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Family Social Practices in Child Marriage in Bogor Regency, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Child marriage remains an urgent social issue, particularly in Bogor Regency. This study aims to analyse the structural dimensions at the family level that play a role in child marriage in Kertajaya Village, Rumpin Subdistrict. The research employs a quantitative approach supported by qualitative methods, including in-depth interviews, observations, and descriptive statistical analysis. The sample consists of 90 women who married before the age of 19 in the past 10 years, selected through purposive sampling. The study compares the anti-speaker (aspek) and doyan speaker (dospek) communities. This practice is driven by low levels of education, economic constraints, and strong cultural and social norms. Men generally marry at an older age due to financial readiness, while women are often encouraged to marry young to preserve family honor. Child marriage is seen as a symbol of family honor and an economic strategy to maintain morality and reduce household financial burdens. Families play a central role, with fathers often making key decisions and mothers providing emotional support to children. Cultural and religious norms legitimize this practice, resulting in 'kawin siri'. This study highlights the dual role of families as guardians of tradition and potential agents of change.

Keywords: Bogor Regency, child marriage, community, family, structuration

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is a ceremony that establishes a legal, social, and economic relationship between two individuals and is seen as a form of worship that is determined by maturity and economic stability (Fathurrohman et al., 2024). Marriage is regulated by human values, religion, customs, and laws with the aim of forming a happy and lasting family, although there are differences in regulations in various countries (Ashari, 2024). Child marriage has been a global concern since the 2000s and is targeted for elimination in the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under Gender Equality. UNICEF has noted a global decline in child marriage, although progress has been uneven. Currently, 640 million girls are married as children, with India accounting for a third of the total and Indonesia ranking fourth with 25.53 million cases. In Indonesia, marriage has been regulated by Law No. 1/1974 on Marriage later amended by Law No. 16/2019, which sets the minimum age of marriage at 19 years old to ensure the mental and physical maturity of the bride and groom (Septi et al., 2024).

Child marriage continues to occur despite the existence of regulations and policies for prevention, but marriage dispensation in court can be done (Ashari, 2024). Law No. 12 of 2022 on the Crime of Sexual Violence provides criminal sanctions for perpetrators of child marriage in the form of imprisonment of up to 9 years and/or a maximum fine of Rp200,000,000 for anyone who forces someone to marry, including in the implementation of child marriage (UU, 2022). In Bogor Regency, Regent Regulation No. 39 of 2021 requires marriages to be legally registered by the state, provided that both parties are at least 19 years old (Perbup, 2021). Efforts to achieve the 2030 target need to be accelerated by 20 times. BPS 2024 Survei Sosial Ekonomi Nasional (Susenas) data shows a decline in the number of women married before the age of 18, from 14.14% (West Java) and 12.14% (national) in 2015 to 6.79% and 6.92% in 2023 (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2024). This decline shows positive results in efforts to reduce child marriage. BKKBN set the median age of first marriage (MUKP) for women in Indonesia at 22 years in 2022 (Muhamad, 2023). However, West Java is in the third lowest position with a MUKP of 19.9 years, indicating the high rate of child marriage in the province.

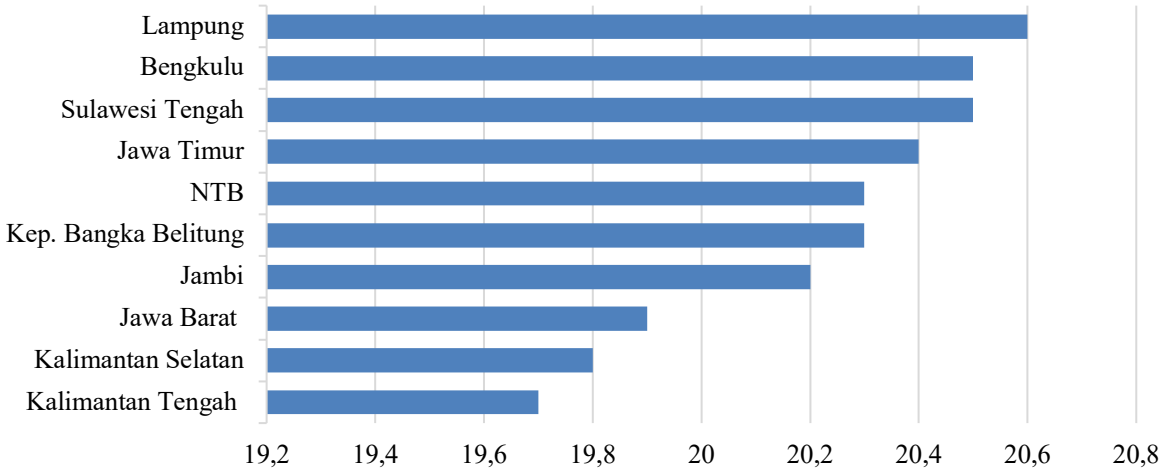

Figure 1. Ten provinces with the lowest median age of marriage for women in 2022 (BKKBN, 2022)

Data from the Health Service in 2021 shows a high rate of child marriage in West Java Province, both in the age group under 15 years and 15-19 years of age (Isabella et al., 2021). Child marriage under the age of 15 reached 7.5%, while in the 15-19 age group it reached 50.2%. Meanwhile, data from Dinas Pemberdayaan Perempuan, Perlindungan Anak, dan Keluarga Berencana (DP3AKB) noted that of the 16 divorce cases under the age of 20 recorded at the Cibinong Religious Court, 13 of them involved women (DP3AKB, 2022). Factors that cause divorce in child marriage include lack of emotional maturity, pressure from outside parties, domestic violence, economic instability, and differences in life principles (Oktaviani & Nurwati, 2020). The practice of child marriage has a negative impact on the economic, social, health and educational conditions of girls (Roberto & Sidabutar, 2022).

