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Early female marriage in the developing world

Robert Jensen and Rebecca Thornton

Many women in the developing world are subject to marriage at an early age. Most such women have little choice in the age at which they marry, or whom they marry. In this article, we examine patterns and trends of early marriage in the developing world. The incidence varies widely, from a high of 70 per cent in south Asia to a low of 30 per cent in South East Asia. Women who marry young tend to have less education and begin childrearing earlier, and have less decision-making power in the household. They are also more likely to experience domestic violence.

In most societies, marriage is among the most significant of life events for both men and women, signalling the emergence to adulthood. It sets in motion a variety of other life changes, and is the beginning of building a new family (or new part of an extended family). Because of the huge impact marriage has on the lives of women in particular, researchers, advocates and policy makers have increasingly sought to consider marriage through a human rights framework, especially with regard to issues of consent and age at marriage. For example, Article 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that 'Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses', and that 'Men and women of full age...are entitled to equal rights as to marriage...'. Correspondingly, the United Nations' 1962 Convention on the 'Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration and an Associated Recommendation' calls on member states to establish a minimum age of marriage of no less than 15 years.

The 1979 Convention on the 'Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women', and the 1990 'African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child' suggest a minimum age for marriage of 18 years, consistent with the definition of childhood articulated in the 'Convention on the Rights of the Child'.

Yet despite these various resolutions, corresponding national laws, and the efforts of various national and international organisations, many young women (and to a lesser extent, men) in the developing world are still subject to early marriage. Often, these young women have little choice over the age at which they marry, much less the partner they marry, because the marriage is typically arranged or orchestrated by the parents. Thus, the issues of early marriage and consent are often intertwined; in fact, in most societies, no contract of any type entered into by a minor is legally binding, since young persons are less capable of understanding the implications of long-term decisions and do not have the full autonomy and

independence or the mental and emotional maturity required for such decision-making. Therefore, early marriages, even when they occur with the seeming consent of the child, violate the basic rights of the child, since by legal definition a child cannot give consent.

Early marriages are also a cause of concern because of the potential adverse consequences for women's physical, mental and emotional development and well-being. First, early marriage is often associated with early age at first childbirth, often before physical growth and development is complete. Many studies have shown that early childbirth can have adverse health consequences for both woman and child (Senderowitz 1995). Second, marriage is typically a barrier to education, since women are often expected to leave school in order to devote their time to the care of their new home or to childbearing and childcare. Finally, the relationship between husband and wife may be influenced by the age of the woman at time of marriage, as well as the husband–wife age gap. In particular, women who marry young and who marry much older men may be less capable of asserting themselves and establishing their position in the household. As a result, they may have less power, status, agency and autonomy within the household. In fact, men may choose younger brides for this very reason.

The goal of this article is to undertake an empirical examination of the patterns and trends in age at marriage in the developing world and the conditions and well-being of women who marry young. Of course, early marriage is an issue of concern for boys as well as girls. However, we will focus on girls both because the phenomenon is not as widespread among boys, and because many of the consequences, such as the physical dangers associated with early childbirth, or status and power in the household, are specific to girls.

Patterns of age at marriage

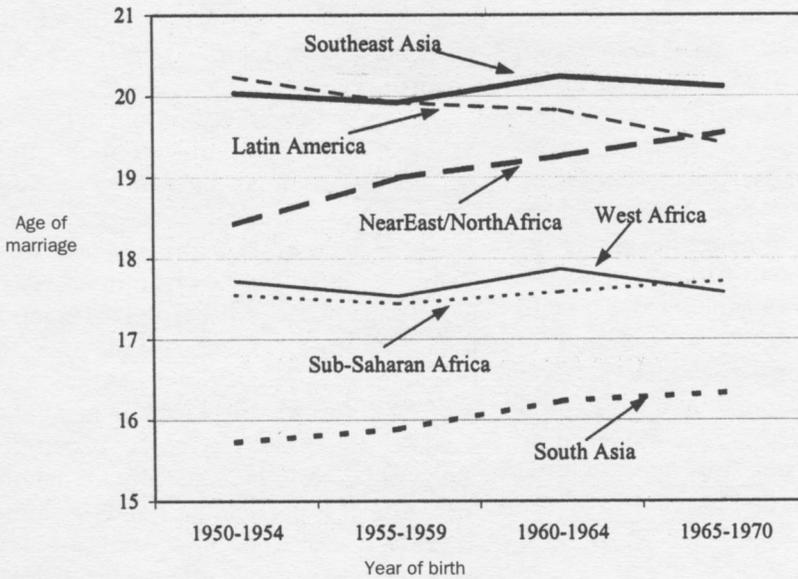
To explore the patterns of age at marriage in the developing world, this article uses data from the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), a series of representative surveys of women aged 15–49 conducted in a variety of countries over the past few decades.¹ These surveys are particularly valuable for the present paper, because they gather data on marital history, as well as education, fertility and other factors which may be affected by early marriage. We restricted our analyses to women in the samples aged 25 and older, since by this age all but a very small percentage of women are, or have been, married. We also disaggregated the data into birth cohorts, in order to examine trends over time. In particular, we focused on the marriage patterns of women born in the intervals 1950–54, 1955–59, 1960–64, and 1965–69.² It is beyond the scope of this paper to attempt to explain why such differences may exist across societies; our goal in this section was modest, namely just to describe the patterns and trends, in order to demonstrate the nature of the problem, and pinpoint where the greatest problems exist.

