Patriarchal Hegemony and Poverty in Child Marriage Practices in a Rural-Urban Area of Bandung City

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Abstract

In Indonesia, child marriage is a time-honored custom, particularly among the poor. This tendency mixes with solid traditions and religions that are difficult to eradicate. The fight to eliminate child marriage must be continued even though it intersects with numerous problems, particularly for the children (women) involved. Inequality in the distribution of work, exploitation, and discrimination against offenders of child marriage are primarily caused by ideas that place children and women in subordinate positions as human beings. This study then discusses how patriarchy and its hegemony arose as an extension of power, giving rise to a dominant viewpoint that supports the maintenance of child marriage. An excerpt from ethnographic notes gathered by the author from the results of in-depth interviews with various subjects who have married before 18 and have a history of poverty in Bandung also becomes quite significant in this article. This research concludes, "When child marriage occurs within the context of poverty, then, rather than being a solution, this will lead perpetrators to the possibility of poverty reproduction, both structurally and culturally".

Keywords: Child Marriage; Patriarchal Hegemon; Reproduction of Poverty

Introduction

UNICEF's definition of child marriage is consistent with that of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which defines child marriage as a union that occurs before the age of 18. However, this formal legal definition leaves the question of what age range a person can be considered a child and what type of connection can be termed marriage. State, religion, or both entities may regard marriage as a social compact. According to another definition, marriage is a formal relationship between a man and woman legally recognized as husband and wife (Djamilah & Kartikawati, 2014). This problem, child marriage, affects more than 60 million women globally. In Indonesia, the proportion of 20 to 24-year-old women married before 18 dropped until this survey was undertaken. However, marriage dispensation applications surged thrice between 2019 and 2020, from 23.126 to 64.211 cases (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2020).

Today, the division of work leads to exploitative inequality and segregation, fostering the emergence of oppression or discrimination against women as human beings. This oppression primarily results from a submissive mindset that views women as second-class citizens (Putri, 2018). One of the elements that determine the number of child marriages. The concept of subjugation, as imposed by certain groups of males on women, pushes women much further away

from social equality. Whereas in the context of social life, the connection between women and men cannot be understood through the lens of sex or the body since 'sex' is a term that refers to the biological differences between men and women: disparities in the genitals and procreation. However, "gender" is a cultural phenomenon: it relates to the societal division into "masculine" and "feminine" (Delphy, 1993). This paradigm of subjugation systematically restricts and marginalizes women's access to a wider social life. This circumstance finally compels women to be economically dependent on stronger men or groups. In a financial environment pushed and driven by the undetermined accumulation of profits, continually attempting to collect money endlessly, it is easier for us to envision the growth of the gap between the rich and the poor than the growth of equality (Magdoff & Foster, 2018).

Under these circumstances, patriarchy interacts with economic conditions that become independent oppressive structures. Then, (capitalist) patriarchy refers to a relationship in which one party, as the dominant party, uses the other party (subordinate party) as a tool to achieve its will, and the dominating parties refuse to recognize the independent subjectivity of subordinated parties (Aminah, 2012). In the end, patriarchy demonstrates its greatness and power, and this state will undoubtedly affect the possibility of child marriage. The practice of child marriage is frequently viewed as a solution to their life difficulties without consideration of the possible dangers of married life. The occurrence of child marriage is frequently related to issues of poverty and inequality. It is regarded as a practice that puts the interests of mothers and children at risk (women). Instead of experiencing marital bliss, these children frequently endure exploitative treatment. The writers observe the influence of patriarchy on the practice of child marriage and the structural and cultural reproduction of poverty in the city of Bandung in order to recognize the complexities of child marriage patterns in urban environments.