Child marriage is influenced by economic factors, arranged marriage traditions, religion, social pressure, and the role of the family through religious factors that enable child marriage under certain conditions (Essing et al., 2020). Peer pressure, low knowledge of health impacts, cultural norms, economic instability, and limited access to education also exacerbate this phenomenon (Dewi et al., 2024; Pramono et al., 2019; Roy & Chouhan, 2021). The impacts of child marriage include health risks such as pregnancy complications, mental health problems, school dropouts that hamper employment opportunities, and exacerbate the cycle of poverty (Bhandari, 2019; Widyawati & Pierewan, 2017). In addition, families who allow child marriage tend to have no understanding of the consequences. In fact, the role of parents and family is very important, but parents often decide on child marriage to reduce the economic burden and continue existing traditions (Scott et al., 2021).

Giddens' structuration theory explains the reciprocal relationship between structures and agents in shaping society. Structure is the rules and resources organized in everyday social practices. Agents are individuals or groups who act and make decisions in social life. Meanwhile, agency refers to the ability of individuals to make choices and act in accordance with existing social structures (Giddens, 1984). The practice of child marriage is influenced by strong social norms and supported by peer group agency that continues to control and perpetuate the practice (Pradipta et al., 2017). Educated families tend to emphasize the importance of children's education for their future, while less educated families prioritize household chores and marriage expenses (Bhandari, 2019). This is in line with the statement of Sharma et al., (2020), low-income families have a major influence on child marriage decisions by considering girls' education important only up to grade 10. Although girls have the self-efficacy to resist child marriage, they are often hampered by family pressure and strong social norms.

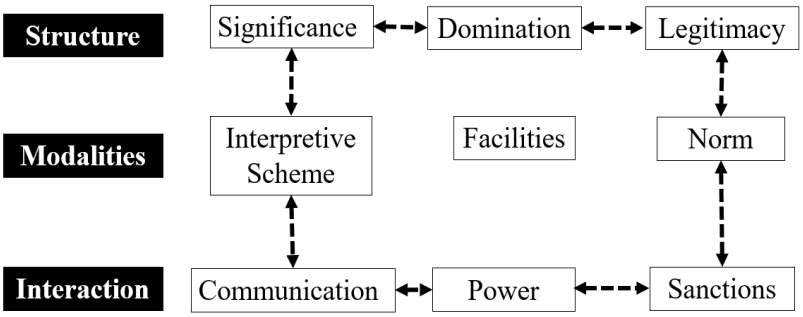

Figure 2. Dimensions of duality of structure (Giddens, 1984)

Anthony Giddens' structuration theory sees the dynamic relationship between agents and structures in "structural of duality" (Giddens, 1984). Giddens identifies three categories of structural dimensions, namely significance, domination and legitimacy, which are reproduced by agents to form structures with interactions that influence individual and group actions towards the phenomenon of child marriage(Kristianto, 2022; Nirzalin, 2013). The theory of family roles explains that each family member has a social role that is regulated by norms and culture, in which the role of the father is often positioned as the main decision maker, while children are expected to obey these decisions (Parsons & Bales, 1956). The authoritative role of parents, especially fathers, can control marriage decisions without involving the children's choices. Support for tradition and social actors often sustain the practice of child marriage despite legal restrictions (Essing et al., 2020). The legal loophole in the form of marriage dispensation regulated in Supreme Court Regulation No. 5/2019 still provides room for parents to impose their will through the courts even though Law No. 16/2019 increased the age limit for marriage to 19 years (Ashari, 2024). Parents as the closest family to the child have a role in the occurrence of child marriage who act as controllers by determining child marriage without involving the child's choice (Roberto & Sidabutar, 2022). School-going girls are also vulnerable to child marriage, although they are at higher risk than non-school-going girls with triggers of household instability and pressure from parents (Bhandari, 2019).

The cultural view of unmarried women in their 20s can bring shame to the family, so children's rights to think, express themselves, and continue their education are ignored (Bahroni et al., 2019). Child marriage occurring at low education levels can increase the risk of divorce and negatively impact childcare (Tyas & Herawati, 2017). This relevance is increasingly evident with the dynamics in

Kertajaya Village, Bogor Regency, which has two distinct communities is the doyan speaker community (dospek), which is open to technology and tends to delay child marriage, and the anti-speaker community (aspek), which is conservative, rejects electronic technology, and is prone to practicing child marriage. This highlights the need for special attention in West Java regarding efforts to prevent and address child marriage, as well as the necessity for more effective policies to protect girls from the risks of child marriage. Therefore, this study was conducted to analyze family social practices in the phenomenon of child marriage in the Aspek and Dospek communities in Bogor Regency, Indonesia.

METHODS

This study uses a post-positivist paradigm and Giddens' structuration theory to examine the relationship between individual actions and social structures. The quantitative approach is supported by qualitative methods. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics to describe, summarise, and present research data focused on describing phenomena factually and objectively without testing the relationship between variables. The results were presented in tables and bar charts. Meanwhile, qualitative data were obtained from in-depth interviews with key informants, then analyzed through a process of reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing with validation reinforced through triangulation. These qualitative data are relevant to complement and explain quantitative findings, particularly in understanding the dynamics of structure and agency at the family level. Primary data was obtained from interviews, field observations, and questionnaires, while secondary data was obtained from official government documents, local regulations, village records, and related journals and literature. The study population consists of women who married for the first time before the age of 19 in Bogor Regency between 2014 and 2024, with individual analysis units based on a sampling frame compiled from marriage records. Purposive sampling was used, taking into account data availability, location accessibility, and suitability with the research criteria. This study identified two communities in Kertajaya Village, namely the Aspek community and the Dospek community, with a total of 90 respondents (61 from the Aspek community and 29 from the Dospek community). This study was conducted in Kertajaya Village, Rumpin Subdistrict, Bogor Regency, West Java, comparing the Aspek community and the Dospek community. Bogor Regency was chosen as the research location because it has Regional Regulation No. 39 of 2021 on the prevention of child marriage. Although the data shows a downward trend in marriage dispensations and a 30% decrease in cases among the 17–20 age group in Kertajaya Village in 2018, the practice of child marriage still continues, making it important to study it in more depth. The data collection process took place from August 2024 to January 2025.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Social Overview of Kertajaya Village

