



**WORLD Policy
Analysis Center**

Child Marriage

Public Use Data Dictionary



CHILD MARRIAGE PUBLIC USE DATA DICTIONARY

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ABOUT THE DATA

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

The mission of the WORLD Policy Analysis Center (WORLD) is to strengthen equal rights and opportunities globally by providing civil society, policymakers, citizens, and other researchers with tools to advance feasible and effective policy approaches for improving the well-being of individuals, families, communities, and societies. WORLD captures quantitatively comparative data for 193 United Nations (UN) countries on adult labor and working conditions, discrimination at work, child marriage, aging, education, constitutional rights, health, disability, family, migration, child labor, environment, and income policies. WORLD works with partners to promote evidence-based decision-making across these areas.

In creating this dataset, our goal was to ensure the accuracy and timeliness of the data we present. We look forward to receiving feedback from data users if they believe that any individual countries have been placed in the wrong category. If you are aware of an error in our data, please contact us at world@ph.ucla.edu to report the error. Please provide a link to the relevant law from which the information can be verified.

BUILDING THE DATA CENTER

We examine constitutional and legal provisions as they set a foundation for citizens' rights and are a first step toward improving outcomes. Across countries, having laws on paper does make a difference in practice. Laws and constitutional rights lead to change by shaping public attitudes, encouraging government follow-through with inspections and implementation, and enabling court action for enforcement. Even when local enforcement is inadequate, laws may still have an impact by shaping the terms of political debate and providing levers for civil society advocates. Laws are a mechanism by which power can be democratically redistributed, changes in institutions can be created to ensure greater fairness, and a social floor guaranteeing minimum humane conditions can be established.

When determining which laws, rights, and policies to include in the data center, we prioritize policies that meet one or more of the following criteria: 1) there is widespread global consensus on their value; 2) research evidence supports their importance to human development, health or well-being in a variety of geographic, social, and economic circumstances; or 3) input from civil society, policymakers, and other stakeholders indicates there are urgent questions about policy design that comparative data could help address.

DATA SOURCES

In selecting data sources to analyze, our first priority is to identify sources containing full-text original legislation. To ensure the greatest level of accuracy and comparability across countries, we always aim to read the original laws (primary sources) rather than secondary summaries or policy descriptions. Primary sources allow for more accurate coding across countries,

particularly in complex legal areas. Working with primary sources also allows us to provide excerpts or links to actual legislation and constitutions for those interested in passing new laws or creating reform in their countries. We review documents in their original language or in a translation into one of the UN's official languages.

Secondary sources are used when information is unclear or insufficient for particular countries. In choosing these secondary sources, we prioritize those that are comparable across multiple countries, such as global or regional sources. When using information sources that cover a limited number of countries, we aim to ensure that the information they contain can be made consistent with other sources.

CODING FRAMEWORKS

In this work, coding refers to the process of translating legislative, policy, or constitutional text into a set of features which can be quantitatively analyzed to provide readily understandable summaries of policy approaches across countries and transformed into data visualizations, such as maps or charts. For example, a researcher reviews many pieces of labor and social security legislation and uses them to answer questions such as: Does a country guarantee paid parental leave? Is it available to all parents, only mothers, or only fathers? How long is paid leave? What is the wage replacement rate? How long do workers need to have been employed to access paid leave?

To answer these questions consistently across countries, we first identify the essential policy features that we want to capture, including intrinsic characteristics, such as coverage; important elements identified in policy research; and minimum standards recognized in global agreements, where they exist. Researchers then read legislative text from 20 to 30 countries to develop an understanding of the approaches countries take in each of these areas. A coding framework consisting of questions and close-ended responses is developed to capture the essential policy features systematically across countries based on the range of approaches identified. Research team members then test whether this coding framework accurately captures approaches on an additional ten to twenty nations.