Method

This research applied a qualitative methodology using an ethnographic approach to fields collecting data, processing, and analysis, incorporating the author's interpretation. Qualitative research is conducted to comprehend the phenomenon of what the research subject feels holistic and in the form of words and language in a unique natural setting and by employing various natural approaches (Moleong & Edisi, 2004). Qualitative approaches are also utilized to uncover and comprehend anything behind occurrences that are still little or unknown (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). This study revealed that each individual's perspective of reality is constantly transforming. Consequently, qualitative research employs an emic approach, which is to understand what occurs from the perspective of the person experiencing it - first-hand experience (Hamzah, 2014), utilizing an ethnographic research design with an empirical and theoretical approach aimed at obtaining an in-depth description and analysis of culture based on intensive field research. The goal of ethnographic research is to create a comprehensive image of the research subject, focusing on documenting the daily experiences of persons through observation and interviews with them and others with whom they interact. The definition of ethnography is "writing about a people group." According to Creswell, ethnographic design is a qualitative research method for describing and analyzing diverse cultural groups that identify patterns of behavior, beliefs, and languages that develop and are utilized by a group of people over time (Creswell, 2016).

The data used is the result of a collection of research publications and reading materials analyzed by Harzing's Publish or Perish (PoP) and Google Scholar apps with the keywords "patriarchy, social class, early marriage, and poverty," as well as the findings of author interviews. The outcomes of this data processing will eventually be discussed in this study. This study examines a simple border in the interaction between patriarchal institutions, child marriage, and poverty. Ultimately, it is anticipated that this study will contribute to the abundance of research in regard to the fight to eliminate child marriage and child protection in general.

Child Marriage, Patriarchy, and Inequality

The government has paid less attention to inequality despite the fact that socioeconomic inequality will affect inequality between populations in Indonesia (Attamimi et al., 2019). Today's disparity and inequality are the results of a widening chasm between the poor and the wealthy, the dominant and dominated groups, and the patriarchy and the group of propertyless women. Under these circumstances, it is easier for us to envision the widening of the gap than the expansion of equality (Magdoff & Foster, 2018). Today, the division of labour gives rise to exploitative inequality and fosters the development of oppression or discrimination against women as human beings (Beauvoir, 2016). This oppression is primarily caused by the 'subjugation' perspective that considers women to be second-class citizens (Putri, 2018), and this is one of the factors influencing the number of child marriages. The concept of subjugation, as defined by certain groups of men on women, pushes women further away from social equality. Whereas in the context of social life, the relationship between women and men cannot be viewed through the lens of sex or the body since 'sex' is a term that refers to the biological differences between men and women: differences in the genitals and procreation. However, "gender" is a cultural phenomenon: it relates to the social classification into "masculine" and "feminine" (Delphy, 1993). This conception of subjugation limits and subordinates women's access to a more expansive social life. This condition ultimately forces women to rely on stronger men or groups for their economic survival. It is easier for us to imagine the widening of the gap between rich and poor rather than the growth of equality in an economy driven by the indefinite accumulation of profits (Magdoff & Foster, 2018).

When patriarchy and economic situations interact under these circumstances, they constitute an independent structure of oppression. Then, this capitalist patriarchy refers to a relationship in which one party, as the dominant party, makes the other party (subordinate party) an instrument for achieving the dominant party's will, and the dominant parties refuse to recognize the independent subjectivity or subordinated parties (Aminah, 2012). In conclusion, patriarchy demonstrates its greatness and hegemony, and this condition will undoubtedly affect the possibility of child marriage. As patriarchy expands in all spheres of life, the idealized depiction of women's lives is increasingly challenged. The difficulty becomes more apparent when the measurements of women's lives tend to "fit in" – in Gramscian terms – hegemony over time (R. I. Rahayu et al., 2019). In his work, the term 'hegemony' has two meanings.

