

***‘It’s all in a name?’***  
***Modern Tribal Identity and Nation Building***

**Qualitative research about the influence of kinship and tribal structures  
in marriage choices of young, urban educated Omanis,  
in the Sultanate of Oman**



*Picture from Google image*

Master's Thesis

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## Foreword

The master's specialization Modern Middle East Studies has provided me with valuable knowledge about my roots and my own upbringing, as well as insights into the politics and social structures of Middle Eastern countries in general. The journey started with a personal quest: I am born Omani, married to a Dutch national and have roots in East-Africa. Having a 'tribal name' by birth, and living in the Netherlands, I wanted to have a look at Oman from a different angle with regard to 'tribal names and marriage choices'. Also, I wanted to apply my academic skills and to gain more information about Omani society at large. Having a multicultural background I wanted to find out what people in Oman think about getting married, marriage and the influence of tribal structures on marriage choice in present society. This research about my country of origin helped me to understand the underlying social incentives and cultural power of contemporary Oman more.

The process of conducting a research and writing a thesis was a process of ups and downs. Doing research in my own country was rather wonderful. The topic of getting married and to whom is highly sensitive in Omani society and perceived as a personal matter. Therefore, I am deeply thankful to my respondents, who opened up to me. I dearly cherish the memories of being in conversation with so many different people, from different background. A change in customs and tradition does not come quickly. People must get used to new ways of thinking. I come to believe, that as long as society and politics do not ignore the debates among people (for example the debate about the way the young want to change the social matrix), the Omani society will benefit from these discussions for the better. Putting everything on paper took some time, but during the process I found pleasure in looking for literature and categorizing the empirical data, to be finally able to present my finding in a suitable manner.

First of all, I want to thank my supervisor, who believed in my skills and supported my 'hunger for knowledge', by supervising me in an attentive and thoughtful manner. I learned so much. I also want to thank my family, my husband and my child, who often had to endure my absence. I could not have done this without their support.

## Summary

In this study the research question: *'What kind of implications has the new political openness in Oman towards the individual freedom of its citizens with regard to the choice of a marriage partner?'* Are answers through interviews with Omani citizens and a literary study? The effect of tribal structures and the idea of a 'good tribe' and a 'good tribe's name' in Oman with regard to the choice of a marriage partner is the topic of this endeavor. This research focuses is the 'modern, free' marriage choice and what that means for young urban Omani. Especially the impact of thoughts about the tribal structure in Oman regarding the choice of a marriage partner leads the argument of this research.

Semi-structured field interviews in Oman were conducted in order to provide insights into the minds of young, urban, educated and (mostly) economically well off individuals and couples. In Oman the choice of getting married is manifested by law. In theory, young couples can get married to whomever they want. However, in reality the marriage market is still divided in parts of society and people from different tribes don't mix easily, due to the wishes to get married or to get their children married to someone that is part of a 'good' tribe. During the semi-structured field interviews the researcher got a glimpse of what people think about marriage in contemporary Oman.

The results of the literary study and the fieldwork show how individuals and couples say on the one hand that everything has changed and on the other hand how important a good tribal name is. The results of the semi-structured field interviews show that the interviewees are clearly influenced by their families in their marriage choice, but some would exchange the good name for good fortune and choose someone who is affluent, instead of good tribe's name. The ambivalence of modernity was noticeable during the interviews. On the one hand the interviewees indicated that they have the desire to marry whomever they want and on the other hand these interviewees indicated that they notice that the strong social matrix of tribal structures, which commend 'a good tribal name' exists and can be a leading force in marriage choice.

The most important finding of this research is the awareness amongst Omanis that the free choice is present 'on paper' and people know, they could marry freely, but the reality is different and the idea of a tribe and the belonging to one, is more important in an era of social transition than the researcher anticipated beforehand. The citizens try to be 'good Omanis' in a modern nation with a strong cultural heritage, which they cherish. The social order is something that is reflected in the interviews. The answers of the interviewees clearly show

the social and cultural hierarchy in Omani society, when they talk about future in-laws or relatives.

It can be concluded that more research is needed about the impact of modern tribal structures and the thought of a 'good name' within these structures. Furthermore, the impact of the tribal culture on young couples who like to get married exogamic or even without the consent of their parents or other elderly advisors should be investigated. Also, further research could explore the concept of 'romantic love in times of social media', a topic that has emerged out of the conversations with the interviewees, that often took place after the recording of the actual interview stopped. Further quantitative and qualitative research is recommended to look into the ways a society is changing rapidly and with this, the thoughts about marriage and identity.

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# 1 Introduction

*“I will proceed as quickly as possible to transform your life into a prosperous one with a bright future. Every one of you must play his part towards this goal. Our country in the past was famous and strong. If we work in unity and co-operation, we will regenerate that glorious past and we will take a respectable place in the world. (...) Yesterday it was complete darkness and with the help of God, tomorrow will be a new dawn on Muscat, Oman and its people.”<sup>1</sup>*

This speech by his Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said on the day of his accession in 1970 is addressed to all Omanis: “(...) every one of you”, in “our country”, “if we work in unity”, and “Oman and its people”. This quote shows his great desire to build the country with the help of the entire population, without exempting any citizen, men or women. With political change, came social change and social mobility. A universal role is given to all Omanis eradicating some believes that some work is only suitable for *zutis* (now named ‘Roma’ and ‘Sinti’). For example only *zutis* could become a blacksmith, a jeweler, a tanner or a shoemaker and had to endure the societal stigma; exogamy was not possible for them and also not for tribes with a ‘bad name’, who were perceived as less than other tribes<sup>2</sup>. Marriage between all different strata and local groups in society should not be a problem nowadays. The sentence “*Yesterday, it was complete darkness*,” indicates the intention of his Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said to forget the past and imagine a bright future for all Omanis. The ‘darkness’ refers to the former bad economic before 1970 and educational status of Omani people, tribalism, poor political engagement in the settlement and the lack of economic development of the country.<sup>3</sup> This speech also portrays what modernity brought to Oman, namely: equality before the law, equality for women and the possibility to marry freely without consent of the tribal elders or kin.<sup>4</sup>

This study explores the way young urban Omani from mostly tribes with a ‘good name’ and educated, are thinking about their own and their children’s marriage choices in the light of this recent economic and political development in Oman. With the ongoing political changes in Oman, also social and cultural changes were introduced. The marriage market

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<sup>1</sup> Qaboos bin Said, Sultan of Oman; Oman. Wizārat al-I’lām, *the royal speeches of his Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said 1970-2005*(Sultanate of Oman: Ministry of Information, 2005), 7. Retrieved from: <https://www.mofa.gov.om/?p=1034&lang=en>

<sup>2</sup> Marc Valeri, *Oman politics and society in the Qaboos state* (Oxford: university press, 2013),14

<sup>3</sup> J.E Peterson. ,Social change in Oman and the Gulf: Some reflections on social change and continuity in Oman and the Gulf.( University of Tokyo, 2004), 12

<sup>4</sup> Freedom House, Women’s Rights in the Middle East and North Africa, Gulf Edition, ‘Special Report Section: Oman’ (2009), available at [https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/inline\\_images/Oman.pdf](https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/inline_images/Oman.pdf). 7. Retrieved from 02/08/2015

changed and people went even abroad to marry foreigners. According to the Oman National Health Survey 52% of the marriages were consanguineous in 2000, whereby the first cousin unions were preferred.<sup>5</sup> Now, the internal political openness, but also external factor as the Internet and the possible use of social media and the possibility to travel abroad could be factors to open up the marriage market in Oman. The tribal structures are deeply rooted in Omanis' cultural and social heritage and used to direct marriage choices.