Once we have a viable framework, we seek feedback from civil society and researchers working in these areas to ensure the questions we are asking will provide the critical answers needed to inform policy debates. Their feedback can lead to more scoping and test coding to determine which questions are feasible to answer with available legislation, recognizing that some important areas aren't always covered by national laws and policies. For example, access to sanitation facilities and safe transportation matters deeply to girls' ability to complete their education but is rarely addressed in a meaningful way in national-level education laws and policies. In other cases, new areas of research might involve going beyond the initial legislation we planned to code, expanding the scale of the project.

Capturing the richness and variety of approaches taken by different countries is our priority throughout the coding process.

At times, research teams would have already analyzed 60 to 80 countries before coming across a single country whose approach to a particular problem was different enough in important ways that it could not be adequately captured within the coding scheme. In these cases, the coding scheme was revised to add the elements necessary to capture new features of legislation and policymaking that had presented themselves. All previously coded nations were reviewed to determine whether the revised coding system would alter how they were analyzed. In other words, the new coding system, better adapted to the full variety of approaches nations around the world take, was applied to all countries in the end.

The data sources available contained systematic information on legislation and policies but not on implementation. To ensure consistent approaches across countries, reports that contained comprehensive information on policies but only limited incidental information on implementation were coded only for policies. Obtaining systematic sources of information on implementation should be a pressing priority for global organizations.

CODING PROCESS

Core to ensuring transparency and consistency is developing a codebook that details the rules and examples for coding each question. Researchers rely on this codebook to make decisions on coding policy features. The codebook is designed to be as straightforward as possible, but some questions require judgment calls. To minimize human error, we use a double coding system where two researchers independently code legal text for each country and then meet to compare their results. When two researchers cannot reach consensus based on the existing codebook, they bring these questions to the full coding team and senior analysts. This team meets regularly to discuss any questions or concerns that arise through the coding process. We record detailed minutes of these meetings and update the codebook to reflect any determinations that impact the coding rules.

ACCURACY, ANALYSIS, AND UPDATING

Upon completion of coding, we conduct systematic quality checks. We also carry out targeted checks of countries that appear as outliers globally or for their region or income level.

For each of our databases, we use the most up-to-date sources available. While this approach is designed to achieve accuracy, it is important to note that when publicly available sources have not been fully updated, the most recent amendments may not be captured in our databases. Further, our process of coding legislation inevitably involves important matters of interpretation. For all databases, we welcome receiving feedback and copies of laws from anyone who believes the databases may not be fully up-to-date.

NATIONAL AND SUBNATIONAL LEVELS

Our goal is to understand the scope of policy provisions and whether they extend protections to all, including, for example, workers in the informal economy, racial and ethnic minorities, urban and rural residents, and those in the poorest households. Accordingly, we code for policies in place at a national level with wide coverage. When policies are legislated subnationally, that is, when states or cities provide protections without a national guarantee, we code for the minimum guaranteed level of protection covering all states so as to not overstate safeguards available only in limited localities. In the future, we hope that a team will be able to analyze information about state/provincial policies and laws in all federal systems for each area.

THE CHILD MARRIAGE DATABASE

The Child Marriage database was created through a systematic review of legislation available as of May 31, 2023. The legislation was located primarily through official country websites, the Lexadin World Law Guide, the Foreign Law Guide, the International Labour Organization (ILO)'s NATLEX database, the Pacific Islands Legal Information Institute, the Asian Legal Information Institute, and JaFBase. In some cases, hard copies and electronic copies of legislation were obtained from libraries such as the Swiss Institute for Comparative Law, the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) Law Library, the Harvard Law School Library, and the Northwestern University Library. The database captures national-level legislation. In countries where minimum age of marriage laws are set at the state or provincial level we coded based on the lowest minimum age provisions. Given that the scope of the project includes 197 countries Beijing Platform Signatories, and that the role and strength of case law varies substantially across countries, we were unable to include an analysis of case law relevant to legal provisions for the minimum age of marriage. Including case law in future analyses will be helpful to better understand the minimum age of marriage permitted by law.