On the one hand, it is contrasted with 'domination' (and thus tied to the opposition of the State/ Civil Society). On the other hand, 'hegemonic' is sometimes used as the opposite of 'corporation' or 'economic enterprise' to designate a phase of history in which a particular group

moves beyond the position of existence of the company and maintains its economic position while seeking leadership in the political and social arena. Gramsci uses the term 'hegemony' as a depiction of the dominant class or group and juxtaposes it with a group he calls a subaltern or non-hegemonic group to describe the power of the state (Gramsci, 2005). This demonstrates, at least in Gramsci's terminology, how the state apparatus or political society can persuade different social strata to accept the status quo via legal institutions, police, soldiers, and prisons; Second, and this is more in line with this research, how and where political societies are, and civil society, with all its institutions, from educational, religious, as well as family institutions to the production of meanings and values, directs, confirms, and forms a 'spontaneous' agreement of the various social strata with the status quo (Kasiyarno, 2014). Gramsci discusses the combination of class dominance and intellectual and moral leadership exercised by the dominant social group against the opposing group. The State and Dominance' explains further that the notions of leadership and dominance are related to leadership toward rival groups and allies (Sulistyo, 2018). Moreover, Patria and Arief explain in their book "Negara dan Hegemoni" (State and Hegemony) that the concept of leadership and dominance is related to leadership toward rival groups and allies (Nezar & Andi, 2009).

Regarding child marriage, in the majority of developing nations, adolescent and child marriage remains a strong social norm, particularly for girls (Field & Ambrus, 2008). The fact that child marriage is one of the results of power contributes to the patriarchal conceptions of society (A. M. Ali et al., 2015; Bemmelen & Grijns, 2018; Grijns et al., 2016, 2018; Marcoes & Sirimorok, 2016b, 2016c, 2016a; Sigiro, 2020). This hegemony fosters a prevalence of marrying girls who come from family environments with low levels of financial ability or poor groups structurally born as a result of economic domination – capitalists – which further forces measures, according to R. I. Rahayu et al. (2019), in social life to continually conform to which, generally speaking, child marriage is widely practiced in developing countries as a means to achieve an ideal measure in social life – that getting married is a necessity.

The practice of child marriage is widely perceived as a solution to resolving problems, despite the potential dangers of married life. The phenomenon of child marriage is frequently linked to issues of poverty and inequality and is regarded as a practice that puts the interests of women and children at risk. According to Dartanto (2015) and Juhaidi & Umar (2020), child marriage risks plunging children deeper into poverty. It is widely acknowledged that child marriage and poverty have reciprocal effects. In addition to structural poverty, there is also cultural poverty. So instead of being happy in marriage, these children frequently receive exploitative treatment, such as becoming a mother at a young age, accepting sexual violence with forced penetration when it comes to having sex, being a household laborer under the pressure of her husband's family, being an illegal labor force due to urgent economic needs, and becoming a widow at a very young age because they are easily divorced.

Then we will be confronted with economic and social inequalities that reproduce, thereby continuously producing groups of poor people who are structurally characterized by inequalities that include, among other things, ownership of resources, opportunities to improve skills, and efforts to improve welfare, as well as other factors that result in unbalanced income generation and an unequal social structure (Attamimi et al., 2019). In another way, social inequality fosters

the development of cultural deprivation. Poverty is viewed from a cultural perspective at three levels of analysis: individual, family, and community. At the level of the individual, poverty is characterized by characteristics commonly referred to as a strong feeling of marginalization, such as parochial attitudes, apathy, fatalism, resignation to fate, wastefulness, dependent, and inferiority. At the family level, poverty is characterized by large family sizes and free unions or consensual marriages. At the community level, poverty is primarily demonstrated by the effective integration of the poor into society's institutions. The poor are frequently treated as an object to be worked on, as opposed to a subject who must take advantage of all opportunities to develop their skills (Palikhah, 2017).

As previously stated, child marriage will place women in a subordinate position and compromise their interests. Field & Ambrus (2008) revealed several negative effects of child marriage, including high school dropout rates, subordination within the family, the risk of domestic violence, a lack of control over reproductive health, and an increased risk of maternal mortality. Other studies have demonstrated the negative effects of child marriage, including marital instability, poor health, lack of education, school dropouts, too many children, gender inequality, and child welfare. In other words, child marriage has both short- and long-term social, economic, and health consequences (Djamilah & Kartikawati, 2014).

