Empirical Strategy

Data
Jordanian Labour Market Survey, 2016 (ERF and DoS)*
Nationally representative survey with an individual module
• 2.369 women married between 1995 and 2016

Main variable
• Value of the dower received at marriage, deflated: Mean value is 4043 Jordanian Dinar (= 7 months of a household income)
• In your opinion, does the husband have the right to hit his wife in any of the following situations?* (16% declare yes at least once)

Identification Strategy
Probit model estimated by maximum likelihood:

\[ IPV_{igt} = \beta_1 Dower_{igt} + \beta_2 X_{igt} + \beta_3 Year_t + \beta_4 Local_g \]

With Dower_{igt}, the dower value, X_{igt} a vector of individual characteristics, Year_t and Local_g time and area-level fixed effect

Threat of endogeneity: unobservable, reverse causality, recalling bias

Instrumental Variable: Short-term variation of the international real oil price

• Main determinant of dower paid in cash: Cash availability at the time of marriage (Siddiqui (2007); Shahrimi (2016))
• Oil price: Exogenous source of cash inflows from Gulf countries to Jordan (Bouri and al. (2016); Mohaddes and al. (2013))

• Exclusion restriction

Supported by the fact that
• Spouses matching and dower value agreed few years before the actual marriage
• Very socially reprehensible to change the matching after ceremonies and families get involved.

Falsification Test: correlation between the instrument and indicators of:
• Matching characteristics? No correlation with: spouse’s age difference, spouse’s education difference
• Marriage timing? No correlation with: woman and husband age at marriage, the engagement duration
• Migration and Sex ratio? No correlation with: sex ratio, net migration, male migration

*Source: Economic research forum and Jordanian department of Statistics.
**When she burns the food; neglects the children; argues with him; talks to other men; wastes his money; refuses him sex.

What effect does the dower received at marriage have on women’s attitudes towards intimate partner violence?

Main Result:
The likelihood of woman justifying IPV increases by 24 percentage point with a 1000 JD increase in the dower value received at marriage.

Mechanism
Dower and divorce in Jordan
• Women must repay back the dower if they want to divorce (unilateral divorce) or go to court to prove mistreatment. Both options are economically costly.
• At the time of the survey: Divorce is socially acceptable (26.97%) but rarely initiated by women (82.02 % initiated by husband and 17.98% by woman (11,95% Judicial Court; 6,03% khul: return of the dower)

The results are consistent with an intrahousehold model that would predict that the dower reimbursement upon divorce reduces women’s outside options (Plattee and Al. (2007)) and leads to an inefficient outcome (Farmer and Al. (1997); Lundberg and Al. (1993)).

Additional empirical evidence
• The effect of the dower on women’s attitude toward IPV is no longer significant if they had access to the labor market, have a high level of education or have savings (repaying the dower is a lower constraint)
• The dower also has a negative impact on women’s autonomy and decision making

Policy implication
• Encouraging women to save their dower (mostly spend on new bridal furniture)
• Targeting directly the obligation of dower repayment upon divorce