The development of the country and infrastructure were intended for most of the people in the Sultanate. Education and health care were provided to all citizens, men and women alike. Also, government schools arose in great numbers all around the Sultanate. These schools provided a chance for people to meet each other across ethnic and tribal lines. All people received the same share of the government service. Men and women started to work in the government or in the private sector. Employees started to have their own communities especially those who worked in the capital city and stayed together full weekdays. The government rules were to be applied by all citizens. The objectives of the Sultans policy were to erase tribal differences and to make the Omani citizens instead of tribal folks.<sup>6</sup> Religion is taught at school, but everyone is free to practice religion in the way he or she wants.<sup>7</sup> That implies a freedom of choice and raises the following research question.

### **Research question:**

*What kind of implications has the new political openness in Oman towards the individual freedom of its citizens with regard to the choice of a marriage partner?*

The social activities in general have changed from the village and kinship circle to include all colleagues at work, new neighbors and parents of children, who go to the same schools. This type of social interaction made the trend towards the national framework more attractive to the citizens, rather than the tribalism and kinship structure, in which citizens were tribal men and women foremost.

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<sup>5</sup> Mazharul Islam, *The practice of consanguine marriage in Oman: prevalence, trends and determinants. Journal of biosocial Science*, volume 44 (Cambridge : University,2011),571-594

<sup>6</sup> Marc Valeri, , *Oman politics and society in the Qaboos state* (Oxford: university press, 2013), 121

<sup>7</sup> Al Farsi Suleiman, *Democracy and youth in the Middle East. Islam, Tribalism and the rentier state in Oman.* (New York : I.B. Tauris& Co Ltd, 2013), 61

This thesis focuses on the ‘old’ and the ‘new’ in a new nation state, in which the sovereign decided to open up the structures of tribal thinking and tribal tradition by leaving the choice of marriage to young couples and not to the tribal elders anymore.

## Point of departure

The social changes in Omani society and the alteration or tradition of the cultural institution of marriage are the motives to research the thoughts of people thinking about marriage.

Marriage choices are a classic topic in social studies and this theme lies at the heart of the researcher, due to her experience as an Omani abroad. This study explores the way young urban Omani mostly from tribes with a “good name” and educated, think about their own and their children’s marriage choices in the light of this recent development in Oman.

## Research Problem

As an element of culture, marriage is an institution. As any other institution, marriage is dynamic and changeable.<sup>8</sup> Cultures, travels and traditions change with time. When a nation is born and taken to a global stage, like Oman was only fifty years ago, traditions change and other traditions are invented to stabilize the idea of a nation and Oman: ‘(...) looks and feels like most people’s idea of a modern country’.<sup>9</sup> However traditions are of everyday importance and it is more complex than the juxtaposition modern/traditional suggest<sup>10</sup>. Modernization and traditional views are often viewed as an ambivalent concept<sup>11</sup>, whereby globalization is taken into account. The theory of ‘modernization at large’ by Appadurai forms the theoretical ground to understand how tradition is not a fixed thing, determined by nature, but a changeable concept in the minds of people, a construct.

The idea of the tribe with regard to marriage ought to be researched closely to understand the complex Omani society. Tribal structures function in times of social change and modernity. In case of this study the choice of the future son or daughter in law is influenced by this tribal structure, but doesn’t have to be in contemporary Oman. How young urban couples and individuals think about this process is the core of the fieldwork. The

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<sup>8</sup> Goran Lind, *Common Law Marriage: A Legal Institution for Cohabitation* (Oxford University Press; 1 edition (September 2, 2008), 6

<sup>9</sup> Jones, J. & Nicholas Ridout, N., *A History of Modern Oman*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2015), 1

<sup>10</sup> Miriam Cooke, *Tribal Modern: Branding New Nations in the Arab Gulf*, (Oakland California: University of California Press, 2014), 10.

<sup>11</sup> Anderson Benedict, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. (London: Verso, 1983), 6-7



literature about Oman is unanimous: there are tribal elements in Omani society that are visible and tangible at every party, every conversation and every wedding, but ideas about modernity and change are present too.

The focus of this research lies on the way marriage is viewed by contemporary Oman with regards to a tribe, tribal thinking and the idea of a ‘good tribe, or good name’. Defining a tribe has proven to be difficult. Many anthropologists and genealogists are unable to come to an agreement on how they came into existence; still different definitions are in use in social science. Therefore, this thesis starts by describing the tribes in Oman; to be followed by the way Islamic traditions play a part in getting married in Oman. This overview is useful to create an understanding about the social context the interviews are set in.

### **Tribes in Oman**

In Oman, a tribe generally comprises of a group of people bound by blood relations, and share common beliefs, social values and economic activity. Tribes are diverse in their origin, and are organized in a broader, multi tribal socio-political system.<sup>12</sup> Tribes are greatly comprised of people that have different identities within the tribe, a feature arisen from unequal economic wealth, and these features exist until today.<sup>13</sup> Within a tribe, all loyalties lie in protecting their family, or tribe. This resulted from the cementing of relations by marrying within the family annex tribe, making the group stronger, wealthier and more powerful. Marrying ones cousins was one way to ensure the stability of this social order. This has become a tradition, deeply entrenched in the layers of Omani tribal society. Most marriages took place only with the approval of tribe and family.<sup>14</sup> Religion plays another role in marriage choices.

### **Islam and marriage**

In Oman, a majority of the population follows Islam, and hence it's ideologies. As marriage in Islam is viewed as a contract, the bride requires a guardian, who should be a male from within her family.<sup>15</sup> This is in order to protect her rights and be in receipt of her dowry or *mahr*. The guardian is supposed to ensure that the bride gets what she needs, or wants. He is

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<sup>12</sup> Uzi Rabi, *The Emergence of States in a Tribal Society: Oman under Sa'id bin Taymur, 1932–1970* (East Bourne: Sussex Academic press, 2006), 9

<sup>13</sup> Al Azri, Khalid, *Social and gender inequality in Oman: The power of religious and political tradition*. (London: Routledge 2012), 12

<sup>14</sup> Peterson, J.E: *Social change in Oman and the Gulf: Some reflections on social change and continuity in Oman and the Gulf* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo 2014), 13

<sup>15</sup> Roald Anne, Sofie, *Women in Islam: the Western expert* (London: Routledge, 2001), 213

supposed to make certain that there is no deviation from the contract throughout her married life. Though the guardian is present to take care of the interests of the bride, the bride has little right to sign her own marriage contract, unless she has no guardian. In that case, she has to appear before a judge, who will authorize her marriage if she signs in front of him. The *Personal Status Law* of Oman is heavily in favor of men, giving women little say in their marriage, divorce, custody of children or even their inheritance.<sup>16</sup> Although, as per a reservation in the *Personal Status Law*, (Article 16, paragraph 1)<sup>17</sup>, there have been many instances where women are denied the right to choose their own husband. Women have no right to ask for divorce, unless they give up their dowry or *mahr*, while the husband can divorce the women even without having to show any reason for it, just by saying the word *talaq* three times. For the woman to divorce the husband, she would need to go to court and prove her reason for discord. Also, a woman may not marry outside her religion, though if a man wants to, he may do so at will.<sup>18</sup> However a Muslim man can marry a non-Muslim woman if the non – Muslim woman is a part of people of the Book. People of the book refer to believers of monotheistic Abrahamic religions that are older than Islam, namely Christians and Jews.<sup>19</sup>

Although The Sultan of Oman has advocated equality between men and women with respect to marriage, custody, divorce and inheritance, the influence of tribes on such decisions are present in contemporary society. Tribes wield power in marriage matters; for that matter the following paragraph describes the influence of modernization.<sup>20</sup>

### **The Effect of Modernization on Arranged Marriages in Oman**

The internet and there within, the social media sites and the dating sites, are a new form of media (entertainment and information), where men and women can interact freely without physical contact or courtship meeting; love and marriage has been known to flourish over such an avenue of communication worldwide. Even pre-arranged marriages and internet-

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<sup>16</sup> The Personal Status Law (No. 32 of 1997), Chapter 3: Couples' Rights, Article 36, [www.mola.gov.om/legals/ala7wal\\_alshkhseiah/leg.pdf](http://www.mola.gov.om/legals/ala7wal_alshkhseiah/leg.pdf), in Arabic

<sup>17</sup> Freedom House, Women's Rights in the Middle East and North Africa, Gulf Edition, 'Special Report Section: Oman' (2009), available at [https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/inline\\_images/Oman.pdf](https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/inline_images/Oman.pdf), p 6,7. Retrieved from 02/08/2015.

