"SHE GOES WITH ME IN MY BOAT"

CHILD AND ADOLESCENT

MARRIAGE IN BRAZIL

RESULTS FROM
MIXED-METHODS
RESEARCH

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PROMUNDO

| JULY . 2015 |

PROMUNDO

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THIS TITLE COMES FROM A QUOTE FROM A HUSBAND IN BELÉM, REFERRING TO THE EXPECTATION OF YOUNG WIVES TO FOLLOW THEIR HUSBANDS' PREFERENCES AND ACCOMPANY THE NORMS WITHIN MARRIAGE THAT THEY SET. IT ALSO IS SYMBOLIC OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RIVER CULTURE AND BOATS AS TRANSPORTATION IN BELÉM, A CAPITAL CITY BUILT AROUND THE AMAZON RIVER.

Founded in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1997, Promundo works to promote gender equality and create a world free from violence by engaging men and boys in partnership with women and girls. Promundo's independently registered organizations in Brazil, the United States, Portugal, and Rwanda collaborate to achieve this mission by conducting applied research to build the knowledge base on masculinities and gender equality; developing, evaluating, and scaling-up gender transformative interventions; and carrying out national and international advocacy to achieve gender equality. Globally, Promundo has more than 45 staff and 25 consultants with expertise in applied research, training, and program development around engaging men in gender equality and violence prevention.

From 2013 to 2015, Instituto Promundo (Brazil) and Promundo-US (United States) conducted exploratory research to explore attitudes and practices about child and adolescent marriage in two Brazilian cities, with support from the Ford Foundation. Data were collected in partnership with local research partners, one affiliated with the University of Pará (Universidade Federal do Pará) in Belém; and another from Plan International Brazil, a Plan International affiliate in São Luís, Maranhão.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE ISSUE | Marriage, informal or formal, involving a girl or boy below the age of 18 is internationally referred to as *child marriage*.[1] While both girls and boys experience child marriages, girls are disproportionately affected by them. They often involve adult men married to girls in early puberty; the terms "child" and "adolescent" are therefore both used. The nature of girls' agency in some marriages and co-habitation relationships challenges existing assumptions around child marriage. This agency must fundamentally be understood within the context of power differentials and constraints on the choices available to girls. In Latin America, child marriage tends to differ from the more ritualized and formal nature of the practice in other high-prevalence settings.

THE NUMBERS | In the emerging body of evidence on child and adolescent marriage in Central and Latin America, Brazil stands out due to the sharp contrast between the country's high ranking in terms of absolute numbers and the lack of research on the subject. According to one estimate, Brazil is ranked the fourth country in the world in absolute numbers of women married or co-habitating by age 15, with 877,000 women ages 20 to 24 years reporting having married by age 15 (11 percent). Also among women ages 20 to 24, thirty-six percent (nearly three million women) are estimated to have married by age 18.[2] In other countries in the Latin America and Caribbean region, prevalence rates are higher only in the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua.[3] According to 2010 Census data, just over 88,000 girls and boys (ages 10 to 14 years) are in consensual, civil and/or religious unions in Brazil.[4]

1. *According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which Brazil signed and ratified in 1990. It is currently the most used and agreed upon term by practitioners and researchers internationally, and it is thus used throughout this research. The word "adolescent" is also added in this research given that many marriages in Brazil and in the Latin America region involve girls in their adolescent as well as childhood years. Furthermore, the Brazilian Statue on the Child and Adolescent, which followed shortly after the CRC, distinguishes between child (below 12 years) and adolescent (12 to 18 years) age groups. Concepts, legislation, and data are discussed further in the full report.*

2. *Percentages in the 20 to 24 years age group from Pesquisa Nacional de Demografia e Saúde da Criança e da Mulher (PNAD) 2006: page 161, Table 2: "Idade na primeira união," available from: http://bvsms.saude.gov.br/bvs/pnds/img/relatorio_final_PNDS2006_04julho2008.pdf (These percentages compare to levels from the same source in UNICEF, 2014.* The State of the World's Children 2014 In Numbers: Every Child Counts. *Source of absolute numbers: Statistics and Monitoring Section, Division of Policy and Strategy, UNICEF (2013), ranked in Vogelstein, 2013. Ranking calculations based on population of women 20 to 24 years old (2011); excludes China, Bahrain, Iran, Israel, Kuwait, Libya, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, and the United Arab Emirates, among other countries, due to lack of available data.*

3. *UNICEF, 2014.*

4. *IBGE, Censo Demográfico 2010. Available from: http://censo2010.ibge.gov.br/.*

BRAZILIAN LEGISLATION | In Brazil, the legal age of marriage is 18 for both men and women; they can marry at the age of 16 with both parents' consent. Exemptions, however, allow minors to marry below the age of 16 *in the case of a pregnancy* and *in order to avoid a criminal sentence*, namely in the case of statutory rape.

PARTNERSHIP | From 2013 to 2015, Promundo conducted exploratory research in two states in Brazil with support from the Ford Foundation. Data were collected in partnership with teams from the Federal University of Pará (Universidade Federal do Pará) and Plan International Brazil in Maranhão.

RESEARCH FOCUS | The study – the first of its kind in Brazil – explores attitudes and practices around child and adolescent marriage in the two Brazilian states with the highest prevalence of the practice, according to the 2010 Census, namely Pará in the north and Maranhão in the northeast. The study examines local attitudes and practices, as well as risk and protective factors, around child and adolescent marriage in the capital cities in these two states. It looks at *both* formal and informal unions (i.e., co-habitation), as the latter are the most prevalent forms of child and adolescent marriage in Brazil yet hold similar implications as formal marriages.

METHODOLOGY | In the urban areas of Belém and São Luís, the researchers carried out 60 in-depth semi-structured interviews among the following groups: (1) girls (aged 12 to 18) in unions with older men (aged 24 and older); (2) men (aged 24 to 60) in unions with girls (below the age of 18); (3) family members of married girls; (4) local service providers/child and adolescent rights protection professionals. Six focus group discussions (three per site) were held with girls, men, and protection network representatives. An additional 50 key informant interviews were also conducted at state, federal, regional, and international levels. In order to explore broader community-level attitudes and practices related to child and adolescent marriage in the same urban setting, a quantitative household survey was conducted with 145 men (aged 24 to 60) and 150 girls (aged 12 to 18) – not necessarily married – in São Luís.

ABSENCE FROM RESEARCH & POLICY AGENDAS | In spite of the high absolute numbers and prevalence of child and adolescent marriage in Brazil, the problem has not been part of research and national policymaking agendas related to protecting girls' and women's rights and promoting gender equality. Brazil – like the rest of the Latin American region – has also been absent from many global discussions and actions around the practice, which largely focus on "hotspot" areas such as those in Sub-Saharan African and South Asia. While there is a relevant body of research and lively policy debates around fields *related* to child and adolescent marriage in Brazil – such as adolescent pregnancy, school dropout, sexual exploitation of children, child labor,

and violence against women and children – no study to date has directly explored the practice and the causes and consequences for the lives of millions of girls and young women. In light of the absence of child and adolescent marriage from national policy debates, this study serves as a foundation for developing targeted interventions and further research, raising awareness, and sharing policy implications in Brazil. This work will also contribute to policy dialogue in other settings where the practice is informal and perceived as consensual, and thus less likely to be addressed by policy and research.

KEY FINDINGS | The results confirm the mostly informal and consensual nature of unions involving girls under the age of 18 in the settings studied. The analysis highlights the ways in which a child or adolescent marriage may create or exacerbate risk factors (i.e., related to health, education, security) while often being perceived by girls or family members as offering stability in settings of economic insecurity and limited opportunities. The average age at marriage (or co-habitation) *and* first birth of married girls interviewed is 15, *with married men being on average nine years older.*
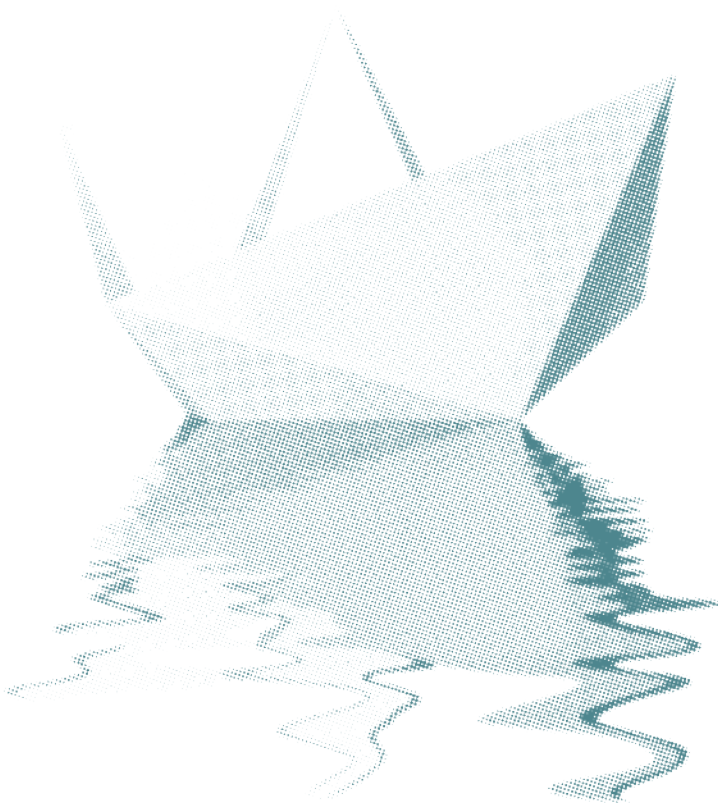
The primary factors associated with child marriage are: (1) desire, often by a family member, to deal with an unwanted pregnancy in order to protect the girl's and family's reputation and to "ensure" the man's responsibility for the girl and potential baby; (2) desire to control girls' sexuality and limit perceived "risky" behaviors associated with girls being single, such as casual sex and going out; (3) girls' and/or family members' desire for financial security; (4) an expression of girls' agency and desire to leave their parents' home, albeit within a context of limited educational and employment opportunities and experiences of abuse or control over girls' mobility in their families of origin; (5) prospective husbands' desire to marry younger girls (perceived as more sexually and physically attractive and easier to control than adult women) and men's disproportionate decision-making power in marriages.

The key consequences of child and adolescent marriage identified include: (1) early pregnancy (sometimes also a cause of marriage) and related maternal, newborn, and child health problems; (2) educational setbacks; (3) limitations to girls' mobility and social networks (namely, girls' expectations of independence are largely met with disappointment and further restricted mobility); (4) exposure to intimate partner violence, including a range of controlling and inequitable behaviors on the part of their older husbands. The study also found inadequate and often discriminatory provision of services and protection of the girls in marriages.

Overall, dating and healthy pre-marital relationships appear absent in girls' life trajectories, with marriage being perceived as the primary and most socially acceptable pathway to womanhood – in effect a "least worst" alternative when education is seen as unappealing or an unattainable means for improving one's life. Girls who leave or end marriages tend to face lower employment and education prospects compared to their unmarried peers, while often being the sole caregivers for

their children. Men, when present in caregiving during and after a marriage, are largely expected to be economic providers. Adolescent boys who are girls' age-mates are unanimously disdained by the girls and their families as viable partners due to their assumed inability to provide for girls and "lack of responsibility." Inequitable gender norms are reinforced by religion, media, and the communities girls live in.

RECOMMENDATIONS | The findings offer insights for improving our understanding of attitudes and practices related to child and adolescent marriage in Brazil and in other settings where the practice is informal, involves smaller age gaps between the spouses (i.e., mostly adult men with girls in childhood or early adolescence), and is more about family or community dynamics rather than a traditional and ritualized practice. The forthcoming report will discuss implications for future research, policy, and programming in Brazil, focusing on the ways that adequate legislation and policies – combined with initiatives aimed at changing social norms and providing viable alternatives to marriage such as schooling – can protect girls' right to freely and fully decide if, when, and whom they marry. As an important strategy, the report will also discuss the ways that child and adolescent marriage prevention initiatives can engage men and boys. These recommendations build on research showing that adolescent girls benefit from involved male caregivers or fathers. For example, research finds that girls with involved fathers experience less sexual violence or unwanted, early sexual activity; have better self-esteem and body image; and are more likely to select partners with more gender-equitable attitudes.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

WHY RESEARCH CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MARRIAGE IN BRAZIL?

Brazil has largely been absent from global discussions and advocacy about child marriage. Available data on unions beginning from age 10 suggest that the practice – internationally defined as a marriage involving a girl or boy below the age of 18[5] – is a problem in the country. Evidence shows that child marriages in Central and Latin America are mostly informal and consensual with varying levels of agency on the part of girls. While both girls and boys experience child marriages, girls are disproportionately affected by them; unions largely involve girls in their childhood and adolescent years – beginning in early puberty, they are married to men several years older. The nature of girls' agency in some marriages and co-habitation relationships challenges existing assumptions around child marriage. This agency must fundamentally be understood within the context of power differentials and constraints on the choices available to girls. In Latin America, child marriages tend to differ from the more ritualized and formal nature of the practice in other high-prevalence settings.

In the emerging body of evidence on child and adolescent marriage in Central and Latin America, Brazil stands out due to the sharp contrast between the country's high ranking in terms of absolute numbers and the lack of research on the subject. According to one estimate, Brazil is ranked the fourth country in the world in absolute numbers of women married or co-habitating by age 15, with 877,000 women ages 20 to 24 years reporting having married by age 15 (11 percent). Also among women ages 20 to 24, thirty-six percent (nearly three million women) are

5. The research team uses the term "child marriage" based on the definition of child (below the age of 18 years) in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), an international treaty that Brazil signed and ratified in 1990. It is currently the most frequently used and accepted term among practitioners and researchers internationally, and is thus used in this research. The word "adolescent" is also used in line with the Brazilian Statute of the Child and Adolescent, which Brazil passed shortly after it signed and ratified the CRC. This statute distinguishes between child (below 12 years) and adolescent (12 to 18 years) age groups. By this statute definition, many marriages in Brazil and in the Latin America region involve girls in their adolescent as well as childhood years. Concepts, legislation, and data pertaining to child marriage are discussed in this Introduction.

estimated to have married by age 18.[6] In other countries in the Latin America and Caribbean region, prevalence rates are higher only in the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua (UNICEF, 2014). According to 2010 Census data (IBGE 2010), just over 88,000 girls and boys (ages 10 to 14 years) are in consensual, civil, and/or religious unions in Brazil.

ABSENCE FROM RESEARCH AND POLICY AGENDAS | In spite of the high absolute numbers and prevalence of child and adolescent marriage in Brazil, the problem has not been part of research or national policymaking agendas related to protecting girls' and women's rights and promoting gender equality. Brazil, like the rest of the Latin American region, has also been absent from many global discussions and actions around the practice, which largely focus on "hotspot" areas, such as those in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. While there is a relevant body of research and lively policy debates around fields *related* to child and adolescent marriage in Brazil – such as adolescent pregnancy, school dropout, sexual exploitation of children, child labor, and violence against women and children – no study to date has directly explored the practice and its causes and consequences for the lives of millions of girls and young women.

RESEARCH FOCUS | Exploratory research on child and adolescent marriage in two Brazilian settings represents a first step toward addressing the problem. The study, a first of its kind in Brazil, explores attitudes and practices around child and adolescent marriage in the two Brazilian states with the highest prevalence of the practice according to the 2010 census, Pará in the north and Maranhão in the northeast. After reviewing key concepts and legal frameworks pertaining to child and adolescent marriage at the international, regional, and national levels in this introduction, the study uses empirical data to examine local attitudes and practices, as well as risk and protection factors around marriage, in the capital cities of these two states (Belém in Pará and São Luís in Maranhão). It looks at *both* formal and informal unions, as the latter are the most prevalent forms of early marriage in Brazil.

From 2013 to 2015, Promundo conducted exploratory research in these two states in Brazil with support from the Ford Foundation. Data were collected in partnership with teams from the University of Pará (Universidade Federal do Pará) and Plan International Brazil in Maranhão.

6.   *Percentages in the 20- to 24-year-old age group from PNDS, 2006: page 161, Table 2: "Idade na primeira união," available from: http://bvsms.saude.gov.br/bvs/pnds/img/relatorio_final_PNDS2006_04julho2008.pdf (These percentages compare to levels from the same source in UNICEF, 2014). Source of absolute numbers: Statistics and Monitoring Section, Division of Policy and Strategy, UNICEF (2013), ranked in Vogelstein, 2013. Ranking calculations based on population of women 20 to 24 years old (2011); excludes China, Bahrain, Iran, Israel, Kuwait, Libya, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, and the United Arab Emirates, among other countries, due to lack of available data.*

The researchers conducted 60 in-depth semi-structured interviews among the following groups: (1) girls (12 to 18 years) in unions with older men (24 years and older); (2) men (24 to 60 years) in unions with girls (below 18 years); (3) family members of married girls; (4) and local service providers/child and adolescent rights protection professionals. Focus group discussions (FGDs) were held with girls, men, and protection network representatives. An additional 50 key informant interviews were also conducted at state, federal, regional, and international levels. In order to explore broader community-level attitudes and practices related to child marriage in the same urban setting, a quantitative household survey was conducted with 145 men (24 to 60 years) and 150 girls (12 to 18 years) – not necessarily married – in São Luís.

CONTRIBUTION OF THIS RESEARCH | In light of the relative absence of child marriage from national policy debates, this study serves as a foundation for developing targeted interventions and further research, raising awareness, and sharing policy implications in Brazil. These include gender-transformative interventions and advocacy, as well as potential community-based campaigns. The study intends to contribute to building the evidence around the practice while understanding the ways in which it relates to other forms of sexual exploitation and violations of girls' rights in the country.

This work also seeks to contribute to policy dialogue in other settings where the practice is informal and perceived as consensual, and thus less likely to be addressed by policy and research. The findings demonstrate the risks that being in a child or adolescent marriage may create or exacerbate. Within the context of these risks, it explores how marriage is perceived as a form of protection or the best alternative for girls. The research also aims to contribute to analyses of the current and potential roles of men in mitigating child and adolescent marriages, roles that have been largely underexplored in efforts to combat child marriage globally.

This study also enables researchers and policymakers to situate the implications of child marriage in Brazil within global research about the consequences of the practice in the lives of girls, their spouses, children, and communities. According to a 2013 UNICEF report on child marriage, of the world's 1.1 billion girls, 22 million are already married. If current trends continue, the number of girls under age 18 married each year will grow from 15 million today to over 18 million in 2050 (UNICEF, 2013). The practice is associated with maternal and infant morbidities and mortalities (Nove et al., 2014; Raj & Boehmer, 2013; Raj, 2010), and often takes place in areas with lower access to education and employment opportunities for women and girls, and higher rates of gender-based violence (Jain & Kurtz, 2007; UNICEF, 2007; Raj et al., 2010).

REPORT OVERVIEW | This report begins with descriptions of the qualitative and quantitative methodology, field sites, and research participant profiles in the chapter entitled, "Methodology." Thereafter, the "Research Findings" chapter presents findings according to theme. First, types of marriages and unions, life phases (i.e., girlhood and adulthood), and perceptions of decisions and behaviors in those stages are discussed. The first main section includes the primary motivations, drivers, and initiating factors to marry, including five major motivations that lead to marriage, and the additional influencing factors of religion, media, and the context of urban insecurity.

The next section addresses findings primarily from the qualitative research with married men and girls. It analyzes changes in aspirations and expectations once in union, unequal gender roles in marriage, and restrictions on married girls' mobility. It also discusses consequences related to intimate partner violence, education, and health. In addition, themes that emerge around fathers and child marriage are identified, followed by sections on separation and divorce, legislation and services, and "deviance" or resistance against child and adolescent marriage norms. The report concludes by discussing the implications of the findings for policy, programming, and research.

DEFINING CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MARRIAGE

Internationally recognized as a violation of human rights, child marriage[7] is defined by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) – which Brazil signed and ratified in 1990 – as a union involving at least one spouse below the age of 18 years. Child marriage is also a violation of Article 16(2) of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights ("marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses"), as well as Article 16 of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), according to which women should have the same right as men to "freely choose a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent," and the "betrothal and marriage of a child shall have no legal effect."

The following characteristics help contextualize the concept of child marriage in Brazil and more broadly in Latin America. These characteristics, listed below, appeared during fieldwork in the two Brazilian settings and are also supported by literature reviews, and discussions with practitioners and researchers.

- **Adolescence Versus Childhood:** Compared to other settings where child marriage is prevalent, in Brazil (and elsewhere in Latin America) girls tend to marry less often in the early years of their childhood and more often upon reaching puberty, i.e., usually above 12 years of age or during adolescent years.[8]

7.   *Internationally, the terms "early" and "forced" marriage have been used as well, such as by the Sexual Rights Initiative (2013) which gives preference to those terms, given that "different nations allow their citizens to attain majority at different ages, and some allow majority to be attained upon marriage" (this is not the case in Brazil). Some experts argue that "early" dilutes the problem of marriage occurring at an age in which international legal frameworks recognize the absence of consent.*

8.   *"Child marriage" has been a less-recognized term in the Latin America region. A number of similar terms have been used in addition to "casamento/matrimonio infantil" (in Portuguese and Spanish respectively), such as "uniones tempranas," "ma-trimonios tempranos" (in Spanish, early unions or marriages) and "casamento precoce" (in Portuguese, early marriages).*

- **(In)formality of Marriage:** The often informal nature of marriage stands in contrast with the ritualized ways in which the practice takes place in other parts of the world. The commonality of informal unions also renders greater difficulty in measuring the practice.

- **Girls' Agency:** Marriage is often perceived as an expression of girls' agency, albeit within the contexts of limited educational and employment opportunities, and power differentials that constrain the nature of the consent expressed by girls themselves (Murphy-Graham & Leal, 2015). Both boys and girls can be in a child or adolescent marriage, but in the Latin America region typically it is girls who marry adult men. The girls' agency in such marriages is in question.

- **Sexuality and Relationships:** Marriage decisions are often influenced by a desire to control girls' sexuality, especially around sexual initiation or pregnancy (Population Council, 2013; UNFPA, 2015), especially in contexts characterized by high insecurity and limited educational and employment opportunities for girls. Marriage is thus viewed as a "safe" pathway for girls (Bruce & Hallman, 2008). In this study, such perceptions are evident from girls' family members and the communities in which they live.

TERMS USED IN THIS REPORT

Given the nature of the practice in Brazil and in the broader Latin America region this research addresses **civil or religious marriages (formal)** and **consensual unions (informal)** as categorized by the Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE). Both types are characterized by co-habitation and are used interchangeably throughout this report. Since informal unions are common in Brazil, and can be understood as related to formal child and adolescent marriages in terms of similar causes and consequences, this research seeks to examine the continuum and the nature of stable relationships in Brazil. Using interchangeable terms recognizes this continuum. Where relevant, distinctions are made between informal unions and formal marriages.

The research also uses the term **child and adolescent marriage**. Child marriage is currently the most used and agreed upon term by practitioners and researchers internationally to define the practice (see Greene, 2014 for a comprehensive discussion on "naming"). The research also recognizes the adolescent age group as distinguished by the Brazilian Statue of the Child and Adolescent (12 to 18 years).

Ending child marriage has been recognized as crucial to both protecting girls' basic rights, and improving a range of development outcomes, including each of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). There is a growing body of knowledge around programming efforts designed to prevent or mitigate harmful effects of child marriage internationally (Lee-Rife et al., 2012), and about the research needed to address current gaps, in order to ultimately end the practice (Greene, 2014).

Although researchers and advocates in Latin America have long addressed issues associated with child and adolescent marriages such as adolescent pregnancy, evidence and critical discussion specific to the practice is very recent (see Annex 1, "Review of Publications in Latin America"). Of the small number of existing studies, most involve key informants and literature reviews with little empirical data collected from married couples or stakeholders directly involved in marriage practices. The majority of studies are focused on Central America, where some countries with the greatest prevalence are located, but these studies are not necessarily representative of trends across the region.

From a policy advocacy perspective, a few trends indicate an important emerging conversation around the practice:

- In late 2013, a call was launched to members of civil society pursuant to Human Rights Council Resolution (HRC) A/HRC/RES24/23 on child, early and forced marriage, for consideration in the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR) report to the HRC.[9]

- In December 2014, the topic of child, early, and forced marriage and unions was included in the resolution adopted by the Twenty-First Pan American Child and Adolescent Congress. The resolution was submitted by the Delegation of Brazil and Chile and approved at the First Session of Heads of Delegation.

- Approximately one dozen representatives from Latin American institutions convened at the May 2015 Girls Not Brides Global Meeting to discuss potential ways to address child marriage in the region.
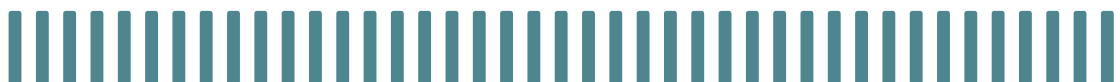
9.   Promundo sent a submission based on the research in Brazil presented in this report (for the 26th Session, June 2013).

Media coverage of the issue in Latin America remains low, even though international media coverage of child marriage has increased in the past three years.[10]

CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MARRIAGE *(CASAMENTO)* IN BRAZIL

Despite the high absolute numbers and prevalence of documented child marriages in Brazil, there is a significant lack of awareness of the practice and its magnitude among researchers, policymakers, and professionals working on child and adolescent rights in the country.

This research finds a noteworthy discrepancy between federal- and state-level policy discourse around the topic. On the one hand, policymakers, researchers, and women's and children's rights practitioners and activists working at the federal level tend to say child marriage is "not a major issue" in Brazil. Interviews conducted in Brasilia show a perception of child marriage as practiced primarily in poor, rural, and/or indigenous areas (often described as "traditions," something that happens "out there" or "in the rural north(east)"). These interviews also show that other issues, such as adolescent pregnancy, are higher priorities in policy agendas regarding girls' rights and wellbeing. On the other hand, key informants interviewed in the field research sites[11] – the cities

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10. *The increase in coverage globally is based on an English-language media review conducted by the Communications Consortium Media Center (CCMC) for the Ford Foundation in 2014. This review did not include a multi-language review specific to Latin America; however, overall coverage in the region is understood to be limited. A recent exception is reporting on the issue in Guatemala that features the global photography and video exhibit,* Too Young to Wed: Guatemala *http://nyti.ms/1ukoUwt*

11. *Initial interviews include researchers and practitioners in government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that work on issues related to child and adolescent protection. Subsequent interviews include members of the protection network such as teachers, social workers, psychologists, community health workers, coordinators of NGO programs for adolescents, and child and adolescent rights promoters and officers* (promotores *and* conselheiros tutelares)*.*

of Belém in Pará and São Luis in Maranhão – acknowledge the high commonality of child marriage in the research settings, while still associating it with areas characterized by extreme rural poverty or remote areas inhabited primarily by indigenous populations.

So far, child marriage has not been part of national research and policymaking agendas protecting women's and girls' rights and promoting gender equality goals in Brazil. While there is a relevant body of research as well as lively policy debates around fields *related to* child marriage in Brazil – such as adolescent pregnancy, truancy, sexual exploitation of children, and violence against women and children– no study directly explores the practice and its consequences for the lives of thousands of young women and girls.

Even when child marriage is acknowledged, the practice is often represented as a solely "rural" phenomenon, even though evidence gathered during fieldwork suggests that it happens in urban areas as well, and that attitudes and practices related to child marriages are complex and highly normalized in the cities in which research was conducted. Given the paucity of research around the practice in Brazil, and the stereotypes of the practice as something happening primarily in rural and/or indigenous areas, this research focuses on urban areas in order to raise the visibility of the issue without further stigmatizing some of the populations and settings in which child marriage takes place.

| MEASURING CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MARRIAGE IN BRAZIL |

Three main sources offer data on formal and informal marriages in Brazil:

- The yearly national household surveys, Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios (PNAD), carried out by IBGE;

- The census carried out every 10 years by IBGE;[12] and

12. *The IBGE studies use the same question and the same answer choices: "Do you live in the company of a spouse or partner?" ("Vive em companhia de conjuge ou companheiro(a)?") If the response is positive, the following question asked is: "What is the nature of the union?" ("Qual é a natureza da união?") The response options are: (1) "civil or religious marriage," (2) "only civil marriage," (3) "only religious marriage," and (4) "consensual union" (in Portuguese, "casamento civil ou religioso," "só casamento civil," "só casamento religioso," and "união consensual"). There are no open-ended questions. Of these options, it is important to note that "religious marriage" and "consensual union" are not included in the Civil Registry. Civil Registry Statistics data are obtained from the Notary of the Register of Natural Persons (Cartórios de Registro Civil de Pessoas Naturais) and only include legal acts (i.e., civil marriages). Consensual unions are thus recorded, but not registered in the Civil Registry Statistics.*

- The Pesquisa Nacional de Demografia e Saúde da Criança e da Mulher (PNDS), the Measure Demographic and Health Survey carried out by the Ministry of Health every 10 years.[13]

Because of their mostly informal nature, child marriages in Brazil are challenging to document. While there is still progress to be made, two aspects of data collection in Brazil are unique and should be noted. First, Brazil is one of the few countries that collect data on various types of unions. Second, these data are also collected on participants as young as 10 years of age. The comprehensiveness of these two types of census data and other data provide a strong basis from which to develop interventions.

The census offers detailed breakdowns of four types of unions/marriages (see footnote 12). The PNDS also includes unions and asks the question about first marriage/union retrospectively. As shown in the tables below summarizing findings from the 2010 census,[14] the higher number of consensual unions among minors signals the relevance of informal marriages, both in federal and state level data. Differences in the numbers of married girls compared to boys who enter unions or marriages are also noteworthy. It appears that, with boys, the norm for marriage age is 18 years, whereas the norm for girls is 15 years, as illustrated by the significant jump in numbers at those ages. State level data for Pará and Maranhão show similar patterns.

