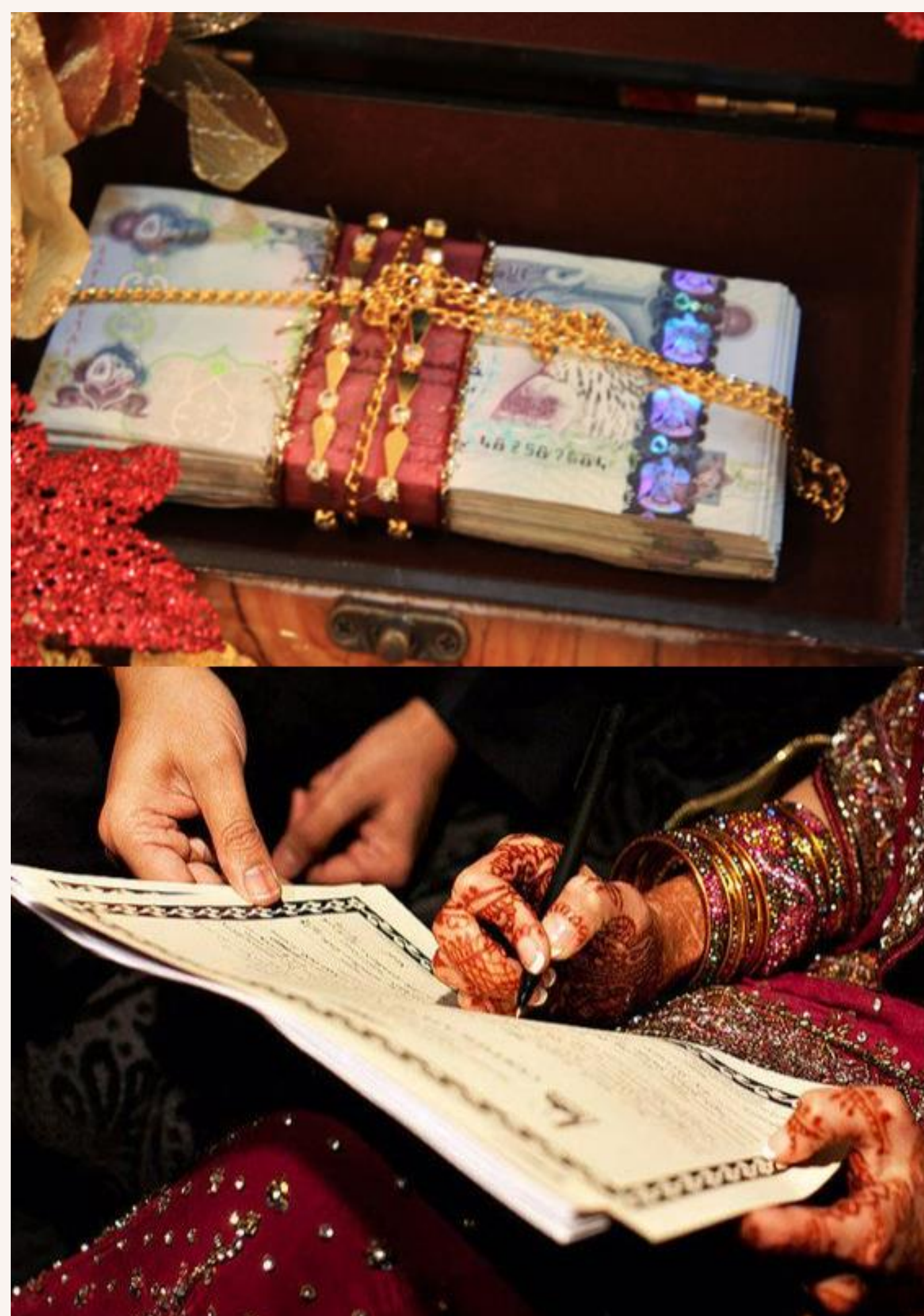


The Price of Silence : Marriage Transfers and Women's Attitude Toward IPV

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The Jordanian Context

Violence Against Women: A major public health concern in Jordan

- Early 2000's more than **80% of women** justified intimate partner violence (IPV)
- Targeting attitudes is a powerful way to reduce violence and to **empower women**.
- After considerable public policy efforts, acceptance of IPV is decreasing but **remains high** (+/- 20% in 2016).
- Limitation: the **marriage institution** imposes normative constraints on women and women face **high economic cost to exit un-happy marriages**.

