons, images, and discourses around the planet that in part create "disjunctures" in the form of inequalities, frictions, disempowerment, and suffering. Global citizenship means resisting "globalization from above" as imposed by the powerful few through "globalization from below" or "grassroots globalization" that activates "transnational advocacy networks" to connect and empower the oppressed (Appadurai, 2000: 16). Grassroots global citizenship of this kind is grounded in

> those ways of thinking, feeling, and acting that increase the horizons of hope, that expand the field of imagination, that produce greater equality in what I have called the capacity to aspire, and that widen the field of informed, creative, and critical citizenship. (Appadurai, 2013: 295).

Postcolonial theory is playing an increasingly important role in childhood studies. As Olga Nieuwenhuys (1998, 2013) argues, it is useful for understanding both children's subordinate global position and their capacities for political resistance:

Th[e] active role of children and youth in the struggle for liberation and social justice is particularly interesting for stimulating a fresh and more comprehensive understanding of children's agency … [and] recognizing children's agency and trying to support their participation has … much to gain from looking for fragments of cultures of resistance and children's roles in the situated encounters that are the focus of postcolonial studies.

In addition, as Sarada Balagopalan (2002) has suggested:

it is through recognizing the ways in which the representation of "indigenous" and "modern" childhoods as discrete categories continues to serve the project of modernity as constructed in the European imaginary, that we will be able to invoke both the premodern and the history of the modern in the Third World, to critique the global circulation of a modern western childhood as the hegemonic ideal. (pp. 32–33; see also Balagopalan, 2011)

Along similar lines, Mehmoona Moosa-Mitha (2005) advances a feminist, anti-racist, non-classist, and transgendered postcolonial theorization of children's citizenship as "difference-centered" or based on "the right to participate differently in the social institutions and culture of the society" (p. 375). The solution to history's "adultist" constructions of power is a struggle that empowers children's "own lived reality" and "subjective experiences" (Moosa-Mitha, 2005: 375, 377).

Of the three models of global citizenship addressed here, postcolonialism offers arguably the best chance for including the distinctive voices and experiences of children. This is because it self-consciously challenges dominant historical norms of power, which clearly elevate adults as a group over children. It is thus able to provide a framework for deconstructing hegemonic adult control over global discourses and empowering children to assert their own distinctive and different contributions.

The question can be asked, however, why postcolonial citizenship theory has in fact tended to focus less on issues of age than on issues of gender, class, and ethnicity. For some in childhood studies, as we have seen, the extension to childhood is a natural one. But I would like to suggest that the relative neglect of children and youth is not entirely accidental. The drawback for young people is that "letting the subaltern speak" or "globalization from below" becomes increasingly problematic the younger the person in question. What could be meant, for example, by the grass-roots global empowerment of babies and toddlers? Should young children lead the struggle for their own transnational political liberation and inclusion in power? Are the young going to have to gain university professorships and other positions of social and cultural authority to develop platforms for normative global critique?

The problem here is that postcolonial theorizations of global citizenship imagine political empowerment as enacted chiefly by marginalized groups on their own behalf. They tend to ignore the important senses, for children but also for adults, in which political empowerment is also in part dependent upon others. From a children's perspective, Spivak's question, "Can the subaltern speak?" reveals itself to be somewhat paradoxical. The ability for the subaltern to speak is both asserted in its own right but also made dependent on two other groups: whoever is asking the question and whoever is being asked. The asking group is not subaltern to the extent that it can speak by asking the question. And the group to which the question is being posed is not subaltern either to the extent that, by being asked, it is presumed to have some power to let the subaltern speak. Children unmask a paradox in postcolonial theory: it at once requires empowerment to arise from below but also depends in part on empowerment being enabled from above.