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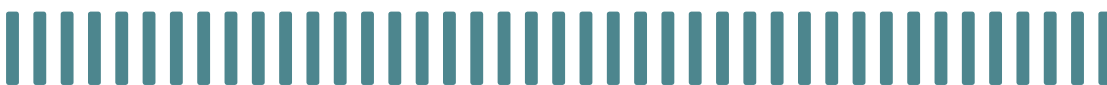
13. *In the PNDS, respondents are asked, "Are you currently married or in union with someone?" (*"Atualmente está casada ou em união com alguém?*") The same question is asked about past marriages or unions. Response options include: "Yes formally married," "in union with a man," or "in union with a woman." (In Portuguese, "sim, formalmente casada," "em união com um homem," or "em união com uma mulher.")*

14. *Source: IBGE, Censo Demográfico 2010*

TABLE 1 | BRAZIL – 2010

INDIVIDUALS 10 TO 19 YEARS OLD WHO LIVE IN A UNION
(BY TYPE OF UNION, SEX, AND AGE GROUP)

SEX AND AGE GROUP (YEARS)	TOTAL UNIONS	CONSENSUAL UNIONS	CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS UNIONS

BOYS/MEN ♂

10 TO 14	22,849	16,486	3,520
15 TO 17	78,997	71,401	3,621
18 OR 19	254,178	223,401	12,444

GIRLS/WOMEN ♀

10 TO 14	65,709	60,200	2,575
15 TO 17	488,381	430,396	22,167
18 OR 19	761,517	583,382	77,562

TABLE 2 | MARANHÃO (STATE) – 2010

INDIVIDUALS 10 TO 19 YEARS OLD WHO LIVE IN A UNION
(BY TYPE OF UNION, SEX, AND AGE GROUP)

SEX AND AGE GROUP (YEARS)	TOTAL UNIONS	CONSENSUAL UNIONS	CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS UNIONS

BOYS/MEN ♂

10 TO 14	1,210	934	109
15 TO 17	4,409	4,062	105
18 OR 19	12,451	11,431	187

GIRLS/WOMEN ♀

10 TO 14	4,428	4,234	26
15 TO 17	25,881	23,402	480
18 OR 19	35,205	29,171	1,036

TABLE 3 | PARÁ (STATE) – 2010

INDIVIDUALS 10 TO 19 YEARS OLD WHO LIVE IN A UNION
(BY TYPE OF UNION, SEX, AND AGE GROUP)

SEX AND AGE GROUP (YEARS)	TOTAL UNIONS	CONSENSUAL UNIONS	CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS UNIONS
BOYS/MEN ♂			
10 TO 14	1,407	1,197	102
15 TO 17	4,681	4,486	90
18 OR 19	14,041	13,200	361
GIRLS/WOMEN ♀			
10 to 14	4,506	4,220	108
15 to 17	30,778	28,814	659
18 or 19	44,069	38,714	2,377

Examining civil registry data from 2003 to 2011[15] shows that while marriages where at least one participant is younger than 15 years old have fallen in Brazil as a whole, there have not been significant changes in the greater metropolitan areas of Belém in Pará and São Luis in Maranhão. This is potentially indicative of migration to these urban areas. Of under-18 marriages, marriages occur most commonly at 16 and 17 years old. As discussed in the section below, it is noteworthy that both federal and state level data show how marriages – formal or informal – occur in the 10 to 14 age range.

15. *Série Histórica (IBGE), Estatísticas do Registro Civil 2003-2011.*

| CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MARRIAGE AND BRAZILIAN LEGISLATION |

In Brazil, relevant legislation is outdated and has a number of ambiguities and loopholes, especially with regard to consent. Such gaps favor the protection of adult men, while discriminating against girls. These challenges are exacerbated by difficulties around enforcement of legal ages of marriage and unions.

BOX 1 | MARRIAGE ACCORDING TO THE BRAZILIAN CIVIL CODE

CHAPTER II
ON THE CAPACITY FOR MARRIAGE

Art. 1.517. **Men and women of age 16 may marry with authorization of both parents, or of their legal representatives, until they have reached the civil legal age.**

Unique Paragraph. If there is a divergence among parents, article 1.631 applies.

Art. 1.518. Until the celebration of marriage, parents or legal guardians may revoke the authorization.

Art. 1.519. The refusal of consent, when unfair, may be surpassed by the judge.

Art. 1.520. As an exception, marriage of a person who has not yet reached nuptial age (Art. 1517), in order to **avoid imposition or completion of a criminal sentence or in the case of a pregnancy**.

Statute of the Child and Adolescent

In the same year that Brazil became a signatory to and ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990), the country passed the national Statute of the Child and Adolescent. The statute distinguishes between children (below 12 years of age) and adolescents (12 to 18 years). In contrast, the Convention on the Rights of the Child defines a child as a "human being below the age of 18 years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier." Albeit representing an advance in the protection of child and adolescent rights in Brazil, the statute has been criticized by some feminist groups as being primarily designed by males and reflecting a masculine perspective (Comitê & Comissão, 2006). Notably, the statute has limited mention of sexual and reproductive health rights pertaining to children or adolescents, and makes no mention of marriage.

Age of marriage and related exemptions

Within Brazilian legislation, the Civil Code (Box 1), and to a lesser extent, the Penal Code address the issue of marriage age and "capacity" or age of consent. The legal age of marriage is established as 18 years old for both men and women with several exemptions listed in the Civil Code. The first exemption – shared by most countries in the world – allows marriage with both parents' consent (or with authorization of legal representatives) starting at age 16.

Article 1.520 of the Civil Code shows other far less common exemptions in which minors may marry before age 16 (without both parents' consent). First, *a minor may marry before the age of 16 in the case of a pregnancy*. In other words, the law de facto implies that girls can get married below the age of 16, while boys cannot – making the law discriminatory against girls, since only girls can become pregnant. Brazil's legislation shares this pregnancy exemption with only four countries in the region: Venezuela, Guyana, Guatemala, and Honduras.[16] Even more troubling is the fact that such an exemption does not foresee a minimum age for its application, thereby, in practice, equating age of marriage with a girl's ability to conceive – that is, with her age of puberty.

A final example that reflects the outdated and detrimental nature of the Civil Code is that *marriage before the age of 16 is also allowed in order to avoid the "imposition of a criminal sentence."* The criminal sentence refers to cases of statutory rape (meaning if an individual is raped at age 14 or below according to the Penal Code). In practice, this exemption allows a rapist to avoid a criminal penalty by marrying the victim. Given that the prevalence of rape is higher among girls than boys, this exemption represents another gender-discriminatory law.
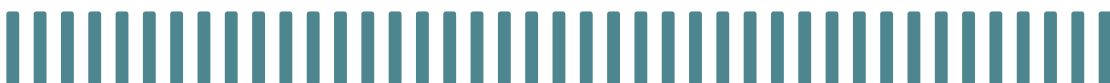
16. *Marriage data from World Policy Forum. Accessed 24 March, 2015 from: http://worldpolicyforum.org/.*

It should be noted that, in the case of minors under the age of 18, the decision to legally register a marriage for minors is left to the judge's or notary's discretion; this research found exemptions for marriage were not difficult to obtain. Training legal officials around the possible harmful consequences of child marriage can contribute to reducing the prevalence of the practice, but the often-informal nature of unions in Brazil challenges the impact that marriage officials may have on the practice.

In addition to examining legislation, the research team reviewed relevant Brazilian academic and social sciences literature. While the review identified a vast number of publications on topics associated with child and adolescent marriage (e.g., adolescent pregnancy, violence against women, sexual exploitation, and gender roles in adult relationships), no publications specifically addressed marriage practices involving minors (see Annex 2 for a summary of the review). The review offered useful background for situating child marriage practices within legal, policy and research agendas.

Findings from empirical data collected in two settings in Brazil ground and expand current knowledge of lived experiences of marriage practices from the perspectives of girls and men (married and unmarried), family members, and members of adolescent and child protection networks in these two settings. These findings are presented after the chapter on methodology.

METHODOLOGY

The research seeks to analyze attitudes and practices regarding child marriage in order to build the evidence for policy and programs to prevent and mitigate the consequences of the practice in Brazil. Relying on both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, the study explores risks and vulnerabilities that child marriage may create or exacerbate for participants. It also looks at the possible positive impact and protection that such a union may provide for girls living in settings where viable alternatives are scarce and where risks may not be perceived to outweigh benefits associated with entering a child marriage. As described in the Introduction, and recognizing the wide spectrum and commonalities among informal unions in Brazil and the region, child marriages and unions are referred to interchangeably in this report.

DATA COLLECTION

Research was carried out in 2014 in low-income urban settings in two states where census data (IBGE 2010) indicated that numbers of child marriage were especially high: Maranhão, in northeastern Brazil, and Pará, in the north. Research was conducted with non-indigenous populations in the capitals of each state (São Luís in Maranhão and Belém in Pará). Promundo designed and coordinated the study, accompanied fieldwork through several site visits and regular communications, analyzed the data, and authored the report. Data collection was carried out by Plan International Brazil in São Luís and by a team affiliated with the Universidade Federal do Pará (UFPA) in Belém.[17]
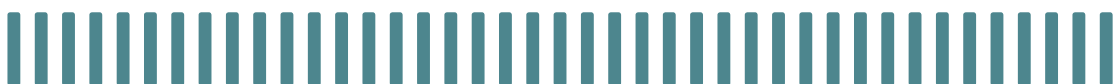
17. *The complete list of individuals involved in the data collection is included in the acknowledgements. In addition to regular communications with the partners, Promundo staff conducted five site visits in order to select the research teams, provided qualitative and quantitative training (i.e., training in drawing the sample and carrying out the data collection), accompanied data collection, and discussed fieldwork approaches, recruitment, challenges, and findings with partners.*

| QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION |

At the start of the research, nine key informant interviews were conducted with national experts, four with international and regional experts, and 37 with local experts. Most of these individuals work on issues related to child and adolescent development and rights, but not specifically on child marriage (given the lack of experts focusing on child marriage in Brazil). The complete list of key informants can be found in Annex 4.

A total of 60 **semi-structured in-depth interviews** were conducted in Belém and São Luís in order to explore attitudes and practices related to child marriage among the following groups:

- Girls (ages 12 to 18)[18] in a union with older men (ages 24 and older)

- Men (ages 24 to 60) in a union with girls (younger than 18)

- Family members of girls in child marriages (these include nine mothers, three grandmothers, two fathers, one brother, and one older female cousin)

- Local protection network representatives, including teachers, social workers, health workers, and representatives from the child and adolescent protection network

It should be noted that, given the often informal nature of the practice in Brazil, the study relied on married girls' and men's self-declarations of their marital statuses (using the term "*casado*" or similar terms, such as "*juntado*" or "*amigado*"). Both girls and men within the targeted age ranges were eligible to participate in the study if co-habitating with their partners, either in their own houses or together with the family of one of the spouses.

Six **focus groups discussions** (three FGDs per site) were held with the following groups:

- Girls in the same age group as those interviewed (ages 12 to 18) but not necessarily in a union

- Men in the same age group as those interviewed (ages 24 to 60) but not necessarily in a union

- Local child protection network representatives

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18. *Except for one who had just turned 19 years old.*

TABLE 4 | QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION

	BELÉM IN PARÁ	SÃO LUÍS IN MARANHÃO	NATIONAL: BRAZIL	INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL
KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS				
	20	17	9	4
IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS				
MARRIED GIRLS	9	6		
MARRIED MEN	9	6		
FAMILY MEMBERS	8	8		
PROTECTION NETWORK	8	6		
TOTAL	34	26		
FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS (FDGS)				
GIRLS	1	1		
MEN	1	1		
PROTECTION NETWORK	1	1		
TOTAL	3	3		

TOTAL INTERVIEWS AND FGDS = 116

| QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION |

A quantitative household survey was administered in São Luís to girls and men in the same age group as those being interviewed – but not necessarily in unions – in order to explore their attitudes and practices related to child marriage. More specifically, the survey was administered to 145 men[19] (ages 24 to 60 years) and 150 women (ages 12 to 18 years) in several of the same communities in which qualitative interviews took place in São Luís.

| ANALYSIS |

Qualitative interviews and FGDs were audio recorded and transcribed. The transcripts were analyzed using Dedoose, a web-based analysis program. All field notes, trip reports, and key informant interview notes were also reviewed manually. Socio-demographic data from the qualitative research were recorded and analyzed together with the qualitative findings. Quantitative analysis was carried out using SPSS to identify relationships or associations between independent and dependent variables. Typically, the chi-square test is a common measure of association used to determine if there is a significant relationship between independent and dependent variables (if the p-value is equal or less than .05). In this analysis, the p-value used is equal or less than .02, indicating a statistically significant relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

| ETHICS AND CONFIDENTIALITY |

The research project was approved by the ethics committee of the Centro de Filosofia e Ciências Humanas (CFCH), Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (Center of Philosophy and Human Sciences, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro). Informed written consent was obtained for all interviews from participants themselves, and from a parent or legal guardian in the case of girls below the age of 18. Principles of consent, confidentiality, and the voluntary nature of their participation in the research and audio recording were read to all participants. Participants were reminded at several points during the interview that they were not required to answer questions that they did not wish to answer. Broadly, the teams followed the guidelines of the World Health Organization (WHO) on researching violence against women in order to ensure confidentiality, privacy, protection from further violence, and to protect from other related risks – especially when interviewing married girls and married men (never belonging to the same couple). Interviewers were trained to follow ethics procedures to prepare them to respond in problematic situations, or in the event that interviewees became upset during field work.

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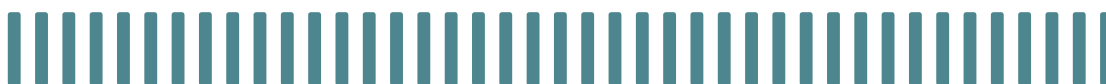
19. One hundred and fifty men were interviewed, and five of these interviews were discarded because the men were not in the same age range as the remaining respondents of 24 to 60 years.

The original paper quantitative questionnaires were kept in locked cabinets at local partners' offices, and copies will be kept in storage at Instituto Promundo's office in Rio de Janeiro for a maximum of five years, following institutional procedures for data handling and storage. The local research teams and transcribers were instructed not to use participants' real names or demographic data. Unique codes were developed in order to de-identify the quantitative surveys. Only the immediate research team has access to both the transcribed qualitative data and the locked paper quantitative questionnaires.

| LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES |

There are a number of limitations to this research. The number of sites (one per state) and relatively small sample size limit the number of experiences and perspectives that can be included. While it enables a preliminary exploration of the issue, the sample size does not allow for making generalizations about Brazil as a whole, nor is it representative of the diverse urban and rural settings in these two states and throughout Brazil. Another limitation with the sample concerns the age of the girls interviewed. The researchers decided to focus on girls and men in marriages where the woman is currently under the age of 18 years; the research does not include women and men who were in such marriages earlier but have aged out. Because of this, the research is unable to explore marriage and separation trajectories over a longer period.

Overall, recruiting participants in all groups was a challenge given the nature of the topic; however, recruiting men was particularly difficult. Men's reluctance to participate may indicate their awareness of being in a union with a minor as problematic and/or associated with a risk of being reported. Married girls often had to obtain permission from their spouses to participate, and, at times, the researchers' insistence on individual interviews with the married girls created suspicion among the husbands. In the quantitative data collection, one mother did not authorize her daughter (who is under the age of 18 years) to participate because she said the girl's husband could react violently. Throughout the research, spouses were not interviewed in the presence of the other in order to protect safety and confidentiality (the researchers also never interviewed men and girls from the same couple). Some men and girls were shy or reluctant at the start of interviews, but then became more comfortable as the interviews continued.

Recruitment for the qualitative research targeted several sites, including maternity wards, health clinics, and schools, where the research teams obtained permission from directors and demonstrated proof of approval from the ethics committee. The high number of pregnancies among participants at the time of the interview relates to this use of health clinics as recruitment sites. In order to gain a broader range of experiences beyond the initial recruitment sites, the researchers used snowball sampling techniques to identify eligible participants in diverse urban settings.

Finally, high levels of urban insecurity in the field sites required data collectors to take precautions when conducting fieldwork, such as only conducting interviews during daylight hours and being accompanied by other researchers.

DESCRIPTION OF FIELD SITES

| NORTH AND NORTHEASTERN BRAZIL |

Both research sites are capitals of states that are characterized by large, remote rural territories with few cities. They are among the poorest states of Brazil, ones with the lowest indicators on maternal, newborn and child health (MNCH) and the highest prevalence of child marriage in the country (Tables 1 and 2). Even though Maranhão's real income per capita has increased substantially in the past 50 years, it is one of two states with the lowest gross domestic product (GDP) per capita in the country (8,760 BRL). The per capita GDP of Pará is 11,667 BRL.[20] In comparison, the per capita GDP of the wealthiest two states are the Federal District (64,653) and São Paulo (33,642). In terms of average household monthly income, the poorest 10 percent of Maranhão households have about half the average monthly income compared to the average in Brazil. The poorest 10 percent of households in Pará earn slightly above three-quarters of the average monthly income of the poorest 10 percent in Brazil (IBGE 2010).

20. BGE (2012). *Contas Regionais do Brasil* (Tabela 4 – Produto Interno Bruto, população residente e Produto Interno Bruto per capita, segundo as Grandes Regiões e as Unidades da Federação – 2012). *Accessed 29 March, 2015 from: ftp://ftp.ibge.gov.br/Contas_Regionais/2012/pdf/comentarios.pdf. In addition, 2011 data from ECLAC, FGV/EPGE, IBGE, IMF, and Thompson Reuters are reported in* The Economist. *In this article, GDPs per Brazilian are compared to GDPs per person in country equivalents. Maranhão and Pará states have GDPs close to that of Jordan and the Maldives, respectively, while the federal district of Brasilia's GDP is close to that of Italy. Accessed 29 March, 2015 from http://www.economist.com/news/americas/21604202-brazils-income-disparities-are-great-so-its-progress-welcome-italordan.*

According to state- and national-level key informants, each state has had a history of political and financial control by either several families (in Pará), or predominantly one family (in Maranhão, where the governor left power after nearly five decades in 2014). Key informants described additional challenges to protecting child and adolescent rights, including weak rule of law, corruption, impunity, and human rights violations in general.

TABLE 5 | INDICATORS FROM THE STATES OF MARANHÃO AND PARÁ[21]

	PARÁ	MARANHÃO	BRAZIL
POPULATION BY SEX (PER 100,000)			
MEN	3,710	3,178	93,356
WOMEN	3,769	3,291	98,439
POPULATION BY RACE[22] (PER 100,000)			
WHITE	22	24	48
BLACK	5	7	7
PARDA	73	69	44
AMARELA	<1	1	1
INFANT MORTALITY RATE (PERCENTAGE)			
	23	37	23
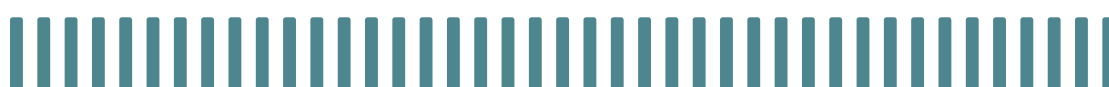
21. Source: IBGE (2010). *Síntese de Indicadores Sociais: Uma Análise das Condições de Vida da População Brasileira 2010. In Estudos e Pesquisas Informação Demográfica e Socioeconômica, número 27. Accessed 2 April, 2015 from: http://www.ibge.gov.br/home/estatistica/populacao/condicaodevida/indicadoresminimos/sinteseindicsociais2010/SIS_2010.pdf. Percentages are rounded.*

22. *The races are drawn from census categories;* Pardo *refers to mixed race, while* Amarela *refers to East Asian descent.*

| BELÉM, PARÁ STATE |

Belém, the capital of Pará, is located along the Amazon River system and characterized by a culture of river life and river-based communities (*ribeirinho*), such as fishing, and transport by boat to access certain parts of the city. Qualitative field research was conducted in several low-income communities in the city's periphery, primarily in Guamá but also in Ilha do Combú, a *riberinho.* The researchers do not identify major differences among these sites, in terms of access to services or other socio-economic characteristics, nor were major differences identified within the findings.

Rather, the local research team and key informants hypothesized greater differences existing between rural areas and Belém (as anticipated, no interviews were conducted in rural areas outside of Belém). In particular, the researchers discussed several differences in customs related to gender socialization in cities like Belém compared to rural areas. For example, a party for a girl's 15th birthday to "introduce," or "show a girl off to society" does occur in cities, but is a widespread practice in rural areas. Both states, however, have a number of historic cultural festivals that are celebrated in cities and rural areas alike.

| SÃO LUÍS, MARANHÃO STATE |

As with the research approach in Belém, the qualitative and quantitative field research sites in São Luís consist of several low-income communities, primarily in the region of Itaquí-Bacanga, the area surrounding a major road (BR 135), in the city's periphery: Vila Embratel, Coqueiro, Vila Samara, Cajueiro, Tibiri, Parque Jair, Jambeiro, Vila Industrial, Aurora, Vila Mauro Fecury, Residencial Paraíso, Pedrinhas, and Vila Esperança. These communities lack infrastructure and planning for utilities such as sanitation. Many, though not all residents are rural migrants who seek better economic and working conditions in surrounding factories and industries in São Luís. Residents also partake in customs and cultures from the rural interior, such as gathering in the front of the house after cleaning it, or sitting on the *quintal* (porch), talking with neighbors in the daytime, or growing fruit trees.

Child marriage amidst urban violence

In terms of homicide rates, São Luís and Belém are among the top quarter and top half, respectively, among the 28 Brazilian capitals, including the federal district of Brasília (Mapa da Violência, 2012). Homicides are highest among young, black men. Implications of urban violence, such as the restrictions it places on mobility, are discussed in the Findings section.

TABLE 6 | HOMICIDE RATES

	SÃO LUÍS	BELÉM	BRAZIL
HOMICIDE RATES (PER 100,000) (PERCENTAGES ARE ROUNDED)			
TOTAL POPULATION – BLACK	84	61	60
TOTAL POPULATION – WHITE	14	5	16
YOUTH (25 TO 29 YEARS) – BLACK	160	135	127
YOUTH (25 TO 29 YEARS) – WHITE	25	11	32

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT PROFILES

MARRIAGE DATA FROM QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Qualitative interviews with married girls, married men, and family members began by asking participants about age of marriage and other socio-demographic indicators.[23]

In terms of the *type of union*, all married men and girls interviewed are co-habitating in informal consensual unions, with the exception of three married girls (all in São Luís) who are formally married (in a civil or religious union).

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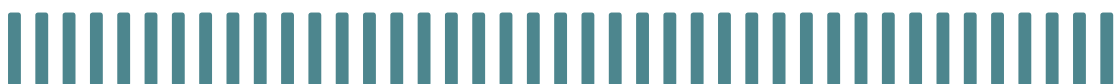
23. *These data are created into "descriptors" in the qualitative analysis program used, so that they could be matched with the qualitative data collected. Within the qualitative field data, sociodemographic data are collected and presented for 15 married men and 15 married girls, and 16 family members. In cases where incomplete data are available for a certain indicator, the total (n) available is reported for that category. Apart from the ages of marriage, complete sociodemographic data of each member of the couple as reported by family members are not systematically documented and are therefore not presented in full, but where it exists. Sociodemographic data are not included from FGD because not all participants are engaged in a child marriage.*

FIGURE 1 | TYPE OF UNION AND LIVING SITUATION

MARRIED GIRLS INTERVIEWED (N=14)
MARRIED MEN INTERVIEWED (N=15)
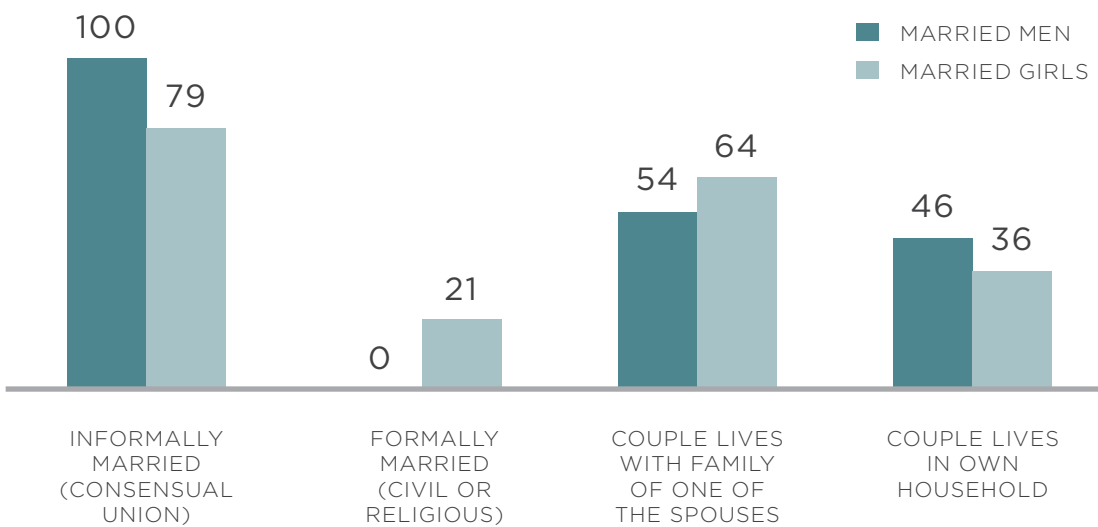
All married girls and married men interviewed (n=30) *co-habitate*: of the data collected, 12 live alone with their spouse (and children), and the remainder are split almost evenly between living with the married man's or married girl's family, either within the same house, or in a room built next to the family member's house.

| AGE OF MARRIAGE AND MARITAL AGE DIFFERENCE |

Among the research participants, the average age at which girls married was slightly under 15: the youngest two girls married at age 12 (to men who were 19 and 17 at the age of marriage). The oldest man interviewed married at age 58 (to a girl who recently turned 18). At the time of the interview, young married girls (as reported by married girls and men themselves, and family members), were predominately between ages 14 and 18. Married men were 21 to 58 years old at the time of the interview, and entered union between ages 16 and 58. The research findings show that average marital age difference is 9.1 years. (See Annex 3 for a complete table of ages of married girls and men.)

This research shows that marriages tend to be relatively recent, with couples having married between several months up to six years before the time of the interview, with an average of 2.4 years of marriage (n=28). All marriages are the married girls' first marriages (and often their first serious relationship). They also constitute married men's first marriages, with the exception of four men who had been married once or twice before (but largely with more previous relationships).

It is worth noting that married girls and men as well as family members often comment that marriage "happens quickly," or "just happens"; couples married from a few months to three years after beginning their relationship (what they considered to be dating (*namorando*), having sex, or having first met). In these cases, marriage appears as girls' best, or "least worse" alternative. For example, one married girl describes how she "ends up" accepting her boyfriend's offer when things are not going well at home:

> Right, it was I think not even three months of dating *(namoro)* and he already wanted to live together. [Laughs.] But I kept holding off. Only I saw that things at home – at my mom's house – weren't working out, so I ended up accepting his offer. And it's been three years already.

Similarly, sometimes marriage is seen as "the right thing to do" given a pregnancy, as this married man from Belém describes; he entered a union at age 21 with a girl who was 15 when she became pregnant and married:

> INTERVIEWER: Did you always want to marry?
> MARRIED MAN: No, I didn't. But after I "got her" [pregnant] like this, then I had to, right?

ADDITIONAL SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS FROM QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

| RACE, RELIGION, AND RURAL MIGRATION |

When asked about their race in an open-ended question, half the married girls and men interviewed self-identified as *pardo(a)*, or mixed race, and the second largest majority, as *moreno(a)*, followed by *negro(a)* and *branco(a)*, and one each as *preto, mulato* and *amarelo*.[24] In the available sample on race data (n=29), the vast majority in this sample identify as some form of mixed-race (of African, Indigenous, and European descent, with three who identify as "black," two as "white," and one *amarela*, or indigenous).

