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Informed powerlessness: child marriage interventions and Third World girlhood discourses

Thais Bessa

Department of Political Science and International Studies (POLSIS), University of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK

ABSTRACT

Child marriage has gained increased international prominence over the past decades. Organisations working with the issue have promoted empowering girls as the best strategy to address it. Informed by postcolonial feminist theory, this article will locate these discourses in broader 'turn to the girl' and 'turn to agency' in international development, analysing how Third World girlhood, agency, resistance and voice are conceptualised. Girls are constructed as threatened by their families and communities, with agency exercised through resistance and materialised by their voice. I argue that this ignores the complexity of decision-making processes and broader structural factors related to child marriage, so that interventions providing 'empowerment-as-information' for girls to be agents of change instead leave them in a state of informed powerlessness.

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Introduction

Over the past three decades, child marriage has gained increasing prominence in the international agenda and the number of programmes and interventions addressing it has grown dramatically. Prevailing discourses claiming to be evidence-based have promoted 'empowering girls' as the most successful strategy to reduce child marriage, which has been uncritically accepted and reproduced. The article will locate these discourses within a wider context that privileges women's empowerment and agency in international development. Informed by postcolonial feminist theory, it will engage with scholarly debates on girlhood and related conceptualisations of agency, resistance and voice.

The article will contribute to existing literature on initiatives that purportedly empower girls.[1] Analyses have highlighted how these initiatives reinforce essentialising binary views of girls, place excessive burden on them and obscure global inequalities.[2] Child marriage is particularly useful to examine broader discourses on Third World girlhood because it has been increasingly raised as a typical 'Third World problem'[3] and, as such, to be solved through empowering girls. However, the consequences of this approach – especially for 'targeted' girls – remain unquestioned and whether it actually leads to reduction in child marriage remains unanswered.

CONTACT Thais Bessa TXS642@student.ac.uk; thais.bessa@gmail.com

A buzzword in international development, empowerment is intertwined with agency, conceptualised within neoliberal and Western knowledge systems. Girls from the Global South are presented in a binary, being at the same time at-risk victims that need to be rescued and heroines full of capacity.[4] In this contradictory framing, girls have not only the *capacity* to be agents of change, but the actual *obligation* to do so by making 'good choices'. It has been claimed that seeing agency as choice has evacuated any notion of influence, coercion and oppression.[5] However, I argue that, particularly in the case of child marriage, coercion and oppression have been moved to the local and family levels. Through policies and interventions, discourses on child marriage construct families as sites of confrontation and conflict, so that girls' agency is manifested through resistance and liberation from their families, communities and cultures. Agency as resistance is materialised by girls' voice, which has been pivotal in child marriage policy and practice and can be understood as a neo-colonial strategy of surveillance.

Practitioners and researchers have extensively examined the causes of child marriage, such as poverty, conflict, lack of access to education, inadequate legislation and underlying gender inequality. Although the causes of child marriage have been located in wider economic, political, social and cultural contexts, girls are expected to be the agents of a change that involves broader structures. Moreover, antagonising girls and their families and communities ignores the complexity of decision-making processes on child marriage.

The aim of this article is not to argue whether child marriage is 'right' or 'wrong' or if empowering girls is important or efficient. The article rather explores the concepts and knowledge systems underlying the discourse that empowering girls is the most effective strategy to address child marriage, which ultimately shapes and frames how the issue is conceptualised, labelled and addressed. The focus is thus discourses, understood as systems that produce and fix meaning, enabling us to make sense of the world.[6] The discursive construction of Third World women and girls is particularly relevant to post-colonial feminist theory, as discursive violence reflects asymmetric relations of power and has material effects through the exploitation and management of Third World populations.[7]

As the site of analysis is discourse, the research method utilised is discourse analysis. Drawing from critical discourse analysis, selected documents were examined in three layers: textual analysis (identifying critical elements in the texts), process analysis (understanding the context where documents were produced) and social analysis (the wider social and political structures where documents and institutions are immersed).[8] The goal of discourse analysis is not to dismiss certain discourses as 'untrue' or reveal an essential truth that has been obscured, but rather to understand the politics of producing meaning; how power operates to produce knowledge and shape representations, images and policies,[9] especially representations of Third World women in opposition to a presumed liberated, secular and advanced West.