The triple bind of political interdependency

What we learn from examining these three broad frameworks is that children present an especially problematic case for theorizing global citizenship. This problem can be summarized as the global

citizen's *triple bind*. This notion of a triple bind is meant in analogy to the "double bind" formulated in poststructuralist feminism (Anderson, 1998; Butler, 2000). But it is now pressed further by childism, the effort "to transform ideas and societies in response to the particular lived experiences of children" (Wall, 2016: 3). Childism adds a further dimension to the global political problem.

In the first place, children face a similar double bind to women. Not only must women, like men, struggle to enact or perform their voices on the political stage, but also, often unlike men, they must do so, secondly, under conditions of historical patriarchy that use gender to limit what counts as meaningful political participation in the first place. Similarly, children too must find a way not only to influence public life but also to do so under circumstances that use (in their case) age to discount their voices as politically unimportant and non-serious. Patriarchy, after all, is the hidden power of the "pater" or father over not only women but also children.

However, children are marginalized in yet a third way. For the very ability to act or perform in the political arena continues to be imagined, as we have seen in all three types of theory above, as something that individuals and groups chiefly perform on their own behalf. But children show with absolute clarity that being able to act in public on one's own behalf is only a necessary, and not a sufficient, condition for political empowerment. Global (and national) citizens also depend on being empowered in part on their behalf by others. In other words, citizenship is a practice of *deep interdependence*. It involves more than self-expression, and more even than interdependence understood in a simple sense of mutuality or relationality. In a more complex and profound way, it involves a simultaneous dynamics of self-empowerment and empowerment from others.

This notion of children's political interdependence has been noted by several childhood studies scholars concerned with children's citizenship in nation-states. Jeremy Roche (1999) some time ago suggested that "the languages of participation and empowerment are cosy but we need to be more critical of the circumstances of inclusion and the kinds of adult support (e.g. advocacy and representation) that children might need" (p. 489). Tom Cockburn (1998, 2013) has argued that citizens hold simultaneous "responsibilities and duties" that presuppose that "both adults and children are socially interdependent" (p. 113). Marc Jans (2004) proposes a "child-sized citizenship" for both children and adults "based on a continuous learning process in which children and adults are interdependent" (p. 40; see also Woodhouse, 2008). And most recently, Dympna Devine and Tom Cockburn (2018) develop a concept of "social citizenship" that "seek[s] to understand [children] as contributing citizens in the present, building and exercising their citizenship capabilities through inter-generational relations of care and solidarity that are generally invisible in adult-centered frameworks" (p. 154).

But children's interdependence as citizens has yet to be theorized globally. Here, theories of global citizenship must contend with the fact that children are the global community's most profoundly marginalized group. They must also address the reality of declining nation-state powers to regulate a growing adult-dominated neoliberal hegemony. A truly child-inclusive conception of global citizenship would combine all at once the struggle for self-empowerment, the overcoming of normative exclusion, and the demand for responsiveness from others. Stated rather simplistically, neoliberalism recognizes only the first element here, cosmopolitanism the first and to some extent the third, and postcolonialism the first and second. Only by addressing all three elements of deep political interdependence, however, can theorizations of global citizenship respond to children fully. And, crucially, only in this way can global citizenship express the full complexity of the global interdependence of us all, child or adult.

Imagining global interdependence

Addressing this triple bind of global citizenship requires basic theoretical innovation. While it is not possible to formulate a complete theoretical system here, we can suggest new directions by

combining the childhood studies and childist suggestions above with some of the more innovative citizenship literature on political interdependence. In particular, we find helpful resources in what may be termed poststructuralist political aesthetics, which helps to conceptualize global citizenship as a practice of interdependent imagination and creativity.

First, we may turn to Judith Butler and her recent efforts to connect politically empowered performativity to ideas of dependency, vulnerability, and precarity. Butler argues that in order to challenge political norms, marginalized groups must appear aesthetically in public not only as agents but also as vulnerable bodies, bodies that thereby declare themselves dependent on public responses from others:

> If we are living organisms who speak and act, then we are clearly related to a vast continuum or network of living beings; we not only live among them, but our persistence as living organisms depends on that matrix of sustaining interdependent relations. (Butler, 2015: 86)

In political demonstrations, for example, individuals and groups put their bodies on the line and thereby create an artistic or imaginative performance of their political precarity.