The community of Kertajaya Village is dominated by the Sundanese ethnic group, with the use of colloquial Sundanese in daily interactions marking the characteristic familiarity of the local community. Kinship patterns in this village remain strong, reflected in the close proximity of settlements and the tendency for one neighbourhood unit (RT) to be inhabited by one large family, thus forming a communal social life and strengthening family values. The tradition of settling in one's area of origin and the low tendency to migrate also influence the marriage system, including the practice of arranged marriages and child marriages within the extended family. The nuclear family is the center of decision-making, but the extended family and community continue to play an important role in maintaining social norms. Differences in community views in villages, namely the doyan speaker (Dospek) community, which is more adaptive to modernity, and the anti-speaker (Aspek) community, which rejects the use of modern technology (Jazuli & Nasution, 2021), also influence marriage patterns. In the Dospek community, awareness of education is more developed and the rate of child marriage is lower, while in the Aspek community, the practice of child marriage is still high. Local culture that emphasizes extended family solidarity, religious views that regard marriage as both a religious duty and a means of preserving dignity, and social norms that place women as symbols of family honour are important factors behind child marriage. The age of marriage is understood not merely in terms of numerical limits, but also in terms of biological readiness or puberty. This makes child marriage a social practice that is considered normal in order to protect families from social disgrace and the risks of promiscuity.

Respondent Characteristics

Child marriage is more prevalent in the aspek community than in the dospek community. In the aspek community, it is still common to find children marrying at a very young age, between 13 -15 years old, and some even under 13 years old. Meanwhile, in the dospek community, marriage generally only occurs at the age of 16 and above. This difference indicates that in the Aspek community, cultural values and social pressure are still strong in encouraging children to marry young, while in the dospek community, views on the age of marriage tend to be more open and in line with social developments in society. Family pressure, including arranged marriages, economic pressure, and unplanned pregnancies, are the main factors driving this practice. Additionally, the perception that marriage is a solution for girls who drop out of school, coupled with a low understanding of new regulations and low legal awareness, especially in areas with low levels of education, contribute to this issue.

Most husbands in the dospek community marry in early adulthood, around the age of 20–25, although there are still a small number who marry under the age of 18, indicating that the practice of early marriage also occurs among men, albeit not as much as among women. In the dospek community, husbands tend to marry at an older age, ranging from 22 to 31 years old, indicating that they consider their readiness and responsibility before getting married. This is in line with statement (Yoshida et al., 2023) that men tend to marry after reaching adulthood, while women tend to marry while still very young. In the aspek community, it is difficult to reject proposals from older men because they are considered capable of providing for their wives. This view, coupled with economic factors, leads families to marry their daughters to older men in order to reduce their burden in life and avoid social stigma.

> *"Marriages here are sometimes arranged by families without the children's knowledge of the meeting. One day, the prospective partners are introduced to each other, and then both children are asked if they want to be with the person they met earlier. If the children agree, the marriage takes place, but the obstacle is only realised when the children are not of legal age to marry at the KUA (Office of Religious Affairs)."* (Informant, village official in the Aspek community, 2024).

The process of meeting the respondents and their husbands took place through various mechanisms, either through natural social interaction or through family intervention. One respondent revealed that she first met her husband at a friend's wedding. This shows that social networks still play a role in bringing prospective spouses together. In addition, there were also respondents who knew their husbands through social media, such as Facebook, which became a new space in the process of finding a partner. Meanwhile, the practice of arranged marriages is still found in the community, where families have a role in determining spouses for their children. Prospective spouses are brought together without direct involvement in the selection process beforehand, and the decision to marry is made by agreement after the meeting. However, the practice of arranged marriage and child marriage faces administrative obstacles, especially related to the age of the prospective bride and groom who have not met the requirements for marriage registration at the Kantor Urusan Agama (KUA). Safira et al., (2021) state that the absence of official registration risks causing legal problems in the future, particularly in terms of protecting the rights of couples and their children.

> *"Nowadays, there are not too many child marriage the government recommends it after 19 years of age. If someone comes to me who is not old enough, I tell them to wait until they are old enough"* (Informant, village official in the Dospek community, 2024).

In both communities, most respondents were in their first marriage, but the aspek community had more cases of second marriages and deaths of spouses. This indicates that child marriages in the aspek community tend to be unstable, influenced by emotional unpreparedness, coercion, and economic pressure. Conversely, in the dospek community, there were cases of divorce, indicating the courage of individuals to end unhealthy marriages. Octaviani & Nurwati (2020) added that divorce in child marriages is generally triggered by emotional immaturity, heavy responsibilities, pressure from family or society, economic instability, potential domestic violence, and differences in life principles. When respondents experience a second marriage, they make efforts to choose a partner that better suits their needs, which can increase awareness of their rights and well-being in marriage. Experiences in previous marriages can influence women's perspectives and decisions in building their next home life. Respondents who have been married longer generally face various challenges in the household, such as

economic issues and gender roles. Newly married respondents are still in the process of adjusting to married life, especially if the marriage occurred at a young age.