In Figure 1, we present data on the patterns and trends in age at first marriage in major regions of the developing world. The underlying data, from 35 individual countries surveyed since 1995, are provided in the appendix.

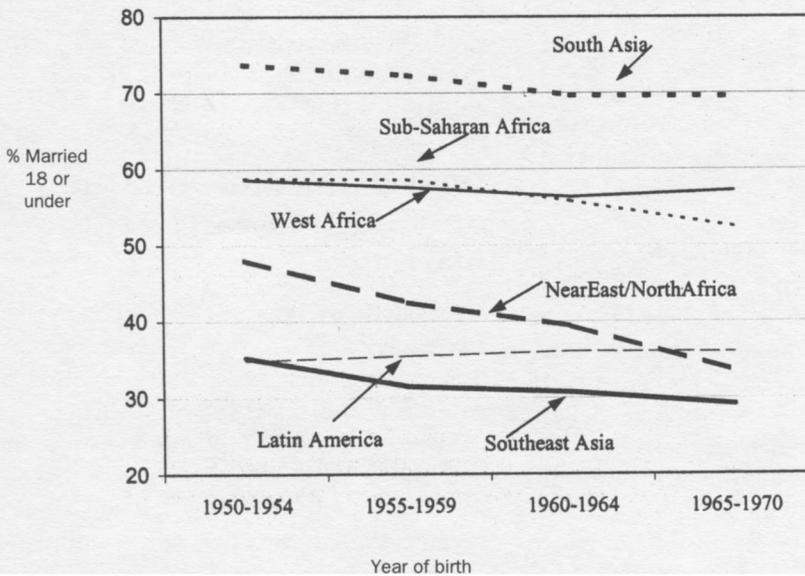
Looking first at panel A, the average age at first marriage ranges from a low of about 16 years in South Asia, to a high of about 20 in South East Asia, with all other regions falling in between. These figures are all well below the average age at marriage for higher income countries; according to the UN World Marriage Tables 2000, the average age at first marriage for women is 26.2 in Western Europe, 26.9 in Northern Europe, and 28.1 in North America (UN, <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/ww2000/table2a.htm>).

Figure 1: Trends in age at marriage and early marriage

A Age at first marriage



B Married 18 or younger



However, even within these regions, there is a great deal of diversity, as seen in the appendix table, 'Trend of age at first marriage'. For example, from 1950 to 1970, within West Africa, the average age at marriage is as low as 15 years in Niger, and as high as 19 years in Ghana. Five countries, all in Latin America, have average ages of 20 or above (Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia and Peru). At the other end of the spectrum, in Bangladesh the average is only about 14.

Panel A of Figure 1 also shows that there has been little overall change in average age at marriage for most of the regions. The notable exceptions are the Near East and North Africa, where the average age of marriage has increased by about a year over the two decades spanned by the data, and Latin America, where it has decreased by about a year. The data for the individual countries in the appendix confirm these findings, but also show many exceptions. For example, while most countries in West Africa show almost no change in age at marriage over this period, the average age has declined by about a year in Ghana and 0.75 years in Nigeria. Five countries (Ethiopia, Tanzania, Bangladesh, Egypt, and Turkey) experienced increases in age at marriage of a year or more, over the two decades. By contrast, Ghana, Mozambique, Guatemala and Nicaragua have all experienced declines in age at marriage of about one year, with Bolivia and Brazil experiencing declines of nearly a year and a half.