When legislation was not available from these sources, analysts reviewed the most recent reports submitted by countries to the monitoring committees of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), as well as the reports detailing the committees' concluding observations.

DATA

While exhaustive methods were used to collect data, comparable information was not always available for all 193 UN member states for every indicator. In these cases, the relevant variable will be blank in the datasets.

COUNTRY IDENTIFIER VARIABLES

Variable Name	Variable Values	Variable Description
country		Name of country
iso_2		2-digit ISO country code
iso_3		3-digit ISO country code
region		Country geographical region (World Bank classification) ¹
World Bank Country Income Group (wb_econ)	1: Low-income 2: Middle-income 4: High-income	Country income group classification (World Bank: 2022)

¹ While Malta is classified as part of the Middle East and North Africa by the World Bank (WB), it is also a member of the European Union (EU) and therefore more likely to have legislation reflecting the EU's principles and directives. Thus, we classified Malta as a part of Europe and Central Asia. All other countries retained their WB classifications.

THE CHILD MARRIAGE DATABASE

Variable Name	Variable Values	Variable Notes
<p>What is the minimum age of marriage for girls?</p> <p>(minage_fem_leg)</p>	<p>1: 13 years old or younger 2: 14 to 15 years old 3: 16 or 17 years old 5: 18 years old or older</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 16 countries, the approval of a guardian is required for females to be married at any age. The minimum age of marriage with guardian approval is reflected in the data for this variable.
<p>What is the minimum age of marriage for girls with parental consent?</p> <p>(minage_fem_pc)</p>	<p>1: 13 years old or younger 2: 14 to 15 years old 3: 16 or 17 years old 5: 18 years old or older</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Parental consent</i> creates legal loopholes to minimum age of marriage laws because most early marriages happen with parental consent and involvement. We do not consider countries with legislation that requires marriage with parental consent to be in the best interest of the child and/or to be to a spouse that is above the age of majority to be more protective than countries that require parental consent alone.
<p>What is the minimum age of marriage for girls including under customary or religious law?</p> <p>(minage_fem_crlaw)</p>	<p>9: Unknown minimum age set by religious or customary law 1: 13 years old or younger 2: 14 to 15 years old 3: 16 or 17 years old 5: 18 years old or older</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In some countries civil law exists alongside parallel customary and religious legal systems. These parallel laws often do not establish an adequate minimum age for marriage, or any at all, weakening civil law prohibitions and exposing girls in specific religious and ethnic communities to early marriage. <i>Unknown minimum age set by religious or customary law</i> means that legislation recognizes marriages under religious and/or customary law, but there is no written legislation regarding the minimum age of marriage under these systems, or the minimum age is only explicit for some but not all systems.

Variable Name	Variable Values	Variable Notes
<p>When loophole exceptions are taken into account, what is the minimum age of marriage for girls?</p> <p>(minage_fem_loop)</p>	<p>9: Unknown minimum age set by religious or customary law 1: 13 years old or younger 2: 14 to 15 years old 3: 16 or 17 years old 5: 18 years old or older</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We consider two forms of loophole exceptions: parental consent (because most early marriages happen with parental consent and involvement), and religious or customary law. • We do not consider countries with legislation that requires marriage with parental consent to be in the best interest of the child and/or to be to a spouse that is above the age of majority to be more protective than countries that require parental consent alone. • In some countries civil law exists alongside parallel customary and religious legal systems. These parallel laws often do not establish an adequate minimum age for marriage, or any at all, weakening civil law prohibitions and exposing girls in particular religious and ethnic communities to early marriage. • <i>Unknown minimum age set by religious or customary law</i> means that legislation recognizes marriages under religious and/or customary law, but there is no written legislation regarding the minimum age of marriage under these systems, or the minimum age is only explicit for some but not all systems.
<p>When all exceptions are taken into account, what is the minimum age of marriage for girls?</p> <p>(minage_fem_any)</p>	<p>9: Unknown minimum age set by religious or customary law 1: 13 years old or younger 2: 14 to 15 years old 3: 16 or 17 years old 5: 18 years old or older</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This variable includes exceptions to the minimum age that permit earlier marriage with parental consent, under religious or customary law, with court or other government approval, and/or when a girl is pregnant or has given birth. • <i>Unknown minimum age set by religious or customary law</i> means that legislation recognizes marriages under religious and/or customary law, but there is no written legislation regarding the minimum age of marriage under these systems, or the minimum age is only explicit for some but not all systems.