Young women who marry at a young age are typically at a disadvantage. Due to their limited education, knowledge, and skills, they typically enter the union unprepared to negotiate the responsibilities of marriage. Amirapu et al. (2019), Chari et al. (2017), and Goli et al. (2015) identified a subset of societies whose members wed their children based on tradition and belief. Even though at that age, they have not yet attained reproductive organ maturity, mental maturity, or the ability to work under pressure, child marriage does not correspond to the stage of growth and development. Child marriage, also known as early marriage, is a practice that has existed for centuries and is widespread worldwide. The literature review revealed two patterns of child marriage, including the marriage of a daughter to an adult male and the pairing of a boy and a girl by their parents. According to a study conducted by Choe et al. (2001), cited in Djamilah & Kartikawati (2014), said the majority of Indonesian women who marry before the age of 18 believe that they do so too soon. Most admit that they wed due to parental pressure or encouragement.

In the context of Indonesia, the state regulates marriage. Marriage is defined as the innerborn bond between a man and a woman as husband and wife in order to create a happy and harmonious family. In Indonesia, child marriage research is predominantly conducted in rural settings. One of the reasons cited is that the phenomenon of child marriage has a close relationship with the long history of agrarian culture, which began in a rural environment. M. Ali (2016b, 2016a) stated that during this time period, many marriages were conducted for political reasons relating to tenure, expansion of land ownership, and labor requirements. However, after the development of the industrial sector entered the rural environment, the prevalence of marrying children at a very young age increased due to the plight of the villagers, who were deprived of natural resources because of the insistence on development and the monopoly of other major parties. When there is a girl in a poor family, she frequently receives two types of treatment: as an object of parental authority and as a subject of domestic pressure, preparing her to be dependable in domestic work as a future wife. They are also viewed as economic assets, and in many cases, they are mated with illustrious (adults) in order to strengthen family status, enhance dignity, and attain economic prosperity. Marriage is considered the best option for parents who wish to acquire status immediately (Agustinah, 2016; Grijns et al., 2016; Octaviani & Nurwati, 2020).

Child Marriage and Poverty Reproduction

Some researchers have identified several trends that indicate this phenomenon is beginning to shift toward urban areas. Among them, as occurred in Makassar, Surabaya, and Bandung, are conveyed through diverse points of view with structural and culturally distinct patterns of poverty. Child marriage is prevalent in densely populated areas dominated by migrants who, on average, work as manual laborers, dockworkers, traditional market traders, domestic assistants, etc. In urban poor neighborhoods, child marriage is prevalent. Such unions are frequently performed as a means of alleviating poverty (Prihartini & Nurlatifah, 2020; A. P. Rahayu & Hamsia, 2018; Sirimorok, 2016). Child marriage can also lead to negative experiences that can negatively impact their lives, such as domestic violence, sexual and emotional abuse, exploitation, reproductive health, early divorce, and other conditions that can plunge them into a cycle of poverty that never ends (Chari et al., 2017; Efevbera et al., 2017; Ilma, 2020; Muntamah et al., 2019; Prihartini & Nurlatifah, 2020; Svanemyr et al., 2012).

The city of Bandung was selected as the research location because it is the largest city and the capital of West Java, which is the center of arrivals from rural areas and small towns surrounding it. Therefore, according to Sugandi (2017), it can be determined that pockets of poverty exist in this city. West Java is also the province with the highest absolute number in the 2015 Inter-Census Population Survey (SuPAS) relating to the Prevalence of Child Marriage by Kementerian Perencanaan Pembangunan Nasional (2020), and in 2014 it contributed a high number to Indonesia's Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR), which was as high as 50 percent (Hidayat & Syamsuddin, 2019). Similar characteristics describe the trend of child marriage in the city of Bandung; patriarchal hegemony in their families is one of the factors that encourage marriage at the age of children. In addition, child marriage occurs because families living in poverty are structurally compelled to view child marriage as a way out of or solution to poverty (A. P. Rahayu & Hamsia, 2018; Sirimorok, 2016).