24. Pardo *is a race/skin color category used in the Brazilian census by the IBGE, most commonly used to refer to mixed race Brazilians, individuals with varied racial ancestries. It was also a classification used in colonial times, from the 16th through the 18th centuries. These self-identified races reflect Brazil's long history of debated terms for race and color, in addition to terms used in the census.*

FIGURES 2-3 | RACE
MARRIED GIRLS

MARRIED GIRLS INTERVIEWED (N=15)
(PERCENTAGES ROUNDED)
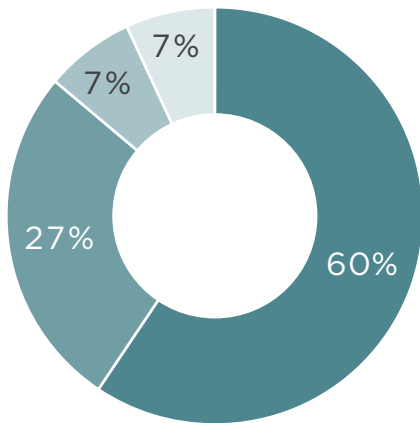
- PARDO(A)
- MORENO(A)
- BRANCO(A)
- AMARELO(A)

MARRIED MEN

MARRIED MEN INTERVIEWED (N=14)
(PERCENTAGES ROUNDED)
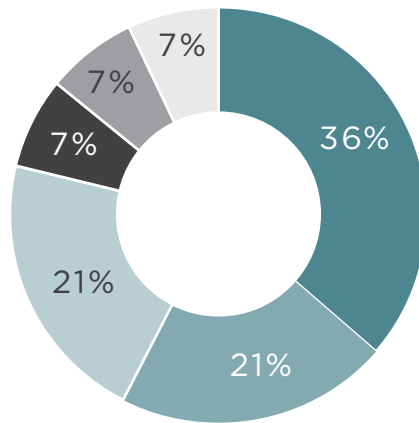
- PARDO(A)
- MORENO(A)
- NEGRO(A)
- BRANCO(A)
- PRETO(A)
- MULATO(A)

FIGURES 4-5 | RELIGION
MARRIED GIRLS

MARRIED GIRLS INTERVIEWED (N=14)
(PERCENTAGES ROUNDED)
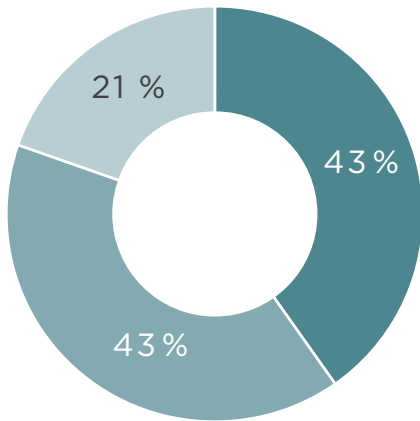
- EVANGELICAL
- NONE
- CATHOLIC

MARRIED MEN

MARRIED MEN INTERVIEWED (N=15)
(PERCENTAGES ROUNDED)
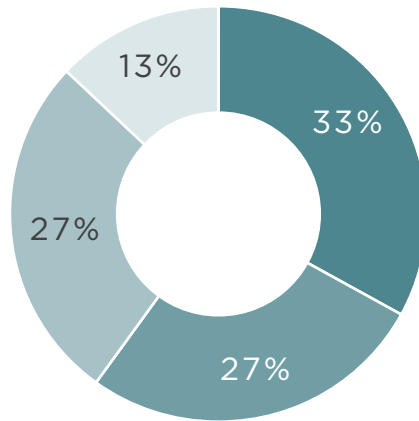
- EVANGELICAL
- NONE
- CATHOLIC
- PROTESTANT

Among married girls and men, most declare being Evangelical (a small percentage declare as Protestant – and within Protestant sects, Pentecostals or Seventh Day Adventists too), not having a religion, or Catholic. In one FGD with men, the majority of participants also declare themselves as Adventist. Of all the married men and girls (n=30), one-third migrated to the capitals where they currently live, mostly from rural areas or smaller cities within their respective states.

| PREGNANCY DRIVES CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MARRIAGE |

The data highlight the importance of pregnancy for bringing the man into the couple. As shown in Figures 6 and 7, married men and girls interviewed have significantly different experiences when it comes to childbearing. It is noteworthy that all married men (selected independently, or as spouses of married girls) have had at least one child, or their partner is pregnant with the first child. It also is indicative of the past partnerships of men. In contrast, girls overall have fewer children: one-third of married girls each did not have a child or had one child (with 20 percent pregnant with their first child and 13 percent having had two children) at the time of the interview. These data are also influenced by recruitment in health clinics in both sites.

FIGURES 6-7 | NUMBER OF CHILDREN

MARRIED GIRLS
MARRIED GIRLS INTERVIEWED (N=15)

MARRIED MEN
MARRIED MEN INTERVIEWED (N=15)

MARRIED GIRLS:
- 33%
- 20%
- 33%
- 13%

MARRIED MEN:
- 47%
- 33%
- 7%
- 7%
- 7%
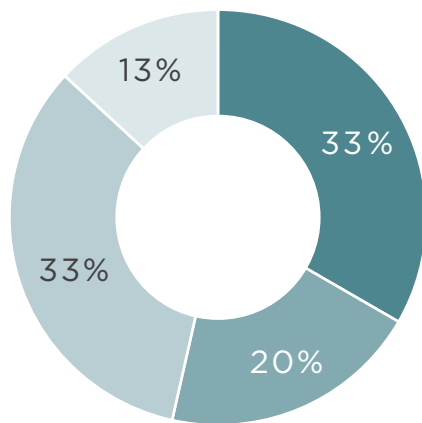
Legend (Married Girls):
- NONE
- PREGNANT WITH FIRST CHILD
- ONE
- TWO
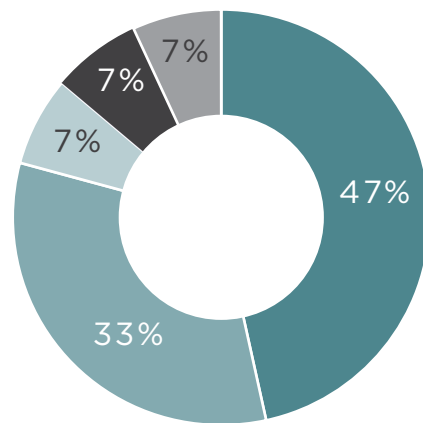
Legend (Married Men):
- PARTNER PREGNANT WITH FIRST CHILD
- ONE
- ONE AND PARTNER PREGNANT WITH SECOND
- THREE
- THREE AND PARTNER PREGNANT WITH FOURTH

FIGURE 8 | GIRLS' AGES AT FIRST BIRTH

According to data collected from married girls and men (husbands or partners), and family members interviewed, among girls who are married and have been pregnant at least once (n=31), the largest group of girls have their first child at age 15 (39 percent). Employment and education of the married men and girls are discussed in the respective sections of this report.

PERCENTAGE ACCORDING TO GIRLS' AGES

Age	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Percentage	3	3	10	39	23	19	3
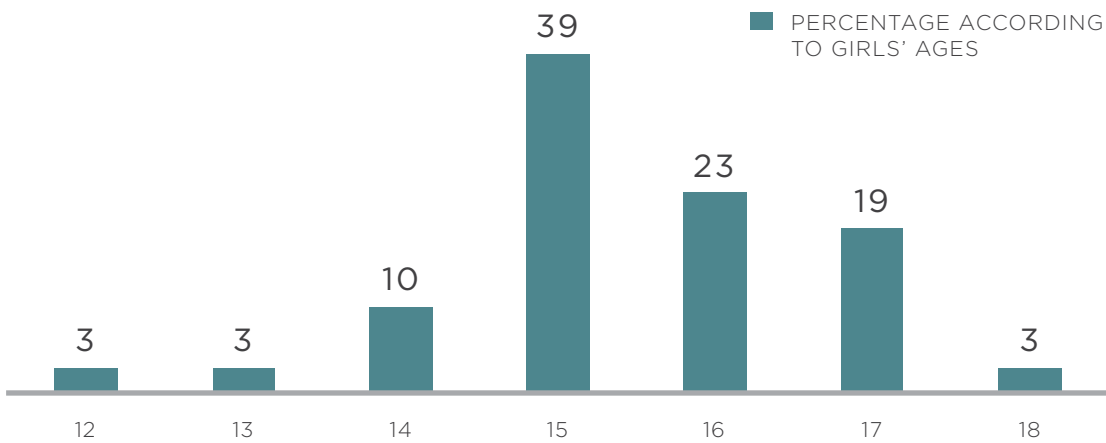
RESPONDENTS' SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS, QUANTITATIVE HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS IN SÃO LUÍS

Table 7 provides an overview of the sociodemographic data collected among the men and girls surveyed in São Luís. (They are not necessarily married but in the same age groups as the married men and girls.)

25. *"Education level" refers to respondents who studied or are currently in the education levels indicated. In the case of men, n=143 for this education level data. As described in the education section,* Ensino Fundamental *refers roughly to the equivalent of elementary school and* Ensino Médio *of high school.*

26. *This race category includes "black"* (negro) *and all races reported that include Afro-Brazilian descent mixed with other races, such as* pardo, mulato, *etc.*

27. *Incomes are reported in Brazilian reais (BRL); at the time of the fieldwork the exchange rate was approximately 2:1 BRL to the US dollar (USD). This rate changed to about 3:1 BRL to USD by early 2015.*

TABLE 7 | SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

INDICATOR	MEN AGES 24 TO 60 (N=145)	GIRLS AGES 12 TO 18 (N=150)
AGE GROUP		
<14 YEARS	–	43.3
15 TO 17 YEARS	–	44.0
18 YEARS	–	12.7
24 YEARS	4.8	–
25 TO 29 YEARS	24.1	–
30 TO 39 YEARS	35.2	–
40 TO 49 YEARS	22.1	–
50 TO 60 YEARS	13.8	–
EDUCATION LEVEL[25]		
UP TO *ENSINO FUNDAMENTAL COMPLETO*	34.5	54.0
ENSINO MÉDIO	57.2	42.7
OTHER	6.2	3.3
RACE/ETHNICITY		
WHITE *(BRANCO)*	13.8	14.7
BLACK *(NEGRO)*[26]	84.8	84.0
RELIGION		
NONE	20.7	37.3
CATHOLIC	53.1	26.0
EVANGELICAL/PROTESTANT	24.1	34.7
HAVE CHILDREN		
YES	73.1	2.7
WORK		
YES	69.0	6.7
INCOME[27] MEAN (AND INTERVAL) AMONG MEN WITH A REPORTED INCOME (N=87); AND GIRLS WITH A REPORTED INCOME (N=32).		
	1,482.56 BRL (INTERVAL: 200–7,000 BRL)	173.44 BRL (INTERVAL: 20–724 BRL)

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The following section presents findings based on qualitative and quantitative analyses of the data collected during fieldwork. The qualitative analysis features interviews in Belém in Pará and São Luís in Maranhão with married men, married girls, family members of married girls and/or married men, as well as professionals in the child and adolescent protection network. It also includes FGDs in each site with girls and men (not necessarily married) and the protection networks. The quantitative analysis presented is based on the household survey administered in São Luís with men and girls of the same ages and communities as couples participating in the qualitative research (but not necessarily married). These survey findings are noted and integrated throughout the qualitative analysis.

THE NATURE OF MARRIAGES IN BRAZIL

THE TERM "MARRIAGE" IS PRIMARILY USED IN THIS REPORT, BUT ALSO REFERS TO BOTH FORMAL AND INFORMAL UNIONS | Throughout the research, and consistent with the norm in Brazil, "marriage" (*casamento* in Portuguese) refers both to civil or religious marriage (formal) and consensual unions (informal). Conceptual distinctions between legally registered and informal marriages are thus often blurred.

The concept of marriage, therefore, is characterized by a greater degree of fluidity than, say, what some key informants refer to as "upper-middle class" marriages in Brazil, or in the Global North. Specifically, the most common words used to describe the marriages/unions in this research are: *casar* (marry), *morar junto* (live together), and *se juntar* (to "get together"). Another term, though less commonly used, is *amigar*, similar to *juntar* but with "friend" in the base of the word.

Furthermore, research participants refer to men in unions and marriages alike as "husbands," or *maridos*, as is common across Brazil among diverse social classes. Girls also refer to the men they are with as *o pai do meu filho* ("my child's father"), but most often *marido*. In contrast, it is worth noting that men use the term *mulher* (woman) nearly consistently in place of *esposa* (wife). Thus, a couple in a range of co-habitating relationships is commonly referred to as *marido* and *mulher*. The term "girl" (*menina* in Portuguese) reflects the way in which most married girls and men, family members, and others interviewed during this study refer to females marrying before age 18.

"IT JUST HAPPENED": INFORMALITIES OF CHILD AND ADOLESCENT
MARRIAGE | Couples often met in casual, happenstance ways. Similarly, the events that
followed in their relationships – pregnancy, and marriage – were described as taking place with
little planning. The union is described as occurring after a period of courtship, casual sex or
dating. Informal unions are more common than formal marriages involving girls and adult men,
and wedding ceremonies are even more rare, though a few are described.

Many men and girls interviewed speak of plans to formally marry their current partners.
However, men in particular express a preference for informal marriage, and several times reference
a "fluidity" of marriage. For example, a married man in São Luís describes his preference of an
informal marriage:

> I think if I were to marry, let's say, in the church, before God — something more religious,
> separation would come quickly. Then afterwards, [one] would be in a relationship again,
> have another thing; so [marrying in a church/formally] doesn't matter.
>
> | *28-year-old married man from São Luís who married (informally),*
> *a year prior to the fieldwork, a 15-year-old girl*

The majority of research participants describe men's willingness to be in a more committed
relationship as "assuming responsibility" – defined both in terms of financial responsibility and in
the sense of "stepping up" to the relationship when a girl becomes pregnant. *Ele assumiu ela* is a
phrase that the research team heard often; it literally translates as, "he assumed her."

GIRLS, ADOLESCENTS, OR WOMEN? | When asked whether a female below
the age of 18 was a "girl," "adolescent" or "woman" at the time of her marriage, most married
girls and men alike consider them to have been "girls" when they married (this is also because
"girl" or *menina* is a word popularly used to describe young to adolescent girls). Several other girl
participants in the qualitative and quantitative research consider womanhood to be accompanied
by sexual initiation and/or puberty.

Importantly, notions of responsibility and motherhood are closely associated with married girls'
passage to adulthood during marriage, according to both married girls and men. For example,
a girl from São Luís (married at age 15 to a 22-year-old man) says that marriage, taking care of
the house, and caring for her sick mother have given her experience, and therefore she considers
herself to be an adult. Even though none of the married girls except for one have incomes,
several organize the household budget and bills – responsibilities they associate with adulthood
and which, girls note, often come at a younger age:

[When does an] adolescent become a woman? A woman has many responsibilities, and an adolescent has to end up assuming these. ... She has to assume responsibilities of someone who should be much older, like if a person who is 13 starts working, gets pregnant, or gets a husband. That turns her into a person. ... It should, right? It should make her develop a mentality of an adult person already because of these responsibilities she has assumed.

| *Girl in Belém, who married, at age 14, a young man of 20*

Conceptions of "marriageability" are distinctly gendered throughout the qualitative research findings: men should have a job and responsibility before marrying, while girls may marry at a younger age (generally starting from around 15 or when girls' bodies begin to show signs of puberty and or/ at sexual initiation). When speaking of their current or future children, married girls' and men's opinions also reflect this norm: they generally prefer sons to marry once they have a job and are at least 18, but often suggest that girls may marry at younger ages.

Furthermore, married girls' perceptions of their own life phases are often mixed. For example, a married girl from Belém (married at 14 to an adolescent who was 16) notes that she did not live her "youth," and considers herself to now be "an adolescent with the mind of an adult" who is responsible for raising a baby. When asked about the life stage she considers herself to be in, a girl from São Luís (married at 14 to a man who was 21), says she is an adolescent with self-awareness and reflection, but considers herself to be more like a child. She relates her self-declared life stage to not having had a childhood:

MARRIED GIRL: I am an adolescent, but I consider myself to be a child *(criança)*.
INTERVIEWER: Why?
MARRIED GIRL: I don't know; my attitudes, my tastes. ... I think are like a child. It's like I did not have a childhood. ... I think a child is a person who wants attention *(carente)*; anything can hurt [him/her]. If you take candy from a child she will cry; I'm very child-like *(sou muito infantil)*.

Indeed, the types of behaviors that married girls and men reference with girlhood include: the girl still plays with dolls; girls do not know how to take care of a house (i.e., cook and clean); and girls cry or act in childish ways, requiring attention from the man or girl's mother.

Finally, several key informants interviewed during the inception phase of this study stressed a number of social norms underpinning societal expectations about girls marrying by a certain age. For example, one key informant from the interviews who is a lawyer suggests societal perceptions that somehow a woman is nothing without a man, that she needs to be married. Another informant, an academic, feels that there are expectations for women to have children and have them in their 20s, before they are perceived to be too old. Another notion, that one academic shared, is that marriage is accepted in many societies as a transaction (rather than for love). The same academic attributes the concept of childhood to white and Western constructs.

The academic believes that these constructs do not account for perceptions grounded in local understandings of childhood in which many aspects of life, including sexuality, begin at ages earlier than what accepted by the Western human rights discourse.

AGE AND DECISION-MAKING PERCEPTIONS AROUND SEXUALITY AND MARRIAGE: RESULTS FROM THE SURVEY IN SÃO LUÍS | The study finds that both men and girls consider age 18 to be a reference (as compared with other ages) when it comes to decision-making around sexuality, reproduction, and marriage. This and other important findings from the household quantitative surveys offer insights into perceptions by a broader sample of men and girls (not necessarily married) in low-income neighborhoods in São Luís.

- **Sexual initiation:** The majority of men and girls surveyed think that the first sexual relationship of both boys and girls should take place at age 18 or above;

- **Marriage or co-habitation:** Men and girls surveyed agree that men and women should decide to marry at age 18 or above;

- **Birth of first child:** Overall, respondents of both sexes think that men and women generally should make the decision about having children at age 18 or above.

The participants also respond about the ages they perceive to be appropriate for decision-making related to marriage, sexuality, childbearing, and paid and unpaid work (including housework). Considering respondents' references to age 18, one can view child marriage precipitated by pregnancy as going against, or failing to meet life aspirations.

TABLE 8 | AGES AT WHICH MEN AND GIRLS CONSIDER THAT CERTAIN ACTIVITIES SHOULD TAKE PLACE

ACCORDING TO PERCENTAGES REPORTED BY MEN (N=145) AND GIRLS (N=150) NOT NECESSARILY MARRIED

AGES CONSIDERED APPROPRIATE TO . . .	PERCEPTIONS OF MEN		PERCEPTIONS OF GIRLS	
	REFERRING TO MEN	REFERRING TO WOMEN	REFERRING TO MEN	REFERRING TO WOMEN

HAVE A GIRLFRIEND/BOYFRIEND

UP TO AGE 14	15.3	11.7	10.2	7.4
BETWEEN 15 AND 17 YEARS	46.2	39.3	52.4	54.1
18 YEARS OR OLDER	37.9	49.0	37.4	38.5

HAVE A FIRST SEXUAL EXPERIENCE

UP TO AGE 14	9.7	6.9	3.5	0.7
BETWEEN 15 AND 17 YEARS	37.5	25.7	31.3	21.2
18 YEARS OR OLDER	52.8	67.4	65.8	78.1

CARE FOR YOUNGER SIBLINGS OR YOUNGER CHILDREN

UP TO AGE 14	28.6	33.3	35.3	44.5
BETWEEN 15 AND 17 YEARS	28.6	26.3	36.0	36.3
18 YEARS OR OLDER	42.9	40.4	28.7	19.2

CARE FOR THE HOUSE (CLEANING AND COOKING)

UP TO AGE 14	48.6	53.8	48.9	69.8
BETWEEN 15 AND 17 YEARS	31.0	28.7	32.6	18.8
18 YEARS OR OLDER	20.4	17.5	18.5	11.4

STOP LIVING IN THEIR PARENTS' HOUSES

UP TO AGE 14	0.7	0.7	-	-
BETWEEN 15 AND 17 YEARS	5.0	5.7	4.1	2.0
18 YEARS OR OLDER	94.3	93.6	95.9	98.0

TABLE 8 | AGES AT WHICH MEN AND GIRLS CONSIDER THAT CERTAIN ACTIVITIES SHOULD TAKE PLACE (CONT.)

ACCORDING TO PERCENTAGES REPORTED BY MEN (N=145) AND GIRLS (N=150) NOT NECESSARILY MARRIED

AGES CONSIDERED APPROPRIATE TO . . .	PERCEPTIONS OF MEN		PERCEPTIONS OF GIRLS	
	REFERRING TO MEN	REFERRING TO WOMEN	REFERRING TO MEN	REFERRING TO WOMEN

MARRY/ LIVE TOGETHER

UP TO AGE 14	-	-	-	-
BETWEEN 15-17 YEARS	2.8	2.1	0.7	1.3
18 YEARS OR OLDER	97.2	97.9	99.3	98.7

HAVE A FIRST CHILD

UP TO AGE 14	0.7	-	-	-
BETWEEN 15 AND 17 YEARS	4.2	4.9	2.1	1.4
18 YEARS OR OLDER	95.1	95.1	97.9	98.6

DO SOME TYPE OF WORK OR SERVICE FOR PAYMENT

UP TO AGE 14	6.9	5.5	8.1	6.7
BETWEEN 15 AND 17 YEARS	34.5	26.9	49.0	41.6
18 YEARS OR OLDER	58.6	67.6	43.0	51.7

HAVE A JOB WITH A FORMAL WORK CONTRACT

UP TO AGE 14	-	-	1.3	0.7
BETWEEN 15 AND 17 YEARS	10.4	9.7	6.7	8.0
18 YEARS OR OLDER	89.6	90.3	92.0	91.3

Table 9 describes the perceptions of men and girls surveyed about making decisions to marry and sexual consent of two age groups of girls. Survey respondents are least in favor of marriage among the youngest age group of girls (ages 13 and 14), especially when asked about marriage in relation to stop studying. There is a greater tolerance, however, of girls marrying within the 15 to 18 years age bracket.

TABLE 9 | AGES THAT GIRLS SHOULD BE ABLE TO MAKE DECISIONS RELATED TO MARRIAGE AND SEXUAL CONSENT

ACCORDING TO PERCENTAGES REPORTED BY MEN (N=145) AND GIRLS (N=150) NOT NECESSARILY MARRIED

	MEN		GIRLS	
	13 AND 14 YEARS	15 TO 18 YEARS	13 AND 14 YEARS	15 TO 18 YEARS
AGE GROUPS OF GIRLS REFERENCED				
A GIRL SHOULD ALREADY BE MARRIED (*CASADA OU 'JUNTA'*) WITH SOMEONE	2.8	28.3	1.3	27.3
A GIRL SHOULD STOP STUDYING AND THINK ABOUT MARRIAGE	–	6.2	–	11.3
A GIRL 'HAS CONDITIONS' (IS ABLE) TO DECIDE WITH WHOM SHE WANTS TO HAVE SEXUAL RELATIONS	20.0	63.4	12.7	65.3

It is noteworthy that early age of sexual initiation is much more tolerated than marriage at an early age. In particular, over half of men and girls believe that girls are able to consent to sex between ages 15 and 18 years. The percentage of men who believe girls are able to consent to sex at ages 13 and 14 years (20 percent) is nearly double girls' agreement about sexual consent in reference to the same age group of girls. Finally, one-quarter of men surveyed (compared to 16 percent of girls) also think that when a girl's body shows signs of puberty, she is ready to have sex with an adult above the age of 18.

WHY MARRY?
MOTIVATIONS
LEADING TO UNION

Several overlapping factors motivate marriages as described by married men and girls and their families. In the example of a marriage in São Luís, the grandparents first encourage their granddaughter's marriage as a result of her pregnancy (at age 15), yet the mother says the girl herself also wanted to marry. The mother describes taking the marriage to a judge who makes an exemption, and proceeds with plans for a wedding.

> "You want to marry?" And [my daughter] said she did. So I … said, "In the afternoon we'll go to register for the community wedding."[28] … Only the judge didn't accept it because she was a minor and she didn't have her father's consent; her father wasn't there. … So I had to talk them into an exemption *(alvará)* at the family court; the judge had to open an exemption for her to marry. The wedding was Saturday after he made the exemption on Wednesday.

While married girls and their husbands or partners alike hear a host of opinions favoring and discouraging their marriage, findings show that the actual decision almost always comes down to two or, at most, three actors: the man himself (who has the most definitive opinion), a parent or grandmother (who often has a definitive influence), and the girl (who also has a somewhat definitive influence). Even when the girl says she wants the marriage, the man, and sometimes a parent, must endorse it too. Neighbors, men's peers, and family members on both sides also express their opinions about marriages but seem to not have direct decision-making power, with the exception of family members closest to the girl.

28. *Community Weddings: As described on its website, in 1999, the* Corregedoria Geral da Justiça do Maranhão *(General Magistrate, or General Comptroller of the Justice Department of Maranhão) began a Community Marriage Project with the goal of making marriage services accessible to low-income couples. All of the services are free, and couples receive blessings from pastors and priests. The ceremonies, for up 1,000 couples at a time, end with a large party. The state provides a cake, decorations, and donated party favors. One announcement stipulated the requirements: the original birth certificate, a copy of the national identity card, a proof of residence for couples over 18, and for couples below 16, the same documents and the parent's permission. Given the volume of marriages and the fact that a 15-year-old pregnant girl interviewed in the study was allowed to marry at a Community Wedding, such weddings could provide an opportunity for enforcing existing legislation that sets 18 as the minimum age for marriage.*

Fathers, mothers, and grandmothers have roles in pressuring girls to girls' marriages. The research shows that, while fathers had more of a definitive role in many cases, they did not always have more weight than mothers or grandmothers. However, unlike other settings with high child marriage prevalence, parents are not the only set of actors that may determine a marriage. The presence and extent of parental intervention, and the determining weight of the girl's or potential husband's choice, seem to vary significantly, as reflected in the comments below by men who participated in the FGD in São Luís:

— No, I don't choose; my daughters choose when it comes to their business.
— Right, but it still happens sometimes that if we decide in the moment, we decide wrong, and that comes back to you. "Look, it didn't work because it was you who decided, you who made that happen, want that." [Referring to pregnancy or marriage]

Despite such variations, a common pattern in parents' behaviors is the initial negative reaction to their daughter's getting married and anger towards the girl for losing her virginity or getting pregnant (often because they would rather see her study and become educated), eventually followed by acceptance (in some cases, for fear of losing their daughter). One girl's father at first did not accept his daughter's pregnancy; he fought with the father of the child and told his daughter to leave the household. Then, as occurred in the case of another mother and her daughter, this father then begged his daughter to stay.

PRIMARY MOTIVATIONS TO MARRY

| PREGNANCY DRIVES MARRIAGE DECISIONS |

In the settings of this research, cases of marriage that could be interpreted as "forced" marriage occur when others, especially family members, pressure or force a girl to marry due to a pregnancy (often, but not always unplanned or unwanted). One girl in the Belém FGD refers to this as an outdated practice, but many interviews show that the practice continues. Whether by force or pressure, union as result of a pregnancy is a trend clearly present in the data collected – similar patterns are found in research in Mexico and Central America (Population Council, 2013).

In addition to being associated with pressure from the family (often to protect honor, although not described exactly in those terms), pregnancy is described in the context of "accelerating" a marriage even when a relationship is desired.

MOTIVATING FACTORS FOR CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MARRIAGE

Five motivating factors have been identified as the most common drivers of child and adolescent marriage. These findings are based primarily on the qualitative data collected in both sites, and where indicated, perceived motivations to marry according to the São Luís survey with men and girls not necessarily in a union.

1. *Pregnancy drives marriage decisions*

2. *Decisions to marry as a desire to control girls' sexuality and limit perceived "risky" behaviors*

3. *Desire to secure financial stability via marriage*

4. *Marriage decision as an expression of girls' agency*

5. *Marriage decision as a result of adult men's preferences and power, i.e., men marry younger girls because they believe them to be more attractive and so the men can "feel younger"; adult men also hold greater power in decision-making and are perceived to be better off than young men.*

> MARRIED GIRL: We talked a lot about these issues of relationships *(namoro)*, having a relationship, but with getting married right away — it was because I got pregnant so that accelerated things more; it sped up that step in our lives. Basically that.
> INTERVIEWER: But who participated in deciding? Just you two or was there someone else's opinion?
> MARRIED GIRL: The two of us, we decided based on me getting pregnant and being an adolescent, because I was much younger than he.
> INTERVIEWER: How old were you when you got pregnant?
> MARRIED GIRL: Fifteen — my mom thought it was a good idea to marry to resolve it, to avoid that "gossip" that would have happened.
>
> | *Girl from Belém who married just after her first pregnancy*
> *(at age 15 to a man who was 20); she has two children*

Compared to adolescent girls not in union, pregnant girls who marry gain a host of additional responsibilities as both a new housewife and a recent mother.

| DECISIONS TO MARRY AS A DESIRE TO CONTROL GIRLS' SEXUALITY AND LIMIT PERCEIVED RISKY BEHAVIORS |

Sexual initiation is perceived as a risk and is met with a response designed to control and repress girls' sexuality – often from a parent, and often supported by the man. Furthermore, different research participants' descriptions of men before marriage, and of single men and non-married girls, overwhelmingly emphasize a life of partying and going out. Society tolerates some engagement in this life for men while they are married, but does not accept it for married girls or women. This section describes these norms as key forms of control of girls that encourage marriage as a "safe" trajectory.

Perceived risks associated with sexual initiation drive decisions to marry. In several cases, sexual initiation and anticipation of a possible pregnancy (rather than pregnancy itself) causes mothers or grandmothers to pressure their (grand)daughters to marry. In a case in São Luís, a man of 18 "took" a girl's virginity when she was 15. As a result, the girl's mother made them marry in anticipation of a pregnancy. Shortly after marrying, the girl became pregnant. Similarly, a mother in São Luís noticed that her daughter was sleeping at her boyfriend's house. The mother feared that her daughter would get pregnant and leave the baby in her care, so she took a preventative measure (i.e., pressuring her daughter to marry) to avoid this "burden." The daughter thus married at age 15 a man who was 27 years old at the time. These cases underscore the significance of co-habitation: once the girl and man are living together, a pregnancy or any other issue is the married man's responsibility, and no longer that of the household of origin.

Furthermore, these cases again show how multiple factors can merge and lead to the marriage. In addition to the initial motivation listed above, the latter mother interviewed also described the fact that the girl was rebellious against the stepfather and the rules he tried to impose, which contributed to her desire to leave her parental home. Here, it is clear that the marriage decision was the result of a mixture of motivations: "saving" the mother from shouldering the burden of a pregnancy; the girl's desire to leave her household of origin; and being courted gradually by the boyfriend until she moved in with him.

The importance attributed to virginity as representative of a girl's worth comes across strongly in the research. A grandmother in Belém, who said that her granddaughter "ran away" with a man around the time she got pregnant at age 14, twice used an expression about a girl losing her virginity that connotes losing her worth, literally translated as "becoming nothing" *("ser mais nada")*. The importance of virginity is connected to girls' lower level of experience in both life and relationships compared to the experience of the men they have sex with and marry (and this lack of experience can pose potential risks to the girl in terms of her sexual and reproductive health and safety).