Variable Name	Variable Values	Variable Notes
<p>Under what circumstances can 13-year-old girls be married?</p> <p>(protect_girl_13)</p>	<p>1: No restrictions 2: Can marry with parental consent and/or under religious or customary law 3: Only permitted with court approval and/or pregnancy 5: Marriage legally prohibited</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>No restrictions</i> means that there are no legal restrictions on girls marrying at age 13. • <i>Can marry with parental consent and/or under religious or customary law</i> means that girls may be married at age 13 with parental permission and/or under religious or customary law. We do not consider that these requirements are protective of at-risk children. • <i>Only permitted with court approval and/or pregnancy</i> means girls may be married at age 13 only with approval that is likely to be more protective (such as court or social welfare center approval), or in the case of pregnancy or after the birth of a child. • <i>Marriage legally prohibited</i> means that there are no circumstances in which a 13-year-old girl can legally be married.
<p>Under what circumstances can 15-year-old girls be married?</p> <p>(protect_girl_15)</p>	<p>1: No restrictions 2: Can marry with parental consent and/or under religious or customary law 3: Only permitted with court approval and/or pregnancy 5: Marriage legally prohibited</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>No restrictions</i> means that there are no legal restrictions on girls marrying at age 15. • <i>Can marry with parental consent and/or under religious or customary law</i> means that girls may be married at age 15 with parental permission and/or under religious or customary law. We do not consider that these requirements are protective of at-risk children. • <i>Only permitted with court approval and/or pregnancy</i> means girls may be married at age 15 only with approval that is likely to be more protective (such as court or social welfare center approval), or in the case of pregnancy or after the birth of a child. • <i>Marriage legally prohibited</i> means that there are no circumstances in which a 15-year-old girl can legally be married.
<p>Under what circumstances can 17-year-old girls be married?</p> <p>(protect_girl_17)</p>	<p>1: No restrictions 2: Can marry with parental consent and/or under religious or customary law</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This variable tells us the circumstances in which 17-year-old girls can legally be married. • <i>No restrictions</i> means that there are no legal restrictions on girls marrying at age 17. • <i>Can marry with parental consent and/or under religious or customary law</i> means that girls may be married at age 17 with parental