<sup>18</sup> Freedom House, Women's Rights in the Middle East and North Africa, Gulf Edition, 'Special Report Section: Oman' (2009), available at [https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/inline\\_images/Oman.pdf](https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/inline_images/Oman.pdf), p 6,7. Accessed on 02/08/2015.

<sup>19</sup> Desika Char, Noel Q., *King Hinduism and Islam in India: Caste, Religion and Society from Antiquity to Early Modern Times*. (USA: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1997), 127

<sup>20</sup> Appadurai Arjun, *Modernity at large: Cultural dimensions of globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 154

based matchmaking services are successful.<sup>21</sup> This arrival of Internet and the growth of information technology in Oman has eradicated boundaries and increased interaction amongst the Omani youth electronically. They are exposed to innumerable cultures every day, with the western culture being the most dominant. Information is now available at their fingertips, and awareness of their rights is high, and further on the rise. Due to the amount of information and exposure to different cultures, it may be that the Omani youth will start to feel and question the restrictions imposed on them. Although tribal influence is strong, it remains to be seen whether the influence has decreased, and if the Omani youth are now emerging with their choices in marriage partners.

### **The Concept of Love in Oman**

In Oman, the father views arranged marriages and his daughter in terms of 'value'. The father of the son as well as of the bride do not consider love to be a factor in marriage. Love is not considered in terms of its natural meaning, rather viewing it in terms of how much one is appreciated for the value that they can bring to the house, or even a willingness to accept the newcomer.<sup>22</sup>

In Oman, the concept of love is quite different from that of the western world, with love being equated with sincerity, the belief being that sincerity gives rise to sensitivity towards the feelings of others, and this may be the base for a successful arranged marriage.<sup>23</sup> As for the contract of marriage, when the expectations are set, and are clearly understood by both the parties, the clarity of set guidelines are the core of any arranged marriage. Trust, sincerity and appreciation form the bond between a husband and his wife, and form strong foundations on which the marriage can be built further.<sup>24</sup> For some Omani people, this is what is deemed to be love. In this paper the western view of love will be called 'romantic love'. The quest for 'romantic love' and the free choice of marriage is linked to the discussion around agency.<sup>25</sup> Who is in charge and does structure provides the parameters of behavior or does individual choices prevail in a 'modern' society with a tribal past? The

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<sup>21</sup> Anuja Agrawai, *Cyber-matchmaking among Indians: Re-arranging marriage and doing 'kin work'*. *South Asian Popular Culture*, volume 13 (Taylor & Francis: 2015), 15-30.

<sup>22</sup> Wikan, Unni. *Behind the veil in Arabia: Women in Oman* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins university press: 1982), 281

<sup>23</sup> George Monger, *Marriage Customs of the World: From Henna to Honeymoons* (Santa Barbara California: ABC-CLIO, 2004), 11

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 282

<sup>25</sup> Reddy William. *The Making of Romantic Love: Longing and Sexuality in Europe, South Asia and Japan, 900-1200 CE* (Chicago: University Press, 2012), 5

discussion of structure or/and agency so passionately discussed in social science and touches the core of the topic.

### **Agency and structure**

Mahmood sees agency as an individual capacity to understand his or her interests in relation to habits, tradition, transcendental will or other obstacles. In the Western tradition of humanistic thinking agency is something the individual wants and gets, hence it is seen as autonomy in making choices. The individual acts like an autonomous being and for example is free in deciding whom to marry or mate. It's the idea that one can freely choose whom to marry, even if in reality, social scientist find structural forces in every society. The two concepts of 'free will' and 'fate', whereby the latter is related to arranged marriages for example is sometimes seen as an illusion. In this research Mahmood is taken into consideration and her approach of an ambivalent feeling towards the two concepts: the individual freedom to choose a marriage partner, since the agent in this scenario can look at dominant cultural concepts - like a tribal structure and tribal-leaders' decisions – with regard to her or his own choices and interest, even without challenging these old, traditional and prevailing structures<sup>26</sup>. The last but not least important concept or debate which touches upon the focus of this thesis is the idea of a nation state opposed to the tribal structures.

The nation state is a Western concept and often the tribal is stated opposite to the nation state. Cooke instead cites the anthropologist James Clifford from his '*Predicament of Culture*' (1988), where he states that: '(...) tribes are part of the present, but the non-Western present'. He refuses to give into the binary opposition of 'the modern and the tribal' and points to the development of the term 'tribal', which replaced 'primitive' in the vocabulary of social science.<sup>27</sup> Cooke's argument relates to the emerging of the nation state in the Gulf States, where the tribal is integral to the modern; it constitutes a crucial element of the Gulf's modernity'.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Mahmood, Saba, *Feminist Theory, Embodiment, and the Docile Agent: Some Reflections on the Egyptian Islamic Revival* (University of Chicago: Published in *Cultural Anthropology* 16(2), 2001), 202-236.

<sup>27</sup> Clifford, James: *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*. (Harvard University Press, 1988), 189-212

<sup>28</sup> Miriam Cooke, *Tribal Modern: Branding New Nations in the Arab Gulf*. (University of California Press, 2014), 9

## Thesis Statement

In Europe and the United States of America marriage is ideally an arrangement between two individuals and the choice a seemingly and as mentioned sometimes illusionary autonomous choice. In this Western word, marriage is expected to be as satisfaction of people psychology and social needs.<sup>29</sup> In Oman arranged marriages prevail; modern concepts of romantic love and free choice are travelling with globalization and new technology and young couples could be drawn into or attracted by either modern version of marriage choices or traditional structures of arranged marriages and within tribal structures.

Consanguineous marriages account for around 52% of the marriages in Oman and therefore tribes play a role in these marriage arrangements.<sup>30</sup> An example of a consanguineous marriage is when two full cousins get married. Couples accept consanguineous marriages, because they might feel obligated towards their family and fear retribution from that same family. The questions around getting married these days in Oman are sheading light upon the greater social change of the Sultanate. Is it due to restriction by the family or tribe, fear of non-acceptance by society, or the loss of support by family in shaping their careers or starting a family? What are the reasons behind the current marriage choices in Oman? In order to answer these questions, the researcher takes the vivid use of information technology and the global concept of 'romantic love' into her consideration.<sup>31</sup> The practice of consulting tribal elders was widespread, and nowadays it is not clear if this practice is still followed, or if the elderly advice is declined Are the youth of today looking for romantic love at all, or do they prefer their parents to find a marriage partner? Marriage and the choice of the partner in contemporary Oman is a complex social phenomenon.

## Aims and Objectives

This thesis aims to shed light upon the ideas of contemporary urban Omanis about marriage and the way one ought, should marry or can be married in the Sultanate. Old and new ideas are explored and displayed in order to give a glimpse of a changing society. The main goal of this research is to analyze how male and female citizens of the Sultanate think about marriage choices in an age of highly advanced technology, which connects Oman with the wider

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<sup>29</sup> Stephanie Coontz, Marriage, a History: From Obedience to Intimacy, Or how Love Conquered Marriage (New York: Viking Penguin, 2005), 130

<sup>30</sup> Mazharul Islam, The practice of consanguine marriage in Oman: prevalence, trends and determinants. Journal of biosocial Science, volume 44, (Cambridge University: 2011), 571-594

<sup>31</sup> Jeremy, Jones & Nicholas .Ridout A History of modern Oman.(Cambridge: University Press 2015), 1-2

world. This thesis also seeks to answer if tribal influence on marriage partners still carries more weight than the law of Oman, which intends to bring equality for women.