The dower

- In Jordan, the husband has to pay a dower - a **cash transfer** - at the time of marriage.
- The dower is a historical evolution of the custom of bride price (which dates to 3000 BC) that follows the advent of Islam. The dower is now practiced throughout the **Middle East, North Africa and parts of South Asia**.
- The transfer is **mandatory** upon validation of the marriage and remains the **full property of the bride**.

The paradox of the dower : on one hand, the dower represents a considerable source of **economic ownership** for women (can account for several years of a household's income). On the other hand, women **must pay back the dower** they received if they want to divorce (unilateral divorce), which can be a constraining..

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 (\approx 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

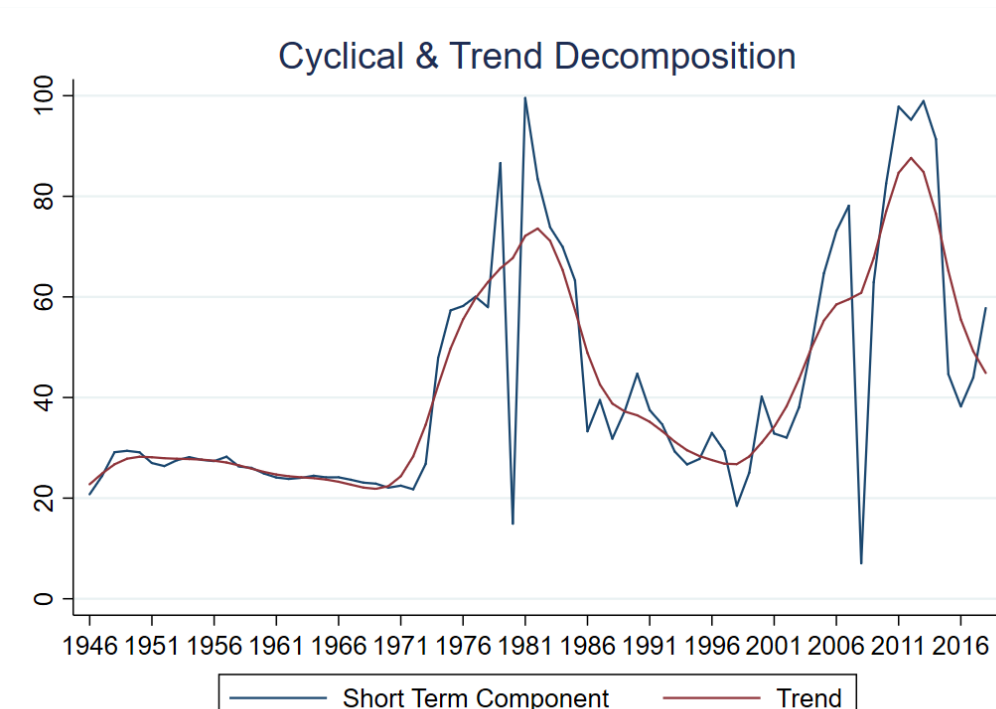
Probit model estimated by maximum likelihood :

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

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); Shahrani (2016))
- Oil price: Exogeneous 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

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

Results & Discussion

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.

Dependant Variable	Woman's attitude toward IPV				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Second Stage					
Dower_Cash _{1000JD}	0.224*** (0.0497)	0.223*** (0.0508)	0.240*** (0.0459)	0.240*** (0.0459)	0.240*** (0.0459)
First Stage					
Oil short term variation t-1	0.0109*** (0.00373)	0.0109*** (0.00373)	0.00975** (0.00385)	0.00975** (0.00385)	0.00975** (0.00385)
Baseline controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Additional Spouses controls		✓			
Past local controls			✓	✓	✓
Contemp Local controls (Cultural)				✓	✓
Contemp Local controls (Econ)					✓
Region FE					✓
S.E. Cluster (Locality & Year)					✓
Wald test of exogeneity (χ^2)	4.96**	5.06**	3.60**	3.98**	3.98**
F-stat (First Stage)	26.78	23.45	23.00	22.07	25.68
Observations	2,369	2,369	2,369	2,369	2,369

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** (Platteau 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

*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.