Variable Name	Variable Values	Variable Notes
	3: Only permitted with court approval and/or pregnancy 5: Marriage legally prohibited	<p>permission and/or under religious or customary law. We do not consider that these requirements are protective of at-risk children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Only permitted with court approval and/or pregnancy</i> means girls may be married at age 17 only with approval that is likely to be more protective (such as court or social welfare center approval), or in the case of pregnancy or after the birth of a child. • <i>Marriage legally prohibited</i> means that there are no circumstances in which a 17-year-old girl can legally be married.
<p>Is there a specific exception that allows girls under 18 to be married under religious or customary law? (except_crlaw)</p>	1: Girls can be married under age 18 in all circumstances 2: There is a religious and/or customary law exception to the minimum age of marriage 5: There is no religious or customary law exception to the minimum age of marriage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In many countries civil law exists alongside parallel customary and religious legal systems. These parallel laws often do not establish an adequate minimum age for marriage, or any at all, weakening civil law prohibitions and exposing girls in particular religious and ethnic communities to early marriage. • This variable examines whether girls that are usually protected from underage marriage under general circumstances can nevertheless be married under the age of 18 through an exception based on customary and/or religious law. • <i>Girls can be married under age 18 in all circumstances</i> includes countries where the predominant legal system, be it civil or religious, establishes a minimum age of marriage below 18
<p>Is there a specific exception that allows girls under 18 to be married with parental consent? (except_pc)</p>	1: Girls can be married under age 18 in all circumstances 2: There is a parental consent exception to the minimum age of marriage 3: There is a parental consent exception with additional requirements to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This variable examines whether girls that are usually protected from underage marriage under general circumstances can nevertheless be married under the age of 18 with parental consent. • We do not consider countries with legislation that requires marriage with parental consent to be in the best interest of the child and/or to be to a spouse that is above the age of majority to be more protective than countries that require parental consent alone. • <i>Additional requirements</i> may include court or other government approval, pregnancy and/or birth of a child, physical and/or mental maturity, and others.

Variable Name	Variable Values	Variable Notes
	the minimum age of marriage 5: There is no parental consent exception to the minimum age of marriage	
Is there a specific exception that allows girls under 18 to be married when they are pregnant or have given birth to a child? (except_preg)	1: Girls can be married under 18 in all circumstances 2: There is an exception to the minimum age of marriage in cases of pregnancy and/or birth of a child 5: There is no exception to the minimum age of marriage in cases of pregnancy or birth of a child.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This variable examines whether girls that are usually protected from underage marriage under general circumstances can nevertheless be married under the age of 18 if they are pregnant and/or have given birth to a child. • This variable includes cases where, in addition to pregnancy and/or birth of a child, legislation requires parental consent and/or court approval to permit early marriage.
What is the minimum age of marriage for boys? (minage_mal_leg)	1: 13 years old or younger 2: 14 to 15 years old 3: 16 or 17 years old 5: 18 years old or older 9: Unknown minimum age set by religious or customary law	
What is the minimum age of marriage for boys with parental consent?	1: 13 years old or younger 2: 14 to 15 years old 3: 16 or 17 years old 5: 18 years old or older	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Parental consent</i> creates legal loopholes to minimum age of marriage laws because most early marriages happen with parental consent and involvement.

Variable Name	Variable Values	Variable Notes
(minage_mal_pc)	9: Unknown minimum age set by religious or customary law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We do not consider countries with legislation that requires marriage with parental consent to be in the best interest of the child and/or to be to a spouse that is above the age of majority to be more protective than countries that require parental consent alone.
<p>What is the minimum age of marriage for boys including under customary or religious law?</p> <p>(minage_mal_crlaw)</p>	<p>9: Unknown minimum age set by religious or customary law</p> <p>1: 13 years old or younger</p> <p>2: 14 to 15 years old</p> <p>3: 16 or 17 years old</p> <p>5: 18 years old or older</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In some countries civil law exists alongside parallel customary and religious legal systems. These parallel laws often do not establish an adequate minimum age for marriage, or any at all, weakening civil law prohibitions and exposing girls in specific religious and ethnic communities to early marriage. <i>Unknown minimum age set by religious or customary law</i> means that legislation recognizes marriages under religious and/or customary law, but there is no written legislation regarding the minimum age of marriage under these systems, or the minimum age is only explicit for some but not all systems.
<p>When loophole exceptions are taken into account, what is the minimum age of marriage for boys?</p> <p>(minage_mal_loop)</p>	<p>9: Unknown minimum age set by religious or customary law</p> <p>1: 13 years old or younger</p> <p>2: 14 to 15 years old</p> <p>3: 16 or 17 years old</p> <p>5: 18 years old or older</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We consider two forms of loophole exceptions: parental consent (because most early marriages happen with parental consent and involvement), and religious or customary law. We do not consider countries with legislation that requires marriage with parental consent to be in the best interest of the child and/or to be to a spouse that is above the age of majority to be more protective than countries that require parental consent alone. In some countries civil law exists alongside parallel customary and religious legal systems. These parallel laws often do not establish an adequate minimum age for marriage, or any at all, weakening civil law prohibitions and exposing girls in particular religious and ethnic communities to early marriage. <i>Unknown minimum age set by religious or customary law</i> means that legislation recognizes marriages under religious and/or customary law, but there is no written legislation regarding the minimum age of