Panel B shows the patterns and trends in the incidence of early marriage, which we define here as marriage before age 18, to be consistent with international conventions. As a region, the highest incidence of early marriage is found in South Asia, where 70–75 per cent of women are married by age 18. This is followed by West Africa and sub-Saharan Africa, with an incidence of 50–60 per cent, and then the Near East and North Africa, Latin America and South East Asia. However, even among the lowest groups, the rate is still very high, with 30 to 40 per cent of women marrying before the age of 18.

Like the average age at marriage, over the two decades spanned by the data, the incidence of early marriage was largely unchanged for all regions other than the Near East and North Africa, where both Egypt and Turkey have seen large declines in the incidence of early marriage and increases in age at marriage.

But as before, the data on individual countries show significant variation within regions. For example, the incidence of early marriage has decreased by 8–12 percentage points or more in six countries (Cameroon, Kenya, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Indonesia and Egypt), and by about 15 percentage points in four countries (Ethiopia, Tanzania, the Dominican Republic, and Turkey). By contrast, the incidence of early marriage has increased significantly in far fewer countries, with only Bolivia and Brazil having increases of 8 percentage points or more. There have also been several cases of extremely sharp declines in the incidence of early marriage, such as Cameroon (women born 1950–54 versus those born 1955–59), Guinea (1955–59 vs. 1960–64), Ethiopia (1960–64 vs. 65–70), Kenya (1955–59 vs. 1960–64), Tanzania (1955–59 vs. 1960–64), Zimbabwe (1960–64 vs. 1965–70), the Dominican Republic (1950–54 vs. 1955–59) and Turkey (1960–64 vs. 1965–70).

Well-being and condition of women in early marriages

As stated earlier, early marriage can adversely affect women along several dimensions, such as early termination of education and onset of childbearing, and women's status and position within the household. To explore these issues further, we focus on four countries in detail, chosen because the surveys from these countries contain useful measures of women's status and well-being. These are Benin, Colombia, India, and Turkey.

Table 1: Well-being and age of marriage in selected countries¹

	Age of Marriage					
	<18	<=15	16 – 20	21 – 25	26 – 30	30+
Years of Education						
Benin	0.6	0.5	0.8	1.4	2.4	2.3
Colombia	3.2	2.9	3.5	4.0	4.1	4.0
India	1.1	0.8	1.8	3.2	3.9	3.5
Turkey	2.7	2.8	3.2	3.5	3.5	3.2
Age of First Birth						
Benin	16.7	15.7	19.1	23.0	26.4	26.8
Colombia	17.3	16.2	19.4	23.3	27.0	30.1
India	17.5	16.7	19.6	23.9	28.2	32.7
Turkey	17.6	16.8	19.7	24.0	28.3	32.6
Husband – Wife Age Gap						
Benin	11.0	11.6	9.9	7.9	7.1	4.9
Colombia	5.7	6.0	5.0	3.7	1.9	1.6
India	6.8	7.3	6.0	4.7	4.2	4.4
Turkey	6.2	7.3	4.7	2.9	2.1	2.8

¹ This sample refers to ever-married women over the age of 25 sampled by the DHS for whom we have data on the age of marriage.

Table 1 shows that there is a strong correlation between a woman's age at marriage and the amount of education that she receives. Uniformly across the countries, early marriage is associated with lower educational attainment. For example, Indian women who marry before the age of 15 receive less than one year of education, on average, and women marrying between the ages of 16 and 20 receive just under two years. By contrast, Indian women whose marriage is delayed until after age 21 receive three to four years of education. Since marriage and schooling appear incompatible, early marriage is likely to be a significant barrier to women's education. By contrast, increasing the demand for female education may contribute to delayed age at marriage for women.

The table also shows a relationship between early marriage and the onset of childbearing. Across the four countries, on average, women who marry before age 15

have their first birth between the ages of 15 and 17. This is, on average, three years less than among women for whom marriage is delayed until age 15 to 20, and seven years less than those who marry between the ages of 21 and 25. The relationship is fairly continuous, with women who marry at later ages having much later ages at first birth, especially because social norms in most societies emphasise the importance of child-birth taking place only within marriage. Because of a lower awareness of health knowledge, and because physical growth and development are not completed until later teenage years, women who bear children at early ages face a much higher risk of maternal health problems, disability and death, in addition to risking problems for their children.