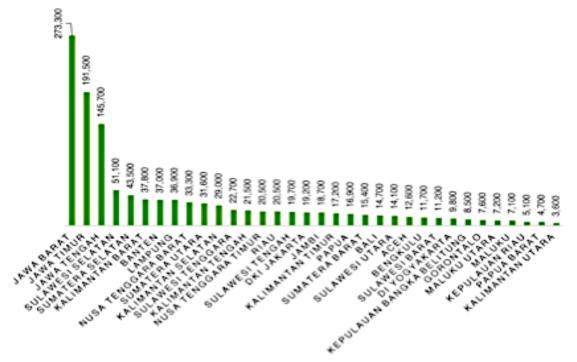


Chart 1. Absolute Number of Child Marriages in Indonesia by Province (Obtained based on the prevalence of child marriage with population projections from SUPAS 2015, Kementerian Perencanaan Pembangunan Nasional, 2020)

The strengthening of patriarchal hegemony, according to the ethnographic research conducted by the author from 2015 to 2020, reveals that poverty and patriarchal hegemony are two factors that give rise to dominance over vulnerable or marginalized groups, in this case children, particularly girls. Hegemony is a dominant class or group that is contrasted with a non-hegemonic or subaltern group. In this instance, hegemony is exercised by groups that exemplify patriarchy, which is the dominance exercised by a group of individuals with a subaltern perspective in order to dominate the subaltern group.

The results of the interview with M revealed that M, who was 19 years old at the time, and L, who was 15 years old at the time, were asked to marry by L's (old) brother. Despite the fact that L's parents and the rest of the family expect L to finish her education first. From this perspective, it is clear that this is a form of patriarchal hegemony. Due to his beliefs, L's brother is dominant in determining what L and M will do (marry at the age of children). Moreover, coercive marriages, or hegemony in Gramsci's terminology, give rise to a new set of issues. The inability of M and L to live a married and domestic life does not appear to factor into Brother L's decision as the dominant party. This condition causes M and L had a number of problems in their married life, including poverty in their household. This demonstrates the message conveyed by the fact that child marriage risks plunging children into abject poverty (Dartanto, 2015).

Moreover, in some families, child marriage is practiced out of a desire to alleviate the burdens borne by the parents of the female child; marriage is viewed as a safety net. This indicates that the incidence of child marriage in the city of Bandung is influenced by structural poverty.

Nonetheless, this condition is not only indicative of structural poverty but also cultural poverty. In a structural context, marriage is expected to liberate the child as an individual from poverty due to the inability of the family, in this case the father as the head of the family or the eldest son, to provide for his family members' basic needs. Moreover, the intervention of the head of the family to marry off his daughters contributes to the structural poverty of marriage.

According to Palikhah's research, there is a tendency for the practice of child marriage to be prompted by cultural poverty. For instance, at the family level, cultural poverty is characterized by a large number of family members and free union or consensual marriages (Palikhah, 2017). M, who is the seventh of eight children, also experiences cultural poverty as a result of his large family size, as do L, who has one older sister, one older brother, and three younger siblings, O, who has six younger siblings, and H, who has four younger siblings and one older brother. Some parents permitted their children to marry because they were able to meet their children's needs. From the preceding examples, it is clear that poverty at the family level, which is culturally characterized by a large number of family members, exemplifies that structural and cultural poverty are interconnected factors in the case of child marriage.