The analysis draws on almost 30 evaluations, systematic reviews and reports, as well as public information materials produced by key organisations working on child marriage, produced and made publicly available between 2005 and 2018.[10] These organisations were selected as they are presumed to be authorised speakers or writers of a dominant discourse, or 'privileged sites of discursive activity',[11] shaping how child marriage is defined and addressed. These include United Nations agencies, such as the United Nations Children's

Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), as well as international non-governmental organisations and think-tanks that work (exclusively or not) with child marriage, including Girls Not Brides, Care International, International Center for Research on Women, Save the Children and Plan International. The websites of these organisations were consulted to identify and retrieve reports and documents published. In addition, Internet and academic search engines were used to identify additional materials, especially papers on the results of field studies and randomised control trial published in peer-reviewed journals. Search words included child marriage combined with related keywords, including, but not limited to, early marriage, forced marriage, early childbearing, adolescent pregnancy, women's empowerment and girl-centred. Materials consulted through initial searches provided additional references and documents in a snowballing effect.

The materials consulted are representative of the topic at hand, although of course they are unlikely to comprise the totality of documents produced about child marriage and have some limitations. Because the search for documents was Internet-based, it may have naturally excluded programmatic reports, evaluations and other documents produced by organisations without an online presence or that have not been published, as well as those produced in languages other than English and that did not turn up in the keyword searches conducted. In addition, most documents examined were produced by a limited number of organisations, when there are countless others that also work with child marriage directly and indirectly and produce a variety of documents about the issue.[12] However, and as mentioned above, the organisations selected have a pivotal and leading role in implementing initiatives addressing child marriage and informing current and future policy and practice. Moreover, due to their perceived position as specialists on child marriage and international development, discourses produced by these organisations are reflected and amplified by the media and shape the public perception of child marriage in developing countries.

In the first section, the article offers a summary of the emergence of child marriage as an international issue, the accompanying increase in programmes and interventions and how empowering girls has been promoted as the most successful strategy to address it. The second section contextualises the focus on empowering girls within the broader 'turn to girl' in international development, whereas the following section connects it to how agency is conceptualised within neoliberal and Western knowledge systems. This is followed by an analysis of how girls' voices have emerged as the materialisation of agency and resistance. The final part discusses the consequences of these discourses, where I argue that empowerment as currently conceptualised and implemented might lead to a situation of informed powerlessness for girls.

Child marriage interventions and the focus on girls' empowerment

Although child marriage has been addressed in an ad hoc manner in certain international documents in the second half of the twentieth-century, the issue gained international prominence since the 2000s and more pronouncedly after 2010. It has increasingly become an area of intervention by different governments, United Nations organisations, non-governmental organisations and think tanks. Eradicating child marriage was included in the Millennium Development Goals in 2000 and in the 2015 Sustainable Development Goals and the number of programmes addressing it has grown dramatically.

Programmes addressing child marriage usually adopt one or a combination of five strategies: empowering girls, mobilising families and communities, providing economic incentives, enhancing access to education and establishing/enforcing laws and policies.[13] Researchers and practitioners have examined these strategies, trying to assess which ones work better, leading to the publication of several evaluation reports and systematic reviews of programmes implemented in different countries in the Global South.

The information from these documents is not conclusive regarding any of these main strategies. Some evaluations of programmes focusing on empowering girls found positive results,[14] whilst others found mixed results or no change in child marriage prevalence.[15] The same applies to mobilising communities and families, with some programmes reporting no impact on child marriage[16] and others claiming that community mobilisation led to public declarations against child marriage.[17] It has been found that conditional cash transfers and other economic incentives contributed to reducing child marriage in some cases,[18] but in others did not reduce child marriage rates or affected age of marriage.[19] Two systematic reviews of interventions addressing child marriage have claimed that empowering girls had the strongest results in addressing child marriage.[20] However, a closer look at the data used shows that empowerment was heavily present in both successful and unsuccessful programmes, making it difficult to ascertain it as the most effective. Indeed, according to Buchmann et al., although empowering girls is gaining popularity, evidence of its success is very limited and often contradictory.[21]

Although the evidence available is insufficient and inconsistent, the idea that empowering girls is the most effective strategy to address child marriage is pervasive, being produced and reproduced by numerous reports, policy documents and public information materials.[22] Vested in an aura of authority, such assertions have powerful consequences, informing research, policy-making and funding allocation. This is not 'evidence-based' as asserted though, but rather located within the wider discursive production of Third World girls defined in terms of their 'problems' and 'achievements',[23] and how these problems should be addressed according to Western understandings of agency, resistance and voice.

