

Global Discourse and Local Research on Early Marriage in Indonesia

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Global Discourse

Debates in Indonesia

Questions for local research



What is child marriage?



EVERY 3 SECONDS A GIRL UNDER THE AGE OF 18 IS MARRIED

(Plan UK)



SHE RARELY GIVES HER 'FREE AND FULL' CONSENT
— a right enshrined in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights



CHILD MARRIAGE IS THE 'SOCIALY LICENSED SEXUAL ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION OF A CHILD'

(Forum on Marriage and the Rights of Women and Girls)



GIRLS YOUNGER THAN 15 ARE FIVE TIMES MORE LIKELY TO DIE as a result of pregnancy and childbirth than women in their 20s

(United Nations Population Fund)



Elements in global discourse

- **Definition:** child marriage – girls and boys under 18 (CRC)
early <15 and forced marriage; underage marriage <law
- Incidence
- Impact
- Gender inequality
- Moral appeal



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THOMSON REUTERS FOUNDATION

Photo: REUTERS/Danish Siddiqui

Incidence

Child marriage is still the fate of many of the world's girls, forcing them into a life filled with harmful outcomes.



1 IN 3 GIRLS in the developing world are married by age 18.

14 MILLION

Girls are married every year before their 18th birthday.

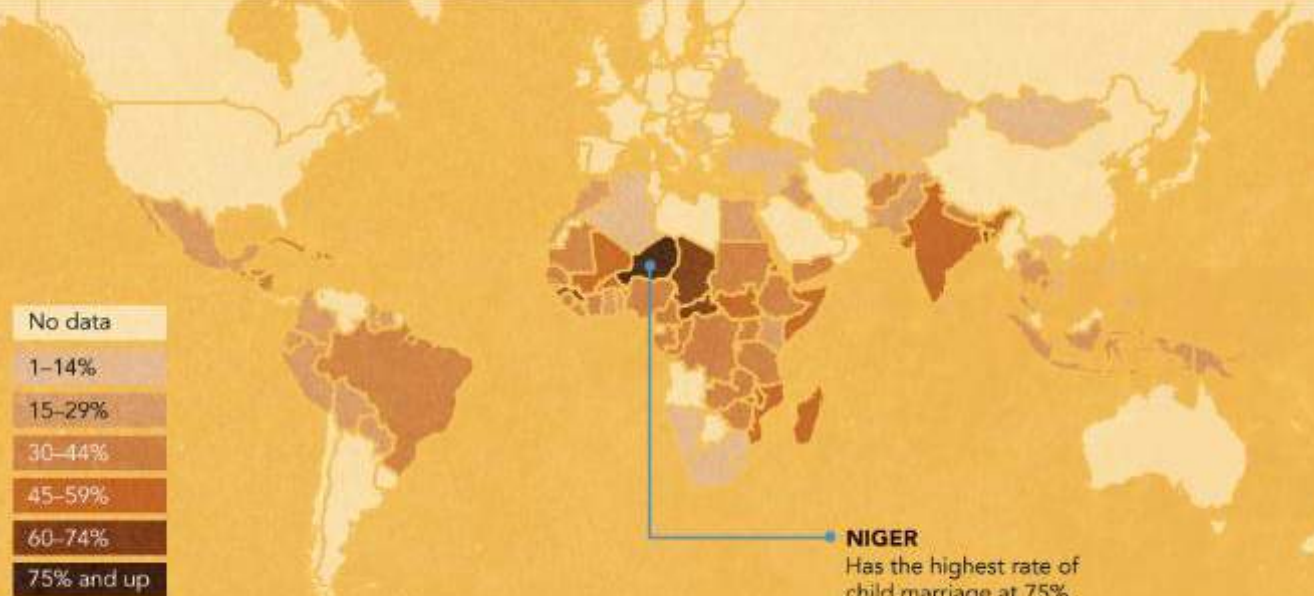
GEOGRAPHY

Child marriage is alarmingly common in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

34%
Average for developing countries (excluding China)



Percentage of women aged 20–24 who were first married or in union before the age of 18



In all countries
In all religions

Impact: health (reproductive, Aids/HIV)

Complications in **pregnancy and childbirth** are among the leading causes of **death** in girls aged 15-19 in low- and middle-income countries (new: **suicide!**)

90% of **adolescent pregnancies** in the developing world are to girls who are already married.