"*I divorced my first husband (arranged marriage) because he didn't care about me and my children, when I was sick he didn't pay attention to me. But this husband (second marriage), Alhamdulillah, we can do everything together*" (Respondents, 26 years old, perpetrators of child marriage in the Aspek community, 2024)

Table 1. Number and percentage by education of respondents and respondents' husbands in Kertajaya Village in 2024

Education	Aspek				Dospek			
	Respondent		Husband		Respondent		Husband	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Did not finish primary school/equivalent	25	41	4	7	1	3	5	17
Graduated from elementary school/equivalent	31	51	32	52	14	48	6	21
Graduated from junior high school/equivalent	2	3	17	28	10	34	10	34
Graduated from senior high school/ equivalent/ Vocational	3	5	7	11	4	14	8	28
College graduate	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0
Total	**61**	**100**	**61**	**100**	**29**	**100**	**29**	**100**

Source: primary data (processed) 2024

There is an educational gap between female respondents and their husbands, especially in terms of community aspects. Most women only complete primary education, namely 51% in Aspek community and 48% in Dospek community, while the husbands of respondents generally graduate from primary school and junior high school, meaning that men have access to higher education. Women in these communities tend to continue their education at pesantren, due to limited access and support for formal schooling. In the Dospek community, the education level of female respondents is better, having completed junior or senior high school. However, the educational gap with their husbands remains, although not as large as in the Aspek community. The low level of access to higher education in both communities shows that although education is often considered a safeguard against child marriage, cultural factors, poverty and social pressure continue to encourage the practice (Scott et al., 2021). This indicates that education alone is not enough to prevent the practice without supportive social and economic changes. No female respondents or husbands completed tertiary education, except for one husband in the Aspek community, reflecting the low attainment of tertiary education and its impact on quality of life and family decision-making.

The gap in access to education between men and women is closely related to the phenomenon of child marriage (Bhandari, 2019). "*Here, women who finish primary school are already good, most of them don't continue their education, if they do, they go to pesantren*" (Respondents, 21 years old, perpetrators of child marriage in the Aspek community, 2024). Women who marry at a young age have to stop their education to take on domestic roles, while men still have greater opportunities to continue their education. Couples with low levels of education tend to be more prone to child marriage due to limited knowledge and ability to consider readiness for marriage, as stated by Hermambang et al., (2021) that low education levels have an impact on individuals' capacity to make rational decisions regarding marriage. Gender norms, economic pressures and limited funding are the main factors that hinder women's education. One respondent expressed her desire to continue her education to junior high school but was rejected by her parents for financial reasons. This shows that in low-income families, girls' education is often not prioritized and is instead replaced by marriage as a family economic strategy and low awareness of the importance of long-term education.

In the Aspek community, most women do not have their own income, while only a few earn less than Rp2,500,000. This indicates that women's economic role is still very limited and their dependence on their husbands is high. Conversely, in the Dospek community, more women earn less than Rp2,500,000, indicating more active economic participation, especially in the informal sector. This is in line with the research by Nasrullah et al., (2014), in which women who marry at a young age generally become housewives or work in the informal sector due to their low level of education, resulting in limited

opportunities for decent work and economic dependence on their husbands or low-paid domestic work. From the husbands' perspective, incomes in the dospek community are also higher, with most ranging from Rp2,500,000 to Rp4,000,000 and the rest above Rp4,000,000. This condition shows that the dospek community has broader economic access and more relaxed gender norms, but the practice of child marriage continues due to strong social and cultural factors. This inequality reflects the strong influence of traditional gender roles, limited access to decent work, and domestic burdens that inhibit women's participation in the formal sector. These conditions also encourage some young couples to remain dependent on their parents, especially when their income is insufficient to meet household needs.

Family Overview

In the Aspek community, the most dominant level of education for fathers and mothers is primary school completion, at 70 % and 68%, while fathers- and mothers-in-law are also predominantly primary school graduates, at 58 % and 46%. In the Dospek community, the highest level of education for fathers and mothers is primary school completion, at 76 % and 76 % respectively, while 72 % of fathers-in-law and 57 % of mothers-in-law are also dominated by primary school graduates. This shows that the majority of parents and in-laws in both communities have a basic education, with slightly higher achievements in the Dospek community. This predominance of primary education reflects the limited access to and opportunities for formal education in the past, influenced by economic factors, geography and traditional values of the village community (Simanjorang et al., 2022). The existing culture in the community prioritizes religious education and considers basic provisions sufficient for children, especially women, for home life so formal education is not a priority. As a result, parents' views tend to be traditional and limited in understanding the risks of child marriage, so the decision to marry off children at a young age is more easily accepted and encouraged in family settings with low educational backgrounds.

Table 2. Number and Percentage by education of respondents' father, mother, and in-laws in Kertajaya Village in 2024

Education	Aspek								Dospek							
	Father		Mother		Father (in-law)		Mother (in-law)		Father		Mother		Father (in-law)		Mother (in-law)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Don't know	1	2	4	8	10	30	14	36	3	14	3	12	3	17	6	26
Not in school	7	15	8	16	3	9	6	15	1	5	2	8	1	6	3	13
Did not finish primary school	3	6	3	6	1	3	1	3	1	5	1	4	0	0	0	0
Graduated from elementary school	33	70	34	68	19	58	18	46	16	76	19	76	13	72	13	57
Graduated from junior high school	2	4	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	6	1	4
Graduated from senior high school	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	47	100	50	100	33	100	39	100	21	100	25	100	18	100	23	100

Source: primary data (processed) 2024

Most respondents from these communities did not know the exact income of their parents and in-laws. This ignorance reflects the low level of communication within the family about economic conditions, as well as the lack of financial literacy, especially in communities that tend to be traditional and secretive about household finances. Family income is generally in the low range, below Rp1,000,000, and is more prevalent among respondents' parents from the Aspek communities. Meanwhile, in-law income in this category was found to be more prevalent in the Dospek communities. The uncertainty of information and low income indicate that economic pressure is still a major problem faced by families. This condition encourages some families to marry off their children early as a way to reduce the economic burden or seek security through marriage (Nasrullah et al., 2014). Basic needs are prioritized, so children's education and development are often neglected. Economic pressures also narrow children's future aspirations, as the social environment provides few examples of alternatives to marriage. As a result, children's life choices are strongly influenced by family conditions and social pressures, and reinforce the view that marrying off children at a young age is a realistic solution to life's limitations.