While Butler focuses on gender and sexuality, one can see the potential application to age. Children too, even babies, can perform themselves aesthetically by using their bodies to exhibit their simultaneous political agency and vulnerability. They can and do participate in demonstrations, appear in political media, impact social culture, and in many other ways exhibit their lived experiences of difference. They can make themselves interdependent participants in the political imagination. Citizens are empowered not just through their own competencies but through the active–passive performance of new political relations to others.

Similarly, Jacques Ranciére's "aesthetics of politics," while again not explicitly concerned with age, includes an interdependent conception of citizenship in its notion of transformative "dissensus." For Rancière (2010), "dissensus is not a confrontation between interests or opinions. It is the demonstration (*manifestation*) of a gap in the sensible self. Political demonstration makes visible that which had no reason to be seen" (p. 46). Here, "demonstration" refers not only to group assemblies but more broadly to an aesthetic dimension of any political act. For Ranciére, all political acts come down to making an oppressed group's difference manifest and visible. The act of dissensus is the act of rendering aesthetically present those differences of experience that the prevailing political "consensus," "logic," or "rationality" render invisible or absent. "The essence of politics resides in the modes of dissensual subjectification that reveal a society in its difference to itself" (Rancière, 2010: 50). Citizenship as such, in any society, is the practice of making visible the difference or gap between consensus and lived experience.

This notion of dissensus can include children because children's differences from the norm at once "have no reason to be seen" but can be made visible nonetheless. Children's lives can just as much as those of any other group be made to demonstrate a society's difference from itself, its normative estrangement from the actual experiences of it citizens. Crucially, these differences are not only to be heard in speech but also "seen," that is, made visible. A child's capacity for political empowerment depends not just on the child making herself visible, but also, and at the same time, on symbolic, cultural, and normative acts of dissensus by which the child's invisibility is rendered manifest by anyone.

Finally, we can turn to a perspective that is more explicitly global, Néstor García Canclini's aesthetics of globalization. García Canclini argues that participatory global citizenship, in all its political and cultural dimensions, is a socially imaginative act of both "interruption" and "intermediation." On the one hand, through acts of "artistic interruption," "artistic creations, slow and divergent, sometimes represent in their narratives and procedures the contradictions of global

policies, the vicissitudes of inequality, and the need of the marginalized to interrupt the totalizing and totalitarian flows with affirmations of their own" (García Canclini, 2014: 174). On the other hand, this kind of political interruption relies on political "intermediations," which he defines as "hybrid" creations among different marginalized global groups,

> connecting intellectual and artistic agents with social movements and culture industries to imagine integrated programs … [that] glimpse not a final scene destined to be repeated like a spectacle but a different future that distances itself from the totalitarianism of the market or the media. (García Canclini, 2014: 178)

Global citizenship is a double activity of deconstructing the normative order (interruption) and reconstructing shared imaginations of more inclusive futures (intermediation).

Although García Canclini is working from within a postcolonialist framework, and although he too does not centrally consider children, this second step of "intermediation" adds an important recognition that global citizenship must involve a kind of creative interdependence. The young can be imagined as both interrupting global norms and sharing in the imagination of new global intermediations. Indeed, what links "interruption" and "intermediation" is the common prefix "inter-": the same sense of deep relatedness that lies within the concept of interdependence. Children as much as adults can both act as global artists helping to reimagine the world and appear as globally marginalized objects in the artistic political imaginations formed by others. Political artistry is a shared activity.