When a mother is under 20, her child is **50%** more likely to **die** within its first weeks of life than a baby born to a mother in her 20s

A study in Kenya and Zambia found that among 15 to 19 year old girls who are sexually active, being married increased their chances of having **HIV** by more than **75%**.

Girls under 15 are **five times** more likely to **die** in childbirth than women aged 20-24.

Source: Girls not Brides

Impact: individual and societal

- Health (maternal mortality and morbidity; HIV/AIDS)
- Education (end of education; lower educated offspring)
- Poverty (vicious circle, limited access to resources)
- Inequality (age: girls and boys – consent elders)
(gender: girls' subordination to (older) husbands)
- Violence (domestic violence; in further life stages)
- Rights (child rights, CRC) (women's rights, CEDAW)

Societal issue: Development, MDGs, Sustainability

Gender

Inequality

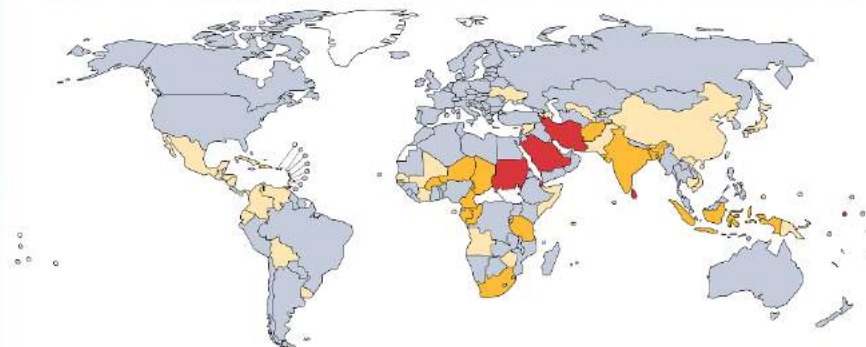
GIRLS ARE MORE LIKELY THAN BOYS TO BE MARRIED YOUNG

7.5:1 RATIO IN INDONESIA



72:1 RATIO IN MALI

HOW LONG ARE GIRLS PROTECTED FROM MARRIAGE COMPARED TO BOYS?



■ No minimum age of marriage ■ 1 to 2 years less
■ 3 years less ■ No difference

54 COUNTRIES LEGALLY PERMIT GIRLS TO MARRY BETWEEN 1-3 YEARS EARLIER THAN BOYS

YOUNG GIRLS WHO MARRY AS CHILDREN

- 📖 are more likely to drop out of school
- 🔒 have limited independence
- 👊 are at a high risk of sexual and physical abuse
- 🩸 are at a high risk of death due to early childbirth

93 COUNTRIES LEGALLY PERMIT GIRLS TO MARRY WITH PARENTAL PERMISSION BEFORE THEY TURN 18

Moral appeal (advocacy and fundraising)

End Child Marriage in one Generation!

Global movement to end child marriage by 2030

Vision for post-2015, supported by The Elders, Girls not Brides (global partnership to end child marriage: NGO network*)

Commitment at State level (African Union; UK/ Unicef; US Senate)

United Nations (Unicef, UNFPA, WHO, UN Women...)

* Koalisi 18+ recently joined as first Indonesia NGO



“The practice of child marriage must be ended everywhere.”

BAN KI-MOON

The Secretary-General of the United Nations, reflecting on a new development agenda to begin in 2015

How to realize this moral appeal?

Theory of Change from Girls not Brides

VISION:

A world without child marriage where girls and women enjoy equal status with boys and men and are able to achieve their full potential in all aspects of their lives.