Variable Name	Variable Values	Variable Notes
		marriage under these systems, or the minimum age is only explicit for some but not all systems.
<p>When all exceptions are taken into account, what is the minimum age of marriage for boys?</p> <p>(minage_mal_any)</p>	<p>9: Unknown minimum age set by religious or customary law</p> <p>1: 13 years old or younger</p> <p>2: 14 to 15 years old</p> <p>3: 16 or 17 years old</p> <p>5: 18 years old or older</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This variable includes exceptions to the minimum age that permit earlier marriage with parental consent, under religious or customary law, with court or other government approval, and/or when a girl is pregnant or has given birth. • <i>Unknown minimum age set by religious or customary law</i> means that legislation recognizes marriages under religious and/or customary law, but there is no written legislation regarding the minimum age of marriage under these systems, or the minimum age is only explicit for some but not all systems.
<p>Under what circumstances can 13-year-old boys be married?</p> <p>(protect_boy_13)</p>	<p>1: No restrictions</p> <p>2: Can marry with parental consent and/or under religious or customary law</p> <p>3: Only permitted with court approval and/or pregnancy</p> <p>5: Marriage legally prohibited</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>No restrictions</i> means that there are no legal restrictions on boys marrying at age 13. • <i>Parental consent and/or under religious or customary law</i> means that boys may be married at age 13 with parental permission and/or under religious or customary law. We do not consider that these requirements are protective of at-risk children. • <i>Only permitted with court approval and/or pregnancy</i> means boys may be married at age 13 only with approval that is likely to be more protective (such as court or social welfare center approval), or when there is a pregnancy or birth of a child. • <i>Marriage legally prohibited</i> means that there are no circumstances in which a 13-year-old boy can legally be married.
<p>Under what circumstances can 15-year-old boys be married?</p>	<p>1: No restrictions</p> <p>2: Can marry with parental consent and/or under religious or customary law</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>No restrictions</i> means that there are no legal restrictions on boys marrying at age 15. • <i>Parental consent and/or under religious or customary law</i> means that boys may be married at age 15 with parental permission and/or

Variable Name	Variable Values	Variable Notes
(protect_boy_15)	3: Only permitted with court approval and/or pregnancy 5: Marriage legally prohibited	<p>under religious or customary law. We do not consider that these requirements are protective of at-risk children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Only permitted with court approval and/or pregnancy</i> means boys may be married at age 15 only with approval that is likely to be more protective (such as court or social welfare center approval), or when there is a pregnancy or birth of a child. • <i>Marriage legally prohibited</i> means that there are no circumstances in which a 15-year-old boy can legally be married.
<p>Under what circumstances can 17-year-old boys be married?</p> <p>(protect_boy_17)</p>	<p>1: No restrictions 2: Can marry with parental consent and/or under religious or customary law 3: Only permitted with court approval and/or pregnancy 5: Marriage legally prohibited</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>No restrictions</i> means that there are no legal restrictions on boys marrying at age 17. • <i>Parental consent and/or under religious or customary law</i> means that boys may be married at age 17 with parental permission and/or under religious or customary law. We do not consider that these requirements are protective of at-risk children. • <i>Only permitted with court approval and/or pregnancy</i> means boys may be married at age 17 only with approval that is likely to be more protective (such as court or social welfare center approval), or when there is a pregnancy or birth of a child. • <i>Marriage legally prohibited</i> means that there are no circumstances in which a 17-year-old boy can legally be married.
<p>Is there a gender disparity in the minimum legal age of marriage?</p> <p>(legal_diff_leg)</p>	<p>1: No specific minimum age for girls 2: Girls can be married 3 years younger than boys 3: Girls can be married 1 to 2 years younger than boys 5: No difference in minimum age</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 15 countries, the approval of a guardian is required for females to be married at any age. The minimum age of marriage with guardian approval is reflected in the data for this variable. • There are no cases where the minimum age for boys is younger than the minimum age for girls. • In some countries with a difference in minimum age, the minimum age of marriage for girls is 18 years old or older, but legislation specifies a higher minimum age of marriage for boys.