The 'turn to girl' in international development

Organisations working on child marriage have argued the need for girl-centred approaches on child marriage in theory and practice, for both principled and pragmatic reasons.[24] Whilst a girl-centred strategy may seem obvious when it comes to addressing child marriage, it is part of a broader context of placing girls as main agents of change that can stop child marriage (or act on other issues considered to be Third World women's issues such as poverty or female genital cutting, for instance). In this rationale, to be agents of change girls need to be empowered, their agency promoted and their voice enhanced.[25]

Over the 1980s and 1990s, empowerment moved into mainstream development discourse and became 'an uncritically accepted goal' of most of the development community.[26] Broadly defined as one's ability to make strategic life choices where that ability had been previously denied to them,[27] women's empowerment was framed within liberal assumptions of freedom, individual authenticity and self-realisation.[28] In this framework, women – notably Third World women – are constructed within a binary of confident, capable and agentic at one hand, and at-risk, oppressed and in need of being saved at the other.[29]

Likewise, adolescent girls assumed an increasing role in development as girlhood emerged as an unstable category between risk and extraordinary capacity.[30] In this 'turn to the girl'[31] or 'girling of development',[32] development discourses and interventions repackaged 'saving Third World women' into 'empowering Third World girls',[33] borrowing and mobilising discourses of 'girl power' that have been circulating in the West for over two decades.[34] Adolescence is thus presented as a period before marriage and childbearing, with a ticking clock for intervention and rescue.[35] This is especially relevant to child marriage, as policies on the issue have identified a 'tipping point' age, when 'child marriage prevalence in a country starts to increase markedly (usually 13 or 14)',[36] so that interventions should target and tailor efforts towards young girls approaching this age.

Agency as resistance to families, communities and cultures

Empowering women and girls is intertwined with agency, which has been conceptualised within an individualistic and liberal framework. In this framing, choice and options are available to all and taken up through agency, so that failure or 'bad choices' are the individual's fault only.[37] Girls are *expected* to be fully self-actualised neoliberal subjects[38] and their agency has become 'increasingly culturally demanded or even normatively required'.[39] The focus on choice is reproduced in child marriage discourse. For instance, Plan International states that 'child marriage also occurs because girls are denied the right to *decide*' and that 'we have a vision that all girls will have the right to *decide* their futures by 2030'.[40] CARE's Tipping Point project puts similar emphasis on the fact that 'many girls are not allowed to have a voice in *decisions* about their own lives' and need 'opportunities to have a voice and *choice*'.[41]

The focus on individual choices privatises issues, obscuring wider structures of material and discursive power.[42] Western discourses – including feminist discourses – that imagine 'the other' who needs to be saved or modernised remain uncritically taken for granted. For instance, although poverty is cited as the number one cause of child marriage by virtually every organisation in the field, when solutions are devised, they do little to address global inequalities that fuel poverty and consequently families' vulnerability to 'choose' child marriage. Instead, these discourses place blame on families, local forms of personhood and kinship.[43] Social relations, especially families and communities, are conceived mostly as hindrances that must be overcome, as women and girls are placed 'as threatened objects' – threatened by their communities, families and practices of dowry.[44]

It has been argued that the 'turn to agency' was built upon a rejection of the idea of women as passive victims, with a corresponding evacuation of any notion of influence, coercion and oppression.[45] However, in child marriage discourse and policy, the idea of coercion and oppression has not been removed, but rather moved into the local and family levels. Families are thus constructed as something that works against girls' interests and that must be resisted. Khoja-Moolji found that moving away from generalised and abstract constructions of 'families' and 'communities', relationships were complex and 'actions within the community were more collaborative than combative'.[46] Understanding individuals as relational opens the possibility of constructing families not as hindrances and barriers, but also sites of belonging and support.[47] Within their contexts, parents are normally acting in what they believe to be their children's best interest and do not intend to cause them harm. Parents desperate due to hunger, extreme poverty or widespread conflict violence marry off their daughters in the hopes of protecting them.[48] Likewise, girls may also take what they consider

to be their families' best interest as the main factor in their decisions. For instance, according to a programme report, a 13-year-old Syrian refugee stated that 'when he [groom] was on a visit to Jordan, he proposed. I thought about it. I liked him and I thought it was easier for my family in financial terms if I got married'.[49] Interests, loyalties and relationships within families are complex, and so are decision-making processes on child marriage.