Together, these poststructuralist political aesthetics help to suggest a way beyond our triple bind above. They make it possible to theorize global citizenship as an activity of creative interdependence—whether it is the performance of vulnerability, the making visible of dissensus, or the intermediation of differences. In each case, global citizenship involves both independent self-empowerment and dependent empowerment through others. The aesthetic dimension is key. It shows how to move beyond an individualistic modernist aesthetics that is centered on the freedom of inner self-expression. Global citizenship is based instead on an interdependent postmodern aesthetics aimed at generating an ever more diversely inclusive shared political imagination.

Toward reconstructionism

How can these politically aesthetic suggestions be reworked into a theory of global citizenship that finally moves beyond the adultism of neoliberalism, cosmopolitanism, and even postcolonialism to fully embrace children? In order to indicate the shift beyond the three theories above, I would like to suggest a fourth concept that I call "reconstructionism." Reconstructionism responds to children's triple bind by understanding global citizenship as all at once self-empowering, de-marginalizing, and other-empowered. That is, it imagines global citizenship as deeply and not just superficially interdependent. Global citizenship should be understood as an inclusive political act of imaginative reconstruction.

The concept of reconstructionism derives from friendly critiques of deconstructionism. These critiques argue that the deconstructionist politics of Jacques Derrida, Slavoj Žižek, and others tend to neglect the senses in which difference or marginality call not just for the negative disruption of historical norms but also for their positive refiguration or reconstruction into creative new alternatives (Wenman, 2017). As Richard Kearney (2003) puts this critique, "how is one to be faithful to the other, after all, if there is no *self* to be faithful?" (p. 79). Or as the African political theorist Sara Marzagora (2016) argues, politics requires a "humanism of reconstruction" that can include a deconstruction of colonialism without undercutting the "long historical "struggle for identity

[which] has always been inextricably linked with the struggle for political and cultural liberation" (p. 174; see also Chapman, 2005; Olaniyan, 2005; Zeleza, 2006). Indeed, it has been shown empirically that radical social transitions tend to involve both "a phase of deconstructing … followed by a phase of (re)constructing new/adapted notions and practices" (Avelino and Grin, 2017: 23).

What I call reconstructionism names this larger reality that political deconstruction is only possible as a moment within a larger project of political reconstruction. No person or group, child or adult, can assert their marginalization from political structures without at the same time demanding their reconstruction into new and more expansive structures. This process does not take us back to the cosmopolitan ideal of reaching consensus or agreement. Rather, it demands the shared revision of the political arena in response to the invisible and the forgotten. Global citizenship involves the endless creative expansion of the political arena in such a way that suppressed differences change the political imaginations of all.

Children can be fully included in this kind of global citizenship because their inclusion does not depend on their self-empowerment alone. Rather, their citizenship is a joint responsibility of both children and adults. Children's marginalized experiences must be empowered to transform existing political imaginations and practices. On the one hand, children themselves must appear in public as visible challenges to the status quo; on the other hand, this appearance demands that those with power in the public realm refigure imaginations of the political sphere in response. In other words, global citizenship can finally conceptualize children insofar as it accounts for the fuller human reality of deep interdependence: not just the surface interdependence of sharing a political world with others, but the more demanding aesthetic interdependence of creating ever more expansive political worlds together. The aim of global citizenship is neither the construction of a world in common, nor the deconstruction of worlds imposed by others, but rather the reconstruction of imaginative worlds that respond to one another's lived experiences of difference.

Conclusion

However such a view may be developed, and however it may be tested in relation to empirical and policy realities, the point of this article has been to show that children's global citizenship calls for fundamental new theorization. Existing conceptions of global citizenship do not respond adequately to children's particular differences of age. A fuller conversation is needed between childhood studies and global studies around the very definition of global citizenship. The suggestion here is that global citizenship needs to be defined in response to both children's and adults' deep interdependency, that is, political persons' simultaneous needs for self-empowerment and empowerment from others. This can be accomplished, I have argued, through a politics of reconstruction in which global citizens of any age are able to participate in the essentially aesthetic act of imagining and creating shared worlds in response to each other. Children show the way toward a more inclusive global citizenship for all.

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