Gender and Population in Africa:

The Case of Child Marriage Prevention in Amhara Region, Ethiopia

Problem

- In 2005, almost half of Ethiopian women aged 20-24 married before age 18

- Adverse outcomes of child marriage for women, children and society

- Little information on:

  - Knowledge and beliefs of individuals who negotiate children's marriages

  - What might work for child marriage prevention

Objectives

- Examine influence of mass media and interpersonal communication exposure on knowledge, beliefs and attitudes related to child marriage prevention

- Examine whether marriage-related beliefs and attitudes among parents/guardians are subject to social influence

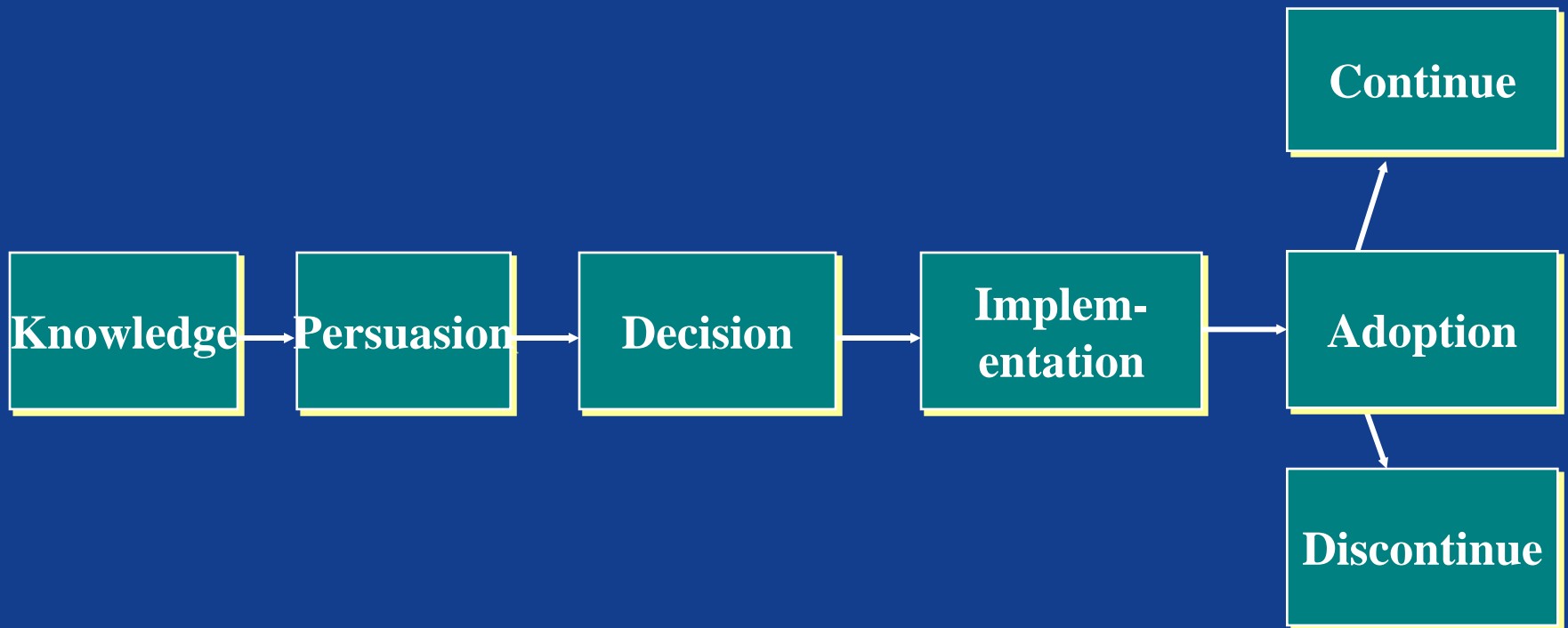- Examine whether the above effects vary by sex

Diffusion of Innovations Theory

Diffusion of Innovations Contd.

Nature of innovation

- Relative advantage over what is being replaced
- Compatible with values of intended users
- Easy to use
- Opportunity to try innovation
- Tangible benefits

Diffusion of Innovations Contd.

- Communication channels
  - Mass media (enhanced by listening groups and face-to-face approaches)
- Social system:
  - Identify influential networks to diffuse innovation
    - Health systems, schools, religious and political groups, social clubs, and informal associations
  - Identify opinion leaders, peers

Social Influence Theories

- Social norms

  - Perceptions of acceptability and prevalence of child marriage will lead to adoption of attitudes supportive of child marriage

  - Perceptions may be accurate or inaccurate

- Social pressure

  - Social inoculation approach to prevention

  - Attitudes/behaviors influenced by explicit social pressure from peers in group context

Social Influence Theories Contd.

- Media exposure theory

    - Frequent exposure to media messages on child marriage prevention would lead to more favorable attitudes about delayed marriage

- Social communication theory

    - Discussions about child marriage prevention between parent/guardians and key agents in community will communicate social norms and values in direction of delayed marriage

Context: Communication Interventions

- Radio serial dramas

- House-to-house visits (SDAs, CBRHAs)

- Local campaigns

- Community conversations

- School-based peer education

- Public forums with traditional leaders

- Religious leader advocacy

Context: Legal Interventions

- Ethiopia Revised Family Code of 2000
  - Legal Minimum Age at Marriage (LMAM) of 18 years
- New Criminal Code of 2005
  - Prison sentences for Grooms
    - Bride 13-17 years old: 3 years max
    - Bride < 13 years old: 7 years max
  - Persons officiating marriage, family members, and witnesses
    - 3 years max or 5000 Birr fine (approx. $366)