As families are constructed as sites of oppression, the concepts of empowerment and agency have become attached to liberation and resistance.[50] According to Mahmood, 'agency, in this form of analysis, is understood as the capacity to realize one's own interests against the weight of custom, tradition, transcendental will, or other obstacles (whether individual or collective)'.[51] Postcolonial feminism calls for thinking about agency in more nuanced ways, beyond the focus on subversion and change.[52] Although child marriage discourse presents romanticised resistance to one's family as the materialisation of girls' agency, open resistance may be unfeasible, undesirable or only one form of agency among others.

Perceiving Third World women and girls as threatened by their cultures reinforces colonialist views, defining them in terms of their 'problems' in relation to an imagined free white liberal democracy, removing 'them (and the liberal democracy) from history, freezing them in time and space'.[53] The focus on cultural causes of poverty (or child marriage or female genital cutting or any other 'Third World women problem') ignores global and structural issues.[54] As Third World women are imagined in opposition to ideal Western women, it is left implied and unquestioned that such cultural 'threats' and male domination are not a problem for Western women. However, even though the 'problem' is one of Third World women only, the solutions prescribed reproduce Western women's values, including freedom, assertiveness, determination and combativeness.[55]

Hence, as child marriage discourses make assumptions about family dynamics and decision-making processes, it also pathologises forms of kinship, values and manifestations of agency that fall outside the Western model. Although empowering interventions impart knowledge on girls about their right to freely make choices, the 'correct' choices are implied from a Western and neoliberal standpoint and may be at odds with local contexts, forms of kinship and cultures.

Girls' voices as neo-colonial surveillance

Along with viewing agency as liberation and resistance only, approaches focused on 'empowering girls' place great emphasis on their voice. Women's voices are proof of agency and the symbol of their empowerment and ability to make choices and to resist – indeed to 'speak out' against – the patriarchy.[56] Finding and promoting girls' voices is evident on how initiatives on child marriage are conceived and publicly presented. For instance, Girls Not Brides claims that 'the voices of girls, including at-risk and married girls, should be central in the movement'.[57] The organisation's website has a specific section called 'Girls' Voices'.[58] This focus also permeates titles of programmes, like Save The Children's 'Choices, Voices, Promises', as well as specific initiatives completely focused on girls' voices such as photographic and multimedia projects 'A Voice for Child Brides',[59] 'Give Voice to Child Brides'[60] and 'Girls' Voices: Speaking Out Against Child Marriage'.[61]

Whilst the focus on girls' voices can be seen as a response to criticism made to earlier girl-centred initiatives for overlooking diversity and complexity,[62] the 'success cases' on child marriage are presented in a very similar manner: a girl who challenged her family, community

and tradition and ultimately avoided child marriage. As repeatedly criticised by postcolonial feminist theory, Third World girls are homogenised, so their stories of oppression and liberation are the same, regardless of specific contexts.[63]

Presenting these few 'pioneers' who are ready to resist and lead change is closely related to binary constructions of girls as powerless but yet possessing extraordinary potential (or obligation) to make over their lives through right choices.[64] A few special girls that assume such role are promoted by organisations as success cases or role models. This approach 'hopes to inspire positive decision-making based purely on the fact that somebody else is doing so, without accounting for any of the structural reasons why families may be compelled to make certain decisions'.[65]

'Giving voice' to the oppressed has been largely criticised by postcolonial feminist theory.[66] The interest and demand for voices and narratives of the marginalised are part of neo-colonial strategies of surveillance and another form of violence linked to the West's craving for coherence, authorisation and redemption.[67] The focus on voices places agency fully with the speaker, abstracting them from wider structural inequalities.[68] Individualised explanations or exemplifications of social problems and their perceived solution are assumed to be enough.[69]

Parpart argues that Western feminism being 'voice privileging' is understandable given women's historic struggles to enter male-dominated public spaces.[70] Voice has been equalised with agency and empowerment, whilst silence was uncritically identified with disempowerment. However, silence and secrecy are not necessarily signs of passivity and disempowerment and could have other meanings or even be strategies of survival and gradual and subtle renegotiation of gender hierarchies and practices.[71] Away from the 'success cases' of the few special girls, 'at an individual level, silence and secrecy can protect women from disempowering contexts where their voices have no institutional or collective power'.[72]