## Outline thesis

Chapter 2 reviews the literature about the influence on the choice of marriage partners in Oman. Chapter 3 describes the research methods that were used during this research. In this chapter the collection of data, data-representation and data analysis are clarified. Chapter 4 presents the results of the field research. Chapter 5 deliberates on whether the aims of this research have been achieved. Also, in this chapter a conclusion based on the results is attained.

## 2 Literary review

### Introduction

In this literary review the marriage tradition and especially the Islamic tradition in Oman is introduced in order to provide an understanding of the contemporary marriage choices of young, urban, educated citizens of Oman. Also, this literature review will provide an insight of the status of women in Oman to provide the theoretical background. For a more geo-political and historical overview of Oman, see appendix I.

### Tribal and religious structures

Oman is organized into tribes with a common genealogy<sup>32</sup> (Nasab). Headed by a sheikh, tribes are groups of people that claim descent from a common ancestor through linear filiation.<sup>33</sup> Tribes are not only considered to be a source of identity, but tribes also provide protection to family, and safeguard legacy and values.<sup>34</sup>

Tribes in Oman are the embodiment of cohesion and hierarchy. Due to this, the structure and economic status within Omani tribes know social inequalities, whereby some tribes are using slaves in their organization structures. The Baluchi are known as slaves, and new research of Baluchi slaves (1921-1950) shows various modes of enslavement, including marriage<sup>35</sup>. Slavery is not the focus of this research, but the context of possible association with tribes who are perceived as less, can play a role in the considerations about marriage. Azri is convinced that this social organization exists in Oman today, and that this social organization plays a significant role in marriage.<sup>36</sup> To understand the overall custom of marriage in Oman, one has to look at pre- and Islamic time, next to the complex tribal structure, organized within the geographical setting of Oman, whereby some tribes were isolated for a long time and

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<sup>32</sup> H. Al Farsi Suleiman, *Democracy and youth in the Middle East. Islam, Tribalism and the rentier state in Oman*. (I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd: New York, 2013), 116

<sup>33</sup> R. Bocco. *Asabiyat tribales et Etats au Moyen-Orient ; confrontations et connivences*. Monde Arabe Maghreb Machrek 147 (New York 1995), 5

<sup>34</sup> H. Al Farsi, Suleiman, *Democracy and youth in the Middle East. Islam, Tribalism and the rentier state in Oman*. I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, New York 2013), 223

<sup>35</sup> Baluchi Experiences under Slavery and the Slave Trade of the Gulf of Oman and the Persian Gulf, 1921–1950 *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa*, volume 4, issue 2, 2013. Special Issue: The Baluchi and Baluchistan.

<sup>36</sup> Al Azri, Khalid, *Social and gender inequality in Oman: The power of religious and political tradition*, (Routledge 2012), 12

other could have been called nations, and other loose group of people organizing themselves. Islam served as unifying structure for all Omani's and gave directions for marriage customs.

The present day marriage conventions date far back to pre- Islamic times, when marriages were contracts, arranged for mutual benefits between two families, or to keep wealth within the kin or tribe. The first questions that need to be addressed concern the composition of a tribe – what is a tribe and how does a tribe is formed? Kostiner and Khoury published a collection of conference papers in 1990, named *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East*. Although this book presents conflicting views on the basis for the composition of tribes, there is a consensus that tribes are important in the formation of states in the Middle East. Tapper<sup>37</sup> argued that tribes were comprised of a group of people with kinship as the backbone of their group. The people constituting a tribe consider themselves different in culture, language or dialect and ancestry compared to other tribes. Their own blood ties govern tribes and family lineage plays an important part of their makeup. Hourani (1990) however, felt that the common ancestry of a tribe was a myth, and that tribes were bound by other factors, such as cultural and social ties, political views and language similarities.<sup>38</sup>

Research about the evolution of tribes forms the basis of this argument, where it first needs to be understood why, or how tribes first constituted. In the book *Kinship and Marriage* (1907), Smith noted that the origins of tribes were based on two lines of thought that were adopted by genealogists. In one line of thought, the origin of tribes is considered to be patronymic. In this line of thought a tribe continued to prevail through male descendants, and all tribes originated from common male ancestors. Two tribes of different name were considered to have evolved from brothers, each tribe being descendants from a particular brother.<sup>39</sup> The second line of thought emphasizes the matronymic practice of adopting the mother's name, and therefore her tribe as the source of ancestry. On the basis of these two theories, there are three types of marriage options that seem to have existed at various times in history, namely:

*Endogamy* – where marriage would take place only within the tribe or kin;

*Exogamy* – marriages were not permitted to take place within the tribe;

*Indifferent marriages* – where the spouse could be claimed either from within or from external tribes.

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<sup>37</sup> Richard Tapper, *Conflict of tribe and state in Iran and Afghanistan*, (St. Martin's Press 1983), 5

<sup>38</sup> Hourani, Albert, and Conclusion: tribes and states in Islamic History.; Philip S. Khoury, and Joseph Kostiner: *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East*, (University of California press, 1990), 303

<sup>39</sup> Smith, W.R, *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*, (Darf Publishers, London: 1990), 3-4, 24-25



As stated above, the endogamy marriages follow from the first theory: the patronymic view, while the exogamy and indifferent marriages come from the matronymic view. The practice of exogamy seems to be widespread before the arrival of the Prophet, and the spread of Islam.

The general consensus is that exogamous marriages were preferred to ensure healthier and stronger children, and to avoid petty squabbles amongst the kin.<sup>40</sup> Works of Al Shahrastani in the early 1100s, as well as from the Diwan of the Hodhail poets.<sup>41</sup> In their poems is obvious reluctance to marry into a different tribe, due to their different eating habits and customs. However, that could not be fully embraced, as women were captured from time to time, and taken as wives, to enlarge the tribe.

From the prose and poetry of the time before Mohammed, as well as after, it is evident that there were multiple marriage systems in place. Historical writings offer a vantage point, which shows how marriage has evolved over time to the present day prevalence of marriage within tribes or kin. Based on the era it can be understood that certain types of marriage may be more rampant during a certain period than other the other forms of marriage.

### **Earliest reports on marriage**

The earliest reports or descriptions regarding marriage show that marriage, if at all, was a woman's choice. A woman had no inclination to leave her tribe. Her husband would come and go as she pleased. If their marriage proved to be a long-term commitment, the husband would be adopted into some tribes. Poems, verses and accounts are written about marriage over time in Oman, to prove the difference in marriage customs. In the *Adventures of Hajji Baba of Isfahan* written by Morier (1835), it is demonstrated that this kind of marriage arrangement was not only common, but also recognized legally amongst the Shiites.<sup>42</sup> Women had multiple husbands over a period of time, and children from these husbands stayed with the mother, and followed her tribe, their rules and traditions. One of the stories in *Legends of ancient Arabia* is about a woman named Omm Kharija, who had married different men from more than twenty different tribes, and still lived with her children in her own tribe.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 75-76

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 75-77

<sup>42</sup> Morier, J. *he Adventures of Hajji Baba, of Isfahan.* ( Baudry's European Library, 1835), 297-298.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 300

Marriages, in which a husband would establish himself in his wife's house and tribe, were called *beena marriages*. These unions enforce the theory of a matronymic society, in which the female name and tribe was adopted by the couple, rather than the husband's name and tribe<sup>44</sup>. These marriages were quite common, and though these marriages required a contract and witnesses, it was still the choice of the wife to send away her husband if she no longer wanted him to stay with her and their children. All rights were with the woman, like the custody of the children. Again, there are verses that describe such marriages. In one of those verses, a woman lives with her son in her father's house.<sup>45</sup> In another verse a woman stays with her father, but calls her husband frequently