Data

- 2007 household survey in Amhara Region
  - To document coverage of child marriage prevention activities implemented by the USAID-funded CGPP & EFPRHP
- Three-stage cluster sampling design
- One eligible adolescent per household regardless of sex
  - Females aged 10-19
  - Males aged 15-24
- One co-resident parent/guardian (N=4894)

Dichotomous Outcomes

- Knowledge outcomes

    - Knows LMAM is18 years (33%)

    - Knows 2+ categories of individuals punishable by law for violating the LMAM (16%)

- Ideational outcomes

    - Perceives that marriage < 18 is "too early" (42%)

    - Believes daughters have right to choose marriage age (67%)

    - Believes daughters have right to choose marriage partner (75%)

Key Individual-level Variables

- No. of mass media channels on early marriage prevention

- No. of interpersonal channels on early marriage prevention

- Perceives most people in community approve of early marriage/family arranged marriage

- Perceives favorable reactions of salient others if respondent advocates against early marriage

- No. of perceived benefits of delayed marriage

Key Community-level Variables

- Social pressure

  - Among girls aged 10-17 in community who ever heard formal engagement/marriage was being planned, % who reported community members contacted families to discuss stopping the marriage

- Social coercion

  - % of parents/guardians who knew a community member who was legally punished for involvement in early marriage

- Influence of opinion leaders

  - % of parents/guardians reporting religious leader advised them & families against early marriage

Confounding Variables

- Residence
  - Program areas
  - Urban areas
- Education
- Age
- Age at first marriage
- Sex

- Employment past year
- HH ownership of bank account
- HH ownership of radio
- HH ownership of TV
- Religion
- Frequency of religious event attendance (ideational outcomes only)

Methods

- Multilevel Models

  - Level 1: parents and guardians (N = 4,445)

  - Level 2: kebeles /districts(N = 120)

- Two random slopes

  - Mass media exposure

  - Interpersonal communication exposure

- Instrumental variable probit for endogeneity

- VIF and tolerance for multicollinearity

- LR chi-square test for significance of random slopes

- STATA 10.1, GLLAMM command

Background Characteristics

	Mean/Percent
Mean no. of mass media channels	1.5
Mean no. of interpersonal channels	2.7
Mean no. of perceived benefits of delayed marriage	1.9
Perceived community approval of early marriage	6.8%
Perceived community approval of family arranged marriage	38.2%
Perceived approval of parents/guardians' advocacy against early marriage by salient others	89%
Lives in high religious leader advocacy community	30.1%
Lives in high social pressure community	30.4%
Lives in community with high awareness of marriage law enforcement	32.1%

Adjusted Odds Ratios: Knowledge Outcomes

Communication Exposure	LMAM	Legal Consequences of Early Marriage
No. of mass media channels	1.304 ***	1.352 ***
No. of interpersonal channels	1.306 ***	1.227 ***
Mass media * interpersonal channels	0.959 ***	0.977
Female	0.673 ***	0.643 ***
Log Likelihood	-2429.18	-1603.05

*** p < .001   ** p < 01   * p < .05

Adjusted Odds Ratios: Ideational Outcomes

	Marriage < 18 is "too early)	Daughters' right to marriage age choice	Daughters' right to marriage partner choice
No. of mass media channels	1.089	**1.277 *****	**1.206 ****
No. of interpersonal channels	**1.090****	**1.106 *****	**1.097 ****
Mass media * inter-personal channels	1.000	0.980	0.990
Perceived benefits of delayed marriage (#)	0.989	**1.147 *****	**1.139 ****
Log Likelihood	-2736.89	-2613.50	-2321.02

*** p < .001   ** p < 01   * p < .05

Adjusted Odds Ratios: Ideational Outcomes Contd.

Social Influence Measures	Marriage < 18 is "too early)	Daughters' right: marriage age choice	Daughters' right: marriage partner choice
Perceives community approves of early marriage.	**0.686 ***	**0.698 ***	**0.637 ****
Perceived favorable reactions from salient others to EMA	**1.836 ****	**1.800 ****	**2.261 *****
High vs. low religious advocacy	0.953	**0.661 ***	0.827
High vs. low social pressure	0.912	**1.528 ****	1.207
High vs. low community awareness of law enforcement	1.136	**1.992 ****	1.388

*** p < .001   ** p < 01   * p < .05

Other Results

- Significant variations across communities for associations of mass media & interpersonal communication exposure with:

  - Knowledge of the LMAM

  - Perception that marriage before age 18 years is "too early"

- Women are significantly less likely than men to:

  - Be affected by salient others' reactions when it comes to belief in daughter's rights to choose marriage age & partner

- Association of perceived benefits of delayed marriage with belief in daughters' rights to choose marriage partner depended on level of education

Program Implications

- Disseminate child marriage prevention messages through multiple channels

- Stimulate discussions about child marriage prevention between parents/guardians and key community members

- Provide guidelines on how key agents (religious leaders) should communicate norms/values supportive of delayed marriage

- Modify social images about marriage timing in "healthier" direction

Program Implications Contd.

- Correct erroneous perceptions of social norms (e.g., community support for child marriage) by using real data

- Encourage community mobilization to stop planned child marriages

- Greater effort needed to strengthen public understanding of marriage laws (especially among women) and acceptance of daughters' rights to marriage choice (especially among men)

- Understand the uniqueness of each community in terms of cultural attitudes, socioeconomic conditions, etc.

Limitations

- Cross-sectional study design; no comparison group

- Endogeneity not fully addressed

    - Strong instruments could not be found

- Communication exposure could not be assigned to specific programs

- Lack of data on recall of specific slogans

- Data not regionally representative

- Unmeasured factors (e.g. message quality/content)

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