

Although females constitute close to half the total population (49.7%) the proportion of males in the 15-59 age group are significantly lower than females (40.6% vs. 48.6%) due to the practice of single men migrating to Jordan in search of work. As a result there is a surplus of single women of marriageable age in Zbeidat without any eligible suitors in the foreseeable future. This is seen as a serious problem in this bedouin society as Zbeidatis will not give their daughters to "strangers" (i.e. men from outside the four sub-clans), while polygyny -- which is traditionally more accepted among bedouins than among fellahin -- is restricted to only 5 cases.

The majority of marriages in Zbeidat involve the union of first cousins, usually on the patrilineal side. Table 11:1 reveals that of the total known unions 58% were so concluded (two involving matrilineal cousins, the rest patrilineal); an additional 15% were concluded within the same sub-clan (hamula) and an equal number with a different hamula. There were 4 cases (12% of marriages outside the tribe, all involving men marrying "strangers" (i.e. non-Zbeidatis). All "strangers" in this case were refugee women from Marj Na'je.

Table 11:1

Degrees of Endogamy in Zbeidat Marriages

Relation of Wife to Husband

	First Cousin	From same Sub-clan	From a Diff. Sub-clan	"Stranger"	Total Known	Total Marriages
Number of Marriages	19	5	5	4	33	63
% of Marriages	58%	15%	15%	12%	100%	-

Source: Author's 1980 Zbeidat Household Survey