Before the Prophet Mohammed made his appearance in the annals of history, there are various accounts about women being captured by tribal enemies or outsiders, whom were taken as wives.<sup>46</sup> Tribes and families were happy to receive their captured women; they held women in high esteem, for the sake of strong, handsome children. When Mohammed asked the Hawazin whether they wanted their goods or the women that were captured in warfare, they stated that they only wanted to get their women back. The life of women who stayed with the tribe, who captured them, was a life of bondage, having lost all their rights and freedom, and spending their lives under the dominion of their lord or owner.<sup>47</sup>

The Prophet Mohammed determined that even though women were captured, they could not be sold, as they were different from slaves.<sup>48</sup> It is seen that through his endeavors, at least during his time, the selling of captured wives waned. However, some men forced women to become their wives, by holding them by the point of their swords, and boast of the high quality sons produced by captured women. To overcome the practice of wife capturing in pre-Islamic times, the purchasing of wives was initiated. Families demanded that they would be compensated for their daughter's hand in marriage, and that the suitor had to pay substantially for the woman. However, this custom was flawed. Although the family of the woman was compensated, the woman had no real life to look forward to.<sup>49</sup>

The original freedom of women in the pre-Islamic period had become a distant memory in the 18e century. However, the purchasing tradition led to the beginning of the dowry system,

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<sup>44</sup> Athena E. Gorospe Narrative and Identity: An Ethical Reading of Exodus 4. (Leiden: BRILL, 2007), 179

<sup>45</sup> Ibid 165

<sup>46</sup> Smith, W.R.: Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia, (London: Darf Publishers, London: 1990), 94-98.

<sup>47</sup> Sahaja Carimokam, Muhammad and the People of the Book. (Bloomington: Xlibris :September 17, 2010), 56

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 57

<sup>49</sup> Smith, W.R.: Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia, (London: Darf Publishers, 1990), 96

though initially the economic benefits of the bride went to the father of the bride.<sup>50</sup> There are instances that show that even if a woman was married, the level of the husband's dominion was somewhat kept in check by the involvement of the woman's kin.

This account of pre-Islamic times – albeit in short – lays a base for an understanding of the opinions of contemporary Omanis whose views are shaped in the light of this history. In Oman families were in the past open to the idea of marrying their daughters off to a member of another tribe, due to the economic concerns, that when marrying a tribe member or kin member it could be a commercial mistake, as either the dowry to father would not be paid, or delayed. One can imagine that disputes within the family about marriage arrangements could then easily occur.

### Status of Women in Oman

When women were once held in high esteem in pre- and early Islamic times, and had the choice to marry or not, this changed over time to an era in which women began to be regarded as exchangeable objects, and were treated as such. The loss of A'isha in the Battle of the Camel propagated the myth that women were not only unfit in a leadership position, but that they also needed to be restrained.<sup>51</sup> Even though A'isha was the prophet's favorite wife, and he shared an almost equal intellectual relationship with her, after his death there began a slow and steady spiral of the degradation of women. Therefore, marriage arrangement - not in favor of women's rights - changed too.

Hadiths are the main sources of information for the medieval era. In these sources it is noted that women were well-treated only as long as they were capable of giving birth. They were married off soon after puberty, and were in danger of abuse or beatings if they were unable to bear sons. A son made a woman's life slightly better, and her position in a marriage became stronger when woman had a son of sons, due to the agnatic norms of society.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Bonnie G. Smith. *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Women in World History: 4 Volume Set*. (Oxford University Press, USA, 2008), 592

<sup>51</sup> Keddie, Nikki: *Women in the Middle East: A History*, Book One, (Princeton University Press, 2006), 27-32

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 31-35

## Nomadic Tribes

In nomadic tribes, however, the situation remained vastly different.<sup>53</sup> Honor and purity were considered to be of paramount importance. Unlike urban areas, where women were kept secluded and were forced to wear a veil, nomadic women could not be treated as such, due to the way of living of nomadic tribes. In nomadic tribes, women were expected to never talk to strangers. Also, when a woman looked at a stranger, this brought the wrath of the tribe elderly upon her. Women were supposed to dress decently and modestly, and at all times obey the men. In fact, if doubts were cast on a woman's virtue, the male heirs had the right to inflict punishment, which would range from lashings, to stoning to honor killings.<sup>54</sup>

In terms of divorce, in nomadic tribe's men could easily leave their wives, just by saying the word 'talaq' three times. For a woman, however, it was substantially more difficult to divorce their husbands, as women had to repay the dowry with which they were bought, in order to be considered for a divorce.<sup>55</sup> Women were considered as slippers that could be taken off at will.<sup>56</sup>

## The Advent of Islam and the Effect on Marriage

Shi'ites is known for their more gentle approach to women and marriage. The reason behind this higher esteem for women may lie buried in the fact that the Prophet only had daughters, without whom which his line would have died out. In fact, even at the time of the Prophet, and soon after, the Shi'a were quite open to the *nikah al mota*, or the short-term marriages that were so common at the height of the women's era<sup>57</sup>. Also, based on the influence of Fatima, the prophet's daughter, and the legacy of her powers, it can be seen that the Shi'a held women with some esteem. The legacy of Fatima is so powerful, that her influence extended into the Sunnism. Inheritance laws for women were also more liberal, as Imams descended through the female line of the prophet.<sup>58</sup> A third group of thought, known as the *Kharijis*, stated that anyone of merit could become the caliph, political and religious leader of the community. They were against child marriage and concubines. In this theory women were

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid. p 40-41

<sup>54</sup> Burckhardt, John Lewis: Notes on the Bedouins and Wahabys, (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 113

<sup>55</sup> Freytag, Georg Wilhelm: Arabum Proverbial, Bonnae ad Rhenium, (Michigan: Halis Saxonum: 1838), 78

<sup>56</sup> Burckhardt, John Lewis: Notes on the Bedouins and Wahabys, (London: Association for promoting the discovery of the interior Africa, 1831), 113

<sup>57</sup> After the introduction of Islam, and the growing dissent after the prophet's death, there were two different views on how leadership should be passed on. One group thought that Ali and all his male descendants should be granted leadership, and these people were known as the party of Ali, or the Shi'a – Ali, or just as the Shi'a. This group, though it was political to start with, evolved into a religious one, with Ali and his descendants Imams.

<sup>58</sup> Keddie Nikki: Women in the Middle East: A History, Book One, (Princeton University Press, 2006), 32

also asked to take part in war, which some did. This section of Islam did not gain much headway in the world, but remains largely to be found only in Oman and Algiers today.<sup>59</sup>

The dominance of women seemed to suit the social agenda of the medieval period *hadith*. A woman therefore had no right in choosing their husband, nor any right in property. Those rights went exclusively to her husband. In the event a husband died, these rights went only to her sons, who were part of her husband's tribe. Furthermore, *qiyas*, also a source of Muslim law, stated that a husband, since he had paid dowry to the woman's father, had full physical rights over the woman, whether she was acceptable to it or not. This demonstrates the downfall of women's rights with regards to marriage. During the medieval period women were treated like inanimate objects, with no say in their own lives or about their future. To add to women's woe, the four Sunni schools of law further laid down the law with regards to the age of women at the time of marriage, as well as for the period children could remain under care of the mother in case of the husband's death or divorce, after which she had no option but to send her children to her husband's tribe.<sup>60</sup>

Kinship creates a stable satisfying realm of communal trust and loyalty. In the tribal form kinship and marriages serves a crucial early role in the evolution of societies. Marriage excels at inculcating a sense of identity, belonging, and solidarity. Therefore, this short excursion about the historical background in Oman was needed to come to an understanding about the tribal and religious structures, which governed Oman and are in place in the form of strong families today. Therefore, the term tribal is simultaneously uses with the social institutions 'family'.