'Girls' voices' have also a role in international development funding. According to Khoja-Moolji, 'voice as evidence' are mere add-ons to amplify already established consensus around Third World girls' possibilities and limitations and to reinforce solutions and programmes already in place.[73] Mohanty has criticised the uncritical use of methodologies to 'prove' universality and cross-cultural validity, including the 'arithmetic's method', according to which if there are lots of cases across cultures, it adds up to a universal fact.[74] Wells claimed that international nongovernmental organisations often use a circular logic, where internally gathered evidence, including girls' voices, serves to legitimise new projects.[75] The success stories of girls raising their voices against child marriage are then used to reaffirm existing interventions and claims that certain strategies – such as 'empowering girls' – are the most effective, creating a chain of self-fulfilling 'evidence'.

Informed powerlessness

In order to gain the benefits promised by neoliberal discourses, girls must use their agency and voices to resist, but they must also bear the onus that comes with it.[76] Certainly, programmes and interventions on child marriage claim to empower girls so they can be agents of change, particularly through resistance against their families, communities and cultures. Examples are abundant in the materials reviewed. For instance, when presenting the roles of different stakeholders to end child marriage, Girls Not Brides claims girls should 'speak up

and act to challenge child marriage and mobilize peers and the wider community'.[77] Plan International states that a successful programme to prevent child marriage starts with girls receiving awareness from an NGO, refusing proposed marriages and convincing other family members to delay age of marriage for girls.[78] This is also clear in the success stories presented, such as 'I stopped talking to my father. I forced him to agree with my view'[79] and several stories from Girls Not Brides website 'Girls' Voices' section.[80]

As previously mentioned, families are constructed as sites of divergence and conflict and this is reinforced by the demand that girls resist their families. Further to ignoring the complexity of decision-making processes on child marriage, this places a burden on girls and may instead place them in greater risk. Confronting their families might not be a strategy that girls want to pursue due to the complex emotional attachments and loyalties involved in family relationships. It may also be counter-productive to interventions' goals, making families more reluctant to engage. In addition, resistance may not be a course of action girls are actually able to pursue, as '[…] in many situations – particularly conflict and postconflict zones, as well as societies characterized by deeply masculinist practices, widespread criminal activities, and gender violence – the choice to publicly challenge the powerful is often extremely dangerous and even foolhardy'.[81] Indeed, it has been reported that girls asserting themselves against their families are often stigmatised.[82] Whilst evaluating an intervention to prevent child marriage in the Amhara region, Ethiopia, Gage concluded that many girls with stopped marriages felt depressed, lonely and worried about their future marriage prospects.[83] International programmes provided these girls with support to resist child marriage, but no subsequent support to deal with the consequences.

Empowerment is often implemented by delivering information and knowledge to girls in areas such as rights, sexual and reproductive health, financial literacy, and vocational and life skills. In this sense, the indicators of successful programmes are normally 'increased knowledge' and 'attitudinal/behaviour change'. When measuring girls' knowledge after receiving intense information, it seems obvious that an increase is expected, although it is rarely discussed how this 'verifiable' increment in knowledge materialises into actual change. According to Warner, Stoebenau and Glinski, 'there has been an absence of clarity on exactly if and how such programmes empower girls, and if so, how this empowerment process leads to changes in attitudes and practices related to child marriage'.[84] Greene has questioned whether 'programmes stop at changing the attitudes of girls? Most often, programmes stop at "wishes to marry later", and do not measure girls' capabilities or actual age at marriage'.[85]

Furthermore, the concepts of 'attitudinal and behaviour changes' can have multiple meanings that vary according to gender, class, ethnicity and culture. Changes in attitudes and behaviours are often self-reported and responses may be influenced by what respondents thought it would be 'the right answer' or what the NGO staff was expecting. The linkage between changes in attitudes and behaviour with actual decreases in child marriage or increase of age of marriage is not well established. For instance, communities making pledges against child marriage have been reported as examples of successful programmes[86] but, again, how pledges materialised into actual reduction of child marriage is left unexplained. Some reports claim that in a few instances when awareness about the consequences and especially the illegality of child marriage increase, community members simply tried to hide it in other religious ceremonies.[87]