Debates in Indonesia

Present scare: increasing incidence?!!

Judicial review

Which global discourse?

Incidence: scary?!

Both BKKBN and LBH APIK reported in 2013 an **increase of child marriage** after years of slow decrease.

- BKKBN: % increase amongst urban female adolescents (15-19), still slow decrease in rural areas.
- LBH APIK: increase in unregistered marriage (nikah sirri) and lower mean age of marriage from 2000 - 2010

Why is this **scary**?

On a global scale child marriage in Indonesia looks not too urgent (17% of all women aged 20-24 married before age 18 and 3 % before age 15 in 2012) and it has gone down twofold since the 1980s

But: even an increase of 0,1 % is scary because of the **huge numbers** involved (about 340.000 women per year marrying under age of 18). Indonesia ranks no 7 in the world in sheer numbers!

Challenge: to collect reliable and recent data at local level

- Underreporting because of aib; asal bapak senang/ MDGs
- Because of concepts used, like fertile age 15-49, 'ibu'?
- What are useful sources for local research (disaggregated by age and gender)?

Root causes

Margaret E. Greene (2014: 23) in **Ending Child Marriage in a Generation: What research is needed?** Ford Foundation

We must consciously shift the focus from preventing the outcome (impact) to preventing the underlying causes of child marriage.

Tradition, gender roles, poverty, security (conflict zones)

More detailed local research incl. intersectionality
(hotspots)

Judicial review (16 → 18)

- Reproductive health rights versus sexual morality central in debate
- Impact of early marriage, especially of early birthing versus prevention of zina (sexual relationship outside marriage; adultery)
- Underlying debate on the definition of child (akil baligh?) and requirements of adulthood (underage child + marriage = adult!)
- Rights of adolescents (F/M; of what age?) on sexual relationship; exclusive linking of intercourse, heterosexual marriage and adulthood

Which global discourse?

88%

of countries that have ratified the CRC
set a minimum age of marriage
of 18 years for girls

However, many countries allow for exceptions with
parental consent or under customary or religious law

Under these
exceptions

30%

of countries that have ratified the CRC
legally permit girls to
marry before age 15

Kawin muda itu asyiiiik!
Keluarga Sakinah
Gender Harmony

Respecting gender disparities and
unequal power relations

Saskia Wieringa 2015: 12 'Gender Harmony and the
Happy Family', *South East Asia Research* 23:1

Questions for local research

- What is local understanding of marriage, including courtship?
- What is local understanding of childhood, adolescence, adulthood?
- What is sexual morality in a specific location or sub-culture?
- What is local understanding of gender relations?
- What is the accepted time slot for marriage (min. and max. age)?
- What are local ways to marry underage children? With consent?
- What are local exit strategies from courtship or child marriage?
- What are legal consequences for the bride and groom of each strategy?
- What are local sanctions for facilitating underage/ child marriage?

More questions for local research

- For effective programs:
 - What are **negative** aspects of child marriage from different viewpoints?
 - What are **positive** aspects of child marriage from different viewpoints?
- Diversity: local context and intersectionality
 - Research root causes in combination with intersectionality (hotspots)
 - Compare best advocacy and programmes of NGOs in particular contexts
- What type of child marriage are we talking about?

Chris Barry (Plan Indonesia 2014 research): traditional (arranged by parents), modern traditional (clash between modernity and traditional values – social pressure) and contemporary type (self-choice of adolescents)

Extreme types: contract marriages, kampong Arab, debt (trafficking)

Review our assumptions

What is our aim? A world without child marriage? Prevent child marriage, mitigate it, support it?

Focus on unmarried children (prevent early marriage), or on married youngsters (mitigate negative aspects)?

Empowerment of children and protection of young women?

Internet as danger or as tool for empowerment?

Are parents 'parents'?

Ethics

At whatever level we are working to end child marriage, girls – positive changes for girls - must remain at the center...

ERIC ethical charter

Ethical Research Involving Children

Sundanese bridesmaids