## **Tribes and Marriage in the 20th Century in Oman**

The prevailing literature shows the influence of tribal structures, in which economic and socio-cultural strong families, preferable with names going back in time, rule. However, the anthropologist Wikan found in 1982 that tribal influence was almost absent in Oman, where some people did not even know the name of their own tribe.<sup>61</sup> Oman is a diverse society, with many groups within comprising different languages; racial origin, social status etc.<sup>62 63</sup> Even

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<sup>59</sup> William Shepard, *Introducing Islam*, (Routledge, 2009),.103

<sup>60</sup> Keddie, Nikki: *Women in the Middle East: A History*, Book One, (Princeton University Press, 2006), 33

<sup>61</sup> Wikan, Unni. *Behind the veil in Arabia: Women in Oman*. (London., the Johns Hopkins university press 1982), 43

<sup>62</sup> Peterson J.E, *Oman's diverse society: Northern Oman*. (Middle East journal, vol 58, num1, 2004), 32

<sup>63</sup> Valeri, Marc, *Oman politics and society in the Qaboos state*, (Oxford university press 2013), 14

though Oman is a seemingly socially tolerant country, inter-racial marriage remain a taboo. Although Wikan (1982) was convinced that kin is an important factor in marriage, the women in Sohar made no mention of kinship when choosing the ideal husband. In fact, the deciding factor for them whether or not to marry was the prospective husband's material wealth.<sup>64</sup> Men, however, preferred women who lived far away from them. Their thinking being that the estranged status would earn them more respect. Ultimately Wikan (1982) concluded that tribes had little or no influence on the choice of partner for marriage. Instead socio-economics and distance issues played a far greater role than once thought.

Under Sultan Qaboos men and women have the right by law to choose their own partners.<sup>65</sup> Education influences decisions regarding marriage choice since the introductions of the educational system in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and with that the ideas about possible genetic disease within endogamy arises.

## **Modern time**

However, a study conducted by Mazharul Islam (2000), showed that 52 percent of the marriages in Oman are consanguineous and therefore, marriages between first cousins are the more common type of marriage opposite to exogamy. Mazharul Islam (2000) stated that in spite of socioeconomic development and the modernization of society consanguineous marriage had not waned over the past few decades. He felt that these kinds of marriages strengthened family relations and stability.<sup>66</sup> According to Mazharul Islam (2000), although Oman under the Sultan has become socially and economically better, Omani youth still do not allow personal choice to rule their decisions for a partner in marriage. They fear that when they let their personal choice rule, they might lose family support. For them, family support is important due to the strong family ties. These ties can pave the way in their future and careers. Eickelman (1984) states that families prefer kin marriages, because they already know the partner and they try to strengthen the tribe's name. In kin marriages the bride and her husband are already familiar with each other, and love and trust that is necessary between partners develops more easily with a known person than with someone who is unknown. Also, the costs of kin marriages are low, and wealth remains within the tribe.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 42-43

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 190

<sup>66</sup> M. Mazharul Islam, The practice of consanguine marriage in Oman: prevalence, trends and determinants. (Journal of Biosocial Science, volume 44, Cambridge University, 2011), 571-594

<sup>67</sup> Eickelman Christine: Women and community in Oman. (New York University Press 1984), 94-95

Over the years marriages in Oman have changed, with the pre Islamic period being an open minded and liberal regime in the Middle East. The dowry, or purchase amount, used to be paid to the father of the bride. Today, this wealth is redistributed often to the bride. Although marriage by purchase does not exist per se in the 20<sup>st</sup> century, the tradition of dowry continues.<sup>68</sup>

Consanguineous marriages have become the norm, and around the half of the marriages that take place in Oman are within the kin, either between first cousins or even uncles. Due to comfort, trust, wealth retention and strengthening of the tribe's name in lineage, consanguineous marriage hold rank as the most popular form of marriage. However, this is not seen all over Oman, as the case of Sohar women in northern Oman, who do not even know the name of their tribe.

The establishment of the modern state by Sultan Qaboos in 1970 has contributed in modernizing the societies' structure in different ways, because of the massive economic and social developments. The Sultan's aim was to build a national identity and stabilize the political authority in the Sultanate. The most important principle Sultan Qaboos currently works on is to establish a modern state, with modern values, like the equality – also gender equality - of all citizens before the law. Sultan Qaboos government has built a country of universal rules and a unity of the nation. A new community administration was introduced, which was founded on location and not on tribal bases. The new administration appointed one person who represents a village/area. The Wali, who is appointed by the government, also represents a village/area. These two persons are the link between the citizens and the government in the request of service, complaints, and verification for the purpose of getting approval of formal papers.

## **Urbanization**

Urbanization has profoundly changed the spatial distribution of the population of Oman. Intensive migration, mainly from rural to urban areas and from interior to more developed areas, has been important in shaping the contemporary social structure of the Omani population<sup>69</sup>. First, people immigrated to work in cities. Some of them built their own homes in these cities. This type of immigration created a gap between the families that moved to the

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<sup>68</sup> M. Mazharul Islam, The practice of consanguine marriage in Oman: prevalence, trends and determinants. (Journal of Biosocial Science, volume 44: Cambridge University: 2011), 571-594

<sup>69</sup> Valeri Marc, Oman politics and society in the Qaboos state, (Oxford university press 2013), 122

city and their ties with their tribe; people lost each other and build new social ties. Most tribes were tied to their location and did not venture to other parts of Oman. Families that moved to the city started to integrate with other families<sup>70</sup>. Another aspect of urbanization is the land reform, where the state is now owner of the land; people were forced to leave their land. The lands ownership according to the Sultan Decree No. 5/80, Article 5 states:

*All lands of the Sultanate shall be owned by the state, save for lands excepted by specific provision in this law. The distribution of lands priority shall be given to the people of the area in which such lands are situated (Article 18). All Omanis are eligible to have a plot of land from the age of 23 of a man or a woman without discrimination, Royal Decree No (125/2008).*<sup>71</sup>

In the city people encounter new neighbors and the idea of a tribe and reliance, trust and custom which come with these ties, were forgotten, changed or even vanished. The couples that moved to the city chose a place to settle based on the proximity of their house to their work.

Yahya El-Haddad has classified the trends in the movement to urban living, changes in family structure, changes in family functions and changes in family values in his paper *Major Trends Affecting families in the Gulf Region*. Urban living has a great impact on family relation: “Urban life produced individualism and privacy and weekend communal solidarity”.<sup>72</sup> The families have moved from small sized traditional communities to complex cities, in which social relations are less important. However, El-Haddad sees that families that moved to the city still remain their traditional kinship ties and that the tribe is still an important authority in determining the behavior of the sons and daughters, especially with regards to marital choice.

El-Haddad raises his worries about the future transformation of the Oman society and individuals. According to El-Haddad materialism affects the relations between families and tribes in general negatively. People give more attention to those who have a higher social and financial status than to people from the same tribe. Also, El-Haddad sees that the dependence on foreign labors affects the behavior of the Omani children; they get insides in different cultures and get to know others, also possible marriage choices. El-Haddad stresses that family transformation exists in most of the Arab countries. He states that there is a shift from

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 124

<sup>71</sup> [www.fiu.gov.om/.../Lands/Law/Sultani/DecreeNo.24-95.pdf](http://www.fiu.gov.om/.../Lands/Law/Sultani/DecreeNo.24-95.pdf)

<sup>72</sup> Yahya El-Haddad Major Trends Affecting Families In The Gulf Countries (Bahrain University, 2003), 3



totally arranged marriages to marriages based on prior agreement between the bride and the groom. However, in order to proceed with actual marriage, the bride and the groom still need the final approval from their parents.<sup>73</sup>

It can be concluded that the establishment of the modern state, urbanization and education has contributed to the decline of tribalism in Oman. All citizens are under the government's law and legislations. The minister and heads of institutions are chosen by the Sultan, whereas members of councils in Oman are chosen by the citizens or government based on their qualification and experience. That could result in more free marriage choices.