The data shows that the majority of respondents in the Aspek community (36%) live in their own homes, reflecting a higher level of housing independence compared to the Dospek community (31%). This may be related to the fact that they have been married longer and have had time to build or buy their own homes. According to Wibowo et al., (2021), families view child marriage as a way out of poverty and believe that marriage can promise better economic conditions, even though the consequences often increase economic vulnerability in the long term. In fact, in this study, many young couples still live with their parents or in-laws, with 44% in the Aspek community and 66% in the Dospek community. This reflects their economic limitations, young age and lack of access to regular employment or housing loans. Living with extended family also reflects the strong family culture in rural areas, where support is reciprocal, both financially and in daily life such as childcare. This multigenerational living pattern indicates that the independence of young couples is gradual and strongly influenced by economic conditions and the social network of the family, which continues to play an active role even after the couple has built their own household.

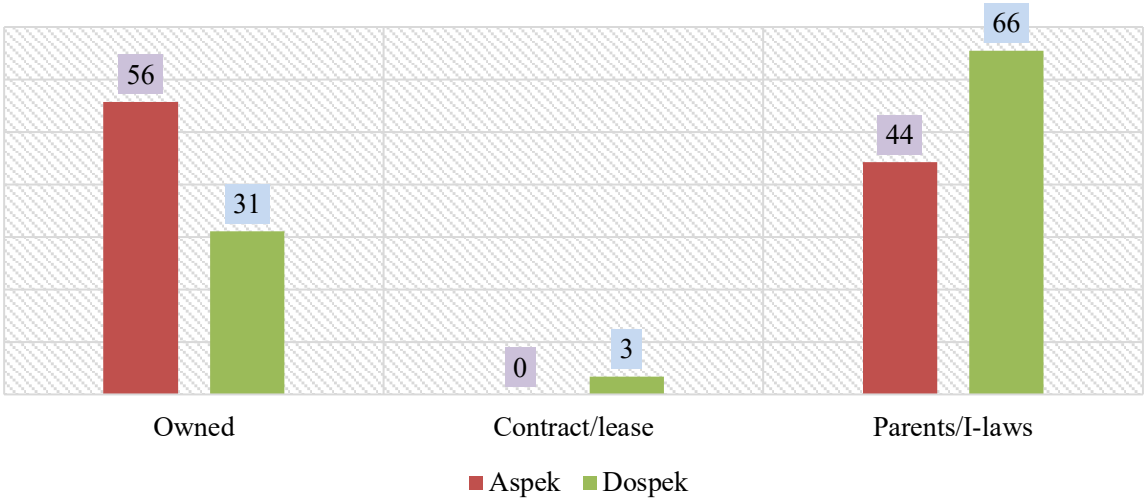

Figure 3. Percentage by house ownership of respondents in Kertajaya Village in 2024
Source: primary data (processed) 2024

This shows that the couple is not yet fully established after marriage because the majority of young couples still rely on the house owned by the family due to economic factors that limit the ability of individuals to buy their own house. "*In the early days of marriage, it was mostly assisted by parents, including living temporarily with parents*" (Informant, village official in the Dospek community, 2024). House ownership is an indicator of economic independence, but more than half of the respondents live with their parents/in-laws, indicating a strong familial social pattern in family life in this village. In the early stages of marriage, couples are still dependent on parents/in-laws. This reflects that the independence of young couples after marriage is not always absolute, but rather gradual and depends on the economic conditions and readiness of the couple to live a household life.

Dimensions of Structure at Family Level

The family's contribution to the phenomenon of child marriage is analyzed through the dimensions of structure according to Giddens, namely significance, domination and legitimacy (Giddens, 1984). These three dimensions show the role of the family in supporting child marriage along with the influence of cultural norms and values prevailing in society.

Significance

The significance dimension shows that child marriage is interpreted as a symbol of maturity, family honor, and traditions that must be maintained. This meaning is shaped by culture, religion, and family views on the role of women and the age of marriage, and is reproduced through communication and daily social practices. This process is part of the meaning of child marriage that is influenced by cultural norms, religion, family views on the role of women, and the age of marriage (Akalili & Sari, 2021). The

social structure, which is formed by the collective interpretation and meaning in the family and neighborhood of social reality, is constantly renewed and maintained in daily life. This study found that there are two meanings of child marriage in the family:

