Statistical and ethnographic data on child marriage in the Roma population in Serbia

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Global scope of child marriage

• Child marriage is any formal marriage or informal union where one or both of the parties are under 18 years of age.

• Each year, an estimated 15 million girls are married before the age of 18. That is 28 girls every minute. 1 every 2 seconds.

• Over 700 million women alive today were child brides.
Child marriage in Serbia

Child marriage in Serbia 2014

Source: Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (UNICEF)

Women married before age 18

Source: Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (UNICEF)
Purpose

Illustrate differences between data:

1. A large-scale statistical population-based household survey (MICS)


2. Secondary analysis of statistical survey data


3. Empirical qualitative research based on in-depth interviews with respondents.

UNICEF (2017), Ethnographic research on child marriage among the Roma population in Serbia (to be published)
1. What is MICS?

- Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS)
- International household survey programme developed by UNICEF in the 1990s.
- Well-being of children, women and households
- Health, education, child protection, water and sanitation
2. Bi-variate and multivariate analysis

- Assess risk factors associated with child marriage
- Explore the inter-relationship between child marriage and school enrolment decisions
- Estimates a bivariate probit model of risk factors (for those currently married and currently enrolled in school), based on girls 15 to 17 years of age.
3. Ethnographic research

- Explore the influence of different social, cultural and economic factors on child marriage
- Grounded theory and multi-sited ethnographic approach at 5 localities across Serbia, with 70 respondents.
- Semi-structured in-depth interviews for narrative accounts of lived experience.
1. MICS data

Child marriage in Serbia 2014

- Overall (general population): 20%
- Women living in rural areas: 40%
- Poorest women (poorest 20% of households): 60%
- Women living in Roma settlements: 80%

Source: Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (UNICEF)

Age-appropriate school attendance

- Overall (general population) under-18: 100%
- Boys - Roma settlements: 80%
- Girls Roma settlements: 60%
- Poorest Roma (poorest 20%): 40%

Source: Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (UNICEF)

Women married before age 18

- General population
  - 2005: 7.9%
  - 2010: 7.7%
  - 2014: 6.8%
- Roma settlement communities
  - 2005: 45.9%
  - 2010: 53.7%
  - 2014: 57.0%

Source: Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (UNICEF)

Under-age pregnancy

- General population under-18: 4.0%
- General population under-15: 0.3%
- Roma settlements under-18: 38.0%
- Roma settlements under-15: 5.0%

Source: Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (UNICEF)
2. Secondary statistical analysis

Graph 3. Percent of women living in Roma settlements age 20–24 first married before ages 15 and 18, by educational attainment (2010)

- Married before age 15:
  - No education: 22.0%
  - Primary: 12.6%
  - Secondary: 0.7%

- Married before age 18:
  - No education: 59.6%
  - Primary: 51.0%
  - Secondary: 30.5%
2. Secondary statistical analysis

• Common unobserved factors

• Examples

• Data does not identify the unobserved factors with certainty
2. Secondary statistical analysis

Self-reported limitations include the following:

• Sample size

• Temporal ordering and main actors

• Social norms are not necessarily established

• Community boundaries vs. sampling cluster boundaries
3. Ethnographic research

2 main factors for extending education and delaying marriage:

1. Perspective that higher education offers for their future, which depends on the possibility of employment in the local community.

2. Strength of the patriarchal model wherein which the family’s economic sustenance is the exclusive responsibility of the male members.
3. Ethnographic research

• Places with poor industries provide poor incentive for education, so access to social protection programmes is now contingent on attending school.

“But for us for this evening school, in order for us to go, they wanted to knock off our social welfare, to knock off the child support, they would even do that because of school, if you don’t go to school then you don’t get to see a doctor. Well, when we heard that, then everyone had to go to school. Just so they note down you’re there.”

- Novi Bečej, woman N, 32
3. Ethnographic research

• Completing secondary school mostly doesn’t even cross people’s mind, and this is true for both girls and boys:

“Well I don’t know of anyone who finished it. (...) You know how it is with us. As soon as they are 15, then they don’t allow her to go to school any more, so that nobody steals her. Because that happens too. And for boys it’s a time to get married. And girls as soon as they turn 14, their parents don’t allow them to go to school.. (...) Nobody sees any purpose to it, that they will find a job, that they will work, there’s nothing in it”

- Novi Bečej, woman D, 55
3. Ethnographic research

• On the other hand, in places with a stronger economy where there are employment opportunities, education is considered important, and primary school compulsory:

“To finish school… in today’s time, if you don’t finish at least primary school.. even with a broom you can’t work anywhere. You can’t not complete it, you have to complete at least eight grades.”

- Vranje, woman SM, 30
3. Ethnographic research

• Here, there is awareness that completing secondary school is also desirable, to the extent that even married boys and/or girls complete it, as shown by examples from Pirot:

  “We accepted her (daughter-in-law, 17 years), but I told her that you will finish school. If you’re getting married, you’re staying here and will be going to school until you finish secondary… and that’s what we did. She went from home to school… I used to go to parent’s evenings for her.”

- Pirot, woman J, ??
3. Ethnographic research

Perspective of employment

Logic of decisions

Decision makers

Current school attendance

Child marriage

Child marriage in Serbia – **UNICEF for every child**
Data and SDGs

• Monitoring of SDGs till 2030

• Quality of interventions will determine how swiftly the SDGs can be reached

• Actions will be more comprehensive and targeted if they are based on a cohesive combination of quantitative and qualitative data
Thank You