In Palikhah's research, there is a correlation between the practice of child marriage and cultural poverty. For instance, at the family level, cultural poverty is characterized by a large number of family members and free unions or consensual marriages (Palikhah, 2017). M, the seventh of eight children, is also affected by the high number of family members as a factor of cultural poverty, as are L, who has one older sister, one older brother, and three younger siblings; O, who has six younger siblings; and H, who has four younger siblings and one older brother. The ability of the family's head, in this case, the parents, to provide for the needs of their children encouraged some parents to permit their children to marry. From the preceding examples, it is clear that poverty at the family level, which is characterized culturally by a large number of family members, is an interrelated factor in the case of child marriage.

The patterns that characterize cultural poverty reveal it's own shape. At the individual level, it appears that people who live in a culture of poverty practically do not experience childhood or have a very short one, because the children in the family are compelled to work too early to provide for the family's needs. In addition, due to the extremely open and permissive sexual relationships in this group, youngsters attain sexual maturity before their age (Palikhah, 2017). As stated in the interview conducted with V, it was discovered that he was compelled to work at the age of 11, and according to the material in Palikhah, the brevity of childhood induced by the compulsion to labor was a defining attribute of cultural poverty. She had her first sexual encounter at the age of 13, which is too young for her maturity level. Moreover, this condition forced V to live in the structural poverty that befell her. This is one of the reasons why she has chosen to marry at a young age. V wed at age 17 in the belief that marriage would alleviate the poverty that had befallen him. As noted in the opening paragraph, the belief that marriage is a safety net for their lives encourages some women to marry at the young age. This information is consistent with the notion that marriage at young age risks pushing children into a deeper pit of poverty (Dartanto, 2015; Juhaidi & Umar, 2020).

In other information, it was determined that the premarital living conditions for women are only adequate in the domestic environment and that it is unnecessary for women to finish their education. This condition is characterized by a profound sense of marginalization and an inclination toward fatalism or surrender to fate (Palikhah, 2017). The information suggests that poverty is one of the primary reasons driving child marriage. In addition, child marriage was not a solution to the poverty they had previously encountered, rather pushes them farther into structural yet cultural poverty. Whereas cultural poverty results from the existence of values or cultures embraced by the poor, such as sloth, a propensity to give up on fate, a lack of work ethic, etc. It is a domino effect of the shackles of structural poverty that have plagued society for too long, or indirectly demonstrates the relationship between structural poverty and cultural poverty in a way that renders individuals apathetic, resigned, and convinced that whatever happens is predetermined (Adhi et al., 2016).

From this, it can be deduced that there is a process by which poverty that was initially determined by structural factors – material – is reproduced as poverty of a cultural nature. This culture of poverty can be viewed from two perspectives, the first of which has already been mentioned, namely the individual perspective characterized by fatalism, and the second, the family perspective, which reveals the existence of a large number of family members and free union or consensual marriages that encourage child marriage as a means of escaping poverty (Palikhah, 2017).

Conclusion

The strengthening of patriarchy as a "subjugation" perspective relegates women to the status of second-class citizens. This is one of the factors influencing the prevalence of child marriages. The concept of one's own subjugation, as defined by some male groups regarding women, pushes them further and further away from social equality. This conception of subjugation, said Putri (2018), limits and subjugates women's access to a more expansive social life. Eventually, this condition resulted in the formation of a patriarchal hegemony that expanded and asserted its dominance, compelling measures of value to conform to patriarchal values. This patriarchal hegemony influenced trends in child marriage. The coping mechanisms generated by patriarchal hegemony produce poverty, especially in cases of child marriage. The cultural and structural interaction between patriarchal hegemony and poverty makes this interaction an independent form of subaltern group oppression. Thus, we will be confronted with a situation in which patriarchal hegemony produces poverty and views child marriage as a solution to this poverty. Child marriage, which is driven by patriarchal hegemony and poverty, is unwittingly one of the primary factors in reproducing other poverty; many of the perpetrators or victims of child marriage, rather than escaping the abyss of poverty, fall back into a state of poverty that is frequently worse. As noted in this study, some marriages that are viewed as a solution to structural poverty lead perpetrators or victims of child marriage to cultural poverty, which primarily affects girls (Sirimorok, 2016).

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