

Third, there is a striking absence of any significant correlation between income groups -- for all categories -- and membership in any of the four subclans. If we take land ownership alone we do notice such a differentiation based on clan membership. For example, the Shahabat subclan, which constitutes 32 percent of the village population owns 41 percent of all village cultivated land (excluding leased land); while al-Mahameed subclan (10.1 percent of the population) owns only 7 percent of village land. But this categorical differentiation, based on collective differences between subclans (cf. Tables 11:2 and 11:3) begins to disappear when average holdings are compared within each subclan. Furthermore, a hierarchy of households based on income shows clearly that there is no concentration of members of any subclan on either end of the wealth scale.

In the distribution of the upper and lower five households (Table 12:9), we have taken into account income based not only on crop yield, but also the ownership of capital goods and income from salaries and wage work. Yet even then the area of cultivated plots remains crucial in determining the households standing within the village (total cultivated land here refers to combined sharecropped and owned plots, hence the anomalies).

The "levelling effect" observed in the relative lack of significant differentiation between the households despite the disparities in the amount of land owned (Table 11:2) is explained by the farmers' access to sharecropped land of absentee landlords in the area. Sharetenancy thus, is responsible not only for the relative limitations in the range of size in cultivated plots in Zbeidat but acts also as a mechanism for absorbing the demographic unevenness of household composition, with larger households having the ability to farm out additional plots.