When asked whether virginity is important to them, most men said that virginity did not matter when choosing a girl to marry (only a few said it was important), yet many preferred it. One married man said that virginity made it easier to know the woman he is now married to would not be involved with other men from the past, thus associating virginity with loyalty:

> Yes, virginity is important. Sometimes you get to know someone and she's gone through several men. Then that thought always comes up, that she's been with other people in her life and whatnot. And if someone calls, then you'll think that it's that guy that she dated *(namorava)*. I think virginity is important for this reason; that way, you won't have this lack of trust *(essas desconfianças)*.
>
> | *Married man from Belém who married recently, at age 27, a girl of 17 who is pregnant (he ascribes the pregnancy to his own "planning")*

COMPARISON BETWEEN MARRIAGE AND "RISKY" ALTERNATIVES

A key finding from this research is that girls, men and family members alike strongly frame married existence and the single life as a dichotomy: a life of responsibility (associated with marriage) and the opposite, being "crazy," being "loose," partying, having casual sex, leading an irresponsible life (associated with being single). In the research, the risk of being associated with this latter extreme is clearly higher for women, affecting their chances to marry and be respected by the community. For men, however, being single is perceived as acceptable and even encouraged until a man wants to "show responsibility" – typically, when he wishes to impress a girl's family. In this context, marriage represents either a *transition from* this partying life, or a means of *avoiding* it. A man in a focus group in Belém considers such a transition to have taken place with the girl he married:

> Look, when I met [my wife] she was 13 and sniffed glue [a popular low-cost inhalant]. … I took her off the streets and she became a woman.

Almost all men and many girls describe the transition of moving from *so besteira e festa* ("messing around" and parties) to *responsabilidade* (responsibility) once in union. In the words of a girl who married, at age 15, a 22-year-old man in São Luís:

> INTERVIEWER: What do you think your life would be like if you were not married?
> MARRIED GIRL: Look, I think I was . . . really, I would have been bad/naughty *(uma safadona)*!
> INTERVIEWER: Why?
> MARRIED GIRL: Because you know, girls today. I was going toward [having sex] with one [guy], then another the next day. Then I would be going toward using drugs. I was going to be someone of that life *(uma "da vida")*.
> INTERVIEWER: You think you would have gotten into a world of doing drugs?
> MARRIED GIRL: I think so!

It should be noted that, consistent with social norms theory, findings from this field research suggest that girls and men may choose marriage to avoid being judged as irresponsible by others. Interestingly, sexually "deviant" behavior is also associated with drug use and presented as the alternative to marriage.

| DESIRE TO SECURE FINANCIAL STABILITY VIA MARRIAGE |

When asked about the motivations that lead girls in two age groups (13 to 14 and 15 to 18) to marry, most men and girls surveyed in São Luís say that girls marry for economic reasons (i.e., to have someone provide for them or give them presents). The qualitative research suggests that men see these economic motivations as exploitative on the part of girls, with the exception of several husbands who say that they wish to help the girls who are their partners, given the financial difficulty in their homes of origin.

Table 10 shows the differences between the opinions of the adult men and girls surveyed regarding the various motivations to marry among girls in different age groups. The table also shows that girls give more varied and overlapping reasons about the different age groups than men.

Girls have (under-acknowledged) economic dependence on men. Among the couples participating in the qualitative research, all married men work, a few are unemployed, and a few do not report their labor status. No married girls are engaged in paid work outside the home, with the exception of one who helps her grandmother sell food.

Married girls' real economic dependency stands in contrast to the finding that married girls and men, and family members interviewed in the qualitative interviews almost never directly cite financial reasons as the main motivation to marry. At most, they cite small benefits that come with the man, i.e., having a car, in one case. Other men in both sites say that they provide for the girl, but do not cite this as the reason for marriage (even when the girl has had an upbringing of great financial difficulty). Similar to the quantitative survey results, when asked what girls look for in a man, a common response among diverse qualitative interviewees is that girls like men who are able buy things for them. Only some girls mention leaving their homes because of the poor financial conditions of their household, hoping to find more financial security by getting married.

Two factors may explain the low reporting of financial motivations for marriage despite the fact that all research participants live in low-income communities. First, it is socially unfavorable for family members or the couple to admit marriage for socioeconomic reasons (though poor financial conditions appear consistently in many interviews). Second, many girls marry men who are not much better off (e.g., men in their early 20s who have not worked for long, men who have insecure labor jobs, or men who are unemployed).

The research suggests that a girl's marriage to a much older man is associated with the poor financial conditions of the girl's family (further research should explore martial age gap, as generalizations cannot be made from these findings). This, in turn, reinforces the girl's motivation to marry an older man who is able to provide financially and relieve the girl's family of a "mouth to feed." This trend – of girls marrying for financial reasons – repeats throughout the men's FGD in Belém and interviews conducted in both sites.

The exchange of a girl for money did not arise in interviews, although the review of media has shown anecdotal marriage transactions, such as trading a girl for a cow in the state of Aracajú.

TABLE 10 | PERCEPTIONS ABOUT MOTIVATIONS FOR GIRLS 13 TO 18 YEARS OLD TO MARRY

ACCORDING TO MEN (N=145) AND GIRLS (N=150);
PERCENTAGES REPORTED AND ROUNDED UP

	PERCEPTIONS OF MEN		PERCEPTIONS OF GIRLS	
	REFERRING TO GIRLS 13 AND 14 YEARS	REFERRING TO GIRLS 15 TO 18 YEARS	REFERRING TO GIRLS 13 AND 14 YEARS	REFERRING TO GIRLS 15 TO 18 YEARS

GIRLS MARRY BECAUSE THEY . . .

	REFERRING TO GIRLS 13 AND 14 YEARS	REFERRING TO GIRLS 15 TO 18 YEARS	REFERRING TO GIRLS 13 AND 14 YEARS	REFERRING TO GIRLS 15 TO 18 YEARS
WANT TO HAVE SOMEONE PROVIDE FOR THEM	60	65	57	72
WANT SOMEONE TO BUY THINGS FOR THEM (I.E., GIVE THEM PRESENTS)	55	58	55	62
WANT TO LEAVE THEIR PARENTS' HOUSES TO HAVE MORE INDEPENDENCE AND FREEDOM	40	52	51	74
WANT TO LEAVE THEIR PARENTS' HOUSES TO STOP HAVING CONFLICTS AT HOME	48	54	52	70
WANT TO LEAVE THEIR PARENTS' HOUSES TO AVOID BEING A BURDEN ON THE HOUSEHOLD BUDGET	17	23	25	43
WANT TO LEAVE THEIR PARENTS' HOUSES TO NOT HAVE TO TAKE CARE OF THE HOUSE OR OTHER SIBLINGS ANY MORE	31	37	35	47
WANT TO HAVE SOMEONE PROTECT THEM	42	46	43	53
THINK OLDER MEN ARE MORE ATTRACTIVE AND INTERESTING, AND THAT THEY OFFER GOOD CONVERSATION AND ARE MORE CARING AND RESPONSIBLE	39	39	51	71
THINK THAT OLDER MEN ARE MORE RESPECTFUL WITH THEM	41	46	43	63
THINK THAT MARRYING AN OLDER MAN WILL MAKE A GIRL FEEL LIKE MORE OF A WOMAN	36	46	42	57

| MARRIAGE DECISION AS AN EXPRESSION OF GIRLS' AGENCY |

Girls may exercise more agency than is generally acknowledged regarding their decisions to marry and co-habitate. This type of agency – arguably, in the context of limited opportunities – stands in sharp contrast to stereotypical images of child marriage. It opens up the possibility that girls are not necessarily passive victims in child marriage. The role of girls *initiating* the marriage, however, appears to a lesser extent in this research compared to girls saying they wish to marry after men or family members pressure or advocate for it first.

Qualitative interviews highlight several reasons why girls wish to leave their house of origin and enter a union with men. Girls stress restricted mobility, and control of their relationship/sexuality (e.g., parental repression of the girls' sexuality following girls' sexual initiation) as key factors in their marriage decision. The girl leaving her household of origin can also be understood as an expression of her own agency, but the decision is often made alongside the man's encouragement that she live with him. In these cases, the girl's family members perceive the girl's actions as an act of rebellion. Another finding is that a minority of the girls (three) have left the home in which they grew up because of mistreatment or abuse (sexual or otherwise) by a family member. Given the difficulties of disclosing abuse, this number may be much higher. The following case of a girl from Belém shows the contradictions accompanying her exercise of agency: she did not like her future husband at first but her desire to leave the house was greater so she went to live with him, and she eventually came to like him.

> I was entering my adolescence; I wanted to go out, enjoy life. ... I was in a relationship with him for three months, and he invited me to live in his house. So I went to his house. I didn't really like him, but I went because of my stepfather. As we lived together I started to like him... [Laughs.]
>
> | *Girl from Belém who married, at age 12, a man who was 19*
> *(she refers to her stepfather mistreating her but it is unclear in what way);*
> *she was 16 at the time of the interview and pregnant*

The São Luís survey with men and girls (not necessarily married) similarly depicts perceptions that girls marry to leave their household of origin, either "to escape conflict in the family home" or to "gain independence or freedom."[29]
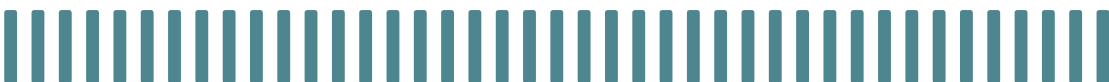
29. See Table 10, "Perceptions about motivations for girls 13 to 18 years old to marry."

Generally, married men and family members do not explicitly raise the notion of girls needing to marry to improve their societal status before they are "too old" (i.e., their youthful attraction fades in the eyes of men). They often use the term *arranjar*, "to obtain," however, when discussing marriage or having children. The use of such a term implicitly portrays marriage and having children as ways of gaining status (especially for girls), consistent with the findings of this and other research conducted in Brazil.

It is important to explore the nuances of girls' agency in future research in Brazil and elsewhere in Latin America. This research in particular highlights the need to understand agency in relation to pressures and influences amid limited alternatives and choices.

| MARRIAGE DECISION AS A RESULT OF MEN'S PREFERENCES AND POWER |

Men prefer, and therefore marry younger girls. Perceptions about men's motivation to marry girls are shown in the São Luís surveys. Both men and girls not necessarily married respond most often that *men want to marry younger girls because younger girls are prettier, and so that men can feel younger.* It is worth noting that these findings echo research on commercial sexual exploitation conducted by Promundo in four Brazilian cities which also finds that nearly half of men who have had sexual relations with girls within the 12 to 17 age range say that engaging in such activity is a *way for them to feel young* (Segundo et al., 2012). In the same study, men and women also *condemn transactional sex with the youngest subset* (i.e., between 12 and 14 years old), just as the present research finds lower "tolerance" of marriages involving girls in the youngest age range. FGDs with men in the present study show that men consistently distinguish between women they have casual sex with and those they marry, or live with.

TABLE 11 | MOTIVATIONS FOR MEN 24 YEARS OR OLDER TO MARRY GIRLS 13 TO 18 YEARS OLD

ACCORDING TO MEN (N=145) AND GIRLS (N=150);
PERCENTAGES REPORTED AND ROUNDED UP

	PERCEPTIONS OF MEN		PERCEPTIONS OF GIRLS	
	REFERRING TO GIRLS 13 AND 14 YEARS	REFERRING TO GIRLS 15 TO 18 YEARS	REFERRING TO GIRLS 13 AND 14 YEARS	REFERRING TO GIRLS 15 TO 18 YEARS

MEN MARRY GIRLS BECAUSE THEY ...

THINK GIRLS OF [GIVEN] AGES ARE PRETTIER	71	81	76	83
MARRY GIRLS OF [GIVEN] AGES TO FEEL YOUNGER	57	64	61	77
WANT A GIRL SO THEY CAN TEACH HER THINGS	37	43	49	53
WANT SOMEONE TO CARE FOR	34	39	42	50
THINK GIRLS OF [GIVEN] AGES ARE BETTER TO HAVE CHILDREN	25	37	29	49
WANT A GIRL OF [GIVEN] AGES TO CARE FOR HIS HEALTH IN THE FUTURE, WHEN HE NEEDS	17	21	37	55
WANT A GIRL OF [GIVEN] AGE GROUP TO WORK OUTSIDE OF THE HOUSE AND HELP WITH THE HOUSEHOLD INCOME	15	24	23	52
THINK GIRLS OF [GIVEN] AGES HAVE MORE RESPECT FOR MEN	15	23	24	47

Results from men surveyed in São Luís suggest several additional factors appear to have the most influence on men's beliefs toward sexuality and relationships.[30] *Duration of the man's current relationship* influences his perceptions. All men who have been in their current relationship for less than a year believe that girls 13 to 14 years old marry older men because girls believe them to be more attractive, interesting, caring, and responsible. Three-quarters of men currently in a relationship of over 10 years responded negatively to the same question (p=0.002). Next, *age*: only one-quarter of men 25 to 29 years believe that girls 15 to 18 years are not able to decide with whom they have sexual relationships (p=0.015). In contrast, about two-thirds of men 40 to 49 years have the same perception. Finally, and as discussed in the corresponding sections of this report, higher levels of *education* and declaring not having a *religion* also influence men's rejection of child and adolescent marriages.

Several findings from the qualitative research complement this understanding of married men's preferences for younger girls. On the one hand, many men who participated in the FGDs in both sites who were not necessarily married note young girls' "lack of experience" of being a housewife as a drawback to marriage compared to adult women's experience. On the other hand, most married men and girls interviewed think that adult men are drawn to marry younger girls because men prefer their appearance, and because they are "teachable" or "malleable." As described by men in the São Luís FGD, upon separation the girl will take what she has learned from the marriage (e.g., caring for the house) and "bring it with her," as when she returns to her earlier life with her family. These attitudes demonstrate the relevance of education on actual marriage experiences in order to deconstruct these justifications.

Men's greater power over girls often determines the marriage decision. While several factors contribute to child marriage, findings show that men's desire to marry is most likely the deciding factor in the marriage decision – outweighing not only the girl's preference, but also that of her parents and other family members.

Men's greater power over girls begins with men's "insistence" during courtship (e.g., to accelerate the relationship), and continues throughout the marriage decisions.

30. *The data presented here are ones that have the greatest significance (p=0.02), considering the small sample size.*

INTERVIEWER: How was it when you [and your husband] met, how old were you?
MARRIED GIRL: It was in the street I live on; he saw me. ... He said that he saw me from the window of my house. He said I was pretty and he wanted to *ficar* [meaning date or have a sexual relationship], so he sent me a note. Even though I didn't want to *ficar* with him, he kept insisting, and I finally did.

| *Girl who married, at age 16, a man who was 21*

Even in cases where the girl's family members are against the relationship because she is too young, evidence shows that, eventually, they follow the man's lead and come to accept the situation. In this regard, it is worth recalling a norm that comes across clearly throughout fieldwork: "one should not interfere in the matters of couples."

A man in Belém who married two years prior to the interview date at age 25 to a girl who was 15 describes how he "alerted" the girl he was dating that they would be living together. As already noted, the motivation to marry is affected by several factors, but again, this case shows that the man has definitive influence in deciding on union. His decision was eventually accepted by the girl's family, even though they originally did not want her to leave the house.

INTERVIEWER: So was it your decision? Did she want to live with you?
MARRIED MAN: No, she didn't intend to live with me. So I kept "alerting her." [I'd say], "I'm building on a little piece of land for me, and we're going to live there."
INTERVIEWER: Did you have to ask for her family's permission? And her parents took it well?
MARRIED MAN: No, they didn't take it well. [Laughs.]
INTERVIEWER: They didn't want her to leave home?
MARRIED MAN: No, they didn't.

Importantly, the girl's opinion does not factor into this married man's description of the decision to marry; rather, it is centered on his preference and "winning over" her family.

INTERVIEWER: So how did you do it?
MARRIED MAN: They see that I don't drink, don't smoke, don't use drugs, don't steal. Rarely, if necessary, I'll lie. [I said to her parents], "I should be able to be with your daughter. You know I'm a working man who doesn't like to joke around. I'm a serious man and I'm trying to show you that. If I was a bum *(vagabundo)* I would have 'put a child in your daughter' and left — end of story." Nowadays that's how it is. And [girls] only like *vagabundos*. So I showed them I wanted something serious with their daughter.

A "low bar" is set for suitable husbands: nearly all groups described the minimum criteria as a man who has a job (which not all married men in this research have), and the man not being a criminal *(bandido)*. Men's power is thus a more significant factor than both the girls' opinion and the qualities of the husband. Aspirations and expectations about partners leading up to marriage are notably distinct and unequal in making the decision to marry.

Perceptions of younger men as "vagabonds" and older men as providers drive unions between girls and adult men. Young men – from adolescence through their early 20s – constitute the demographic most consistently described in negative terms by girls, adult men (primarily those starting in their late 20s), and their family members, especially in terms of their lack of appeal as potential husbands. They are consistently referred to as irresponsible and good-for-nothing vagabonds who only want to have fun or joke around. These perceptions of young men reinforce the acceptance of girls marrying older men who are viewed as more serious, more responsible, and likely to have stable employment and money.

Men in both research sites agree that, in order for a man to be "marriage material," he must earn enough to support the family. At the same time, some men find girls' wish to marry men for financial reasons, as opportunistic (as in the case of a FGD in Belém).

> — In my case, generally girls only talk about wanting older men because they have more responsibility. Around here boys don't want to have responsibility; they only want to play around *(só brincadeira)*. It's about casual sex *(só fica)*, it's a game *(brincadeira)*. And they [women/girls] also say that younger guys want to show off *(ser gabola)*.
> — Right, I think it's a little divided because there are a lot [of girls] that only want that, right? Having fun and taking advantage of life, and others who prefer older people: financially, one who works, is more mature — one who can give me this or that, can give me clothes.

A married man in Belém similarly describes how growing up to be a responsible man (no longer a "boy who jokes around") enables him to marry. Demonstrating to society that he has become such a responsible man also reinforces his decision to marry.

> INTERVIEWER: In your case, what made you want to live together with a younger woman?
> MARRIED MAN: Also in terms of society. One sees that a boy quickly becomes a man; he's not that little boy who just plays around *(menininho da brincadeira)* and all of that. He takes things more seriously, has his own house and work; is seen by society as a regular person, a responsible person.
> INTERVIEWER: Did you seek to live with a younger girl to change the way people would see you?
> MARRIED MAN: It's more or less about the relationships. For relationships, to show that the immature person grew up, you know?
>
> | *Man from Belém who married, at age 25, a girl of age 15*

At times, younger men are also seen as less equipped to "teach" and "care for" girls. When speaking of losing their virginity, girls in an FGD in São Luís said that older men could be more considerate than young men, who were seen as reckless: "A man treats a girl with a more special kind of care than a boy does."

Although many motivations influence marriage – from pregnancy and parental perceptions of risk to financial motivations and girls' agency – in the end, men have the most significant power to determine the marriage-related decisions.

## ADDITIONAL KEY INFLUENCES ON CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MARRIAGES

Three additional influences affect the motivations described above: the role of religion, the media, and urban insecurity in the research sites. Each of these factors shapes social norms underpinning marriage and demonstrates the diversity of marriage drivers.

| THE ROLE OF RELIGION |

Even though the research initially did not focus on religion, the role of religion emerged several times in the qualitative research to the point of becoming a significant theme. Findings show that religion is a very important influence on gender attitudes and norms prior to, during, and after child marriages in Brazil. The research participants primarily belong to various Evangelical/Protestant and Catholic denominations.[31] Religious denominations declared in this study do not explicitly dictate practices around child marriage; however, beliefs associated with these denominations support traditional gender norms that enable child marriage. These beliefs influence decisions related to virginity, pregnancy, abortion, and especially gender roles that justify entering union. A girl from Belém who married, at age 14, a man of age 20 said:

> I'm Evangelical — in the church they teach a lot of that issue that the man has to be the head of the family; he has to make the important decisions, with the help of the woman.

Religion also emerged as a significant factor among men surveyed within the quantitative research in São Luís. Among men who declare that they *do not have a religion*, the vast majority do not think a girl between ages 15 and 18 should marry (90 percent). Men who declare a religion (e.g., an Evangelical or Catholic denomination) are less likely to oppose girls' marriages in this age range (p=0,009).
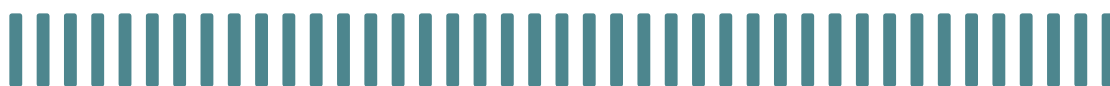
31. *Afro-Brazilian religions are also practiced in these regions (especially the northeast where Maranhão is located), but were not declared in this study.*

Furthermore, the religious beliefs cited by participants support traditional gender norms, favor patriarchy and restrict women's and sexuality and mobility. In the context of girls' limited mobility, the church is one of the few places the men allow the girls they have married to frequent. This is most often the case with couples that declare a religious denomination. For both married men and married girls, the church symbolizes an "acceptable" social institution, synonymous with "settling down" and in opposition to the partying/irresponsible lifestyle so often juxtaposed to marriage. Family members especially, but also married men and girls sometimes reference God as being responsible for outcomes in life, including those related to jobs, pregnancy, and marriage.

More research is needed on the role of Christian religion and other religions in Latin American and African settings in which both child marriage and religion are prevalent. Child marriage often, and mistakenly, tends to be associated solely with Islam.

| THE ROLE OF MEDIA: *"TUDO FALANDO DE NOVINHA"* ("EVERYTHING/EVERYONE TALKING ABOUT YOUNG GIRLS") |

According to the men who participated in one of the FGDs in São Luís, music plays a role in promoting men's preference for younger girls:

> It's true, and not just men, say, wanting to … music itself "incentivizes" men. Nowadays music [lyrics] are always talking about "the young girls" — like incentivizing men to have relations with younger women. It's *sertanejo* music, and *funk* music: everything/everyone talking about young girls.

Funk music in particular is known for sexist lyrics that objectify young women and girls – including, as the man in São Luís described, popularizing being with a younger girl. In many favela communities throughout Brazil, funk parties are popular cultural spaces for the community. However, other Promundo research has already shown that the music, drug traffickers (often the organizers), and other young men who listen to their music model behaviors that highly sexualize and objectify women, and portray violent treatment of women (e.g., being a male drug trafficker is associated with a norm of having one main wife and casual sex with many other women).

In addition to music, television is cited by respondents as popularizing a preference for younger girls by men. For example, the response of a grandmother of a girl who married at age 13 in Belém is consistent with a repeated finding that girls "buy into" men's discourse more than an adult woman would. She thinks television, particularly *novelas*, promotes gender norms that encourage men to have relationships with girls:

They [men] want to be with [*ficar*, referring to casual sexual relations or dating] these younger girls because they are easier than adults. Because adults won't fall for [men's] "lip" [*lábia*, literally meaning "lip," is the word used], and young girls think that's right. Sex on television too — it's also always talking about *ficar*, "so-and-so slept with someone else." And girls think that what happens in *novelas* is true.

| MARRIAGE AS PROTECTION AMIDST URBAN INSECURITY |

Exposure to urban violence – which is greater in the low-income communities where this research was conducted than in other parts of the cities – is not explicitly cited as a reason for marriage, but it emerged as a crucial concern throughout research. The respondents' perceptions of risks girls face when out of the house can be interpreted as a combination of perceived "threats" to losing virginity or pregnancy and risks related to urban violence. Urban insecurity thus reinforces the rationale for girls to enter a union as a way to 'protect' them from being alone in general as well as alone on the street.

The presence of armed drug trafficking gangs is especially strong in the communities in São Luís where research was conducted, affecting the times and places at which participants and fieldworkers could be present. Limited mobility due to living in an area dominated by a drug faction becomes dually restrictive for girls when combined with a marriage girls so often characterize as limiting their mobility. Furthermore, the research team has noted a few participants who may have been involved in trafficking, and also have seen drug distribution during data collection. Field data collectors and protection network FGD participants also describe drug traffickers' girls as those with the best brand clothing, makeup and rose tattoos. Researchers have noted that the impetus for one girl in São Luís to formally marry is to have the proper documentation to visit her husband in jail.

A related strategy of protection amidst urban violence is marriage to a drug trafficker. This type of marriage was not declared in this field research but has appeared in other forthcoming Promundo research. In the case of most child and adolescent marriages identified in this study, the draw of a man as a provider who has money (and often one who is older) seems to be more associated with the man having a formal job and stability but, in cases in other Promundo research, the draw to status, (conditional) protection and money of a trafficker also offers appeal.[32]

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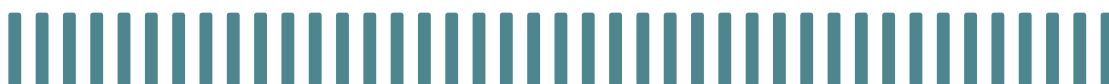
32. *Research in areas affected by heavy gang violence in Central America has also shown how girls sometimes marry gang members in exchange for his protection of the girl's family, but this protection often comes at a cost. Similarly, Promundo's research in Rio de Janeiro has shown that young women's marriages to drug traffickers pose multiple risks to them. Marriage is commonly understood as an arrangement in which the trafficker has one main wife and sleeps with many other women whom he can "obtain" because of his status. He may use violence against his wife in order to reinforce power (and restrict her mobility in order to not be "taken" by other men), and expose her to additional security risks.*

THE CHILD AND ADOLESCENT PROTECTION NETWORK WEIGHS IN ON MARRIAGE MOTIVATIONS

Professionals interviewed from the child and adolescent protection network do not always perceive child marriage as a problem, but they attribute the practice to three main causes. First, these professionals note the *precariousness and vulnerability of the communities* in which the practice takes place, characterized by low levels of educational attainment, poor infrastructure, weak rule of law and enforcement of public policies, urban violence, and pervasive drug trafficking, as well as limited opportunities for girls.

Second, these professionals believe that adolescents wish to leave their parents' house, start dating *(namoro)* and going to parties in part because of an emotional and hormonal "whirlwind" experienced during adolescence, but also as an *escape* and means of tolerating the difficult conditions in which they live. These professionals believe that early pregnancy and marriage sometimes are a result of these dynamics, and are an expression of girls' agency (albeit in a context of very limited opportunities).

The third cause of child marriage most frequently described by the protection network is *weakness in family structures*, including the financial inability of the family to provide children with opportunities. According to this perspective, fragile family structures often lead girls to seek stability and security elsewhere, marriage being one of the most viable alternatives. The protection network often describes families as flawed, sometimes abusive, supporting "premature" sexual experiences, and failing to encourage life planning and provide guidance to girls. In addition to pointing out the weaknesses in family structures, protection network professionals also cite family approval as a necessary factor in determining whether a marriage can take place.

Some professionals describe marriage as a transaction related to multiple forms of security. As explained by a social worker at a women's domestic violence service center in Belém:

> I think it's an issue of security, you know? There's an exchange: one looks for security, the other looks for youth. The man looks for youth, the girl, the woman looks for security. But that doesn't work.

Links between sexual exploitation and child marriage arise several times throughout findings, and are recognized by the protection network. Several professionals in São Luís recognize sexual exploitation as taking place in the Itaquí–Bacanga area. Cases of exploitation are sometimes reported; however, there are gaps in investigations and follow-up. Apart from the weakness of the legal system in recognizing and addressing sexual exploitation (including a tendency to "pass off the responsibility"), child protection officers *(conselheiros tutelares)* themselves refer to exploitation as "child prostitution" demonstrating a lack of awareness of the issue as one of exploitation of minors.

Protection network professionals sometimes describe marriages as transitory: couples live together and then, sometimes girls return to their parents' houses and then continue in cycles of informal unions with other men. Some individuals in the protection network believe that, when a child is involved, the couple may want to formalize the union to offer greater stability for the child. Many family members also encourage (or require) pregnant girls to marry, and at the same time, lament how frequently girls are left to raise children as single mothers. This is a situation family members and girls alike wish to avoid, and is another factor that sustains the practice of child marriage even when girls do not wish to be married.

IMPACTS AND CHANGES DURING MARRIAGE AND AFTER

As only the qualitative research includes interviews with married girls and men and family members of married girls, findings on the consequences of child marriage come only from that research and should be considered within the context of the small sample size. Nevertheless, they show a number of trends related to socialization of girls and boys, education, health, mobility and intimate partner violence.

WHO DOES WHAT AT HOME?

DIVISION OF TASKS BETWEEN BOYS AND GIRLS IN BRAZIL

	MAKE THE BED	COOK	WASH DISHES	CLEAN THE HOUSE	WASH CLOTHES	IRON CLOTHES	TAKE CARE OF SIBLINGS
GIRLS	81%	41%	77%	66%	29%	22%	35%
BOYS	12%	11%	13%	11%	6%	6%	10%
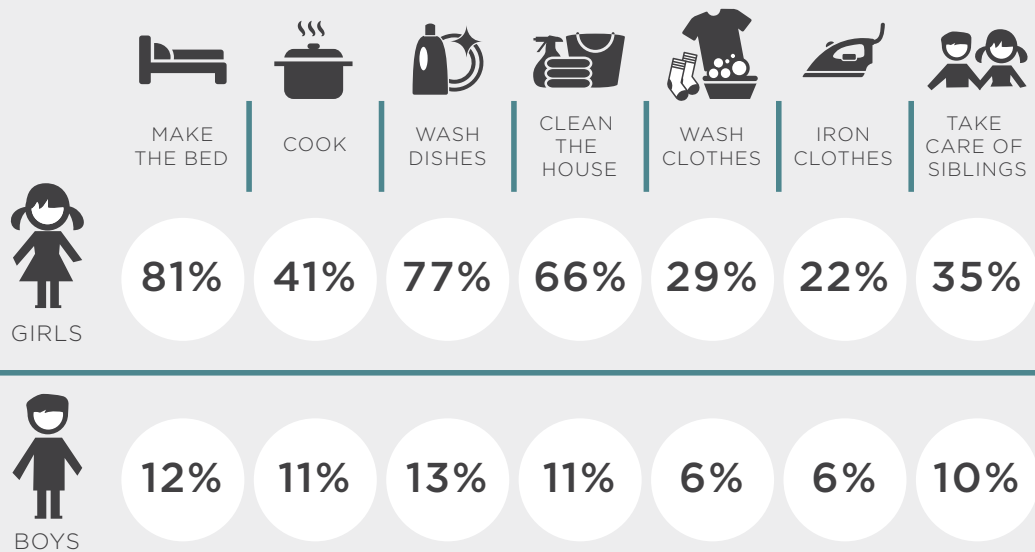
Research and media in Brazil are beginning to document the unequal ways in which girls are raised and socialized. In 2012, Plan International collected data about girls in 21 Brazilian cities (including São Luís), showing that girls report doing far more housework of all kinds compared to boys (Plan Brasil, 2014). The greater time girls spend doing chores is not only spent learning to take care of the house while boys are outside playing or socializing, but also detracts from girls' development of the aspirations they cite (e.g., with employment and education).