The table also reveals that women who marry younger are also more likely to marry much older men, as indicated by the husband–wife age gap. The pattern is most

striking in Benin, where women who marry under the age of 15 marry men who are on average 11.1 years older than them. In contrast, women who delay marriage until after they are 30 have an average husband–wife age gap of 4.9 years. The other countries show a similar pattern of a declining husband–wife age gap, as women’s age at marriage increases.

These age differences between husband and wife can affect the power, status and autonomy of women within the household. Older men, or their mothers and families, may be able to manipulate or exert control over younger women to a greater extent than in marriages with no such age difference, because women are less mentally, emotionally and physically mature, and/or capable of asserting themselves. Behaviour, attitudes and power relations that are formed early in a marriage may persist over time, especially as regards a woman’s status and position in the household. For these reasons, autonomy and status of women may be affected by women’s age at marriage and the husband–wife age gap.

There are obviously many dimensions to power, status and agency. Even defining such complex concepts, much less measuring them, is difficult. However, for the purposes of analysis, the selected DHS surveys provide several useful indicators, although the exact questions varied across the surveys. In particular, in India, regarding autonomy and independence, women were asked whether they needed permission to go to market or to visit relatives or friends, and whether they were allowed to have money set aside. They were also asked whether physical violence by the husband towards them can be justified in various instances, including: if the wife is unfaithful, if her family does not give money, if she shows disrespect, if she goes out without telling him, if she neglects the house or children, or if she does not cook properly. These questions indicate the woman’s view regarding her status, and especially her status in relation to men.

As in the India survey, women in Benin were asked whether physical violence towards them is justified in various situations, such as if a woman neglects the children, if she goes out without telling her husband, if she argues with him, if she refuses to have sex with him, or if she burns the food.

In Colombia, questions regarding women’s status included whether the respondent’s husband accuses her of unfaithfulness, does not permit her to meet her girlfriends, tries to limit her contact with family, insists on knowing where she is, or doesn’t trust her with money. Additionally, women were asked whether their husband threatened leaving, taking the children away, or withdrawing economic support, or whether she had ever been physically or sexually abused.

In the Turkey survey, women were also asked whether men are justified in beating their wife in a variety of circumstances, in addition to a variety of questions relating to whether they believe that women are or should be subordinate to men. In particular, they were asked whether they believe that important household decisions should be made by men, whether men are wiser, whether women should not argue with men, and whether it is better for a male child than a female child to have education.

Table 2 provides data on the relationship between these measures of status, and women’s age at marriage. In India, 70 per cent of women who marry under the age of 15 need permission from their husbands to go to market, or to visit family or friends. The rate is much lower, though still very high, among those marrying at later ages, with about half of women who marry at age 26 or above needing permission. Similarly, 43 per cent of women marrying before the age of 15, and 35 per cent of those marrying before 20, are not allowed to keep money, compared to only 21–25 per cent of those who delay marriage until they are 21 or older. For both measures, there is a clear gradient between age at marriage and

