



GIRLHOOD STUDIES

An Interdisciplinary Journal

Call for Papers

Child, Early and Forced Marriage and Unions: Diverse Practices, Diverse Perspectives

The practice of Child, Early and Forced Marriage and Unions (CEFMU) that refers to any formal marriage or informal union in which one or both parties are under the age of 18, affects over 12 million girls every year worldwide (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund 2021). Despite international recognition of the myriad physical, psychological, and societal risks for young people, particularly girls, posed by CEFMU, the commitment of 193 countries to the Sustainable Development Goals that include ending child marriage by 2030 as a target (United Nations 2015), and decades of focused efforts to understand the impacts of CEFMU and attempts to eliminate it, the practice persists in diverse forms around the globe (Fan and Koski 2022; Koski et al. 2024). Although some progress had been made towards reducing prevalence in the decade before 2020 (Yukich et al. 2021), in recent years, the global COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated CEFMU in many regions, increasing the number of girls at risk of marrying at an early age by 10 million (Das et al. 2022; United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund 2021).

An increase in both academic and gray literature published since 2000 reflects the growing concern about child marriage as a threat to the health and well-being of girls and young women in all parts of the world (Siddiqi and Greene 2022); this coincides with the increased focus on girls and young women in international development in the early 2010s (Hayhurst 2011). A substantial and growing body of literature about CEFMU includes policy documents, gray literature, and advocacy campaign material produced by researchers, agencies like the United Nations, and international development actors. Much of this literature has focused on specific regions including sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, and on prevalence, trends, causes, and determinants rather than responses and interventions aimed at prevention and/or addressing the needs of those affected by CEFMU (Siddiqi and Greene 2022). Further, although some of it includes the words of girls and young women, a lot of the literature on CEFMU has been written by and from the perspectives of adults, many of whom are located (literally or in terms of their perspective) in the Global North. As a result, our current understanding of CEFMU and the experiences of girls and young women affected by it is often filtered through these perspectives.

It is against this background that in this Special Issue we aim to bring together contributions that explore CEFMU from different contexts and perspectives from scholars, activists, practitioners, and policymakers. We particularly encourage submissions from girls and intergenerational partnerships along with those that foreground the voices, experiences, and perspectives of girls. We also encourage creative submissions like poetry, first-hand accounts, and photo-essays. Possible topics include but are not limited to those that analyze, explore, examine, investigate, and/or challenge

- local understandings, meanings, and dynamics of CEFMU in local contexts;
- tensions between ideas about culture/tradition and modernity in relation to CEFMU;
- the complexity in the legal frameworks related to marriage, adolescent girls' sexuality, and customary/traditional law;
- counter-narratives that counter assumptions about drivers of, motivations for, and experiences of CEFMU and underpin interventions designed to address it;
- intersectional, postcolonial, and/or decolonial feminist perspectives on CEFMU;
- different discourses framing CEFMU across time, languages, regions, and/or disciplines; and/or
- innovative approaches to addressing CEFMU in sustainable, responsive, context-relevant ways.

Abstract and Article Submission

Abstracts are due by 15 October 2024, and should be sent to girlhoodstudiescefm@gmail.com.

Full manuscripts are due by 17 March 2025. Authors should provide a cover page giving brief biographical details (up to 100 words), institutional affiliation(s), and complete contact information, including an email address.

Articles may be no longer than 6,500 words and no shorter than 6,000, including the abstract (up to 125 words), keywords (6 to 8 in alphabetical order, none of which replicate words in the title of the article), notes, captions and tables, acknowledgements (if any), biographical details (taken from the cover page and not exceeding 100 words), and references. *Girlhood Studies*, following Berghahn's preferred house style, uses a modified Chicago Style.

Please refer to the Style Guide:

http://journals.berghahnbooks.com/_uploads/ghs/girlhood-studies_style_guide.pdf

Articles that are not compliant will be returned.

GUEST EDITORS

This special issue will be edited by Boroka Godley and Lisa Wiebesiek. Please send inquiries to girlhoodstudiescefm@gmail.com

Boroka Godley is a PhD candidate at McGill University in Montreal, Canada. Her research uses participatory visual methods to examine CEFMU, gender and girlhood in Brazil and South Africa.

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