The data collected in this study echo such findings. In this context, girls' transitions from girlhood to womanhood are "accelerated" (de facto coinciding with puberty) and strongly marked by traditional gender norms that require girls to devote their time to child care and household chores. According to one key informant, a scholar based in Belém, the fact that girls are already seen as "behaving as women" from a very young age, by taking on chores and caring for children, renders child marriage more socially acceptable. Keeping girls inside the home is also related to parents' desires to protect them in the context of urban violence, along with the perception that girls "hanging out outside" of the house (i.e., doing more than an errand or going to school) are "loose" and/or not cared for by their parents.

In cases where married girls' mothers do most of the household work (or continue to do it in a few cases where the couple co-habitates in the girls' households of origin), mothers and married men say that these girls "had it easy." In such cases, the men in the union are more likely to take on a role in "teaching" girls about household duties they think the girls have not yet learned.

MARRIAGE AND ASPIRATIONS: EXPECTATIONS VERSUS EXPERIENCES

Married girls and men unanimously say that marriages overall do not live up to expectations. In particular, girls express disappointment about the lack of mobility and their frustrated expectations of independence associated with being in a union, at times felt more acutely within marriage than in their household of origin. This stands in sharp contrast with the hopes that lead many girls to leave their parents' house in the first place.

Girls have many aspirations and expectations which are unfulfilled in marriage. It should be stressed that, although girls may marry to escape the limited opportunities and difficult conditions in which they grow up, simply getting married is often cited amongst girls' aspirations. Most girls, however, would have preferred to do so at a later age. It is also crucial to note that girls do not lack other aspirations and dreams. On the contrary, nearly all girls interviewed share professional plans (e.g., becoming lawyers, nurses, or policewomen). Even when they do not have career aspirations or their life plan has changed, girls want financial independence and opportunities they currently do not see as possible in their marriages.

Once married, girls become aware that such hopes are much less likely, if not impossible, to become reality because of their marriage and even more because of a pregnancy or already having children. Several girls in both sites directly attribute interrupting their studies or lowering their professional ambitions because of getting married or becoming pregnant. One girl in São Luís says she wanted to be a model, then a lawyer, and now "at least a technician."

The desire to enter the labor market also persists in girls' marriages. Another girl (married at age 14 in São Luís to a man who was 24 at the time) describes multiple dreams, all contrasting with her current reality in which she must take care of the house and a husband who does not support her preference to work and to delay pregnancy. She describes what she considers to be a fulfilled woman, and associates equality in the relationship with an absence of conflict:

> The man and the woman work, they both construct their home — if they like each other they live together, buy things for their house. They don't think of having a child soon; neither the man nor the woman has a child. I think that's a fulfilled woman; she'll have her independent life too, and then [the couple] will go along together without a lot of work, without conflict.

Both married girls and men have high aspirations for their children, saying that they want them, whether boys or girls, to marry at a later age. It is worth noting that married girls' family members also always mention having high aspirations for their daughters to study and to "be someone." In other words, parents across generations have hopes for their children other than marriage at an early age. Yet, financial pressures and unequal gender norms reinforced by society, as well as the lack of access to comprehensive education about sex and use of contraceptives, continue to normalize pregnancy and unions among girls.

Girls' sexuality is highly regulated. Even *before* marriage, girls are not allowed to go out on their own, and their sexuality and mobility are controlled by a family figure(s). Girls are not exposed to sex education; rather, when it is "discovered" that a girl has lost her virginity, she is encouraged, if not forced, to co-habitate with the man so he will assume responsibility for the girl and the child (if she becomes pregnant). Furthermore, once in union, control of the girl's or woman's mobility and sexuality is transferred from the family to the married man.

As a result, this research suggests that girls tend to rarely have one or more sexual and/or dating experiences that do not result in marriage or pregnancy. They either marry shortly after their first sexual experience or have multiple sexual partners (and marry or co-habitate a number of times). Marriage is thus framed and normalized as a "least worst" option within a dichotomy of controlled mobility and sexuality versus "hyper" sexualization of girls (beginning in puberty and incentivized by the sexualization of girls through media, music and social norms). Such restrictions on girls' options are heightened by the lack of quality education and meaningful employment opportunities, and further curtailed throughout marriage.

The perception that marriage averts a girl from risks or a "bad" life, can also sometimes fosters her loyalty toward the husband. Marriage as security in this sense also demonstrates the conditions of poverty, lack of opportunity, and insecurity in the research participants' neighborhoods. In these contexts, virginity and perceived sexual propriety or purity are also simultaneously valued.

Sex work/sexual exploitation as a marriage alternative. One of the youngest girls interviewed by the research team – 14 years old, and one of eight siblings – remarked that, if she had not married (at age 13 to a 36-year-old man in São Luís), she would be on a path toward prostitution like her sister. This case also points to the need for further research in order to understand whether families are more likely to support marriage of the oldest daughter if there are many children in the household.

> INTERVIEWER: What would your life be like if you weren't living with him? What would you be doing?
> MARRIED GIRL: I think I would be almost on the same path as my sister; my sister is almost on the path of prostitution.

The dichotomous way in which girls' lives are perceived is telling of the lack of relationship, education and employment options for girls outside of these binary pathways. It is noteworthy that this binary is repeated in reference to separation: if the couple separates, girls may gain more freedom (sometimes referred to as returning to the "party" life, or becoming prostitutes). Girls' sexuality – repressed or objectified and unlikely to have been experienced with full consent – is now less desirable. When asked what would happen if her daughter (age 16, married to a 23-year-old, and with a baby) separated from her husband, a mother from São Luís remarks that some girls trade sex or sell sex. Similarly, the brother of a girl who married twice – first at age 14 and then at

15 – says that, if his sister separated she would be a "thrown out" girl, one who has to live in other people's houses. A grandmother describes her granddaughter's marriage in similar terms: now that she is married, it's better than her being "thrown out there," i.e., "loose" in the community.

Marriage for men is tied to respect and responsibility. Just as the desire for greater mobility and independence is a constant in girls' reasons to leave their family home and get married, the issue of respect is a recurring theme in men's interviews and FGDs. When asked about their dreams and being fulfilled, several men describe the girls they married carrying out traditional gender roles as "respecting them" and adhering to their plans. In this sense, the quote below – from a man (married at age 19 to a 13-year-old girl) interviewed in São Luís – is representative:

> What makes a man feel fulfilled is coming home, finding the woman — everything at home all well done. The woman not contradicting the man either, you know? I think it's that … not disrespecting, … doing things the right way, as the husband asks. I think that makes a man happy.

Other men in the FGD in São Luís echo similar themes. Sometimes men described the support that came from the girls they married as fulfilling them:

> A woman taking care of him [fulfills a man] — talking when he needs to talk, giving advice, taking him out when he's in a hole.
>
> | *Man from Belém who married, at age 21, a girl who was 15*

Overall, findings suggest that men do not fully support many norms underpinning child marriage, but their entitlement and power, along with some norms and a variety of influences and conditions, enable the practice to continue.

Responsibility is tied to gendered expectations and social status offered by marriage. For girls, responsibility in marriage is associated with *staying at home*; for men responsibility is *providing*. In marriages with a large age gap, the girl's responsibilities change much more drastically than men's (girls need to learn and do housework, cook, care for children, and stop or drastically curtail leaving the house for fun).

As with girls, several men say that being married makes them adopt better behaviors or "doing the right thing." This is consistent with the dominant narrative of marriage as the opposite of a partying lifestyle. A man in São Luís who, at age 30, married a 13-year-old girl (his second marriage to a girl of that age), described this change in his own life:

> We people who are married have more responsibility. Being single we don't have to necessarily help others, right? … If I want to do something wrong, she's at my side to say "that's wrong." And if I were single, I don't think so. … I'd go toward my friends or brothers and do things I shouldn't do.

Marriage plays an important role in men's identity, because it is closely associated with the ability to provide for their family's needs. Married men describe notions of becoming fulfilled by marriage, thereby linking notions of masculinity, marriage with the "right" woman (i.e., one who respects him), responsibility and being a provider as reflected in interviews with married men, and FGDs with men (married and unmarried) in both cities. The quoted comment above also demonstrates the relevance of challenging notions (reinforced by men and women) of "men causing trouble" together. Countering this notion of masculinity means fostering male peer and family relationships that promote non-violence and equality.

Responsibility (mainly to provide) is also a key attribute that men stress once they are within marriage. "Assuming (responsibility for) the marriage" is viewed as a defining factor of manhood. Another married man –whom field researchers think might have been involved in drug trafficking – describes his newly-gained responsibility when asked what has changed in his life.

> A lot changed because I wasn't this way [before]. Because I didn't work; I just stayed out in the street, doing nonsense *(fazendo besteira),* you know? Then after I got married I straightened up. … And now that I have a child, the responsibility is even bigger.
>
> | *Married man from São Luís who married, at age 25, a girl of 14*

UNEQUAL GENDER NORMS WITHIN MARRIAGE

Gender norms – socially ascribed appropriate or expected behaviors of individuals – apply in highly unequal ways among couples in this research. While inequality can exist in relationships involving all ages, it assumes a pronounced form in child and adolescent marriages. This section discusses three main sets of norms that have emerged in the research: the ways in which men hold unequal power in marriages; expectations that girls adhere to the preferences of, serve and "hold onto" husbands; critical everyday strategies girls use to contest and negotiate their positions, with varying degrees of success, in light of the greater power wielded by men in marriage.

MEN'S UNEQUAL POWER: LIFE EXPERIENCE, AGE, ECONOMIC STATUS | Older men's age places them at a significant advantage in a union with a younger girl. Male sexual entitlement sets the tone for unequal marriages: on the one hand, it is socially acceptable for men to go out at night and their infidelity is permitted; on the other hand, expectations about married life for girls are centered around 'settling down' at home/ not seeing peers, virginity until marriage and being faithful (these themes emerge in many interviews and in among men in their 50s and 60s in a Belém FGD). Accordingly,, gender roles within marriage in the research settings largely follow traditional, unequal roles: married men are the providers, and girls are the caregivers with responsibility for household tasks.

Men's greater life experience gives them broader access to peer networks and mobility, educational and employment opportunities, and more relationship experience. In São Luís, a 54-year-old grandmother describes how a man was "smarter" (more experienced and streetwise) than her granddaughter and thus able to influence her:

> GRANDMOTHER: When she turned 15, he [at 23] was smarter than her, and "filled her head."
> INTERVIEWER: Why do you think he was smarter than her?
> GRANDMOTHER: Because he is more experienced: he is more able to interact with people on the street, with women, understand? And she is not; she was never "a girl who goes out" *(saideira)*; she was always in the house. She would go out, but once in a while with a neighbor, with the daughters of the neighbor. During São João [a festival] I let her, I didn't ask for much; but when I went out, I always brought her.

Similarly, in a discussion about the consequences of the age and experience difference between men and girls, the mother of a married girl in São Luís uses the term *lábia* (literally translated as "lip") to refer to men's "lip" or "talk" that can easily convince or mold younger girls. She attributes the pregnancy and marriage of her daughter at age 15 to this "lip":

> MOTHER: It's because of experience, understand? He's lived more, you know? I think so.
> INTERVIEWER: Experience in what, are you talking about?
> MOTHER: I especially wanted my daughter to have dated a man her age, because maybe if she had been with a person her age, she might not have gotten pregnant. She might be just studying, she might be just dating *(namorando)*, you know? Because whenever a man is more experienced than a woman, the man has more lip; he is more mature, right? He's already lived... he convinces the woman because a man has more lip than a woman.

Interestingly, a man in the São Luís FGD acknowledges the advantage that greater experience gives men upon entering marriage, and the fact that it is easier for a man to "re-start" his life after a separation. However, he considers men "passing their knowledge" to girls during marriage as something of a favor to girls, who could then use this knowledge in their lives.

Larger age gap between couples, in marriages involving younger girls and older men, is associated with less equitable relationships. Girls, family members and men all acknowledge that girls' younger age makes them vulnerable to being controlled or "molded." In addition, married men in older age groups seem more fixed in their views about gender roles, whereas there are several cases of the youngest married men among the research participants (i.e., from 18 years of age to the early 20s), "testing" their power and being potentially more flexible in altering their views.

Girls consistently prefer men roughly five to nine years older, but no girls prefer significantly older men. This is true among married girls and unmarried girls surveyed. The largest age gap in the research is of a man in São Luís of age 58 married to a girl of 18, whose

relationship began a year prior to that in secrecy from the girl's family; she started co-habitating with him and he plans to formally marry her. Girls overwhelmingly do not prefer boys their own age, repeatedly referring to them as "good for nothing."

According to respondents, society is less accepting of marriage involving 12- to 15-year-old girls compared to 16- to 17-year-old girls. This distinction is repeated several times throughout the findings and is significant because it points to a window of potential intervention to prevent child marriage with girls prior to age 12. Men's and girls' perceptions in the survey about the appropriate ages for certain practices to take place are also consistent with these findings (see Table 8).

In the Belém FGD, several men describe hearing discriminatory comments about a much older man with a young girl. Referring to the young girl that another man married, a man describes the community's disbelief:

> They want to know if she's your "woman" or your granddaughter. So he says, "No, she's not my granddaughter, she's my woman/wife." So then people started believing him. But people thought I was a liar. People were asking and I said, "Look, she's his woman." "What do you mean? You're lying — that's his granddaughter." No one thought she was his wife.

Similarly, a 27-year-old man married to a girl 10 years younger in Belém has experienced stigma for having married a girl because of her particularly youthful appearance: "She is 17 but looks about 13," he says. He notes that having a child and forming a family de-legitimizes some critiques made by community members of his marriage to a young girl. Norm-change work involves deconstructing the notion that certain practices such as having children justify child marriage.

One explanation of age-related marriage patterns comes from a psychologist in Belém. She suggests that older adolescent girls (i.e., 16 and above) are more likely to be with men closer to their age because the girls are more "clever," less naïve and passive than the youngest subset of girls who, she explains, are more likely to "give into" being with older men much older than they are.

> When they're 17, they're more clever, outgoing, so they have casual sex with/date *[ficar]* boys their own age. The younger ones are with older guys. I had a [case] where the girl was 12 and the guy was 32.

Prior to the fieldwork, researchers and protection network professionals in both states hypothesized that marriages with a significant age gaps (i.e., greater than nine years) are more common in rural areas; additional field research could explore this hypothesis.

Economic imbalances reinforce unequal gender norms in marriage. Child and adolescent marriages with the greatest marital age difference are also more likely to be driven by financial motives, and are similar to what are referred to as "sugar daddy" relationships in other

countries. A girl's dependence, and sometimes her family's dependence on the married man's financial support, heightens inequality in the union. In this research, most men do not provide direct financial support to the families of the girls they married, but almost all fully financially support their wives. No married girls who participated in the qualitative research works, with the exception of one who helps her grandmother with a food-selling business. Married men also speak of helping the girls they marry when they need something, such as in the form of buying medicine for the girl or her family member.

"SHE GOES WITH ME IN MY BOAT": GIRLS ACCOMMODATE MEN'S PREFERENCES | One of the most evident consequences of men's greater power over young wives is that girls are expected to adhere to the preferences of their husbands. These preferences range from everyday desires and "tastes," to major choices around sex and child-bearing. This consequence, observed throughout the fieldwork, is exemplified in an interview with a man from Belém (married at age 19 to a 14-year-old when she became pregnant):

> MARRIED MAN: She goes according to the dreams I intend for myself, right? She accompanies [my dreams] *(ela vai seguindo)*. … Because she's younger and I'm older, it's like she goes with me in my boat.
> INTERVIEWER: So you think she fulfills herself with the same things as you, the same plans?
> MARRIED MAN: Right, it's because she lives like subject to being in the same boat as me. Because she doesn't have a financial structure. That's the biggest mistake of women *(o erro da mulher)*.
> INTERVIEWER: Biggest mistake?
> MARRIED MAN: Mistake, in the sense of not structuring themselves, not having independence — and that makes them submissive to men. She's subject to my choices.

The boat serves as a powerful metaphor of the man's acknowledgement that the girl he married must follow his dreams and plans. He describes her submission to him, and attributes – and naturalizes – the lack of financial structure and independence as the "mistake of women" (in this case the girl became pregnant).

Similarly, another man in Belém describes how a wife (*mulher*, or "woman") is also subject to "fall" or suffers when the man falls:

> If the man falls down, the woman falls together with him.
>
> | *Man from Belém who married, at age 21, a girl of 15*

> [A woman] has to know how to get along with a man. I think that she has to know how to be the woman of a man. She has to do things the man likes. If the man does something, she has to do it too. She has to be acting like a wife *(tem que tá fazendo a esposa)*.
>
> | *Man from Belém who married, at age 23, a girl of 16*

In the next example, and in most quoted remarks, the man sees himself as the dominant figure; the girl he married must agree with *him*, accompany *him*, and go along with *his* tastes. Interestingly, he justifies the importance of her agreement with him in the context of his heart condition. He later refers to the need to treat her well enough that she will not leave him, reasoning that it is harder for him to find a younger girl to marry now that he is 58 years old. This relationship also represents the largest marital age gap encountered in the research among couples in a union.

> At my age — I have a heart condition — I live "naturally," thank God. But for me to be a "natural" man, the woman has to agree with me and accompany me. A relationship works when both "get it right"; it's not worth it if the man wants something and the woman does not, or the woman wants something and he doesn't. Things have to be from both sides.
>
> | *58-year-old man from São Luís, who had been co-habitating for some time*
> *with a girl of age 18 after they hid the relationship from her parents*
> *(he has two previous marriages and three children)*

Several married girls describe similar experiences, including a 17-year-old from São Luís who married when she was 14 and the man was 21. As in many other cases, she recounts the words of the man to whom she is married, that she should go along with his "tastes" in order to avoid a fight:

> He said — just like that — "ah, I have to go along with his tastes; if not we'll have fights."

This married girl continues to make several thoughtful reflections. In one of several references to herself, and younger women in general, being manipulated in marriage, she blames herself and says she allows him to exert power over her. She also makes critical distinctions about the man's entitlement to mobility compared to his control of hers:

> That's my fault, because my mom said, "Guys don't get used to things." If he went out, he would *tell me*. If I went out, I would *ask*; it is always like that. I didn't ask my mom [whether I could go out] and now I'm asking him. ... in some way, the blame for him being able to exert this power over me is mine.

She continues to reflect on asking the man for permission to go out, including how to avoid making him angry and to appease his ego. Several times, she says it is her fault for allowing him to hold power over her and for putting herself in this position in the marriage.

GIRLS SERVING AND "HOLDING ONTO" MEN | In the context of discussing sharing of tasks, or men doing traditionally female tasks, a few men in the Belém FGD share an attitude of: "Why be married at all?"

— Because there are woman who are like that: the guy works, and when he comes back, he has to make food, bathe the children, and do a bunch of things at home. Why'd he get a woman? For her to be a man?
— Otherwise, it's best for the guy to be alone.

Interestingly, girls and family members often support the same views as these men, as described by one girl in a FGD in Belém. She points out the need for a married girl to cook and treat the married man well in order to "keep" him; otherwise he could just live with his mother. Girls make references on several occasions to thinking men would leave if they came home to an unkempt house, or to a complaining, disobedient, or difficult wife.

> [A woman should] give a little attention when a man comes home from work *(serviço)*. The person leaves the house… he kills himself working and gets home, and she treats him poorly? Doesn't even get up to heat up food or give dinner or lunch to her husband? Who is going to want a woman like that? No one. If a man is going to have to live that way, he can live at his mother's house. His mother can serve him, rather than staying with a young girl who won't help him. That's the reality. I think that's it.
>
> | *Girl who participated in a FGD in Belém*

While some men recognize benefits of marrying adult women, their beliefs remain gender-inequitable. Not all men prefer young girls; yet the men who talk about preferring adult women also convey inequitable norms. One 33-year-old man in the São Luís FGD contrasts the appeal of young girls today with the appeal of older women (according to a saying):

> There used to be a saying *(ditado)*: "an old pot makes good food." Today, it's the opposite.

It is telling that the man who seemingly contradicts the others and favors the idea of dating older women, also refers to them in a sexist and derogatory way. For example, in the same FGD, he lists the drawbacks of dating younger girls, including having to deal with their parents and worrying about them having sex with other men.

> Young girls *(novinhas)* only make your life complicated, in terms of their fathers and mothers, you know? You are with a young girl like that [*pequena*, translated as little], and until you put her on your terms, it's bad. You're going to go to work worried: "Is she 'on top of' [having sex with] another guy?" And the older woman *(coroa)*, no, she's more calm, more on her own. You get home, your clothes are "cool" [washed, taken care of]; your food is there. So it's more adequate [to be with an older woman].

Several other men in the Belém FGD add to this list of "problems" of marrying younger girls. One man says he is too old for younger girls and it would only end up causing a problem; other men refer to having to take care of younger girls or wait for the girls themselves to learn to take care of the house.

The concept of "partnership" in marriage rarely arises in the qualitative research; however, some men's descriptions of relationships with adult women seem to acknowledge benefits of such partnerships. These include perceptions from men in FGD that adult women have the experience to advise the man, have conversations, resolve things together, and be a partner.

Girls initiate everyday negotiations amidst gender inequitable marriages. Girls often recognize, disagree with and dislike certain inequitable norms and forms of control the men they are married to display. Even though, at times, the girls contest some of these norms and are able to get what they want, most of the time men still have the final word. For example, a few married girls have been able to negotiate waiting to have a child, but have had to follow preferences of the men they are married to in terms of the clothes they wear, the friends they see (if any), and their level of social mobility (including access to educational and professional opportunities). When girls contest too much (and in some cases at all), they are criticized for causing trouble.

Married girls take on roles of "innovating," "stress-avoiding," and "maintaining" the status quo of being dominated by their husbands. As a result of the threat of conflict, girls tend to adjust their behaviors according to what would be permissible. One 17-year-old married girl from São Luís formally married (with her parents' permission) at age 14, to a man who was 21 at the time; the marriage was his idea so she would have authorization to visit him for the 2-3 months he spent in jail. The girl describes her role as "wife," as an "innovator" and, in her own words, "multiplier" (i.e., someone who takes on multiple roles). She avoids causing stress to the man she is married to, and maintains her appearance to prevent him from going away with another woman.

> INTERVIEWER: What is the role of a woman in a marriage?
> MARRIED GIRL: The role of a woman is to innovate.
> INTERVIEWER: In what sense?
> MARRIED GIRL: In all senses: sex, and in the day-to-day. Because today, men see a married woman as one who has to work for him, because he sees what? [If his wife is] woman all dirty, with messy hair, who doesn't care for herself — what will he see in the street? He'll see a pretty woman, one who smells good *(cheirosa)*. His woman at home is stressed all the time, he won't give her affection. ... But the other woman no, she's there all clean, won't cause him stress; he'll just go to her, kiss her and grab her. So, a woman has to "multiply" herself, she has to divide herself across many things. She has to innovate as much in the relationship as with sex; in everything. Because if she lets [the marriage] fall into that routine, it'll be the worse thing.

She talks about how he does not want to know about her day when he comes home (because he thinks his stress is more important than hers), and about his role to provide for her:

He has enough stress, so he doesn't want to know about your day, so you have to take that
stress off of him. … His role today is to work, to "maintain" me, pay what I need; pay the car
… only pay! The business of affection, love — no. Today my role is to "put up" with him; be
that smiling woman all the time, not treat him badly, be good all the time, but that's not
what I want. What I want is to also be able to de-stress too. … I only feel renewed when I
talk *(desabafar)*, but I am learning with myself. There's no point in doing that because he
will get annoyed and turn to one side and I'll turn to another. So nowadays my role has
been to renew things.

Notably, seemingly equitable attitudes on the part of married men sometimes coexist with their
desire to control girls: for example, several girls say that men support their aspirations, but expect
them to stay home. In effect, the inequitable gender roles, social norms, and marital inequality
that characterize child marriages represent a continuation of the norms that existed before the
marriage, and seem to become more rigid with marriage, as with men's control of girls' sexuality
and mobility. Inequitable norms are also at the core of, and enabled many of the other impacts
discussed in the remainder of this report related to, girls' health and the health of new mothers,
newborns, and children.

**Norms outside the union (e.g., that people should to stay out of couple's affairs)
allow unequal marriages to continue.** One viewpoint that repeatedly appears in the findings
is encapsulated in a popular saying across Brazil: "When it comes to fights between a husband and
his wife, don't get involved" *(em briga entre marido e mulher, não se mete a colher)*. This saying is often
applied to domestic violence conflicts, but also applies to the views of respondents on interfering
in marriage matters more broadly.

For example, men in the Belém FGD note that they have not interfered in unions involving
a minor, and quote several sayings along the lines of, "to each his own." Several married girls'
mothers also share this attitude. As one mother in São Luís says: "I respect [my daughter's
marriage]! I'm not one to be 'lecturing' in vain. If I get involved, that's wrong." Girls in FGDs
in both research sites also echo this sentiment, including several in São Luís who mentioned
wanting to avoid the risk of a married man's arrest.

MOBILITY AND SOCIAL NETWORKS

**Girls' mobility and social networks are diminished when they marry, unlike men's
experiences.** For men, the shift to marriage is described as less drastic compared to girls. Boys
and young men in society have greater mobility and freedom to go where they please prior to
marriage, and men retain the option to go out and have greater social networks while in union.
For example, one man expresses satisfaction with the girl he married because she does not go
out, drink or smoke; he, on the other hand, does so regularly. Married men regularly criticize

girls they married for having gone out before marriage, and continue to discourage or stop girls from going out. Consistent with many interviews and several men's opinions in the Belém FGD, a man in this FGD describes the ideal attributes of a wife: "She isn't at other people's houses all the time; that only causes confusion. And that she has her husband's opinion."

The hope for independence upon marrying, met with a reality of restricted mobility and control, is a source of disappointment that girls constantly raise in the research. Contrary to their expectations, upon union, girls almost always spend much more time at home and stop going out or seeing friends. Girls frequently describe not being able to leave the house. The lack of a social network of peers as a result of the union is important to note; it is a key similarity in child marriages in diverse international settings (even in cases where girls seem to have some level of agency in the marriage decision).

> MARRIED GIRL: Ah, I used to go out a lot, I had fun; married life is another thing, right? Being married is something else.
> INTERVIEWER: You don't go out as much anymore?
> MARRIED GIRL: Right.
>
> | *Girl from Belém who is now 16 and pregnant with her first child; she married, at age 12, a man who was 19 at the time (she wished to leave her house because her stepfather mistreated her)*

Contrary to the case of this married girl from Belém who was mistreated by her stepfather but still went out, some girls are restricted from going out in the households of origin. Therefore, marriage becomes a continuation of being confined to the home – often to an even greater degree.

A mother from São Luís notes that her daughter regrets marrying at age 15 when she sees her 18-year- old cousin going out:

> I have a niece; I'm not sure whether you saw my niece who is 18. Sometimes my niece goes out and I feel that... [my daughter who married] doesn't regret having her daughter but she regrets a little having found a husband early, you understand?

A married girl in Belém describes girls' disproportionate lack of mobility as unfair and a possible source of separation. Married at 15 to a man of 21 due to an unplanned pregnancy, she reflects that men wish to keep girls "captive" while they go out with friends. She asks, "Is the woman really supposed to stay at home 'staring at the walls?'" Her reflection illustrates how young married girls may contest the control imposed upon them by husbands. Married men's greater power, however, means girls lack an equal stake in negotiations and decision-making.

Child and adolescent marriages often discourage girls' friendships. Related to girls' reduced mobility and diminished social networks compared to men is the apparent absence of

girls' friendships. The lack of these friendships not only reduces exposure to other life experiences, relationships and aspirations during formative phases, but also provides fewer potential sources of emotional support and help in the event of intimate partner violence, a health problem, or a marital separation.

Entering marriage at an early age appears to take place when girls already have few friendships, and limited spaces for socializing with peers of their own age (outside of school, if they attend) and building relationships. In similar vein, leaving a marriage seems more difficult when the marriage becomes the center of a girl's life (i.e., she is dependent on the man and has few other networks, no engagement in work or school, and no other opportunities). Girls are less likely to develop alternative aspirations when they have limited contact and interaction with others' lives apart from perhaps their family and the church. In a telling example from Belém, a married man associates friendships with 'girlhood' rather than 'womanhood' (and several other men echoed perceptions that staying at home (being *caseira*) is what women should do):

> INTERVIEWER: Is there something you perceive [and say to yourself], "this is already a woman, not a girl"?
> MARRIED MAN: I think her attitudes in the house: wanting to take care of the home, not wanting to go out with friends, not wanting to go to a friend's house and all of that. I think when those things start to happen she's actually wanting to become a woman.
>
> *–Man from Belém who married, at age 27, a girl of age 17*

Marriage thus imposes on girls, undue solitude (rather than independence) during formative phases in which they value socialization and time with their peers. A number of examples from the fieldwork show married girls wishing they could be with their peers who are going to school, or interacting with other friends. A man from São Luís, who married a girl when he was 25 and she was 14 (four years prior to the interview), similarly associates marriage and motherhood with the end of the girl's socializing:

> [The life of the girl I married] changed, because she was also one to go to parties. Now that she's had a child, now she'll have to change her life, break away from that thing of friendships with colleagues, right?

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE (IPV) AND ABUSE AGAINST MARRIED GIRLS

Married men and girls, family members and representatives of the protection network who participated in the qualitative interviews report that experiences of violence within child and adolescent marriages range from the widespread control of girls' mobility and sexuality to physical violence.

Couple disagreements about mobility are indeed the most common source of arguments, according to married men and girls alike. As a girl who married, at age 16, a 22-year-old man describes:

> For me, it's about him [being jealous]. He is very jealous of me because sometimes I need to leave [the house]... and if I leave, when I come back he starts fighting: "Where were you? What were you doing?" interrogating me, but already fighting.