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 4

### **3 Research methods**

#### **Qualitative research**

This research is a qualitative study in the field of Middle Eastern Studies and is set out to collect data from the city Muscat with the intentions to introduce different Omani tribes. As a method a small ethnographic research was developed, to get to know their thoughts about marriage choices and the influence of the tribe

An ethnographical approach is used to collect data through interviews with various, randomly chosen respondents. In the conversations a set of semi-structured interviews the respondents are introduced and invited to speak up after the formal part of the interview. A semi-structured interview leaves an open space at the end, where respondents and interviewer alike can talk about topics related or totally other themes.<sup>74</sup> Participants will be obtained by word of mouth, the snowball effect, to start with the researcher's family and friends. This method is contested: if friends and family are the first to start with, the circle of respondents can't be seen without bias on the part of the researcher. The snowball effect causes an influx of other participants to gather for interviews, still in the realm of the researcher. It's impossible to be objective in a snowball sampling (respondent-driven sampling), but it is possible to see and analyse a certain network and group of people, to shine light on a part of the Omani urban population. Due to the research questions, this method seems suitable, also in light of the limited time and access by the researcher in the field.<sup>75</sup>

#### **Literature review, fieldwork and interviews**

Fieldwork will be undertaken by travelling to Oman and get access to urban young couples, women and men, to be able to conduct interviews, whereby the participants are all confronted with the same questions. The interview design is shaped by the keywords: 'marriage choices, freedom to choose a partner' and the questions, what the respondents think of the contemporary restrains and possibilities to get married to whom they want, or are they bound to some rules? Fieldwork and interviews are qualitative methods to gain trust and insight information from people in order to gain insights in why and how people are getting married in contemporary Oman and to whom. The voice of those who do not think in terms of structure and agency should be heard through the representations of the conversation. Fifteen

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<sup>74</sup> Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods*. (Oxford: University Press, 2009), 228

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 229

respondents were interviewed. They were a mixture of married and unmarried young men and women, in order to bring about a greater understanding of the inclinations of the youth in respect to marriage and possible tribal influence.

## **Respondents**

The respondents were young (18-35), urban, educated people from various tribes, living in the city of Muscat, where the urbanization led to open access to the wider world.

All of them are Omani by birth and embedded into the Islamic religion. None of them would marry without Islamic rituals. They were all Ibadhi, which indicates a strong tie to the Omani state, which was build with people practicing Ibadhi. Although they were chosen randomly, they present a fair overview of the different tribes, all connected by Ibadhi belief. They perceive themselves as Muslims. Ibadis are known in opposite to the much conservative Sunni; to practice a moderate and open Islam, open to other religions.

Most of the respondents have their BA or MA and belong to the strata in society, which has access to the global trade, Internet, and therefore are familiar with social media as a meeting point.

## **Interviews & Data analysis**

The interviews were prepared after the literary review and keywords are used to structure the interviews.

The method chosen to analyses the data is the qualitative data analysis, introduced by Bryman. The interviewee were chosen randomly, the interviews transcribed verbatim and then read and labeled. This process of labeling is also called coding.<sup>76</sup> The researcher looked for relevant sentences, words and concepts related to the research question. The interviews were organized with keywords: marriage choice, tribal influence, tribal elders and social media. After the coding the researcher made a more precise index with relevant topic occurring in the interviews: 'a good tribal name', romantic love, arranged marriages, social media, tribal name and change. The codes like 'a good tribal name' and 'tribal names' were grouped in a category. The categories were about the same content and the way some interviewees differ from the core of spoken information.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 298

## 4 Field research & Results

The questions for the semi - structured interviews were designed to gather information about how free people were or better how free they feel, to choose their spouse, in order to look at the possible effects of modernization on marriage tradition. The fifteen interviewees were given time - up tot some hours - to talk about their marriage experiences and how they want marriage to be for their future generation. The interviews were done individually upon interviewee's request of time and place. The interviews seemed the suitable method to conduct fieldwork, and as so often: after switching the microscope of, the most interesting conversation took place, whereby the interviewees shared sometimes their 'real' views and opinions with the researcher.

The key questions and key words, such as 'partner choice, tribe's name, sheiks influence, and indeed social media' were systematically asked in every interview; after these questions the talk was about marriage and the importance of the tribal name.

### Interviews

*'Having a tribe for me is not that important for me, I am myself. I don't need a tribe to have an identity' (respondent A.A.B)*

*'Having a tribe is very important for me and my family. It is our identity' (respondent B.A.R.)*

Both remarks are stated by young, urban Omani's; however the first one was a total exception. Respondent AAB comes from a Baluchi tribe and was the only one who stated this clearly that the tribe was not important for him. Most of the other interviewees state that the tribe is import for them, that the tribe reflects their identity, their pride and their right as Omanis and that their tribe names refer to their family roots. Belonging to a tribe gives the attribute of social identity and togetherness. B.A.R. says that:

*"I married my cousin because we need to make our tribe`s name bigger and stronger. We want that our tribe`s name stays for generations. I know my cousin and his family very well, we grew up together, we have same culture, and same way of thinking, marrying him was very easy for our family and for me" (B.A.R.)*

B.A.R. wants her children to marry from the same tribe or from a tribe that has a higher social status. She considers that marrying someone from a low-level tribe is a shame for the

family. B.A.R. thinks that marrying from the same tribe makes more harmony between the spouses because they have the same tradition and culture. "We do not want our children to break the rules of our culture and tradition by marrying from unprivileged tribes or some tribes that follow a certain Islamic sect". Those who do not consider the importance of the tribes say also, that they are proud to belong to a certain tribal name. F.A.A. married to a man from a different tribe but a relative; cousin. A sister-in-law recommended him, and her family knows him. F.A.A. says: that

*"(...) tribalism still plays a big role and still exists nowadays. It will take a long time to change it and it is in Omani people`s blood".*

However, H.A.R. thinks that having a tribe is not that important as long as the person is Muslim and has the same social level and the same education. Some interviewees say the tribe is of less importance nowadays and the spouse financial status and social class is more important.

*"(...) nowadays some parents look more at financial issues than a tribe before marriage. Parents want that their children marry someone who is wealthy enough to marry their children (F.A.H.)*

Those who married by their own choice from outside the tribe see – next to their own choices - that marrying a relative or someone from a good tribe is the best idea. They faced confrontations with their families because they refuse such ideas that break the norms of their culture and traditions. For instance, H.A.R. married twice; the first to non-Omani, which he choose by himself and the second to an Omani chosen by his parents. "I decided to marry someone from the same tribe as me because I know her and her family from my childhood. We have the same culture, we speak the same language; she respects me and listens to me. We fight less and she is raising our children according to our culture and religion." A.A.A. is a man who married to someone not from his tribe and, as a result, he faced a conflict with his parents because they did not accept her. He rejected to marry his cousin as a solution because he said that his children follow his tribe's name even though their mother is not from the same tribe.

B.A.R. gave the example of a cousin who fell in love with someone who is not from the same tribe. The family rejected her marriage with that person because the man was not from a good

tribe. The families of the two spouses rejected their marriage and refused to be in touch with them because they brought a shame to the families. Now the cousin has a lot of problems with her husband because her husband is from a different tribe and not a good person.

*“If he could be from our tribe or a good tribe, we could discuss and try to solve the problem. His tribe is not a good tribe and we did not want to consult the Sheikh for solving our problems because she brought shame to our village.”*

The interviewees' answers about their children marriage in the future varies from complete disagreement of marriage to a different tribe to being free to choose whoever they want under certain conditions, i.e., being a Muslim, from a good tribe and with good financial status.

### **Role of the Sheikh and tribe in marriage decision and process**

The sheikh's role is of no importance nowadays and they state that marriage is a personal choice,. The sheikh's role, if existent, will be only as adviser and guider as M.A.B. says, "The sheikh may propose someone but not impose someone". The sheikh and the other members of the tribe can facilitate marriage by playing the role of the mediator between the families of the expected groom and bride. The sheikh's role might appear later after marriage whenever there are some problems between the spouses. If the couple is from a different tribe the sheikh will represent one tribe to talk or negotiate with the other tribe. Thus, the sheikh's doesn't have the power as in the past where he used to facilitate or stop a marriage, even a kinship marriage.