1. Child marriage is interpreted as part of religious teachings and cultural heritage institutionalized in community life, and is considered a form of social security believed to be able to provide protection, stability and moral legitimacy for girls and their families (Wulandari & Sarwoprasodjo, 2015). Families produce cultural values, viewing marriage as a solution to social concerns such as the stigma of "spinsterhood," out-of-wedlock pregnancy, and the uncertainty of girls' futures, as well as a symbol of maturity and readiness to enter a more mature phase of life. Some community groups also interpret child marriage as a moral solution in accordance with religious teachings, in order to maintain chastity, avoid adultery, and maintain family reputation and honor, women's virginity is positioned as a symbol of morality that needs to be protected through marriage. Religious and cultural norms that regard the age of puberty as a sign of readiness for marriage reinforce the legitimacy of this practice, even though the child is psychosocially immature (Musrifoh, 2016). Groups that uphold traditional values such as the Aspek community see this practice as a cultural heritage that is preserved to maintain social cohesion, strengthen relationships between families, and maintain communitarian values.
2. Child marriage is interpreted as a strategy to overcome family economic difficulties. Marriage is seen as a way to create long-term financial stability (Prasetyo, 2017). For families with financial limitations, marriage is seen as a solution to reduce the burden of living expenses and obtain financial support from the child's partner. Marrying off daughters is seen as a way to reduce the economic burden on the nuclear family in terms of daily needs, education and future dependents. Girls were seen as transferring dependents from parents to husbands, allowing families to focus on other children or other pressing needs. Marriage is seen as a form of economic mobility that allows women to move from financial dependence on the family of origin to the husband, as well as a response to rare opportunities that are perceived to reduce social and economic risks for the family. This tends to be the case in Dospek communities, where families marry off their children not because of norms or culture, but because they see marriage as a way out of economic pressure. Child marriage is also believed to bring about a form of socioeconomic mobility, for example if the prospective husband is considered capable of providing a guarantee of a better livelihood.

Domination

The domination dimension relates to the distribution of power and control over resources within the family structure. This domination is reinforced through social pressure, norms and economic obligations that the family reproduces. Family actions are not only influenced by external pressures, but are also an attempt to maintain or change existing social structures, as seen in the roles of fathers and mothers in the child marriage process (El-Hassan, 2025). In the aspect and dospek communities, families still exhibit traditional and patriarchal structures. Fathers hold the main authority in decision-making, including on children's education and marriage. Mothers play a more domestic and social role, but are not dominant in strategic decisions. This dominance does not only stem from the individual, but is reinforced by recurring social practices, norms and economic pressures. The similarity of patterns in both communities suggests that the power structure within the family has not changed much and continues to reproduce the practice of child marriage.

The majority of respondents in this study made the decision to marry on their own accord, reflecting increased autonomy in choosing a life partner and a shift away from the traditional norm of arranged marriage. Access to education, social media and modern values emphasize individual rights, although the final decision remains with the parents, especially the father as the head of the family.

> *"Baheula, abdi dinikahkeun sabab dijodohkeun ku kolot abdi. Pun bapak nikahkeun abdi sareng lalaki pilihanna padahal basa eta abdi boga kabogoh. Perjodohan eta kulantaran kolot abdi hoyong enggal boga incu. Basa abdi hamil dalapan bulan, abdi ditinggal keun ku salaki abdi. (My father married me to a man of his choice even though I had a boyfriend at the time, because my parents wanted to have grandchildren. When I was 8 months pregnant, my husband left me)"* (Respondents, 28 years old, perpetrators of child marriage in the Aspek community, 2024).

Table 3. The roles of fathers, mothers, and children in the child marriage stage in Kertajaya Village in 2024

Stages	Community	The Role of Fathers	The Role of Mothers	The Role of Children
Before Child Marriage	Aspek	The main decision-maker, citing the marriage of children as a moral responsibility of the family.	Mothers support their husbands' decisions and give their children moral advice, but they have little power to reject their husbands' decisions.	She tends to be passive, marrying due to parental pressure and social norms, with little room to refuse.
	Dospek	Remain dominant, but give more consideration to the child's reasons.	More involved in discussions with children, tends to provide emotional support and advice.	More active in expressing their desire to marry, the decision to marry is driven by romantic relationships or the desire for independence.
During Child Marriage	Aspek	Ensuring that the marriage ceremony complies with religious norms so as to preserve the family's honour.	Managing domestic preparations and social relations between families.	When living in a marriage as the person being married, one tends to follow the family's instructions.
	Dospek	Playing a role in the legality of the marriage, including assisting with the marriage registration.	Being involved in the preparations for the event and providing emotional support for the child.	Entering into the marriage with the awareness of needing to adapt in order to be accepted by the husband's family.
After Child Marriage	Aspek	Controlling the child's life, pressuring them not to return home, providing financial assistance if necessary.	Being a confidant while still encouraging patience and obedience in their children.	Being passive, dependent on one's husband and extended family and predominantly domestic roles.
	Dospek	Providing material and moral support and allowing more freedom for children's independence.	Be more open about the child's condition and provide realistic advice and encouragement to be independent.	Begin to demonstrate agency by helping the family economy.
During Divorce	Aspek	Often refuses divorce in order to preserve the family's honour.	Focus on maintaining the family image.	Returned home feeling ashamed and helpless.
	Dospek	Take on the role of mediator and accept divorce as a social reality.	Helping children get back on their feet.	Finding a new livelihood and rebuilding self-esteem after divorce.

Source: primary data (processed) 2024

Parental involvement in the lives of young couples shows that parents still play a role in their children's marriage, especially in emotional and decision-making aspects (Scott et al., 2021). The family solidarity that is maintained shows that the independence of the couple is relative, with parents still considered as authority figures. However, excessive parental involvement can exacerbate household conflicts, as it can be a complicating factor in children's family dynamics. Marriage marks a transition to adulthood, and children are expected to be able to solve problems without interference from extended family. Limited parental intervention shows a more egalitarian pattern of family relations, with parents respecting the limits of their children's privacy after marriage. In addition, most young couples are financially independent after marriage, but a small proportion still receive financial support or non-financial assistance from parents, such as food or daily necessities. This support demonstrates the value of family solidarity and economic independence is more of a transitional process that remains influenced by family social and cultural relations.