The same girl continues by contesting what she sees as an unjust norm set by the man to whom she is married: She has to tell him where she was going or where she's been, but he does not have to keep her informed in return.

> And I don't like it; I start to say, "How do you want me to tell you where I go if you don't tell me where you go?" I don't need to tell you, but in this case I just need him not to say anything to me. I think that's wrong. So that's why we fight.

The theme of marital unfairness as a source of conflict arises repeatedly in the fieldwork. In addition, everyday forms of controlling behavior limit girls' mobility and sexual behavior, e.g., the married men comment on the girls' clothing if considered revealing, and restrict girls' educational and professional aspirations.

While married men and girls speak openly and frequently in interviews about (normalized) forms of control, they rarely report experiences of physical intimate partner violence (IPV). It is possible that IPV cases are underreported. An egregious case of physical IPV was reported by a girl in São Luís who married, at age 15, an 18-year-old man due to family pressure when she became pregnant. The husband has multiple sexual partners but expects his wife (the married girl) to be loyal; he beats her when he uses cocaine or *loló*. [33]
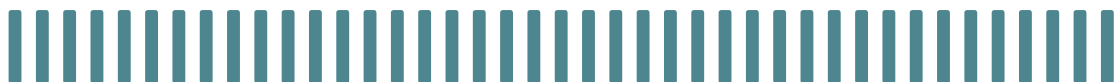
_33._ Loló *is a cheap inhalant – most popular among adolescent-age users – that produces a short-term high.*

IPV is usually perpetrated by men, with only two cases in the research in which married girls are said to act aggressively toward their husbands. Generally, married girls are expected to keep the peace, by not causing stress to their husbands, or adopting their husbands' preferences. When asked if they feel they can leave the marriage if they want, some married girls respond they are able to "run" to a family member in case of need, but most are isolated. It also is important to recall that child and adolescent marriages operate in a wider societal context that reinforces perceptions of women and girls as sexual objects of "lesser value" than men and boys, and in which IPV is normalized (see Annex 2).

Incest and other forms of sexual abuse should be explored further. Several cases of incest have been raised by key informants in both Belém and São Luís in relationship to child and adolescent marriages, but incest has not been commonly reported among the married couples in this research (the exception was one couple who are cousins). Key informants have shared with the researchers information about cases of incest in Ilha do Marajó, an remote island with a large territory, accessible only after several hours by boat from Belém. A key informant from Belém describes a tradition on the island that the father is entitled to a girl's virginity, then brothers and uncles, before giving the girl to other men for marriage. Fathers also take girls from school to have transactional sex with other men who are fishermen by the river. Members of the protection network who have participated in FGDs and girls and men in São Luís mention similar cases of abuse and exploitation, but no cases were directly identified during the field–work for this research. More research needs to be conducted on the subject.

EDUCATION

PREGNANCY, SCHOOLING, AND MARRIAGE SEQUENCING IN THE LITERATURE | There is a complex relationship between pregnancy, schooling, and marriage. Low school performance and low expectations of girls getting a good education, can lead to marriage and pregnancy. Conversely, marriage and pregnancy have a range of consequences on girls' education too (see Murphy–Graham & Leal, 2015 as a recent study from the region). An existing body of literature on pregnancy and education also addresses the connections between school truancy and dropout, and child and adolescent marriage.

An ample body of Brazilian research addresses adolescent pregnancy in relationship to school trajectories (Nascimento et al., 2011; Chalem et al., 2007; Almeida et al., 2006). For example, in a large sample of adolescents in three Brazilian capitals, Almeida and colleagues (2006) found that half of those who had interrupted their studies at least once reported a teenage pregnancy, and that the main reasons for interrupting their studies were pregnancy and children for women and work for men. School dropout due to adolescent pregnancy was mentioned by 40 percent of women who had a child after becoming pregnant. Twenty percent had already dropped out of school before becoming pregnant.

Throughout Brazil, the provision of quality education is a challenge, especially in states like Pará and Maranhão that have high levels of poverty and inequality and generally lower development indicators. Educational outcomes are worsened by poverty, child and adolescent marriage, adolescent pregnancy, and inequitable gender norms that underpin these issues.

TABLE 12 | EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES IN BRAZIL AND TWO STATES ACCORDING TO CENSUS DATA[34]

	BRAZIL	PARÁ	MARANHÃO
NET SCHOOL ATTENDANCE			
FEMALES (6 TO 14 YEARS)	97	83	81
FEMALES (15 TO 17 YEARS)	83	47	38
MALES (6 TO 14 YEARS)	97	82	80
MALES (15 TO 17 YEARS)	83	34	29
SCHOOL DROPOUT RATE			
WOMEN	32	37	40
MEN	41	46	47

34. IBGE, Censo Demográfico 2010. *Retrieved 20 April 2015 from: http://www.ibge.gov.br/apps/snig/v1/?loc=0. From* Estatísticas de Gênero, *data on net school attendance* (taxa de frequência escolar líquida) *and early school dropout rate* (taxa de abandono escolar precoce)*; numbers are rounded up. Early school dropout is defined as the proportion of people 18 to 24 years old who have not completed* ensino médio *and have not attended school. IBGE also offers data according to completion by grade level.*

Globally, research presents ambiguous evidence from diverse settings regarding links between pregnancy and school truancy and dropout. Explanations vary by setting, and solutions cannot be "one-size-fits-all" (Psaki, 2015), though there are several potential implications to consider in the context of unions. Girls may be more likely to drop out of school: (1) if they experience school interruptions prior to pregnancy; (2) when they are the primary caregiver to their children (compared to those who have help with caregiving responsibilities) (Grant and Hallman, 2008); and (3) when they consider leaving school before getting pregnant, given that pregnancy rarely inhibits what Binstock et al. (2005) refer to as a "moderately successful educational career." Additional studies examine the effects of neighborhood and socioeconomic factors as well as discrimination (i.e., from the community) for attending school while pregnant, while other studies find that girls of school age who become pregnant tend to abandon schooling (Chae, 2013).

Importantly, addressing both school enrollment and adolescent pregnancy are priorities in research and policy agendas in Brazil. Similar to trends elsewhere in Latin America, however, there is far less understanding of implications of marriage *in addition to* pregnancy – and in some cases *independent from* pregnancy – on schooling and on longer-term employment outcomes and aspirations. There is also limited data about men's educational attainment and the effects on marriages. Based on primarily qualitative data from this study, dynamic connections and sequencing involving child and adolescent marriage and pregnancy are addressed in the next section in terms of their influence on schooling. Findings from the survey in São Luis also show how higher education levels are associated with views against child and adolescent marriage.

EDUCATION: FINDINGS FROM THE FIELDWORK | As the research in these two Brazilian sites shows, in addition to research elsewhere (Murphy-Graham & Leal, 2015), a lack of educational opportunities can be a *cause* of marriage. This qualitative research also finds one of the most prominent and recurring set of *consequences* of child marriage to be related to education. Namely, marriage – often coupled with a pregnancy – is found to affect girls' education in three ways:

(1) Girls dropping out of school;

(2) Girls interrupting school for prolonged periods of time; and

(3) Truancy, or girls' irregular attendance and interruptions in school (i.e., arriving late and leaving early, skipping classes, disruptions at home).

A girl in Belém attributes not being in school to marriage. The implications on her life are now more apparent now that her husband, who was to support her, is unemployed.

INTERVIEWER: About your life if you hadn't married, how do you think it would be?
MARRIED GIRL: I think [I'd be] in school. It would be much better, you know? I'm not saying it's not good, but in that sense, not having a husband, not having married *[ter me amigado]*, not getting pregnant, I think my life would be a little easier, much better. … Because I'm really young, you know? I should have, how do you say it? I should have taken more advantage of my life. It's not that I'm not going to take advantage of it, but I'm going to have a child now — I have to think more.
[My husband] says that he wants to help me, that he wants me to study but it's me that didn't want that. He gave me the life that I wanted. He gives me that, but now he's unemployed; he's having a difficult time.

This quotation also references the theme of expectations compared to experience in marriages, and a dependence on husbands. It raises again complex questions of girls' agency in making decisions (in this case to drop out of school) that can be contrary to girls' own well-being.

In the qualitative research, data were collected on the highest grade level completed among married girls (n=15) and married men (n=14), and their current enrollment status.[35] Girls involved in a child or adolescent marriage tend to be more likely than their husbands to be enrolled in school at the time of the interview in large part due to their age. The other girls had stopped going to school, and it is unknown whether they will return.

Among married girls enrolled in school and those who are not, *girls are more likely to have interruptions in their schooling than men*. Far more girls than men are behind in school in grade levels below the age-appropriate level. About one-third of girls had not yet reached *ensino médio* (the last three years of school for the 15- to 17-year age range, roughly equivalent to high school), *none* had finished *ensino médio*, even though their ages mean they should all be enrolled in or have graduated from it. Girls' ages range from 14 years old, to one girl who had recently turned 19 at the time of the interview.[36]

35. *In the Brazilian education system, the following grade levels roughly correspond to the US system:* Ensino médio *as high school,* ensino fundamental I *as elementary school, and* ensino fundamental II *as middle school. In terms of highest grade level completed, 60 percent of married girls interviewed had not completed* Ensino médio *and 40 percent had completed* Ensino fundamental II. *At the time of the fieldwork, 73 percent were enrolled in school. Among married men, 64 percent had not completed* Ensino médio, *14.5 percent each had some level of college or a master's degree and had completed* Ensino médio. *Seven percent had finished* Ensino fundamental II. *In contrast to the girls, only 29 percent were enrolled in school at the time of the fieldwork.*

36. *Data on highest education level completed were also collected from qualitative interviews with family members: 38 percent had not completed* ensino fundamental I, *the same percentage had not finished* ensino médio, *and 13 percent each had not completed* ensino fundamental II, *and had completed* ensino médio.

Girls and men alike are affected by men's low educational attainment, low wages, and high job instability. Married men who participated in this research have higher education levels than girls; however, the quality of their education and their educational performance may be just as poor as that of girls.

First, it is evident that a married man's failure to see the value in school negatively influences the girls to whom they are married. One man in São Luís reasons that he went to school, but is unemployed, so it "did not do him much good." By the same logic, there is no point for the girl he married to study. Interestingly, the girl's father has changed his opinion of his daughter's schooling: previously, he had wanted her to study, but now that she is married and has a child, "it would only be double the work." School is thus posed in opposition to a marriage pathway.

Second, in the fieldwork sites, employment prospects – connected to low educational attainment – for both sexes are very limited. Of the 15 interviews with married men and 15 with married girls in both sites, a third of married men are enrolled in school, and the remaining two-thirds have stopped – most often before completing *ensino médio*. Two married girls in Belém note that their husbands also have stopped studying in order to work and be able to support the couple's child.

BOTH ADULT MEN'S AND GIRLS' HIGHER EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT MAKES THEM LESS APPROVING OF CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MARRIAGES

The household surveys carried out in São Luis with the same age ranges used in the qualitative data collected demonstrate the **influence of both men's and girls' educational attainment on their attitudes surrounding child marriage-related practices**. Among men with at least part of *ensino fundamental*, 60 percent related that a woman could have a first child among ages 15 to 17. The percentage decreased to 37 percent among men with at least a partial *ensino médio* education level (p=0,003) responding to the same question.

Several associations of statistical significance were also found with regard to educational attainment of the girls surveyed in households. Most girls with at least some *ensino médio* level education believed that a girl between the ages of 15 to 18 should not stop studying (98 percent), compared to girls who had only completed at least part of *ensino fundamental* (83 percent) (p=0,001).

The rest of this section addresses qualitative interviewees' perceptions of challenges posed by the education system that influence (or are influenced by) girls' marriages. It then discusses the roles of married girls and men and family members in influencing girls' education in the context of a union.

| EDUCATION SYSTEM CHALLENGES |

Overall low appeal and quality of school itself is one of the greatest difficulties reported by research participants; *learning* **is associated with marriage.** A human rights lawyer interviewed by the research team, who has worked extensively on child and adolescent rights issues in Brazil, describes a perception of school amongst girls as "passing time until a girl marries and starts a family," rather than as a pathway toward opportunities in life. Similarly, in an exchange between girls in the FGD in Belém (ages 16 to 18, some married) participants describe how girls who marry older men can *learn more* about "being a woman," such as how to cook. This theme resonates throughout interviews.

> GIRL 1: I mean, when she's with an older guy, she's going to learn more.
> GIRL 2: To be a woman, you understand? Because I know … a friend of mine who has a daughter — she already has a child, she's 18, she knows how to make beans; she knows how to make rice …
> GIRL 3: She knows how to fry an egg.
> GIRL 2: [continuing] She doesn't have to wait for her father to get home to make food: she has already gotten a husband; she already has a child.

A man in the São Luís FGD also reinforces this notion that girls learn or mature from interacting with mostly older men in marriage:

> No, I mean, in a relationship, in marriage, the greatest benefit is for the woman, right? Because she's younger, and so she's going to get more mature along the way, you know? She's going to learn more with the husband who is more mature, you understand, about how to take care of the house properly. Because the man is more mature, you know? He's had other marriages; he's gone through others, right?… She will learn with the man how to take care of the house, the children, understand? And that way she'll acquire things that will serve for her in the future, you know? The man can separate and leave, and he leaves what — everything he's taught her; he leaves her stabilized. Then he's going to start over again, from zero, you know?

It is critical to note that both girls and men a number of times *associate girls' education with marriage more than with school*. For example, some girls view marriage as a way to "learn to be a woman" and to "learn independence." Married girls, however, consistently say that marriage does not in fact bring them more independence and they do not describe "learning experiences" in their discussion of their marriages. The men's explanation of girls "learning from them" further justifies marriage and solidifies men's greater and unequal power and advantage in terms of educational

and life experiences. Men and girls portray school as unappealing and unattainable for girls' lives, although girls and family members nearly always cite professional dreams and desires as reasons for girls to attend school.

Based on the limited data collected with regard with the appeal of education among married men for the purpose of this research, it seems that they share a similar perspective as the one discussed for girls. However, further research is needed to explore in greater depth the appeal of school for boys.

Short duration of the school day is another reported challenge. "Unoccupied time" (i.e., students study only in the morning or afternoon, the standard in Brazilian public schools) is associated, especially by mothers and grandmothers, with girls' increased chances of getting pregnant and subsequently marrying. Socio-economic implications are evident, in that parents (often a single mother or grandmother raising the child) must work long hours and will likely have fewer resources to fill this time, compared to middle-class girls who participate in extra-curricular activities. This lack of activities lessens girls' exposure to opportunities apart from marriage, and limits their social networks.

Schools and other services offer inadequate support for young mothers' continued education. This study finds that marriage (often coupled with a pregnancy) leads to, but is not the only driver of, girls' interruptions and dropping out of school. In particular, the findings show that girls' husbands seem to have the last word on whether their wives should continue to go school or not. Caregiving for a married girl's child(ren) is typically negotiated with the father and grandmother of the baby, thus offering insights into the ways in which these relationships can be leveraged in order to promote continued schooling.

When girls experience early pregnancies, they typically do not only miss school during the birth, but have longer pre- and post-partum periods, because of their increased chances of complications and caesarian sections, which are highly common in Brazil. Missing school for pregnancy-related complications is normalized, as described by a participant in the FGD with girls in São Luís: "There are some girls who have problems during pregnancy, so it's normal that they don't go to school."

A married girl's sister explains that the girl is obligated to stay at home with her baby (rather than bringing it to school as some of her peers suggested), because her husband insists on his wife staying home:

> And sometimes they argue over it; [the husband says], "because I provide for you, I provide for you, so you have to stay at home doing what I want." So he wants her to do what he wants, when he wants.

Flexible enrollment options (such as the *supletivo*[37]) are seen as more viable options for this girl and others to finish school – as discussed in the FGD in São Luís, where a married girl with a baby describes how the school principal advocated for her to return to school.

> And then I couldn't [go to school any more]; she [my daughter] became a girl and in 15 days I couldn't start school again and leave her. So I had to wait for four months, or at least two. The principal was pressuring, pressuring [for me to go back to school]. I talked to my husband and we decided to let it go, so I didn't go last year. At the beginning of the year I enrolled here, to see. I wanted to do first and second year right away (of *ensino médio*), but because of my age (I was still 17), I couldn't. Next year I'm thinking of doing both years together to finish.

Other noteworthy reasons for why girls drop out of school, as pointed out by a Belém researcher, are the fear of someone in the school denouncing the husband; and girls seeing school as a place of fear of discrimination rather than support *(acolhimento).*

| WHO INFLUENCES DECISIONS RELATED TO GIRLS' EDUCATION? THE ROLES OF MARRIED GIRLS, MEN, AND FAMILIES |

In addition to these challenges posed by the education system itself, several factors influence girls schooling according to the qualitative data, namely: pregnancy, support of the married man and/or a girl's family member, and desire for education or for marriage from the girl herself. In the research, Married men and family members emerge as crucial figures in determining whether girls stay in school. Girls and family members generally favor girls' studying (with some exceptions, such as wanting a girl to stay home during her child's first months or years); however, it is clear that, in practice, a combination of a pregnancy *and* often the husband's deterrence, de facto keep the girl out of school.

This section discusses girls' education along the lines of the three main groups identified as influencing girls' education: married girls themselves, married men and family members.

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37. Supletivo *courses were designed to have flexible hours, and to serve as a way for people of all ages to complete school more quickly. They often have low enrollment fees. Several participants noted pregnant and single mothers in these courses.*

Girls' discussion of their own schooling

"Seeing the other girls go to school, and wanting to go too": school as a space to socialize. Girls often recognize that marrying will get in the way of studying and a profession, as one girl discusses in this Belém FGD:

> A woman getting a husband early really gets in the way. She needs to have responsibility of the house and to worry about other things; her head is somewhere else [other than school]. Studying is difficult.

In addition to the many barriers to married girls' education, it is important to highlight findings that suggest that *girls value school as their time to be with age-mates.* This theme should be leveraged in programming and policymaking, in addition to highlighting school as a pathway for girls to fulfil their own aspirations. As a girl in São Luís notes, getting pregnant and not being in school (after she married) made her feel that she was missing out on being with the other girls:

> I cried a lot when I didn't study last year. I went a little crazy *(loquinha da vida)* seeing the girls go to school, and wanting to go.
>
> | *Adolescent girl in the São Luís FGD*

This quotation exemplifies how girls themselves recognize they are missing out on their own girlhood due to pregnancy and marriage. It is also a powerful reminder of married girls' numerous descriptions of their limited social networks and friendships, as school is one of girls' only opportunities to form social bonds essential to their development and protection.

It is clear in the case of both married men and especially girls, that they do not see education as tied to employment prospects and financial independence. Girls and family members, however, often cite these opportunities as desirable for girls. Additional research on child and adolescent marriage and educational impacts in Brazil (such as associated with income), could further knowledge about marriage in relation to education over the course of the lives of married girls, married men, and their children.

Most girls do not return to school. Given the recent nature of most marriages in this research, complete data on the percentage of girls who marry before they are 18 and interrupt their education but return to school are unavailable. Yet, several qualitative research participants from all groups comment that there is a greater likelihood for girls not to return to school.

## SEVERAL MARRIED GIRLS CONTEST HUSBANDS DETERRING THEM FROM SCHOOL

Among a few important examples of girls' contesting the power men try to exert over them, a girl in São Luís describes how she was clever *(esperta)* in making it clear to her husband from the beginning of their marriage that she will stay in school.

> Sometimes in my family it's the man who says, "Ah, you're not going to study anymore." My husband had all these crazy ideas in his head:[38] "Ah, now you've had the baby so you're not going to study anymore." [But I said], "No sir - I will go to school, and the discussion stops here!" I ended the discussion because if you let it go on, the man — he wants to go above the woman, you understand? He wanted to really give the orders *(mandar)*, but I was clever; I was clever and I ended the discussion right away.
>
> | *Girl in the São Luís FGD*

Leveraging girls' agency and encouraging couples to discuss major issues influencing girls' lives are important programmatic points to address in to norm change work. This, and several other quoted thoughts of married girls and family members, also point to the importance of 'setting' more equitable norms from the earliest possible phase of the relationship.

In particular, men in the FGD in Belém suggest that a girl's return to school depends on her own volition. If she wants to go, the participants argue, the girl could ask her mother for support, and there is no reason the girl should stop studying if the mother provides this support. In addition to this assumption that the family member will do the caregiving, such an attitude shows men's lack of recognition of the conditions needed to ensure girls' schooling, e.g., child care, support from a family member and/or married man (participants of the same FGD echo this attitude).
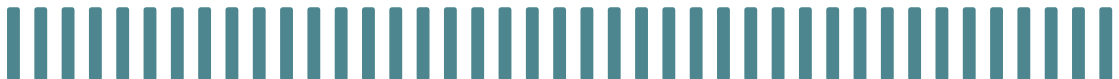
38. Com abobrinhas na cabeça, *an expression that translates literally as having "zucchini in his head."*

Other than dropping out, girls face other less visible interruptions and setbacks. Even when married girls do not drop out altogether, their school performance often decreases because of developments like irregular attendance. Falling behind in studies causes girls to repeat grades. Even in cases when girls try to go back to school and catch up on the missed time, they often do so in ways that result in a lower quality education, such as by attending accelerated learning *(supletivo)* courses.

Additionally, married girls have far less time to study given that their studies take a second place in comparison to the duties, most often in the form of unpaid care and domestic work, that are expected of them from a young age. Husbands' and societal expectations that wives will fulfill these duties also work against an environment conducive to married girls' studying. Furthermore, when a girl spends time physically away from school and moves from her family of origin to live with the man she marries may require changing schools. Girls who change, leave, and return to school several times, and who experience a marriage and sometimes pregnancy during childhood or adolescence, must also organize child care in order to continue to school. Thus, education is not expected to be a married girl's priority in the face of other competing duties that occupy a girl's times and otherwise influences her life plans – and these often-unspoken norms influence the girl's own assessment of her choices regarding school.

These disruptions appeared in the research to pose emotional and psychological challenges to girls, which in turn affect their ability to concentrate on schoolwork. When girls separate from or are left by their husbands, they invariably became single mothers, thereby further reducing their chances of educational attainment. They also face additional burdens, such as needing to secure an income in case that the family does not resume at least minimal support.

Husbands' roles in influencing girls' education

Married men's attitudes about girls' education can be summarized in three ways:

Married men (conditionally) support girls' education. In the few cases where married men support girls' education, such support seems to be rooted in the desire to control girls' mobility. Within this context, the married man prefers his wife go to school rather than a workplace. Therefore, the conditions in which she will study and care for the child are dependent on the husband. Married men also understand their support to girls as a desire to "help" their wives by providing for them, and offering what they themselves never had. As one married man in Belém puts it:

> I want her to study, I want to help her. I want to give her what no one gave me. I want to give her a friendly hand, in the way she never had one in her life.
>
> | *Man in Belém who married, at age 25, a girl of 15 (the couple was two years older at the time of the interview)*

Married men do not actively support or dissuade, but girls interrupt their studies because they marry and/or get pregnant. A few family members and girls alike attribute the girls' cessation of studies to her getting married, even when the husband does not outwardly dissuade the girl's schooling. For example, a mother in Belém who became upset when her daughter married, laments throughout the interview that the girl would otherwise be in school. In many cases, family members recall going through something similar when they were younger and wish for a different story for their daughters.

> INTERVIEWER: And if she were not living with this guy; if she had not *juntado* (married) this guy, what do you think she would be doing today?
> MOTHER: She would be studying; I would be taking care of her baby and she would be studying. I wanted her to study to be someone in her life.
>
> | *Mother in Belém of a girl who got pregnant and married, at age 15, a man of 18*

This highlights the importance of accounting for the effect of simply being in a union on girls' lives, even in the apparent absence of married men's rigid, inequitable attitudes, such as overtly deterring girls' schooling.

Married men – and several of the married girls' fathers – oppose girls' education, yet a family member and/or the married girl insists upon studying. Sometimes married men's influence on girls missing school begins far before the marriage. One girl from São Luís started skipping school when she met her current partner, and her mother did not know where she was until she discovered her daughter was pregnant.

> INTERVIEWER: How did [your daughter and her husband] meet?
> MOTHER: I don't know — they were already talking, they were already dating *(namoravam)* — maybe when she went to school. She would go for a month or more without going to school. She left the house every day saying she was going to study, but she didn't go. The principal called me every day saying she wasn't in school.
> The last time she "went to school" she came back seven months pregnant. ... When she came back she "got this belly" from her child *(pegou essa barriga dessa criança)*.
>
> | *32-year-old mother from São Luís, whose daughter married, at age 13, a man who was 26*

A grandmother who was 54 at time of interview also speaks of an 'interval' of hours between the time the girl's school ended and the time she came home, during which she believes the girl got pregnant. The granddaughter married, at age 14, a man of age 19. The issue of the use of time in or out of school thus again emerges as a factor that had implications for pregnancy and marriage.

As this example and several others illustrate, parental support for the girl's education (usually a mother's, in this research) is mentioned several times. A mother from São Luís describes advocating for her daughter to keep studying:

INTERVIEWER: Do you think she did some of these things like studying, working, that you dreamed for her to do? Do you think she fulfilled these things, or still can?
MOTHER: She can, still can because I'm helping her to be able to continue her studies, because if it weren't for me… neither her husband nor her father want her to study. I stay with the baby so she can go to school.

| *Mother from São Luís whose daughter married, just before age 18, a 21-year-old man*

A mother from Belém says that her 30-year-old daughter stopped school when she married at 16 and had two children, then returned to school, against her husband's will, because of the mother's insistence:

With her husband (saying), "no, you won't go, you won't go, you won't go" [to school], she studies because of her own insistence and mine. Her husband doesn't even want her to study.

| *Mother in Belém, of a girl who married, at age 16, a man who was 24*

As these examples show, there are variations as to whether the girl and family members' attitudes favoring education outweigh other factors that keep girls out of school, i.e., dissuasion of their husbands, and pregnancy. These findings identify several opportunities for making policy that supports girls' education. Furthermore, these variations in sequencing (i.e., around school, pregnancy and marriage) and supports for girls' schooling give credence to studies that show that, sometimes, school departure (or plans for departure) precedes early pregnancy.

Family members' support of girls' education

Family members' invaluable support of girls' education is apparent in three ways, according to the findings of this research.

Family members support the general idea of girls' education. Overall, family members present in girls' lives tend to support girls' education, as most girls want to be in school. Nearly all family members interviewed have said multiple times that they want their daughter/family member who married to be educated and to "become someone," in order to have financial independence, and to have better opportunities than they did.

I always thought about her studying, working and growing in life — but getting a husband right away I didn't imagine; it happened … in my opinion she would study, go to college, choose a profession that she likes to move ahead in life.

| *Mother from São Luís, whose daughter married, three years prior to the interview (just before age 18), a man who was 21 years old*

A mother whose daughter married and became pregnant at age 15 in São Luís similarly recognizes that women could have jobs nowadays, and that relationships can be more equal – which she associates with being a fulfilled woman.

The girl's mother, typically, takes care of the baby while the young married girl is in school. Girls' education is a sacrifice for girls' mothers too (when their daughters have babies), but mothers tend to support girls' education. In a few cases, mothers want their daughters to marry, in order to avoid having to shoulder the burden of taking care of a baby if the daughter gets pregnant. In one interview, a mother says that, if the couple wants to separate, she and the girl's father would convince them to stay together to avoid an even greater burden falling on the mother.

> In my opinion, it's not that she wouldn't be able to work and care for her daughter because until today, as I said, for her to go to school, it's a sacrifice for both of us. So if she were to separate from her husband, [caregiving of the baby] would fall under [whose responsibility]? Under mine and her father's. That was going to happen; they wanted to separate, but I came and her father came and talked to both of them.

Thus, continuing a girl's education in school often depends on the girl's mother or grandmother's willingness and/or ability to help substantially in caregiving; fathers in this research are consistently not expected to partake in caregiving (only to provide).

Family members provide financial support, especially when younger married men are less financially prepared. Financial support is not significant, but the low levels of education for both the married man and girl, coupled with the husband's low wages, means that such financial support sometimes enables the couple to care for the infant and for the girl to continue school. For example, given the couple's expenses with the infant, the grandmother may pay for books or an enrollment fee to a *supletivo* so the married girl can continue her education.

In summary, findings from the qualitative research show that neither pregnancy alone, nor husbands' dissuasion, guarantees that girls will stay out of school. It seems that the combination of girls' desire and family members' support can in fact strengthen the chance that the girl will remain in school.

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HEALTH

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CONSEQUENCES | Married men and girls alike say they have little or no discussion around planning to have children. Pregnancies are mostly unplanned. Findings indicate inconsistent contraceptive use, and perhaps low motivation on the part of men and women for contraceptive use: girls either forget to take the pill or do not remember to get their "injections" (injections are the most common form of contraception mentioned, where used). Some girls say that they purposefully discontinue seeking protection (further research should explore why, but this research hypothesizes that it is related to unequal relationship norms).

Several examples show how married men's disproportionate power influences sexual relationships and health outcomes. A common way in which men enforce control over girls' sexuality is by not using condoms; in an example from girl participants in a FGD, one girl refers to men preferring *couro a couro* ("skin on skin"). A married man believes that a condom is not necessary "if there is trust": if the girl he married requests it, he would know that she must have other sexual partners. A 27-year-old man married to a 17-year-old girl in Belém describes how he impregnated two girls previously, and says that both had abortions. When asked if his current partner's pregnancy was planned, the husband responds that he "planned" this pregnancy alone: he told the girl he would use the withdrawal/pull out method, but then did not. When she became pregnant, the decision to keep the baby was his. Abortion, which is illegal in Brazil, is not considered a viable option by many family members and by some married girls and men.

At times, girls express some level of agency around sex, as in the case of a girl (married at 15 with a man who was 22 years old) in São Luís, who insists on condom use because she knows the man has other partners (and she also uses a IUD because she does not want more children). She was able to negotiate around sex, but not other preferences with her husband.

