Mies Grijns, Hoko Horii, Sulistyowati Irianto, and Pinky Saptandari (eds), *Menikah Muda di Indonesia: Suara, Hukum dan Praktek*. Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2018, xxiii + 379, pp. ISBN: 9786024336899, price: IDR 100.000,00 (paperback).

Common discourse around the question of early marriage generally places the issue between two positions. One accentuates the principle of human rights (or the rights of the child), where the prevention of early marriage becomes the main argument. The other is based on the notion that cultural tradition and religious norms should not be interfered with by the state or international institutions or conventions. This book is a welcome contribution to the discussion, as it goes beyond this binary approach. Although not denying the prevalence of the arguments for and against early marriage, it goes deeper into the issue by examining the legal and political ambiguities surrounding early marriage, the norms and regulations regarding the age of marriage, the actors involved in the debates for and against early marriage, the actual decision-making in the marriage process itself, and the consequences for the young people involved. Although the general pattern illuminated by the various cases shows the prevalence of early marriages, the different circumstances under which these occur show some variation in terms of the 'what, when, and who' questions raised in the introduction. The chapters include cases from eight provinces (West, Central and East Java, Yogyakarta; South and West Sumatra; South Sulawesi, and West Nusa Tenggara), allowing readers to explore the question of contextual diversity in the use of legal frameworks, the actors involved, and the subjectivities of those who marry early either by consent or by force.

This book is divided in three parts which pivot around the structure-agency issue. The first part examines the experiences of young girls who marry early. The second part examines the legal framework and the gaps and contestations between different regulations; and the third part focuses on the role of the various actors involved in propagating early marriage or providing alternative support networks. Although the three parts show clearly the different emphases surrounding discussions on the issue of early marriage, one can also see the interactive dynamics underlying these contentions, which urge us to reflect on the concepts of childhood, consent, and agency that cannot be separated from the concepts of governmentality and sexual moralities.

As this book shows, in defining marriage regulations within the decentralized political context of Indonesia, various legal and political bodies and regulations exist at different levels of governance, enhancing the contestations and ambiguities regarding the proper age for marriage. At the international level, various conventions have been ratified by the Indonesian government, which

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provide the framework for the political debates defining the proper age for marriage (as stated in the introduction of this book). The CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women) was ratified by Indonesia in 1984 and the CRC (Convention on the Rights of the Child). The latter states that 'a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years, unless under the law applicable to the child, maturity is attained earlier' (*CRC Part 1 Article 1*), as was ratified in 1990. Before these international conventions, the 1974 Indonesian Marriage Law (*UU Perkawinan 1974*) stated that the minimum age of marriage for girls is 16 years and for boys, 19 years. This was also the result of extended political debates between different parties and political actors. However, in practice, parents are legally allowed to disregard the minimum age requirement, as there is space to request dispensation in court as stated in article 7 no. 1 of the 1974 Marriage Law.

An attempt to challenge the minimum age of marriage was undertaken by the Komnas Perempuan (National Commission on Violence Against Women), with the argument that the Indonesian Human Rights Law of 1999 defined a child as someone under the age of 18 years. They also argued that early marriage often promoted domestic violence.

Although it is often argued that traditional and religious laws have been the main impediments to the implementation of a minimum age of marriage, this book examines the local variations and contestations regarding not only cultural traditions but also religious interpretations of marriage norms. For example, the tradition of *merariq* in Lombok, which is the (often ritualized) act of kidnapping a girl by the husband-to-be, has been countered by the local village-based norm, legalized in 2013. This provided authority to the *kepala dusun* (hamlet head) to reject underage marriage and enforce legal sanctions if these marriages were enacted. A number of other examples are given of local regulations established to prevent child marriage. In East Tomoni, South Sulawesi, a minimum age of marriage was introduced in mid-2014, namely 19 years for girls and 21 years for boys. In Lombok, through the traditional institution of *awig-awig*, local officials were legally authorized in 2013 to reject underage marriages, with sanctions that could be undertaken by the school or the village authorities.

Not mentioned in the book is that on the 27th of April 2017, the Congress of Islamic Women Clergy (*Kongres Ulama Perempuan*) passed an Islamic ruling or *fatwa* to pressure the government to increase the minimum age of marriage from 16 to 18 years (for girls). At a national level, the major Islamic political organizations, namely NU and Muhammadiyah, are against the raising of the minimum age to 16 years. Nevertheless, some *kyais* in a religious school in Lamongan, East Java, considered that marriage below 17 years was not benefi-

cial for young girls, as it reduces their ability to continue their education, have the physical capability to work, and especially to enhance their reproductive health.

However, as shown in the book's chapters, the state rulings and even the local-level regulations which attempt to obstruct or delay early marriage are often countered by factors such as the prevailing social norms regarding romantic and sexual relations (which among others prohibit staying out late at night), the economic conditions of the parents, and unplanned pregnancy, which still accounts for a high percentage of the early marriages.

Another important theme highlighted in this book is the consequences of early marriage. As one case study in Palembang shows, there are different degrees of responsibility that the husband takes after marriage. In more than one third of the cases, the husband did not provide financial support, or only for a maximum of one year after the birth of the child, or abandoned his wife after less than one year of marriage. Another case study shows the problems of reproductive health and prenatal care in cases of early pregnancy, resulting in high levels of health risks.

In general, it is argued at the end of this book, certain social transformations have occurred over time regarding the age of marriage—for instance, marriage under the age of 15 years has become less frequent and the choice of partner is now more in the hands of the young people themselves. Nevertheless, when and whether they should marry is still often in the hands of the parents.

Apart from the sexual moralities surrounding the practice of early marriage, its treatment by the various authors in this book brings up various related issues: the nature of *adat* or tradition, and of governmentality; the consequences of early marriage, and the notion of agency where the concept of “consent” itself becomes an issue that should be problematized more. Further questions explored in this book include: to what extent do class, gender and ethnicity issues shape the degree or nature of parental control, or their motivation to propagate early marriage; how does being the eldest or youngest child affect parental pressure to marry at an early age; how far does the labour market provide pathways to escape from forced or early marriage; and how might the child's consent or wish to marry at an early age be a strategy to escape parental control? The fact that these questions come up while reading this book shows the important contribution it has made to stimulate discussion and understanding of early marriage, which, apart from the issue of diversity, also involves the factors of time, space and scale.

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