Although empowering girls is presented as the best strategy to address child marriage, most programmes and initiatives acknowledge it is only one pillar of a complex work and must be done alongside engaging with families and communities, providing services and improving legal frameworks. This is aimed at changing underlying social norms and creating an 'enabling environment'.[88] However, such breadth of interventions is often not done by all organisations and programmes at the same time.[89] As 'empowering girls/women' has become a buzzword in development, this component is more appealing to funders and the media. In addition, providing training sessions to girls is somewhat more straightforward to implement and to generate numbers that can be measured, scrutinised and evaluated compared to promoting structural changes. Moreover, such broader changes happen at a slower pace than 'empowering' groups of girls and communities' commitments to end child marriage may also be lip service that does not materialise into an actual 'enabling environment'.

Hence, whilst expected to lead social change, girls must still navigate the structural inequalities that marginalise them in the first place and may be in even greater risk, especially when interventions end and NGO staff leave. Although girls' knowledge about their rights (as presented from a Western point of view) and the risks of child marriage may increase with 'empowerment' interventions, when this knowledge is not necessarily connected to their context and structural changes are not happening at the same pace, they are unable to effect change as promised, and are left in a state of informed powerlessness.

Conclusions

This article has contextualised and critically analysed discourses that produce and reproduce girls' empowerment as the best strategy to eradicate child marriage. Conceptualising agency as individual choice and liberation moves coercion and oppression to the local level, constructing families as sites of conflict. In this sense, girls must resist their families, communities and cultures, which is materialised by their voice. However, this manifestation of agency may not be possible or even preferred by girls in specific contexts. Postcolonial feminist theory has criticised this homogenisation of Third World women in terms of their problems and achievements measured against an ahistorical imagined liberal democracy, as well as the focus on women's voice as a form of neo-colonial domination. As empowerment is presented as the preferred solution to child marriage, it is left unquestioned how this empowerment happens and what knowledge systems it reproduces. Girls receiving 'empowerment-as-information' from Western organisations are often left with a greater burden: they may be informed and expected to be resisting change-makers, but as the status quo and structures around them remain unchanged, they are powerless to act according to the prescribed model.

Other issues can be raised and require further discussion and investigation. First, how social change happens in complex issues such as child marriage is still underexplored. Reports examined acknowledge that 'there is much that is still unknown about what, exactly, encourages people to give up CM [child marriage] (and other harmful practices), where, when, why and how'.[90]

In addition, the case of child marriage raises questions regarding the wider evidence-based culture in international development, where 'acceptable evidence' is based on positivist framings of knowledge production and limits the possibilities of seeing the world differently.[91] Indeed, claims that present themselves as 'evidence-based' are taken with an aura of authority, even when a closer examination of such evidence reveals that many claims are perhaps

unsubstantiated. More importantly, the search for evidence on 'solutions' to a 'problem' that affects Third World women and girls, such as child marriage, is assumed to be neutral, apolitical and ahistorical. Instead, it is inserted in wider processes that define what the problem is in the first place and how it needs to be addressed. Sets of evidence gathered may find themselves 'supporting the very status quo that they may have originally set out to change. They are contributing to policy that confirms rather than changes social relationships'.[92] Therefore, overcoming the objectification of Third World women and girls may not happen through giving girls a voice, but rather through change in the processes of knowledge production.

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Notes on contributor

Thais Bessa is a Doctoral Researcher at the University of Birmingham, UK. Her research uses postcolonial feminist theory to examine the discourses involved in the emergence of child and early marriage as an international issue, especially how Third World girlhood and female agency are conceptualised. She has an MSc in Forced Migration (Distinction) from the University of Oxford and over 10 years of experience in international development and human rights, having worked at different United Nations agencies and international NGOs across several countries.