EARLY PREGNANCY AND CHILDBIRTH | A popular phrase for becoming pregnant among the research participants, is *pegar barriga*, to "get a belly," a passive way of saying a girl becomes pregnant. In the FGD with men in Belém, a male participant also associates the main change in marriage with becoming pregnant:

> FACILITATOR: In what way, in your opinion, will life change for a girl or woman [when she marries]?
> MALE PARTICIPANT: Mostly with her 'belly' — that it will grow.

Findings show that pregnancy is with a common feature in marriage, following one of two sequences: (1) pregnancy, followed by marriage, or (2) pregnancy shortly after marriage. The former – pregnancy followed by entering a marriage – is the more common sequence, similar

to findings from key informants in earlier research conducted in Central America (Population Council Mexico, 2013).[39] Internationally, both sequences occur: according to UNFPA, nine out of ten adolescent births globally are to girls who are married or in a union. The same report finds that births among girls under 15 years of age are rising in the Latin America and Caribbean region (UNFPA, 2013).

Furthermore, there are strong expectations that young married girls themselves will do all the caregiving, often with substantial support of the married girl's mother or grandmother. This is a major theme in interviews with mothers of married girls. One mother talks about her daughter, who became a mother and formally married at age 15. The young married girl will not wake up early with the baby, so the grandmother cares for the baby in the morning.

According to a family court judge interviewed who worked for 15 years in a small city in Rio de Janeiro state, all the child and adolescent marriage cases she saw were those in which the girl becomes pregnant and then is pressured to or wishes to marry the father. In several cases, girls become pregnant shortly after marrying (as in the example of the youngest married girl interviewed from Belém who married at age 12 to a man of age 19, and got pregnant shortly after). Most girls say they wish to have children, but not so soon. The married girls who do not have children also do not want them right away, and describe trying to negotiate their choices with their husbands.

MATERNAL HEALTH CONSEQUENCES | Complications due to pregnancy and childbirth among girls who have recently entered puberty are mentioned multiple times, even though the field researchers did not include in-depth questions about health complications. There is a consensus that adolescent pregnancy is highly common in the communities in which the research takes place. One girl stayed in the hospital for two months after her pregnancy, while another commented that caesarian sections – notorious as routine procedure in Brazil – could make healing take longer. Girls in a FGD talked about not being able to walk up the stairs due to the caesarian section.

Caesarean sections, in addition to being common in Brazil, are more likely to be necessary in underdeveloped, teenage bodies. Hence, girls by definition are more likely to experience a longer recovery time from delivery, with consequences not only in terms of health, but also in terms of lost educational opportunities. Pregnant girls are at much higher risk of having serious

39. This Central America research also points to coupling resulting from forced sex or rape that may involve a pregnancy; this did not arise among cases in Brazil but should be explored in further research, especially given legislative loopholes.

medical complications such as placenta previa, premature delivery, significant anemia, toxemia, and pregnancy-induced hypertension. International data shows that married girls are less likely to receive medical care during pregnancy than women who married as adults (UNICEF, 2014). Research by Raj (2010) and colleagues (Raj & Boehmer, 2013) offers some of the most comprehensive existing health-related evidence about child marriage, pregnancy, and childbirth complications.

During a discussion in the FGD with girls in São Luís, a girl reflects that, if she had many complications during her pregnancy at 16, a 12-year-old would have even more complications (a participant then shared the case of a 12-year-old neighbor was raped by her stepmother's boyfriend). The discussions among research participants convey an overall lack of awareness and clarity around the potential complications of pregnancy and birth among girls.

NEWBORN, INFANT, AND CHILD HEALTH CONSEQUENCES | Maranhão is the state with the second highest infant mortality rate in Brazil (after Alagoas), at 36.5 percent. Pará's infant mortality rate is just above the average for Brazil, at 23 percent (IBGE 2010). Infant morbidities and mortalities are a global public health problem, and the younger the mother, the higher the risks for the infant. As described by WHO (2012), in low- and middle-income countries, stillbirths and death in the first week and first month of life are 50 percent higher among babies born to mothers below age 20 compared to those born to mothers 20 to 29 years old. Rates of low birth weight, preterm birth, and perinatal asphyxia also increase. These conditions raise the chance of death or future health problems for the baby. Pregnant adolescent girls are more likely than older women to have unhealthy habits like, smoking and drinking that pose greater risks to the infant in terms of stillbirth, inadequate growth, and other health problems in the baby.

In this research, while several mothers and grandmothers refer to having infants who died, infant mortalities are not reported among the married couples. In the case of one girl who married at age 15 a man of 22, their son takes medications for convulsions (potential seizures, but his condition was not fully explained by the interviewee). The married girl and her mother took care of the baby, and the mother's husband (the married girl's father) played with him sometimes to "help out."

The experiences of a delivery room nurse in Maranhão, often with young mothers, offer additional insights on infant health risks, health workers' attitudes, and the use of non-medical substances perceived as remedies. In one of her earliest experiences, the nurse witnessed a doctor slapping a young teenage mother because the mother was afraid and kept her legs closed during her first delivery. According to the nurse, neither first-time mothers nor birth attendants are adequately prepared, which increases infant health risks. When speaking about her experiences with births in rural areas, the nurse talks about a hand-made ointment placed on the baby's cut umbilical cord (which leads to infections and sometimes death), and *mingão* fed to babies because fat babies are seen as attractive (the *mingão*, a thick porridge-like mixture, can clog babies' intestines prior to their development, and make babies puffy or overweight). She does not often see the appropriate

information being given to mothers according to each trimester of pre-natal visits.

Findings underscore the importance of advancing Brazilian policies that promote men's involvement in pre-natal health. In recent years, several unprecedented national health policies were developed to promote men's involvement in maternal, newborn and child health, and to promote men's health beyond use of the emergency room. First, national law allows an expectant mother to choose a companion of her choice in the delivery room during birth. This initiative has made important strides with support from Promundo and other NGO and government actors, but it remains to become standard practice throughout the country. Second, there is an ongoing struggle to increase current paternal leave from five days. Third, the crucial large-scale national policy led by the Men's Health Unit, *Pre-natal Masculino* (pre-natal health services involving men), has already been implemented in over 1,000 Brazilian municipalities. The policy encourages the involvement of fathers and caregivers in pre-natal care with women, and also provides an opportunity for the man to check his own health.

This study finds that men are indeed less present in spaces of social service provision in the health system, including pre-natal visits and deliveries. The research teams in both sites observe that the majority of girls seeking pre-natal care are alone, or accompanied by a female family member. Men's presence in at least one pre-natal visit with their partners, however, means that pre-natal care services became sites to recruit male participants in this research. Pre-natal care spaces represent a vital opportunity to address a range of the findings of this research, by involving men in norm change around gender-equitable relationships, better health and other positive outcomes.

FATHERS AND CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MARRIAGE

Overall, the research finds limited expectations of men's potential positive roles as caregivers, from the part of all groups who participated in the field research. Three roles related to fatherhood are identified in the qualitative research:

- **Fathers' role in their daughters' marriage decisions:** fathers either encourage, or have neutral/limited influence in, decision-making around their daughters' marriages.

- **Married men's role in caring for children:** Married men are expected to play little or no role in caregiving apart from being providers. The expectation – reinforced by both men and women – is that children's mothers and grandmothers raise the children.

- **(Older) married men's role as "father figures" to young married girls:** Especially in the case of a large age difference, sometimes married men assume responsibility to provide financially for the girl. This is usually accompanied by controlling and patronizing attitudes, centered on the desire to "teach" their wives.

FATHERS' ROLE IN THEIR DAUGHTERS' MARRIAGE DECISIONS | In a
few cases, fathers' decisions have been pivotal in pressuring young girls to marry. This is primarily
due to the fathers' desires to prevent a pregnancy, or pass the financial responsibility associated
with a pregnancy to their daughters' prospective husbands. In the case of a girl who married in
Belém at age 17 a 30-year-old man, a grandmother describes how the boyfriend approached the
father to ask permission to date, to which the father responded by suggesting a marriage; shortly
after, the married girl became pregnant.

> So she started going to [her boyfriend's] house, so her father called him and said, "You
> want to assume [responsibility] for her, assume it right away. This 'business' of going to
> sleep there and coming back. … So before you get her pregnant, if you want to assume
> [responsibility], do it right away." So he assumed [responsibility for] her.

In the case of another girl in the São Luís FGD, marriage was also seen as an alternative to her
father denouncing the man who "took" her virginity.

As discussed in the São Luís FGDs with girls and throughout the research, fathers are not expected
to be present and participate in the care and support of children they fathered. In this FGD
with girls, more than half of the girls spontaneously raise the subject and share the experience
of having a father who has multiple children with different women. One girl says, "My father
has children scattered around the world!" Men's infidelity and multiple sexual partners (and
sometimes children with them) is normalized by men, and especially by girls and family members
alike throughout qualitative research. In contrast, women and girls in a relationship or marriage
are expected to be faithful.

Findings also show how any interactions between adult men and girls is perceived as sexualized
by men and women in the community. A telling example of this sexualization occurred in São
Luís, where a married girl was thought to have been her father's young wife or girlfriend when
they held hands walking around the neighborhood.

MARRIED MEN'S ROLE IN CARING FOR CHILDREN | Nearly all of the
couples interviewed for this research either had young children or were pregnant at the time of
the data collection – in part because maternity wards and health clinics were used as recruitment
sites for the research.

The married men interviewed consistently express the attitude that caring for children is a
"women's realm" or more "natural" for women. Such attitudes are reinforced by female family
members and girls (married and unmarried), who primarily perceive men as economic providers
rather than caregivers. On account of their youth, girls are often unable to care for the baby on
their own. Within this context, child marriage is justified as a way to provide girls with financial

stability to care for their babies. In practice, however, this research shows that girls' mothers and/ or grandmothers end up doing nearly all the childcare work. Furthermore, financial provision is largely inadequate given married men's mostly low-paying jobs or unemployment.

Mothers of married girls accept and even reinforce men's lack of engagement in caregiving. Beginning with the birth of her grandchild, one mother discouraged caregiving on the part of her son-in-law (who is 23 years old, married to a 16-year-old girl). She assumed complete caregiving responsibility when her daughter gave birth, preventing the girl's husband from playing a more proactive role because she would "take care of everything."

On several occasions in the research, men have conveyed preferences for boy children. For example, one married man in Belém says that, if the couple separated, he would stay with their child if it were a boy (the girl was pregnant at the time of the interview). A 21-year-old man married to a girl of 15, also in Belém, describes wanting a son so he could play football with him.[40] Men also seem to feel they are likely to have a greater parental role in raising boys rather than girls. For example, another man in Belém explains that caregiving roles should be different until children grow older – for instance, men should not bathe children, especially girls, as this is the mother's job.[41]

40. Previous research showed similar findings (which prompted a Promundo project, Children, Subjects of Rights/Crianças, Sujeito de Direitos, to include discussions with parents about gender expectations and son versus daughter preference).

41. Findings raised in Promundo's Men Who Care research were similar with regard to gendered expectations around caregiving roles.

MALE CAREGIVING: FROM "EMERGENCY CIRCUMSTANCES" IN THE ABSENCE OF A WOMAN – TO WILLINGNESS

The few examples of engaged fathers in the research are always related to situations when mothers *cannot* or *do not care for their children*. An exchange in the Belém FGD with men begins with a shared belief that mothers should care for children. One man describes how he has taken his daughter under his care because the girl's mother (his ex-wife) likes to party and would have "killed" the daughter by leaving her at home alone. Here again, the partying/irresponsibility versus responsibility/ marriage/motherhood dichotomy is evident.

Similarly, when asked who would stay with the baby if a young girl and man separated, a mother (39 years old, with a daughter who married at age 15 and has a child) notes that the baby would stay with the father only *if the mother abandoned the household*. In another example, a father assumed a caregiving role with his child out of necessity when the girl he married was hospitalized after her pregnancy. He stayed at home for two months and took the baby to get vaccinated – but his caregiving role seems to have ended once the girl he married left the hospital.

There are, however, notable examples in which married men interviewed and men in the FGDs advocate for the roles of fathers in child care. One man in the Belém FGD, for example, stresses that fathers, too, can take care of the children. He speaks after a discussion of how married girls, with help from grandparents, do the caregiving. A humorous exchange follows about how a few men in the FGD cook: they sometimes burn the food. One man jokes that he has not yet let a nail fall into the food, thankfully. As with fatherhood, engaging men in cooking and household tasks helps to reverse the stereotypes that men are "incompetent" at these tasks and women are naturally "good" at them. When another male participant of the same FGD again suggests that a married man could also play a role in caregiving, a debate ensues. He raises the practical challenges of coordinating child care and poses the question: what are the ways to engage men as active caregivers when they work long hours (many men have construction jobs) and are the sole providers?

Findings suggest men may be willing to find solutions to these legitimate questions and contribute to their share of caregiving; they are not entirely accepting of a gender order in which fathers are completely out of the picture. Men's active participation as fathers is not only beneficial to the relationship, children, and men themselves, but is also an untapped supporting factor in girls' education.

(OLDER) MARRIED MEN'S ROLE AS "FATHER FIGURES" TO YOUNG MARRIED GIRLS | Diverse interviewees refer to married men "becoming girls' fathers." When asked about marriage to young girls, several men point to married men's roles in "raising" girls – sometimes to compensate for the "inadequate education" the girls had received, as described by a man in the São Luís FGD:

> She left her father's house without knowing … everything. There are fathers and mothers that don't educate their children, right? They just raise them, but don't educate them; it's a question of teaching them. So the husband becomes husband and father.

Even when the age gap between the couple is not large, the fathering role is often accompanied by authoritarian and patronizing behaviors. The following observations from a married man in Belém are noteworthy:

> INTERVIEWER: Why do you think some girls marry older men?
> MARRIED MAN: Whatever she didn't know about life; I showed her how life is, how married life is. It's completely different than a single person because with married life you have to think a lot. … A man who's come to "be a man" has to have authority — being young, old, whatever age; you have to have authority in what you do.
>
> | *Man from Belém, who married a girl one year ago, when he was 22 and she was 15*

There appears to be an attitude among family members and married men that, once a girl is in the man's house, she is no longer under the care or protection of her household of origin. Consistent with what is seen in other patriarchal structures, the married girl in a sense becomes "property," the "charge" of the new patriarch (even in the case of younger married men, who sometimes struggle the most to fulfill economic provider expectations). As a result, some families do not know much about married girls' lives, especially in cases where the girl leaves her household of origin of her own will.

Caregiving in the family of origin is, therefore, replaced by that of the married man. This caregiving, however, is accompanied by a highly unequal power dynamic, and is more control than care. The wider the age gap, the stronger such patterns. Several mothers continue a kind of "co-parenting" of the girl along with the husband, before and throughout marriages. For example, an older married man describes how he threatened to call the mother of the girl he married if she did not go to school. Another mother from São Luís said that when her daughter – who married, at age 16, a 23-year-old man – gets irritable, both she and the husband try to calm the girl. This same mother assumed complete caregiving responsibility when the girl gave birth to her own child.

SEPARATION AND LIFE AFTER MARRIAGE

Girls who marry as minors are more likely to marry informally, and therefore lack legal protection when the couple separates. Girls in the São Luís FGD discuss the challenge of lacking documentation (of their own marriage, or of their own children's birth) when attempting to seek help from social services to exit a (informal) marriage. At times, girls take action to stay with their husbands despite no longer being in a satisfying relationship, because they worry about being worse off without them.[42]

Both formal and informal marriage seem to have a greater impact on girls' lives because they favor traditional gender roles, especially by reinforcing expectations that girls do the domestic work, become mothers, and serve the men with whom they are married. Fulfilling these roles also prevents girls from continuing to access education and explore employment opportunities outside the home, while reducing their chances to socialize with their peers.

Findings show that after the end of a marriage brings about fewer changes for men. Albeit for different reasons, men also face limited – though better than girls' – educational and employment opportunities in the communities where this research was conducted. Yet, men benefit from larger social networks than their former spouses, and often the only expectation is for men to provide financially for the child(ren) unless they abandon the mother and child altogether. This research also found reference to the phenomenon of men "recycling" women as seen in previous research in Bahia, Brazil (Greene, 1995). As observed by a female cousin of a married girl in São Luís, some men "change their minds like they change their clothes" – this highlights the fleeting nature of some marriages, where marriage as an adventure for men who eventually tire of their wives.

Following separation, girls and young women are left with few to no education and employment prospects and limited social networks. In nearly all cases, men, women and family members alike say that, if a separation is to happen, the child(ren) will stay with the mother. One mother (whose daughter married, at age 13, a man of 26) in São Luís describes the fear of girls becoming 'loose' when they separate. Descriptions of girls and women, by men and family members, as anxious and nervous are not uncommon in this and other research Promundo has conducted in Brazil.

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42. *One of the measured effects of* Bolsa Familia, *Brazil's conditional cash transfer program, is that women are able to leave unwanted relationships with more financial security.*

> A woman — after she has a child and separates from her husband, some women go crazy ... they go around with one man, date/have casual sex with another *[ficam]*; every day with a different man. There are women who, when they separate, are like that.

Stigma and potential risks are challenges accompanying separation for married girls. For girls, "being left by the man" often generates stigma against themselves, but not against the man (see Moreira & Guedes, 2007). In a few cases, girls say separation is not even possible due to fear of the spouse acting violently, or the girl being unable to provide for herself and her children. According to married girls and their family members, separation can be especially difficult when the girl initiates it.

Throughout the qualitative research, women repeatedly are portrayed as possessions, to be obtained by men and, when the man no longer wants the girl, returned to their families of origin who must now assume all financial responsibilities. This treatment of girls as exchangeable objects is described in the Belém FGD with men:

> In my opinion, if he got her [the married girl] from her family — the same way he got her, he'll have to try to "return the right to her" to her father and mother. "Here, it isn't working anymore... here's your daughter. I don't want her coming after me anymore; I'm returning her with her rights."

Later in the same FGD, another man describes this exchange with his brother-in-law, who "returned" the married girl to her mother. He stresses that once he had "returned" the girl to the mother-in-law, the brother-in-law was no longer responsible and did not want to have anything further to do with her. In saying, "I only want what is mine – a television and wardrobe (furniture)," the brother-in-law no longer feels ownership of her.

Notions of possession and control sometimes last well beyond the marriage itself, as noted by several men in the FGD in Belém:

> — It's harder for her [after separation] because he runs after her, threatening ...
> — There are those men who say, "no she's mine." That thing of possession; she can't have another relationship that isn't that one.

Girls themselves (in the Belém FGD) also contribute to objectifying descriptions of women and girls, when they question why men would want to have sex with women who are "used," meaning "too old" (and also sexually experienced):

> — Will men want to have sex with [*pegar,* literally translated as 'to get'] — something that's already very 'used'? They want those [women/girls] that are younger, isn't that right?
> — The young ones are prettier.

As for family members, they generally discourage separation – which is sometimes portrayed as a potential regression to the "partying life," as discussed in the previous sections. One mother in São Luís (whose daughter married, at age 15, a man who was 22), for instance, describes how she already once convinced her daughter to "hold onto her husband" when the couple fought, in order to avoid an even greater financial burden falling on herself:

> She was going to lean on me, because she doesn't work — she can't work since she has a child and if he [the father] were to pay support, he'd only give a little: 100, 200 reais isn't anything. Especially for a child who takes medications, don't you agree?

Despite being considered old enough to bear children and marry, girls are largely considered not old enough to make other major decisions on their own, such as when to leave a marriage. The mother from São Luís quoted above refers to her daughter's dissatisfaction in her marriage as a "phase," de facto infantilizing her wishes:

> So I said to her: "My daughter, this is a phase. You're going to have to hold onto your husband through the good and the bad. You're going to have to hold on because you have a child. Do you want your son to 'raise' himself' — like you did, without a father?"

Far from being an isolated case, this attitude is shared by most married men and family members interviewed over the course of this research. It is also noteworthy that the mother refers to her daughter's childhood without a father, as a reason for the girl to stay in the marriage: for the child to have a father.

IT'S JUST ON PAPER: CHALLENGES WITH LEGISLATION AND SERVICES

Many marriages would be prevented, and separation would be more feasible, with greater awareness of and enforcement of legislation. If legislation were effective, the provision of services dedicated to child and adolescent protection would improve.

Overwhelmingly, awareness of existing legislation related to age at marriage is limited and enforcement is seen as weak. According to the Brazilian Penal Code, sex with a minor age 14 or below is considered statutory rape *(estupro de vulnerável)*. Girls and men in the FGDs know and agree with this law – this is consistent with other findings that show a greater rejection of marriage involving girls 12 to 14 years old compared to girls 15 to 17 years old.

The research finds less awareness with regard to the minimum age to marry (which in Brazil is 18 years; 16 with parental consent and exemptions beginning at age 14). Results from the household surveys conducted in São Luís find that about 20 percent *believe a law exists* that defines the minimum age to marry in a notary's office. A higher percentage of men (35 percent) and girls

(32 percent) do not think such a law exists for either men or women.

When asked whether a law *should* define the minimum age for men and women to marry in the notary's office, most of the same household survey participants respond affirmatively. Men believe girls should marry at a younger age (19 years on average, with the lowest age cited as 13 years). Girls themselves believe in an average of 21 years for girls to marry, with 15 being the youngest age they cite. Men surveyed think that, on average, the age for men to marry should be above 19 years, while girls say 21 years. The results may indicate participants may give researchers what they think is an appropriate response (i.e., referring to ages above 18) rather than what they practice or believe. The responses also may indicate encouraging findings in terms of suggesting preferences against child marriage.

Lack of legal enforcement comes very strongly from the São Luís FGD with men and several interviews. If a law is not enforced, the participants argue, it does not matter if it exists 'on paper.' A man in the Belém FGD points out that older men commonly date and have sex with girls they meet at popular parties, knowing the law can be circumvented by a bribe to officials if necessary.

CHILD AND ADOLESCENT PROTECTION NETWORKS | Professionals from the child and adolescent protection networks in both sites tend to initially say that child and adolescent marriages are more common in rural areas than in the city. As interviews or FGDs continue, they then describe several cases of such marriages that they have come across in their work in urban areas.

Findings and observations from fieldwork show that professionals from the local or city-level protection networks often hold discriminatory attitudes toward girls who marry and/or get pregnant. These attitudes can be summarized in three ways:

- **Offering poor treatment (from discrimination to verbal abuse) when providing services** in healthcare service centers, schools, and other spaces. The research finds that this treatment deters girls from seeking services, and can also lead to experiences of re-traumatization and abuse.

- **Conveying moralistic judgments rather than offering positive incentives** for girls and boys to construct alternative pathways to marriage. This accumulation of discrimination, as an interviewer describes it, conveys the message of "your life will never amount to anything," instead of "how can we develop a life project with and for this girl?" as proposed by a social worker in a Belém FGD. Similarly, a didactic style could be replaced by encouraging questioning and reflection.

- **Reinforcing social and economic inequalities** when asked about child and adolescent marriage and pregnancy. These attitudes can be summarized as: *the poor do not teach values to their children nor do they have strong family structures.* A delegate of the women's domestic violence center (DEAM), for example, says that poor families "lack values" that middle class families teach their children. Community leaders in Belém and others counter

these forms of stigma (i.e., viewing the poor as "criminals" and "neglectful parents") by emphasizing residents' concerns to work hard and to raise children well.

These attitudes reinforce notions of responsibility of mothers (rather than both parents) for raising children, marriage in the context of other opportunities, and major issues of class and inequality that shape perceptions about child and adolescent marriage practices in the Latin America region. In reality, while child and adolescent marriages are believed to be less common in middle- to high-income communities, they do indeed occur in this economic group.

SEEKING SUPPORT: IDENTIFYING ADEQUATE SERVICES | The quantitative survey respondents are asked whether there are places a girl below age 18 can turn to for help if she is experiencing pressure to marry, even if she wishes to do so. The *conselho tutelar*[43] and family are the most frequently cited institutions by both men and girls. Among married girls, in addition to citing these two options, they most often cite women's and children's delegacies as places to ask for help or to end the marriage.

In the qualitative research, governmental agencies most cited as ones that should be capable of responding to child and adolescent marriage are also *conselhos tutelares*, in addition to social assistance centers (CREAS, CRAS), the Defensoria Pública, women's police stations, and the Promotoria with the Ministério Público. Several challenges related to the structure and capacity of the protection network – both public and non-profit entities – emerge from the qualitative research:

- **Professionals and institutions seem disconnected** and cite a lack of training about making appropriate referrals to services for issues related to child and adolescent rights and relationships.

- **Services are often too full or do not offer girls their full attention (sometimes more attention is given when a child was involved)**. When asked about institutions, girls in the FGDs cite seeking help from families rather than an institution.

- **Demands are greater than service providers' capacity to respond,** according to professionals in the protection network themselves. They note that they need more training and opportunities for professional development in order to address child marriage.

43. *Local child rights protection representatives.*

RESISTING, OR DEVIATING, FROM CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MARRIAGE

On a broad scale, public opinion data shows that Brazilians overwhelmingly believe that a woman should be free to choose her own husband regardless of her family's wishes.[44] In this research, the service providers described earlier are willing and ready to receive training and to coordinate more effectively. Furthermore, many married girls and men themselves, as well as family members challenge child and adolescent marriage practices, such as wanting girls to marry at a later age (yet the marriage practices are still supported by norms favoring it), and forcefully advocating for continued education.

Men recognize at least some negative consequences to girls' early marriage. For example, several men in the São Luís FGD recognize the consequences borne by girls:

> — It's also bad because, for example, a woman, a girl having [sexual] relations since she is 14. ... If that doesn't last for ever and she ends the relationship at 14 and gets pregnant, she's the one who is worse affected, right? Even if she receives support from the ex-husband, she will end up losing because sometimes she stopped studying to care for the children. She lost some of her adolescence. And, definitely, it will be difficult for her to finish her studies.
> — It took her freedom, because she was going to marry.

When the men in the FGD are asked if they have ever intervened in a child marriage, one man similarly demonstrates awareness of how marriage differently affects men and girls:

> [There was a man] who was about 20 and a girl who was 14. I intervened more on her part than on his, right? Because she was going to lose a lot by leaving her house, losing all of that freedom of adolescence, right? But not him, if he separated, he wouldn't lose anything. He'd continue his life.

In the research, men's attitudes are often more equitable than their behaviors, though it is unclear whether this means that they may want to change or is due to a response bias. They often convey attitudes against child and adolescent marriage when speaking of their children's future, and experience contestations from the part of girls. Overall, findings from this research demonstrate opportunities from multiple stakeholders to leverage attitudes and practices that deviate from child and adolescent marriage.

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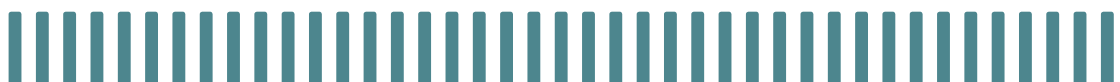
44. *Pew Research Center (2007). Question Q.44 (97 percent responded that a woman should be free to choose).*

POLICY, PROGRAMMING AND RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

Child and adolescent marriage in Brazil is not an isolated issue, and it is central to achieving a number of rights and development goals already on the agenda. Given the lack of visibility of such marriages in Brazil – despite the numbers and the harmful consequences that child marriage so often entails, the first step is raising awareness. In order to give child and adolescent marriage the attention it merits, a committed response is required. To this end, the research proposes three sets of recommendations:

- Strengthen legislation and protection services to protect child and adolescent rights;
- Engage the education and health sectors; and
- Transform social norms that uphold child and adolescent marriage.

STRENGTHEN LEGISLATION AND PROTECTION SERVICES

Addressing child and adolescent marriage requires an integrated approach at all levels of government – federal, state, and local. In Brazil, it is crucial that these efforts be coordinated to leverage existing advances in women's, children's, and adolescents' rights, as well as in education, health, and social policy.

Amend, enforce, and promote legislation. Given the vast size of Brazil's population and administrative divisions, enacting change requires a clear commitment at the federal level. It also entails implementation of policies and programs at state, municipal, and community levels. Listed below are selected priorities identified from the research:

- **Amend legislation:** The Civil Code should eliminate existing ambiguities and guarantee 18 years as the minimum age of marriage for girls and boys, removing the current exemptions that discriminate against girls.

- **Enforce legislation:** Family court judges, civil registrars, and child protection representatives should receive appropriate training on adolescent and child rights in order to ensure that marriages occur only after age 18. Trainings should be part of professional development and should include reflection on professionals' own attitudes toward the practice and the populations with which they work.

- **Provide adequate funding and establish cooperation across sectors** to ensure change happens and lasts. As child marriage is a cross-cutting issue, relevant ministries and secretaries include: Ministries of Health and Education; Secretary of Children's and Adolescent's Rights; National Secretary of Youth; Ministry of Social Development and Ending Hunger (Gender and Women's Policies Unit); and Secretary of Women's Policies.

- **Develop guidelines for preventing and addressing child and adolescent marriage** with federal-level support and technical advising. Guidelines are also crucial because there are no precedents for addressing child and adolescent marriage in Brazil specifically.

- **Promote public awareness**, given the very limited recognition of legislation and the harmful consequences of child or adolescent marriage. Communities – and girls especially – need access to information about how to seek support services, and when necessary, safely report cases.

In addition to laws that specify protection from child and adolescent marriage, in order for girls to be able to fully express their agency, it is necessary to address the socio-economic context in which they live and expand the opportunities available to them before entering or after leaving a marriage.