Most parents prioritize marriage and family stability over girls' education. *"Kolot abdi basa eta te boga acis keur abdi ngalanjutkeun sakola. Abdi ngarasa kolot abdi teu ngadorong jeung ngadukung abdi pikeun ngalanjutkeun sakola nu leuwih luhur* (*my parents didn't have money to pay for my further study at that time, I feel my parents didn't encourage me to continue my education*)*"* (Respondents, 17 years old, perpetrators of child marriage in the Dospek community, 2024). This is due to economic constraints as well as social norms that make marriage a solution to reduce family burden. As a result, support for their children's continued education after marriage is minimal. Parents' preferences and support strongly influence girls' future orientation, including in terms of education, which impacts on their self-confidence and self-esteem (Kamantyan et al., 2021). Cultural views that place women in domestic roles, coupled with economic pressures and concerns about societal views, encourage parents to marry off their daughters at a young age to maintain family honour and avoid social stigma. Boys' education is prioritised, while girls are encouraged to help with household chores or work. Child marriage is also considered part of a tradition passed down through generations.

Legitimacy

Legitimization is the process by which actions are deemed legitimate by society through norms and traditions. Families in both communities often justify child marriage in various ways, even though it is illegal and damages children's rights. The decision to marry off children is considered a social obligation, not just an individual choice, so family and environmental pressures make children follow the existing rules. The pattern of parental permission for girls' social interactions in this study shows a tug-of-war between conservative values and adaptation to social change. Some parents allow dating with certain conditions, such as maintaining moral boundaries and parental involvement, while others prohibit it completely to maintain the reputation and morals of the child. *"Abdi diijinkeun bobogohan, ngan aya syaratna nyaeta teu meunang berlebihan jeung, kudu nyaho waktu, kolot oge kudu nyaho* (*I am allowed to date, but there are conditions, which are not to be excessive, must know the time, and be known by parents*)" (Respondents, 20 years old, perpetrators of child marriage in the Aspek community, 2024). These permissions reflect traditional parental authority legitimised by religious and cultural norms (Oktari et al., 2023). Marriage standards are still based on biological maturity (baliq), without considering mental maturity (rusyd), and the father as a mujbir guardian often has full rights to marry off the child without the daughter's consent (Musrifoh, 2016).

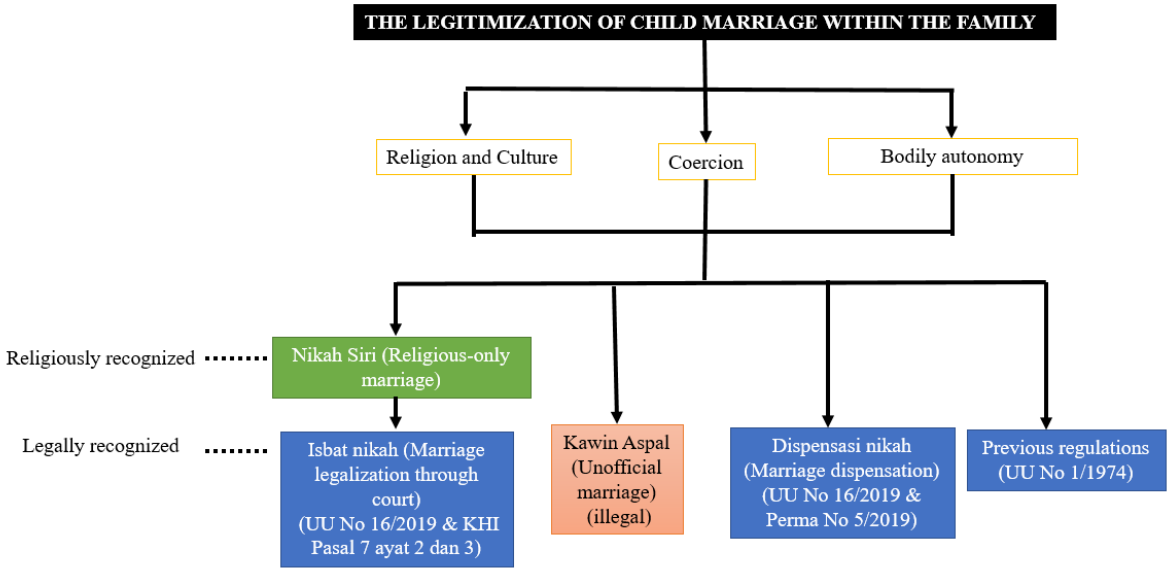

Figure 5. The process of legitimizing child marriage in families in Kertajaya Village in 2024

The process of legitimizing child marriage in the family shows the dominance of the family in legitimizing the practice through religious and social mechanisms. Once the decision to marry is made, the family seeks religious and social recognition, if possible from the state. Community understanding is still limited to basic concepts such as puberty, without regard to children's rights and obligations.

Some respondents were unaware of official regulations such as Bogor Regency Regulation No. 39 of 2021, although some of them were aware of Law No. 16 of 2019 and even Law No. 23 of 2002. Child marriage can come from arranged marriage or the child's desire facilitated by the family. Low legal awareness causes families to choose the siri marriage route because it is considered fast, religiously valid, and does not require official registration which is hindered by the minimum age limit. *"Upami umur can cekap mah tiasa nikah siri, engke mun umurna tos cekap karek indit ka KUA* (*If you are not old enough, you can get married siri, then when you are old enough, you can go to the KUA*)" (Respondents, 19 years old, perpetrators of child marriage in the Aspek community, 2024). Kawin siri is also chosen to maintain family honour, especially in the event of an out-of-wedlock pregnancy or to avoid social stigma. Families can apply for isbat nikah to the religious court in accordance with Law No 16/2019 and Kompilasi Hukum Islam (KHI) Article 7 paragraphs 2 and 3. This is in line with respondents' statements.