Variable Name	Variable Values	Variable Notes
<p>Is there a gender disparity in the minimum legal age of marriage with parental consent?</p> <p>(legal_diff_pc)</p>	<p>1: No specific minimum age for girls 2: Girls can be married 3 years younger than boys 3: Girls can be married 1 to 2 years younger than boys 5: No difference in minimum age</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We do not consider countries with legislation that requires marriage with parental consent to be in the best interest of the child and/or to be to a spouse that is above the age of majority to be more protective than countries that require parental consent alone. • There are no cases where the minimum age for boys is younger than the minimum age for girls. • In some countries with a difference in minimum age, the minimum age of marriage with parental consent for girls is 18 years old or older, but legislation specifies a higher minimum age of marriage with parental consent for boys.
<p>When loophole exceptions are taken into account, do laws prohibit early marriage and ensure girls have as much legal protection as boys?</p> <p>(loop_summ)</p>	<p>9: Unknown minimum age set by religious or customary law 1: Girls can be married at age 13 or younger 2: Gender inequality in age, and girls can be married at ages 14 to 17 3: Gender inequality in age, or girls can be married at ages 14 to 17 5: Gender parity, and cannot be married until 18 years old or older</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We consider two forms of loophole exceptions: parental consent (because most early marriages happen with parental consent and involvement), and religious or customary law. • We do not consider countries with legislation that requires marriage with parental consent to be in the best interest of the child and/or to be to a spouse that is above the age of majority to be more protective than countries that require parental consent alone. • In some countries civil law exists alongside parallel customary and religious legal systems. These parallel laws often do not establish an adequate minimum age for marriage, or any at all, weakening civil law prohibitions and exposing girls in particular religious and ethnic communities to early marriage. • <i>Unknown minimum age set by religious or customary law</i> means that legislation recognizes marriages under religious and/or customary law, but there is no written legislation regarding the minimum age of marriage under these systems, or the minimum age is only explicit for some but not all systems.
<p>Is the minimum age of marriage with parental consent at least 18 years old for girls?</p>	<p>0: No 1: Yes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This variable is included for each year between 1995 and 2023 to enable analyses of whether minimum age of marriage laws have strengthened over time. Data is only available for a subset of countries.

Variable Name	Variable Values	Variable Notes
(minage_par_18_f_*)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Parental consent</i> creates legal loopholes to minimum age of marriage laws because most early marriages happen with parental consent and involvement. • We do not consider countries with legislation that requires marriage with parental consent to be in the best interest of the child and/or to be to a spouse that is above the age of majority to be more protective than countries that require parental consent alone.
<p>Is the minimum age of marriage with parental consent at least 18 years old for boys?</p> <p>(minage_par_18_m_*)</p>	<p>0: No 1: Yes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This variable is included for each year between 1995 and 2023 to enable analyses of whether minimum age of marriage laws have strengthened over time. Data is only available for a subset of countries. • <i>Parental consent</i> creates legal loopholes to minimum age of marriage laws because most early marriages happen with parental consent and involvement. • We do not consider countries with legislation that requires marriage with parental consent to be in the best interest of the child and/or to be to a spouse that is above the age of majority to be more protective than countries that require parental consent alone.