Notes

1. Prominent examples are the Girl Effect, launched by the Nike Foundation in 2008, and the Girl Up campaign, launched by the United Nations Foundation in 2010.
2. Moeller, *The Gender Effect*; Hickel, "The 'Girl Effect'"; Shain, "The Girl Effect"; Switzer, "(Post) Feminist Development Fables"; Hayhurst, "The 'Girl Effect'", among others.
3. Although prevalent, the issue of child marriage in developed countries is under examined and usually referred to as affecting immigrant communities only.
4. Berents, "Hashtagging Girlhood"; Switzer, "(Post)Feminist Development Fables."
5. Gill and Donaghue, "As If Postfeminism"; Madhok et al., "Introduction"; Wilson, "Agency as 'Smart Economics.'"
6. Shepherd, *Gender, Violence and Security*; Milliken, "The Study of Discourse."
7. Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes"; Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders*; Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak."
8. Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse*.
9. Shepherd, *Gender, UN Peacebuilding*; Shepherd, *Gender, Violence and Security*.
10. The time range was determined because child marriage emerged as a prominent issue in the international agenda especially from 2000 onwards and markedly after 2010.
11. Shepherd, *Gender, UN Peacebuilding*, 26.
12. For instance, as of April 2019, the Girls Not Brides partnership has over 1000 members in 95 countries.
13. Girls Not Brides, *Theory of Change*; Glinski et al., *Child, Early, and Forced Marriage*; Malhotra et al., *Solutions to End Child Marriage*; Jain and Kurz, *New Insights*.

14. Pande et al., *Improving the Reproductive Health*; Edmeades et al., *Improving the Lives*.
15. Erulkar and Muthengi, "Evaluation of Berhane Hewan"; Muthengi and Erulkar, *Building Programmes to Address Child Marriage*; Psaki, *Addressing Early Marriage*.
16. LEHER, *Strengthening Existing Systems*.
17. Diop et al., *Evaluation of Long-term Impact*.
18. Kosky et al., "Has Child Marriage Declined"; Kalamar et al., "Interventions to Prevent Child Marriage"; Parsons and McCleary-Sills, *Preventing Child Marriage*; Paina et al., *Piloting L3M for Child Marriage*; Pathfinder International, *Raising Age of Marriage*.
19. Nanda et al., *Making Change with Cash*.
20. Chae and Ngo, *Global State of Evidence*; Malhotra et al., *Solutions to End Child Marriage*.
21. Buchmann et al., *Power vs Money*.
22. Girls Not Brides, *Theory of Change*; Women's Refugee Commission, *Girl No More*; Save the Children, *Every Last Girl*; Greene, *Ending Child Marriage*; Warner et al., *More Power to Her*, among others.
23. Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes"; Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders*.
24. Girls Not Brides, *It Takes a Movement*; IMC Worldwide, *Independent Verification and Evaluation*; Warner et al., *More Power to Her*.
25. Glinski et al., *Child, Early, and Forced Marriage*.
26. Parpart, "Lessons from the Field," 41.
27. Kabeer, "Resources, Agency, Achievements."
28. Hickel, "The 'Girl Effect.'"
29. Hayhurst, "Girls as the 'New Agents'"; Shain, "The Girl Effect"; Wilson, "Agency as 'Smart Economics.'"
30. Koffman and Gill, "The Revolution."
31. Koffman et al., "Girl Power and 'Selfie Humanitarianism.'"
32. Hayhurst, "The 'Girl Effect.'"
33. Sensoy and Marshall, "Missionary Girl Power."
34. Koffman and Gill, "The Revolution."
35. Ibid.
36. Jain and Kurz, *New Insights*, 2.
37. Wilson, "Agency as 'Smart Economics'"; Hemmings and Kabesh, "Feminist Subject of Agency."
38. Gonick et al., "Rethinking Agency."
39. Gill and Donaghue, "As If Postfeminism," 253.
40. https://www.plan.ie/stories/decide/ (emphasis added).
41. https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:9mpjDjrvaM0J:https://caretippingpoint.org/innovation/walk-in-her-shoes/+&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us (emphasis added).
42. Gill, "Critical Respect"; Wilson, "Agency as 'Smart Economics.'"
43. Hickel, "The 'Girl Effect.'"
44. Khoja-Moolji, "Doing the 'Work of Hearing,'" 748.
45. Gill and Donaghue, "Postfeminism"; Madhok et al., "Introduction"; Wilson, "Agency as 'Smart Economics.'"
46. Khoja-Moolji, "Doing the 'Work of Hearing,'" 758.
47. Ibid.
48. Women's Refugee Commission, *Girl No More*; Care International, *To Protect Her Honour*.
49. Care International, *To Protect Her Honour*, 9.
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ORCID

Thais Bessa http://orcid.org/0000-0002-9859-5422

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