Table 2: Status of women: the effects of age at marriage¹

		<18	<=15	16 – 20	21 – 25	26 – 30	30+
Benin²	Beating ever justified	0.66	0.67	0.65	0.57	0.42	0.36
Colombia³	Husband doesn't trust	0.34	0.35	0.31	0.26	0.23	0.21
	Threatened	0.23	0.25	0.22	0.18	0.13	0.14
	Emotionally abused	0.41	0.43	0.39	0.34	0.29	0.28
	Physically abused	0.18	0.20	0.16	0.12	0.08	0.07
	Sexual violence	0.14	0.17	0.13	0.11	0.07	0.05
India⁴	Beaten in past year	0.12	0.12	0.10	0.05	0.04	0.04
	Need permission	0.69	0.70	0.65	0.57	0.53	0.53
	Beating ever justified	0.59	0.62	0.52	0.44	0.40	0.48
	Not allowed money	0.39	0.43	0.35	0.25	0.21	0.24
Turkey⁵	Beating ever justified	0.60	0.64	0.53	0.39	0.36	0.43
	Women subordinate	0.44	0.47	0.37	0.27	0.26	0.24
<p>1 This sample refers to ever-married women over the age of 25 sampled by the DHS for whom we have data on the age of marriage.</p> <p>2 For Benin, 'Beating ever justified' refers to the percentage of women who think it is justified for a husband to beat his wife in any of the following circumstances: if she neglects the children, if she goes out without telling her husband, if she argues with him, if she refuses to have sex with him, and if she burns the food.</p> <p>3 For Colombia, trust is measured as an average of whether a respondent's husband accuses her of unfaithfulness, does not permit her to meet her girl friends, tries to limit her contact with family, insists on knowing where she is, and doesn't trust her with money. 'Threatened' is the average of whether a respondent's husband threatened leaving her for another women, taking the children from her, or withdrawing economic support. 'Physically abused' is the average of whether a woman's husband had ever pushed, shaken, or thrown something at her, ever slapped or twisted her arm, or ever hit with fist or something harmful. 'Sexual violence' refers to whether her husband ever physically enforced sexual relations when it wasn't wanted.</p> <p>4 For India, 'permission' is an average of whether the woman needs permission to go to market or to visit relatives or friends. 'Beating ever justified' is what percentage of women think it is justified for a husband to beat his wife in any of the following circumstances: if she is unfaithful, if her family does not give money, if she shows disrespect, if she goes out without telling him, if she neglects house or children, and if she does not cook properly. Each respondent was also asked whether she was allowed to have money set aside.</p> <p>5 For Turkey, 'Beating ever justified' is what percentage of women think it is justified for a husband to beat his wife in any of the following circumstances: if she burns the food, neglects child care, argues with her husband, talks to other men, spends needlessly, refuses intercourse. 'Women are subordinate' is the average of whether she thinks that the important decisions should be made by men, whether men are wiser, women should not argue with men, and it is better for a male child than a female child to have education.</p>							

power or autonomy, with women marrying earlier faring much worse than those for whom marriage is delayed.

As stated earlier, in India, Benin and Turkey, questions were asked regarding whether a husband is ever justified in beating his wife under various circumstances. To interpret the results, we created an indicator that equals one if the female respondent reports that a husband is justified in beating his wife under any of the particular conditions asked, and zero otherwise. Despite the fact that the specific circumstances mentioned varied across the surveys, the levels and patterns across the three are similar. Of the women who were married before age 15, 67 per cent of women in Benin, 62 per cent of women in India, and 64 per cent of women in Turkey believed that physical abuse from a husband may be justified under certain circumstances. By contrast, among women who marry between the ages of 26 and 30, only 42 per cent in Benin, 40 per cent in India, and 36 per cent in Turkey believed such violence may ever be justified. Some of these views both reflect, and can be explained by, women's own view of the position and status of women. For Turkey, the measure of whether respondents believed that women should be subordinate to men is an average of answers to the questions mentioned above (if important household decisions should be made by men, if men are wiser, if women should not argue with men and whether it is more important to give education to boys than girls). Overall, 47 per cent of women who marry before age 15 agreed with these statements, compared to only 24 per cent among those marrying after 30. This is evidence that younger women may be more impressionable and easier to control than those who marry at older ages.

In addition to power or autonomy, the data for India show that age at marriage is also correlated with physical security. About 12 per cent of women who married at age 15 or younger say their husband has beaten them in the past year. This is more than twice

the rate among women who married between ages 21 and 25, and three times the rate among women who married after the age of 25. The survey for Colombia also asks explicitly about the incidence of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. Of women who married early, 25 per cent say that they have in some way been threatened emotionally by their husbands, in comparison to 13–14 per cent who marry after the age of 25. There is also a large difference between women married early and later in the incidence of physical and sexual abuse. While 20 per cent of all women who married under the age of 15 said that they had been physically abused, delaying marriage until after the age of 25 reduced the incidence of reported violence by almost two-thirds.

For almost all these measures, the largest differences, or the greatest improvements for women, correlated to delaying marriage from 15 or younger to after the age of 15, and especially waiting until after age 20. In fact, for many measures, there was little difference between women married at ages 21 to 25 and women who had delayed marriage until after 25. Of course, for many measures in these countries, women's status overall is still very poor, even for women who marry later, which is a concern in its own right. However, the results do suggest that large improvements in women's well-being may be achievable with even small increases in female age at marriage, or reduction in the incidence of marriage at the very youngest ages.