Incorporate child and adolescent marriage as a meaningful part of protection agencies' agendas. These protection agencies include the Secretary of Children's and Adolescent's Rights and related entities at the federal level,[45] as well as existing networks dedicated to protecting child and adolescent rights. Guidelines and trainings should also be offered to the agencies listed below that act at local levels. These agencies are especially important, because girls, unmarried men, and family members name them most frequently as responsible for addressing issues related to child and adolescent marriage:

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45. *These include the* Conselho Nacional dos Direitos da Criança e do Adolescente*, or National Council on the Rights of Children and Adolescents of the Secretary of Human Rights, and the* Associação Nacional dos Centros de Defesa da Criança e do Adolescente *(National Association for Centers of Defense of Children and Adolescents).*

- **Conselho tutelar** members – community leaders, teachers, social workers – who jointly determine child protection measures for given cases;

- **Institutions that serve low-income families**, including *Centro de Referencia de Assistência Social* (psychologists and social workers), *Centro de Referencia Especializado de Assistência Social* (including more specialized services), and *Bolsa Familia* professionals; and

- **Delegacia de Proteção da Criança e Adolescente**, which is responsible for handling crimes in which children and adolescents are victims.

Services targeting adult women[46] should reach girls and adult women who married as girls, and offer counseling, education, and job training.

ENGAGE THE EDUCATION AND HEALTH SECTORS

Prioritize comprehensive sexuality education in school and non-school settings in ways that are meaningful to girls' lives rather than stigmatizing. When parents and men control girls' sexuality, (e.g., pushing them to marry upon sexual initiation or pregnancy), girls bear the brunt of the consequences. Norms privileging virginity also detract from girls' and boys' potential to have dating relationships and sexual experiences that are healthy and equitable. Approaches should, therefore, (a) encourage parents to support daughters' pregnancies and healthy sexual/dating relationships rather than view marriage as a "solution," (b) promote dialogue about sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and choices, and (c) be designed alongside incentives for girls' education and economic and social empowerment.

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46. *Existing centers in Brazil include* Delegacias Especializada de Atendimento a Mulher *(DEAM, centers for women victims of domestic violence);* Centro de Referencia de Mulher*; and the* Casa da Mulher *in Bahia.*

47. *Promundo's Program M includes discussions of SRHR, including the right to choose one's partner and when this right may be violated when a family forces a girl to marry due to pregnancy. Additionally, Portal for Education on Gender and Equality (PEGE) is based on Promundo's Programs H|M|D. It promotes institutionalized sexuality education while contributing to teachers' professional development via Ministry of Education accreditation. PEGE has been implemented in three Brazilian states.*

Reaching girls, boys, family members, and community members alike in ways that encourage discussion on SRHR and relationships is part of ongoing efforts by Promundo in several Brazilian states.[48] Along with government support, these efforts could be adapted to address child and adolescent marriage.

Promote girls' continued quality education and its linkages with employment. Policies must first and foremost support the continuation of girls' education before, during, and after marriage and/or pregnancy. Structural factors that undermine the importance of girls' education should be addressed, such as household conditions, pregnancy, and the disproportionate and unpaid burden of care.

Aspirations voiced by girls and their family members throughout this research highlight the need for quality education that is linked to meaningful employment opportunities, so that education is perceived as a valuable pathway for girls' lives. When girls lack such opportunities, they will enter into low-paying jobs or remain financially dependent on their husbands. Vocational training or apprenticeships in school should be considered, too. Furthermore, since girls tend to stay in school in the period leading up to their marriages or pregnancies, and sometimes during marriage (despite the challenges to performance and attendance), they should be supported when they need to repeat grades, or receive alternative education to make up for lost school time. Incentive scholarships should be explored.[49]

Daycare also supports girls' schooling and alleviates burdens of caregiving voiced by family members who sometimes encourage marriage in order to avoid such burdens. Innovative forms of daycare could offer spaces for young mothers to develop economic and social empowerment in or beyond these spaces (e.g., in collective community daycares or in the health system). Daycares are also spaces in which to engage men as caregivers and advocates for girls' education.

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48. *Promundo's Program M includes discussions of SRHR, including the right to choose one's partner and when this right may be violated when a family forces a girl to marry due to pregnancy. Additionally, Portal for Education on Gender and Equality (PEGE) is based on Promundo Programs H|M|D. It promotes institutionalized sexuality education while contributing to teachers' professional development via Ministry of Education accreditation. PEGE has been implemented in three Brazilian states.*

49. *Scholarships implemented in the LAC region include one for a girl if she finishes school without getting pregnant (Mexico), and a private school scholarship that has been shown to reduce adolescent co-habitation (Colombia) (Angrist et al., 2002). A similar incentive could be tested in Brazilian public schools.*

Offer youth-friendly and accessible health services. In addition to comprehensive sex education, the delivery of health services to children and adolescents should be targeted to facilitate their access to and use of contraceptive information and services (especially because abortion is illegal in Brazil), and to skilled antenatal, childbirth, and postnatal care. To this aim, health workers should be trained in delivering services in non-discriminatory ways that cater to the specific needs of girls and boys. Additionally, the role of community health workers should be leveraged,[50] because not only do the populations in the study live in marginalized urban areas, but the findings also have implications for rural populations.

Specific government health services that should be engaged include local health clinics such as *Clinicas da Família*, which also conduct home visits and collect household demographic and health data, and *Pre-natal Masculino* ("male pre-natal"), the novel government program promoting the role of men in pre-natal care and birth. Pre-natal care visits are an opportunity to engage male partners, in light of findings from this research on men's limited caregiving throughout their partner's pregnancy and the child's life.

TRANSFORM SOCIAL NORMS

Transforming social norms is an overarching strategy to address child and adolescent marriage. When men and girls problematize child marriage but then become involved in one, it suggests that they must overcome strong influences in order to avoid marrying. Their choices also reflect the challenges posed by limited opportunities (e.g., regarding decisions to continue school and delaying pregnancy and/or marriage).

50. *Examples of health services in marginalized communities are Plan International Brazil's community health workers who conduct home visits, and "mobile" counseling, testing, contraception, and GBV prevention services out of a traveling van offered by the Colombian NGO Profamilia.*

Promundo's Program H|M|D provides a useful basis on which to adapt gender-transformative programming through critical reflection and questioning of the gender roles that appeared in this research. It can also address the norms that arose in discussion about not getting involved in matters "between a couple."

Leverage meaningful spaces of socialization. The fieldwork shows the scarcity of positive and healthy spaces in which girls and boys can interact with peers their own age, because schools do not fulfill these needs. In addition to the spaces identified in this research (e.g., health service centers, *supletivo* courses), sports, dance, and arts venues, as well as cultural spaces such as festivals[51] and music events, hold enormous social significance. Norm-change work in these spaces – if done with sensitivity toward family members and men – could also begin to counter the notion that married or "good" girls should not interact in these spaces. Transforming norms also means targeting media and music, as well as developing behavior-change communication approaches via television, radio, and cell phone applications.

Empower girls in achieving their aspirations. Leveraging the aspirations that girls so often describe should be part of empowering girls, including improving the conditions in which they make decisions around sexuality, relationships, and marriage – and beyond.

Savings clubs and conditional cash transfers (CCTs) – if adapted to girls' needs – are two examples of spaces for girls to develop economic and social empowerment. Such initiatives also challenge practical difficulties raised when men are the sole provider in low-income households. CCT evaluations have shown that participants in CCTs experience increased education, reduced marriage rates, delayed sexual initiation, and reduced risky behavior (e.g., condom use and reduced sex with older partners) (Baird et al., 2009). Furthermore, some evidence shows that group lending with frequent meetings can broaden and deepen social networks (Glennerster & Takavarasha, 2010). In the present research, girls wish to interact with peers and have greater mobility.

Encouraging girls' aspirations via role models and supportive groups with peers[52] is crucial, given that nearly all the girls in the research seem to have professional and life-long aspirations. Alternatively, it is easy for girls to abandon these aspirations and be embraced by one of the first

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51. *Major festivals that involve residents of all ages include Círio (especially in Pará, along with the popular* aparelagem *party DJs), and São João and* bumba meu boi *festivities throughout the northeast.*

52. *The Population Council's* Abriendo Oportunidades *with rural girls in Guatemala is one such program example.*

apparent forms of support and attention: a husband. Girls in the focus group discussions also recommend addressing early marriage prevention; psychological support, especially for those who have experienced abuse; and guidance to girls who are going to marry so they are prepared.

Strategically involve men and boys as part of the solution. There is growing recognition that effective programming involves men and boys as key decision-makers and potential husbands and fathers (Greene et al., 2015). Such programming can enhance existing initiatives in Brazil to promote women's and girls' empowerment; maternal, newborn, and child health; and child and adolescent rights.

Findings that show men's and girls' perceptions that men wish to marry younger girls because they are considered to be attractive underscore the rationale for gender-transformative approaches that address valuing females of all ages beyond physical appearance. There also is potential to leverage male peer groups. Promundo's research on sexual exploitation (Segundo et al., 2012) shows that the percentage of men who say that they have had friends who engaged in sexual relations with adolescents is more than double among those subjects who have engaged in sexual relations with adolescents themselves than among those who have not. These results lead the researchers to infer that peers may have a major influence on other men to engage in transactional sexual relations with adolescents; similar findings could be tested in relation to preventing child and adolescent marriage.

FATHERS | The relevance of interventions that address fatherhood and active, shared, caregiving roles arose consistently throughout the research. Such interventions would increase the understanding that a man's role as a father is more than simply that of a provider, challenging the notion that men should marry girls in order to "prove" financial means and their responsibility as men. Working with fathers could also include challenging the perception of marriage as a solution for girls' "losing" virginity and pregnancy. In Brazil, specifically:

- Adapt *Você é meu pai* ("You are my father"), the Brazilian MenCare campaign, as an advocacy and awareness-raising strategy to address participation in caregiving and fatherhood among communities and in broader settings; and

- Enforce *Pre-natal Masculino* (described earlier), including to share caregiving responsibilities and promote health.

BOYS AND ADOLESCENT BOYS | Work with boys from an early age to challenge gendered social norms, including addressing relationships within comprehensive sexuality education. All groups interviewed discriminate against adolescent men as irresponsible and not attractive for marriage. This perception leads girls, in part, to seek older men. Importantly, findings that show how adolescent boys/young men begin to "test" their ability to exert power over girls and observe inequitable gender norms underscore the need to reach boys at a young age in order to promote equitable norms among boys as future husbands.

Effective social-norm change around child and adolescent marriage means empowering girls, engaging men and boys, and finding meaningful entry points for community figures such as religious leaders. For married girls who identify as religious, the church represents one of the only spaces in which they can socialize, away from husbands and family members. Initiatives should also leverage positive deviants, such as family members, girls themselves, men who encourage girls' aspirations and waiting for marriage, and educators who advocate for girls to stay in school. All recommendations must be carefully adapted to local contexts, but they can be considered for other settings where child and adolescent marriage has characteristics similar to the practices described in this research.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESEARCH

As this is the first study of its kind in Brazil (and an early empirical study in the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) region, albeit with a limited sample size), there is potential to conduct far more research in diverse settings of Brazil and the LAC region. Research in these settings entails understanding links among child and adolescent marriage and the following issues:

- Agency, choice, and empowerment as connected to pregnancy, marriage, and broader education and economic outcomes;

- Caregiving and fatherhood in the context of union, and in the context of maternal, newborn, and child health outcomes especially;

- Social norms and broader harmful traditional practices throughout the region;

- The role of religion; and

- Legal frameworks and enforcement challenges.

Further research is also needed in order to understand how relationship and marital inequality are affected by factors such as:

- Constructions of male and female sexuality;

- Existing conservative, inequitable attitudes within the research sites; and

- The impact of (in)equality and violence in girls' relationships on adult intimate partner violence (IPV) experiences, and quantitative research on child marriage and IPV outcomes.

In addition, research should explore child and adolescent marriage decisions and:

- Links with urban inequality, poverty, and insecurity. Such research would extend the initial finding of this study: that child and adolescent marriages occur in urban areas in addition to rural areas;

- Rural settings, still underexplored throughout the region, including indigenous and *quilombola* communities;

- Family support of a marriage when the family has a large number of children and/or when the girl is the oldest of several daughters;

- Sexual exploitation, including in the context of major private sector projects;[53] and

- Longitudinal research on marriage over time, with adults who married as children.

Research in these areas has the potential to drive evidence-based policies and programming, and contribute to better measures of tracking progress toward change.

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53. *In the initial fieldwork, the implications of marriage in the context of* grandes obras *(major infrastructure or petroleum/energy projects) in Brazil emerged.*

CONCLUSIONS

If most girls have aspirations that did not involve marrying young, and many girls and men convey attitudes against child and adolescent marriage – as evidenced through both qualitative and quantitative findings, why is the practice of child marriage able to persist to the degree that this research (and census numbers) shows that it does?

Findings from São Luis and Belém show that the marriage of girls ages 12 to 18 with adult men is highly normalized to the point where it is not recognized as a problem.

Brazil's informal child marriages share similar causes and consequences with formal child marriages in other settings. These marriages are driven by a combination of both individual and structural factors. Most couples who live in poverty in the field sites are not in child marriages, although most of the married girls are poor. Pregnancy or sexual initiation is used to justify a child or adolescent marriage (and pregnancy often occurs shortly after union). In these cases especially, religion emerges as an important factor in influencing norms around sexuality and marriage. An abusive family member, precarious financial conditions, control and limited mobility in the household of origin, and other factors motivate girls to leave their house and marry. Husbands often have the final word, with varying degrees of influence from family members and girls themselves. Inequitable gendered social norms also support marital preferences, decision-making and inequitable roles, and complicate options for separation.

MARRIAGE EXPERIENCES AND CONSEQUENCES | In the face of these risks and limited opportunities on the one hand (for men and some girls), or of being controlled and having limited mobility in the childhood home on the other (for many girls), marriage is often an attractive option. It offers the appeal of stability and perceived protection from risks. For men, the status of marrying is tied to strong pressures around taking responsibility and providing income; for girls, marrying, along with having children, means staying at home. It offers girls an important avenue toward being viewed as an adult woman and gaining status in the face of scarce alternatives in the fields of education, employment, and other opportunities.

The fieldwork in Belém and São Luis shows, however, that marriage most often does not live up to girls' (or men's) expectations; in fact, marriage expands risks, control, and limited mobility for girls. Specifically, child marriage hinders girls' ability to fulfill aspirations and fully make choices about their futures. It compromises their wellbeing and development, even when girls seem to marry of their own will, with their parents' consent, or for reasons related to financial strain. Most married girls are burdened with responsibilities as wives and mothers without sufficient support, resources, or life experience to meet these challenges. For girls, a childhood or adolescence spent in marriage is one of negotiation, household duties, new motherhood, learning to avoid fights with a husband – not to mention restricted mobility and aspirations.

Living in conditions of poverty and inequality as the research participants do, perceived opportunities are few and insecurities are high. Single girls are portrayed as being worse off and living a more unstable life. "Settling down" at an early age thus emerges as part of a series of other life events for girls that begin in childhood and early adolescence, such as sexual initiation, pregnancy, and motherhood. Marriage is appealing in the absence of encouragement from society, parents, and men and women alike around healthy sexuality, dating, and alternatives. For both men and girls in the research, marriage also represents a strategy to avoid a lifestyle that participants associate with parties, drugs, sex with multiple partners, and prostitution. In this way, marriage is often posed as a "safe" and responsible extreme on the spectrum. Once in union, however, married couples have highly unequal relationships: men exert control over girls in terms of their mobility, sexuality, childbearing practices, and finances.

While child and adolescent marriage rarely involves a ritual in Brazil, this form of marriage speaks to divergent expressions of gender inequality and everyday forms of gender and marital inequality. It is also an expression of family and community dynamics, in which inequitable norms perpetuate child and adolescent marriage and consequences that negatively affect the lives of girls.

This report highlights the voices of girls who sometimes express a desire to marry or co-habitate even against their parents' wishes. Brazilian girls express agency in this research, which is often overshadowed by other influences, and this agency must be harnessed. Their agency also stands in sharp contrast to the way society generally imagines child marriage as victimizing, and this research offers some data to substantiate this claim (thus bringing child marriage into more nuanced, evidence-based, and less ideological debates). Yet, as the Brazilian context is highly complex, findings also underscore the influence parents often have, as well as the control that husbands have over young married girls from sexual initiation well into marriage.

LACK OF RECOGNITION | Scarce attention has been paid to the causes and consequences of child marriage in Brazil. This limited attention is apparent in both the global movement to end child marriage and in the national policymaking agendas. Considering both national and international legal frameworks and the findings of this research, the law in Brazil offers little actual protection for girls. In Brazil, although noteworthy advances have been made with women's political participation and development goals, the gender equality agenda is unfinished. The numbers of child marriages are a testament to this incomplete agenda.

A set of perceptions about child and adolescent marriage emerges repeatedly from the research explaining this lack of recognition. These include a greater acceptance of the practice starting at ages 16 to 17 (but rejecting it at ages 10 to 12). They also include a general attitude – especially from protection network professionals – that marriage in and of itself is not a "problem" (and that it is only problematic if physical violence is involved). Additionally, child marriage practices are assumed to be confined to the most remote and poorest contexts.

OPPORTUNITY | Broadly speaking, the lack of full understanding and attention to the issue presents significant windows of opportunity for policies, programs, and research to reverse this trend. A number of already-existing Brazilian policies can be leveraged, and available marriage data in the country can be used to develop targeted and evidence-based policies and programs. At the community level, several factors have the potential to end the practice: contestation and negotiation that arises; positive deviants; the involvement of not one actor, but several actors in marriage decisions; willingness of service providers to improve their capacity; and the fact that many girls and men do not wish to marry, but do so under certain circumstances. The gender norms that drive relationship inequalities cannot be transformed in the short term, but change is possible; doing so entails promoting girls' empowerment, including within relationships and other aspirations (e.g., education, work, and financial). It means engaging men and boys in the process. Federal support for policies and programs must be matched with local-level commitments to sustain change.

Systemically addressing child and adolescent marriage has the potential to make strides in bridging economic inequalities and achieving other key development goals already on the agenda in Brazil. It is essential to advancing sexual and reproductive health rights and the full protection of human rights for all Brazilians.

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ANNEXES

ANNEX 1
REVIEW OF PUBLICATIONS: LATIN AMERICA

RECENT REPORTS AND STUDIES
ON CHILD MARRIAGE IN LATIN AMERICA

ORGANIZER (AUTHORS)	METHODS / FOCUS	FUNDERS	DATE OF PUBLICATION (TYPE)
EL SALVADOR, GUATEMALA			
UNFPA EL SALVADOR, UNFPA GUATEMALA	USE OF MINISTRY OF HEALTH DATA ON ADOLESCENT PREGNANCIES TO IDENTIFY MARRIED GIRLS AND THEN CONDUCT INTERVIEWS	FORD FOUNDATION	FORTH-COMING, 2015/2016
BRAZIL (URBAN AREAS IN TWO STATES IN THE NORTH AND NORTHEAST)			
PROMUNDO, WITH PLAN INTERNATIONAL BRASIL AND UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DO PARÁ (TAYLOR, LAURO, SEGUNDO, GREENE)	EMPIRICAL RESEARCH: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH ON ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES WITH MARRIED GIRLS AND MEN, FAMILY MEMBERS OF MARRIED GIRLS, THE CHILD AND ADOLESCENT PROTECTION NETWORK, AND KEY INFORMANTS; QUANTITATIVE HOUSEHOLD SURVEY WITH NON-MARRIED GIRLS AND MEN	FORD FOUNDATION	2015
MEXICO, GUATEMALA, NICARAGUA			
GIRLS NOT BRIDES COMMISSIONED (TREJO)	DESK LITERATURE REVIEW AND KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS; MAPPING OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS THAT COULD BE INTERESTED IN BECOMING MEMBERS OR WORKING WITH GIRLS NOT BRIDES	GIRLS NOT BRIDES	2015
HONDURAS			
UC BERKELEY SCHOOL OF EDUCATION (MURPHY-GRAHAM AND LEAL)	EXAMINES THROUGH (EMPIRICAL) QUALITATIVE LONGITUDINAL RESEARCH, CONNECTIONS BETWEEN ADOLESCENT MARRIAGE, AGENCY AND SCHOOLING IN RURAL HONDURAS	UC BERKELEY AND WILLIAM & FLORA HEWLETT FOUNDATION	2015
COSTA RICA			
UNFPA COSTA RICA (GONZÁLEZ GÓMEZ) WITH INSTITUTO PANIAMOR	PRESENTATION OF EXISTING DATA ON *"UNIONES IMPROPRIAS,"* GIRL MOTHERS, AND ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY; EMPHASIS ON DISCUSSING TERMS	UNFPA	2014
EL SALVADOR, GUATEMALA, HONDURAS, NICARAGUA, AND SOUTHERN MEXICO			
POPULATION COUNCIL (SORHAINDO)	LITERATURE REVIEW, KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS, AND AVAILABLE DATA ON 'EARLY UNIONS' (*UNIONES TEMPRANAS*)	FORD FOUNDATION	2013
GUATEMALA (FOUR AREAS WITH PRIMARILY INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS)			
ECPAT GUATEMALA	FORCED MARRIAGE, SEXUAL AND LABOR EXPLOITATION IN HUEHUETENANGO, QUETZALTENANGO, TOTONICAPÁN AND QUICHÉ	IBIS	2013
GUATEMALA			
UNICEF, CIRMA (CABRERA PÉREZ)	CHILD MARRIAGES AND FORCED UNIONS – EMPIRICAL RESEARCH	SWEDISH EMBASSY	2011

ANNEX 2
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE: BRAZIL

The following search categories were selected because formative research indicated that there are no existing publications specific to the issue of child marriage in Brazil, and that there are overlapping risks related to these categories and girls' unions. The relatively large number of articles in each of the top two categories reflects concerns among researchers and policymakers about these challenges facing children and adolescents.

The principal category searched, *"marriage and unions during childhood and adolescence,"* yielded the lowest number of publications (10). Overall, three main trends are apparent. First, publications about (or which mentioned) marriage in Brazil almost always focus on experiences *within* the marriage rather than on the process or motivations leading to it (and how these relate to girls' life plans). Second, research dedicated to marriages, unions, and relationships among children and adolescents is lacking; there is a greater focus on adult relationships. Finally, available literature focuses primarily on low-income populations, both in rural and urban areas.

Within this principal category, a publication by Greene is particularly relevant for the purpose of this study. Exploring the spaces and networks in which marriages are formed, *Blessed Art Thou Among Women: Male Advantage in the Brazilian Marriage Market* (Greene, 1995) expanded understandings of the marriage market in a case study in Bahia, Brazil. Using demographic data, the research examines the contexts and possible explanations for the rise of consensual unions, investigating the ways in which such marriages inhibit state regulation, and favor men's ability to dissolve unions and thus "recycle" women through the marriage market. Given the mostly informal marriages encountered throughout this research, Greene's study is especially helpful to understand the implications of the lack of legal protection characterizing such unions.

Another category, *"contraception and pregnancy during childhood and adolescence,"* yielded the highest number publications (50) among the categories searched. This category is especially visible within efforts in Brazil to address public health and development policy and programming implications. A review of the relevant publications suggests concerns with "regulating" the sexuality of girls and young women, a tendency particularly noteworthy in a country in which abortion is illegal and with deeply-rooted Catholic and Evangelical churches. The analysis of the literature also shows that special attention is given to analyzing cases of early pregnancy; many articles relate life histories and reflect on pregnancy during childhood/adolescence, its challenges and potential prevention strategies.

Another category, *"violence and abuse, sexual exploitation, sex trafficking,"* (37 publications), appears as a priority area for civil society organizations, media outlets (both national and international) as well government actors. This literature includes case studies and proposes solutions to problems of sexual and inter-family violence, which – to some extent – can be relevant to better understand the practice of child marriage. For example, mixed-methods research on commercial sexual exploitation in four Brazilian cities (Segundo et al., 2012) offers findings on perceptions and tolerance around sex, intimacy, and adult relationships with minors that resonate with findings from the present study.

In terms of intimate partner violence (IPV), Brazil ranks seventh out of 84 countries in homicides against women, most of them committed against girls and women ages 15 to 29 (WHO ranking using 2006-2010 data). From 1980 to 2010, approximately 91,000 women were victims of homicide in Brazil, 43,500 of them during the 2000s alone (Waiselfisz, 2012). Rates of domestic violence remain high and also affect female children and adolescents, though the primary regional (Belém do Pará Convention) and national (Maria da Penha) legislation focus on adult women. Research also shows IPV in adolescent dating relationships can be associated with increased risk of IPV in the first year-and-a-half of co-habitation and in adult relationships (Peña Cárdenas et al., 2013; Manchikanti Gómez, 2011; Smith et al., 2003), as well as associated with adverse health outcomes. Finally, IPV prevention efforts should addresses boys' witnessing of violence; Promundo's IMAGES research in Brazil and other countries, for example, shows the strongest predictor of an adult man's use of IPV is his having witnessed – as a child – a man use violence against his mother (Barker et al., 2011).

Finally, the category of *"education, school dropouts (including in relation to pregnancy and sexual initiation),"* (11 publications), is discussed in the Education section of this report. Additional publications were identified through the categories of *"child and adolescent labor"* (23) and, more broadly, *"sexual rights during childhood/adolescence"* (22).

ANNEX 3

TABLE | AGE OF MARRIAGE AND MARITAL AGE DIFFERENCE

AGE OF MARRIAGE AND MARITAL AGE DIFFERENCE

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

AGE OF MARRIED GIRL AT MARRIAGE	AGE OF MARRIED MAN AT MARRIAGE	MARITAL AGE DIFFERENCE
AVERAGE MARITAL AGE DIFFERENCE		9.1 YEARS

MARRIED MEN ♂

14	19	5
15	25	10
17	22	5
15	21	6
16	23	7
15	25	10
15	23	8
17	27	10
18	30	12
13	19	6
13	22	9
18	58	40
14	25	11
15	27	12
14	30	16

AGE OF MARRIED GIRL AT MARRIAGE	AGE OF MARRIED MAN AT MARRIAGE	MARITAL AGE DIFFERENCE

MARRIED GIRLS ♀

AGE OF MARRIED GIRL AT MARRIAGE	AGE OF MARRIED MAN AT MARRIAGE	MARITAL AGE DIFFERENCE
13	29	16
14	19	5
15	19	4
14	20	6
14	16	2
12	19	7
16	22	6
16	28	12
16	24	8
15	18	3
15	22	7
14	21	7
13	36	23
15	22	7

FAMILY MEMBERS

AGE OF MARRIED GIRL AT MARRIAGE	AGE OF MARRIED MAN AT MARRIAGE	MARITAL AGE DIFFERENCE
14	19	5
15	18	3
17	30	13
14	25	11
12	17	5
16	24	8
17	30	13
13	19	6
15	27	12
15	22	7
16	23	7
18	21	3

| SÃO LUIS, MARANHÃO

- ARTENIRA SAUAIA, PhD, Psychologist and Child Rights professor at the Maranhão's State Judiciary School of High Studies (ESMAM).
- NÁDIA GUTERRES, Psychologist, program officer at the Municipal Secretary of Health and project manager at the local NGO Akoni, working on prevention of sexual exploitation of children and adolescents in the state of Maranhão.
- IGLIANA FREITAS, Civil Police Officer specialized in violence against children, currently in charge of Maranhão's Civil Police Unit of Protection of Children and Adolescents (DPCA).
- CÉLIA REGINA MOREIRA RAYMUNDO, MD, Physician and Director of the Technical Forensic Center for Children and Adolescents (CPTCA).
- RICHARDISON GOMES, Psychologist at the Technical Forensic Center for Children and Adolescents (CPTCA).
- ANTÔNIO AUGUSTO NEPOMUCENO, Lawyer and State Attorney for Children's Rights.
- CLÁUDIA GOMES LIMA, Assistant of the State Attorney for Civil Registry, Gladston Fernandes de Araújo
- LÍTIA CAVALCANTI, Lawyer and State Attorney for Consumer Rights who was in charge for cases of sexual exploitation of children and human trafficking for two years.
- ELIZIANE GAMA, MP, Journalist and State Deputy (elected for a second term from 2010 to 2014), participant in the State Parliamentary Commissions on Ending Violence against Children, Pedophilia and Sexual Violence against Children, Women's Rights and Human Rights.
- SANDRA SILVA, Social Assistant, former member of São Luis' City Council on the Protection of Children's Rights and Advisor of MP Eliziane Gama.
- FELIPE KLAMT, Journalist, former State Secretary of Children's Rights and advisor of opposition MP Rubens Pereira Júnior.
- RAFAELA MARQUES, Journalist, activist and former Internal Affairs Officer of Maranhão's Public Health System (SUS).
- NELMA PEREIRA DA SILVA, Psychologist specialized in violence against children and adolescents working at the Human Rights NGO Sociedade Maranhense de Direitos Humanos (SMDH).
- LUCA SINESI, Director at Plan International Brazil in Maranhão.
- CELIA BONILHA, Gender Advisor, Plan International Brazil.
- ELIANA ALMEIDA, UNICEF in Maranhão.
- ANDREIA BARBOSA, UNICEF in Maranhão.

| NATIONAL – BRAZIL

- ANGÉLICA GOULART, National Secretary of Promoting Child and Adolescent Rights, Human Rights Secretary of the Presidency (Brasilia)
- MONICA ALKMIM, Human Rights Lawyer, Projeto Legal (Rio de Janeiro)
- KATHIE NJAINE, FioCruz (Rio de Janeiro)
- ANDRÉA PACHÁ, Family Court Judge (formerly Petrópolis, currently Rio de Janeiro at the Justice Tribunal)
- LUDIMILA PALAZZO, Adolescent Citizenship Officer, UNICEF (Brasília)
- MARIO VOLPI, Youth and Adolescent Development Specialist, UNICEF (Brasília)
- BENEDITO MEDRADO, Professor, Universidade Federal de Pernambuco; Researcher, Instituto Papai
- LEILA POSENATO GARCIA, PhD, Researcher on femicides and gender issues in Brazil, IPEA (Brasília)

| INTERNATIONAL & REGIONAL

- ANITA RAJ, Director, University of California San Diego Center on Gender Equity and Health
- MARGARET E. GREENE, GreeneWorks
- DIANA KERRIGAN, Johns Hopkins University
- CARMEN BARROSO, Regional Director, International Planned Parenthood Federation
- ANA LUISA LIGUORI, Ford Foundation Mexico

PROMUNDO