Families resort to various means to legitimize child marriage, such as nikah siri, isbat nikah, marriage dispensation and aspal marriage (falsifying age in order to gain official state recognition). Official channels such as dispensation are rarely used because they are considered complicated, time-consuming, expensive, and open to family disgrace. Kawin aspal is an option because it is an easier process and immediately gets a marriage book, even though it violates the law. In interviews, informants recognized the practice of 'shooting the age' or 'being elders' as a way to obtain legality without a trial. These mechanisms show that social and religious legitimacy takes precedence over state legal legitimacy. Families take a leading role in legitimizing child marriage as a form of social control to maintain the family's honour, good name and dignity in the community, especially when girls are perceived as violating moral norms.

Family Contributions to the Concept of Structure Duality

The family acts as both a structure and an agent in the practice of child marriage, depending on their interaction with social norms. As a structure, the family maintains cultural values such as the tradition of marrying children at a young age in order to preserve family honour and avoid social pressure. Meanwhile, as an agent, the family acts within a framework of interrelated rules and resources. These rules include deep-rooted social views, such as the belief that women must marry young so as not to be considered in violation of norms and to avoid adultery. Families use authoritative resources in the form of parental power to regulate children's decisions, restrict socialising, and control morality, as well as allocative resources such as family economic assets, prospective son-in-law's income, and social networks to facilitate the marriage process. In Aspek communities, this form of domination is stronger because traditional values and obedience to family structures are still highly upheld. In contrast, in Dospek communities, although parents still play a dominant role, there is greater flexibility due to openness to social change. These two resources show that the decision to marry at a young age is the result of rational family actions that simultaneously reproduce social structures that limit children's agency (Maulida & Safrida, 2020).

Families as agents can delay or accelerate child marriage based on interpretations of social norms, economic conditions, and religious views. Families that care about education tend to delay child marriage so that they can continue their education, while families that internalize the value of marriage are more supportive of child marriage practices despite the potential harm to children. External influences, such as religious leaders, peers and communities, strengthen the family's position as a structure that encourages child marriage. Religious leaders provide legitimacy on the basis of religious teachings, while peers normalize young marriage. Interventions from other agents such as educational institutions and health cadres can expand girls' negotiation space by educating them about the importance of education and health risks, but this influence is limited if the family prioritizes economic values or tradition. The village government and neighbourhood leaders also play a dual role, supporting or discouraging the practice through administrative or educational recommendations. The interaction between external agents and the family shows the role of the family as both a structure and an agent that negotiates social norms in the practice of child marriage (Pradipta et al., 2017). The Dospek community shows the relationship between a more open social structure and individuals who have room for negotiation in life choices, while the anti-speaker community emphasizes morality and family protection, supporting child marriage as a solution to prevent deviant behaviour. These differences reflect the interaction between social structures and individual agents in shaping the norms and practices of child marriage.

Families from the Aspek community tend to maintain the practice of child marriage because of long-established social norms that emphasize adherence to tradition and protection of morality. They believe that marrying off girls at a young age is a way to maintain family honour and prevent behaviour that is considered deviant. Religious interpretations that emphasize marriage as a way to preserve women's chastity further reinforce this view. Aspect communities are enabling, as strong social norms govern family behaviour and tend not to allow girls to determine their own future. In contrast, families from the Dospek community are more open to new information and consider the long-term welfare of their children, such as supporting girls to complete their education before marriage. They are more active in participating in socialization activities held by the government or community organizations. The Dospek community has the potential to be constraining to the practice of child marriage by opening up more space for individual agents to negotiate life choices. Family decisions remain influenced by economic factors and social pressures, suggesting that broader social structures continue to limit individual autonomy in determining their future.

The theoretical implications of this study reinforce the application of Anthony Giddens' structuration theory by showing that the family plays a dual role, namely as a structure that implements norms and control, and as an agent that responds to social conditions such as culture, religion, and policy. A comparison of the Aspek and Dospek communities reveals differences in orientation, with Aspek families tending to reproduce traditional and patriarchal values, while Dospek families demonstrate greater agency in adapting to modernisation and formal systems. In practical terms, these results emphasise the importance of making the family a key agent in preventing child marriage through strengthening family education, critical awareness among parents, and policy synergies that are more in line with social realities.

CONCLUSION

Child marriage is still common in Kertajaya Village, but it shows different patterns and meanings between the aspect and dospek communities. Based on Giddens' three-dimensional analysis of structure, namely significance, dominance, and legitimacy. In the Aspek community, child marriage is mostly interpreted as part of culture and religious values as an effort to maintain family honour. Conservative social structures, strong moral control, and the dominance of parental roles, especially fathers, encourage the decision to marry children at a young age. The legitimacy of this practice is reinforced through social and religious norms, for example through unregistered marriages ‘nikah siri’, which are considered morally valid even though they are not legally registered. Meanwhile, in the dospek community, child marriage is more often motivated by economic considerations and the desire to achieve stability in life. Dospek communities are relatively more open to social change, including women's participation in informal economic activities. However, family economic pressures and the pragmatic view that marriage can reduce financial burdens remain strong reasons for child marriage. Decision-making patterns in Dospek families are also more participatory than in other communities, where children have little room for negotiation even though the final decision remains in the hands of their parents. Both communities demonstrate that the family acts as a duality of structure, simultaneously reproducing social norms and acting as an agent that negotiates these values. Child marriage is not merely the result of individual decisions, but rather the result of social constructs influenced by culture, religion, and economics. Prevention efforts need to take into account the characteristics of each community. In the Aspek community, this can be achieved through the transformation of cultural values and progressive religious education, while in the Dospek community, it can be achieved through improving economic welfare, education, and critical awareness among families so that they do not view child marriage as a solution to poverty.

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