Discussion and conclusion

Our analysis has shown that there remains a very high incidence of early marriage in the developing world. Aside from a few notable exceptions, there is little evidence of declining trends, and in many cases, the trends suggest increases in early marriage. Further, we have shown that women who marry young have numerous, sharp disadvantages in terms of education, status and autonomy, even including physical

safety. In order to address the problem of early marriage, there needs to be an integrated approach, involving stakeholders at the household, community and national levels.

Legal and institutional reform

At the national level, where laws prohibiting such marriages do not exist, an important first step is to enact them. Such laws signal the importance of the issue, and are a salient symbol of the recognition of the rights of women in marriage. However, as evidenced by the large number of early marriages in countries where such laws do exist, bans and minimum age requirements are not sufficient. In many cases, enforcement of these laws is weak, both because of a resistance from local officials due to prevailing social norms and practices, and because of practical difficulties in enforcing them, such as the widespread lack of birth registration, which makes age verification impossible. The latter underscores the importance of developing the capacity of local and national governments to collect and store vital statistics records for births and marriages. Where the former is the problem, local law enforcement officials and community leaders need to be sensitised to the need to enforce these laws, and to encourage the elimination of early marriages.

Even where local practices and customs favour early marriages, they are in general superseded by national and international laws and conventions. For example, the Preamble of the UN Convention on the Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration explicitly states that nations '....should take all appropriate measures with a view to abolishing such customs, ancient laws and practices...' that contradict the dictates of the Convention. Necessary steps in this regard include information and awareness programmes and activities aimed at civic authorities and community leaders, as well as at the broader community.

Challenging the economic and social rationales for early marriage

Beyond bans and minimum age laws, it is also essential to focus on the underlying causes of early marriage. In doing so, it is important to recognise and understand the incentives, forces and constraints acting on both the 'supply' side – that is, why households marry their daughters at a young age, and the 'demand' side – that is, why men prefer younger brides. Both sides may be acting in ways that are 'rational', given the prevailing economic, social, health and political environment.

On the supply side, households may marry their daughters at young ages because of the high costs of raising children (food, clothing, education and health care). This is particularly likely in contexts where fertility is high, and parents have many children. In such cases, girls may be viewed as an economic burden, so parents may prefer to marry them out of the household at an earlier age. In addition, national economic conditions or crises, or individual economic shocks, such as a bad harvest or the illness or death of a primary income earner, may also cause households to marry their daughters early. The economic pressures for early marriage may be strengthened where grandparents or other relatives are left to care for children orphaned by AIDS. In this regard, it may even be seen as in the best interests of the child to marry her into a more financially stable household. Similarly, in places where crime and/or violence are high, including regions in conflict or without a strong rule of law, parents may view early marriage as a way to protect young girls from violence or sexual advances from men. A vulnerable household, such as a female-headed household, or one in which an elderly grandparent is left to care for a child, may feel that the child would be better off and safer if married into another household.

On the demand side, from the perspective of the groom, younger brides may be preferred for a number of reasons. First, women who are younger have longer

reproductive lives during which to have children. In regions where desired fertility is high, and/or infant mortality rates or rates of miscarriage are high, there will be a stronger demand for younger brides. Men and their families may also view younger brides as more desirable because they are more easily controlled, and less assertive, because of their lack of physical, mental and emotional maturity. Younger brides may therefore be viewed as more 'trainable'. They may also be better able physically to perform household activities. Finally, younger brides are less likely to have had previous sexual contact, which, due to social norms and the prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, may be considered important or essential to the groom and/or his family.

The overall incidence of early marriage is, therefore, influenced by a variety of factors on both the supply and demand side. The demand for young brides in and of itself will not generate significant numbers of early marriages, unless there is a supply of young brides available. Similarly, even if all parents wanted to marry their daughters young, if there were no demand for young brides, no early marriages would occur. Consequently, policy cannot focus on just one side of this interaction. As the old dictum states, 'demand begets supply' and 'supply begets demand'. In particular, where there is strong demand for young brides, parents who delay the marriage of their daughters may have to pay a higher dowry or receive less in bride price, or may find less attractive marriages are the only ones possible as the advancing age of their daughter makes her less marriageable. These forces pressure them to marry their daughters young, even if they would prefer otherwise. Alternatively, if most households prefer to marry their daughters young, even those men preferring older brides would face pressure to marry young brides, because they may fear that most of the more 'desirable' brides will be married early, or

that they will have to pay a higher bride price or receive a lower dowry in order to secure a 'desirable' older bride. Thus, policy interventions aimed only at one side of the problem will be less effective, because if either the demand or supply remain strong, the forces of the marriage market will continue to yield a high incidence of early marriage.

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Notes

- 1 The data and further documentation are available from www.measuredhs.com.
- 2 Since many of the women born to cohorts later than this will not have yet married at the time of our survey, we are unable to analyse patterns in their age at marriage and the incidence of early marriage.

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Appendix: Trend of Age at First Marriage, By Year of Birth¹

	Average Age of Marriage				% Married Under 18			
	1950– 1954	1955– 1959	1960– 1964	1965– 1970	1950– 1954	1955– 1959	1960– 1964	1965– 1970
	West Africa							
Benin	18.84	18.84	18.74	18.83	41.51	41.80	43.11	42.62
Burkina Faso	17.56	17.42	17.66	17.67	62.15	63.25	62.72	60.99
Cameroon	17.05	17.75	18.05	17.60	64.09	56.41	54.65	55.98
Ivory Coast	18.93	18.78	19.04	18.58	46.15	48.23	44.79	47.47
Ghana	19.63	18.74	19.29	18.82	40.90	37.04	42.52	36.97
Guinea	16.79	16.62	17.24	16.65	69.72	67.72	60.92	70.12
Mali	16.18	16.37	16.45	16.25	79.64	74.44	74.03	74.71
Niger	15.19	14.94	15.23	15.48	86.28	88.87	86.76	83.33
Nigeria	18.29	17.25	17.89	17.55	50.90	57.32	54.12	54.36
Togo	18.79	18.62	19.11	18.37	44.85	41.52	40.12	45.55
	Sub-Saharan Africa							
Central African Republic	17.06	17.91	17.14	16.81	66.01	56.16	59.93	61.64
Chad	16.06	15.99	16.19	16.09	74.21	74.69	72.43	70.64
Ethiopia	15.97	16.37	16.51	16.95	74.64	70.46	67.02	58.24
Kenya	18.06	18.07	18.76	18.93	50.84	48.54	39.60	38.69
Malawi	18.30	17.46	17.69	17.54	50.33	58.68	55.39	55.18
Mozambique	18.37	17.55	17.62	17.28	52.31	55.81	55.51	57.43
Tanzania	17.17	17.18	17.73	18.25	64.54	63.85	55.10	48.98
Uganda	17.51	17.41	17.54	17.68	58.10	59.28	56.47	52.51
Zambia	17.42	17.50	17.64	17.95	59.65	59.91	56.99	51.76
Zimbabwe	19.57	18.96	19.05	19.74	37.47	38.81	39.72	29.04
	South Asia							
Bangladesh	13.23	13.48	14.27	14.49	92.61	91.87	85.93	85.65
India	17.53	17.52	17.75	17.71	56.64	56.35	54.38	53.89
Nepal	16.43	16.68	16.68	16.79	71.77	68.73	68.68	69.14
	South East Asia							
Indonesia	18.75	18.83	19.02	19.34	45.35	42.99	40.29	36.18
Philippines	21.32	21.01	21.46	20.89	25.12	20.00	21.18	22.20
	Latin America							
Bolivia	21.31	20.72	20.58	19.89	21.98	25.21	28.07	31.03
Brazil	21.36	20.64	20.30	19.59	23.29	24.66	28.21	31.66
Colombia	20.79	20.87	20.99	20.82	29.53	27.13	27.64	23.46
Dominican Rep	18.59	19.03	19.55	18.89	52.14	44.80	39.57	37.63
Peru	20.94	20.71	20.39	20.15	29.19	29.86	31.31	30.82
Guatemala	19.49	19.02	18.66	18.32	39.60	46.17	47.07	45.51
Nicaragua	19.18	18.46	18.28	18.23	48.08	50.34	50.73	51.84
	The Near East/North Africa							
Egypt	18.44	19.23	19.11	19.49	49.39	43.57	41.85	37.03
Turkey	18.42	18.76	19.40	19.60	46.60	41.37	36.85	29.95

¹This sample refers to ever-married women over the age of 25 in the DHS for which we have data on the age of marriage.