The sheikh of the tribe still has his dignity as the government gives them to participate in decision-making in their district. He still plays the role of adviser, guardian, and representative of his tribe. His role in marriage might be consultation and advice. He sometimes plays the role of solving social problems inside the tribe or outside the tribe whenever the spouses are from different tribes.

### **Choosing of the spouse**

The interviewees prefer that the parents, elder brothers or sisters are the ones who choose their spouses because they are wiser and have more life experience. Thus, the interviewees prefer arranged marriage because the spouses will know each other well and will have the same culture and social life.

M.A.B.: *"My mother chooses her because we have same traditions and same culture. I am more comfortable with her because we have many things in common."*

The majority prefers to have kinship-arranged marriage: the parents know what is good for their children and the parents have more life experience. Arranged marriage is successful because the couple knows each other well and they have the same tradition and culture. In addition, if problems occur it is easy to solve the problems within the two families, which is different when the spouses are not relatives or from different tribes. A.A.A. who is married to someone not from his tribe says: *"I believe if I could marry my cousin, I could have fewer problems because we come from the same culture and same background."*

Those who do not prefer arranged marriage say that "(romantic) love marriage is equilibrium for a couple", however, the traditional type of marriage diminish the role of the woman in the society because it gives the man more rights than the woman. Others say that kinship marriage is not a good idea because the spouses are like brothers and sisters. A.D. who is against arranged marriage claims that "how can a person marry a woman who he regards as his sister?" Sometimes the person is told to marry a girl who he has never seen before. He sees that the new social media made it easier for a person to choose his future life partner. Through communication and planning in advance, things will be much better than letting someone determine your future. Another reason for not accepting kinship marriage is to avoid genetic diseases e.g. A.S., a secondary graduate who works as a government employee, says that these days it is better to avoid kinship marriage as it is the main reason for genetic diseases. His argument stresses that the shift from family marriage opens the door for people to choose their partner from outside the tribe itself.

Some people of low financial status and social level complain that they face difficulties whenever they try to marry according to their own desire, i.e., from outside the tribe or out of the kinship circle. A.H. who comes from the interior part of Oman, states that tribal issues still exist in the Omani society. He couldn't marry the woman he wanted because of the difference in tribe and social status between him and the wife he wanted. "However, it may disappear whenever one of the expected couple comes from another well-known tribe and he is in a good financial status." In addition, the economical factor is one of the main factors that lead the family to intervene in the decision of their son or daughter to choose his future groom/wife. This intervention might exist even between families within the same tribe, which

shows an existence of a social class's gap. K. A.B. adds that the families rely on religion on their marriage decision, which is to choose a woman of good family root and religion. He gave examples of two stories that support his argument; a parent refused to accept a person to marry his daughter even though he is from the same tribe but comes from a poor family. Another story states that a person was forced to divorce his wife who he had chosen because her grandfather's family background wasn't known.

### **Modernization and change of marriage traditions**

*'We have to get marry to a same tribe or to a good tribe' (respondent B.A.R.)*

All interviewees see that there is a big change in marriage traditions in the recent years because people became more educated, more integrated with each other at work, and because of the emergence of the new social media. People became open-minded and more open to others. Travelling outside the country or meeting people from different countries influenced the traditions and resulted in changing the mentality of the young Omani. The life of women has shown a rapid change by having equal rights as men to study, work and mingle with other people in different places, which was very restricted in the past. M.A.H a university graduate, mentions that the new era of Oman since 1970 and the encouragement of the new government for people to go to schools and complete their higher studies in order to participate in the development of the country made the families and societies more open and think as a nation, leaving the tribal matter aside. The development of the country contributed in the increase of migration to the cities for the purpose of finding jobs and to live where facilities exist more. All developments broke the tribal gap. Boys and girls became freer to choose their future partner because of mingling at colleges and work.

### **The influence of social media on marriage decision**

*'Omani are small in number and in order to keep our Omani blood our ancestry name, we should choose someone who has a good tribal name' (respondent S.A.A.)*

Through the social media and access to the global world, this desire to keep the Omani bloodline intact could be challenged. The Internet offers the access to a whole new marriage market. Most of the interviewees expressed a frequent use of different types of social media.



They use them to chat with relatives, friends, or to make new friendship. Many are open to meet people after chatting in the social media. However, conservative people say that it isn't possible for them to communicate with strangers, exchange pictures, and express their feelings because it is opposite to their tradition. Conservative people consider social media relations as not serious and they would prefer arranged marriage. People like A.A.A. see that the social control is very high in Oman, and therefore social media was the easiest way to communicate with their partner. Thus, social media helps to discover the other person's interest, ambitions and to know him/her well.

People have changed with social media, the medium changes people. They don't visit their friends or family very often like before. They became more individual and at the same time communicate more via social media. Social media of course influences the partner choice. "A friend of mine met her husband through social media. I also chat with my fiancée, sending picture via social media." [S.A.B]

Even though the interviewees take advantage of the use of social media to know their partners well, they still see that there might be a confrontation with the parents who trust the tradition. Those who see the advantages of the social media always keep in mind that their parents have to bless their marriage.

*B.A.R.: Tribe is very important for me, my tribe's name give me an identity in our society and let me feel proud of myself and my family. It is very important to marry someone who has a good tribe name; it is for the future of your children and an honor to your family.*

B.A.R. gives the voice to many the researcher spoke to; it was difficult to take the recorded interviews and the in hindsight maybe constructed and socially desirable answers seriously into account as valid research data, due to the fact that almost everybody agrees with the above statement. When the respondents ventilated their desire to marry freely, there was often a 'but' and a family who would disagree. The next quote shows how important the ethnical background is and that this should be taken into account when thinking about a random setting of people, who were mostly comfortable in their own settings, middle and upper class and from a 'good tribe'. This interviewee knows that marriage outside of some cultural boundaries is difficult; at one point he says that everything should be possible in a new Oman, but then:

*“Oman has diverse society. We have pure Omani who are born here and did not mix with other people, we have people coming from Africa or have African background and we have Baluchis, who are from Baluchistan. With all diverse people, we have diverse culture. I have African background it will be difficult for me to marry someone who does not have same culture as me. Is better for me to marry someone who has same culture. But if I found someone who respect me and is a good person is fine. We can always try to adjust our cultural difference. It is a matter of understanding each other.” (F.A.H)*

We can conclude that often wishful thinking and the desire to change the social restraints by family names, tribal structures, slave heritage and ethnic backgrounds are the core of some saying. Many confirm that changes are in place, divorce, courtship through social media and discussion, debates with families and friends. The latter will contribute to the cultural and social changes, but ... there are a lot of ‘but’s in this debate. Let’s conclude the representation of fieldwork data with a credo by a young woman who wants to get married with a secret lover far away:

*I have a close friend (secret) from outside Oman. I meet him through social media and we are looking to have a future together. I know that my parents won’t take me serious but I don’t mind, I will fight to get married to him (A.B.)*

We don’t know if this suitor will marry her love interest, but one can state that change has come, not in radical way, not for everyone and not in a rapid tempo, but the traditional structures are bursting in a slow, gentle way, whereby the ‘good tribal name’ can be exchanged for wealth, ‘a good Muslim’ or rich educational background. The romantic love of the West is not what the respondents ventilated; family is in charge in so many ways in contemporary Oman.

Coming from the Baluchi tribe, she embraced the concept of modernization by rejecting the tribal importance. The other respondents are very clear in their rejection of other tribes at the moment they themselves or their children would get married to a tribe with a ‘lesser name’ ‘less good’, although, and this is the most interesting finding all of them see great change and the possibility for a free choice in a future spouse. The contraction between tribal thinking and modern development seems to be a dichotomy, which causes frictions in the households of Omani people, as the researcher experienced in the conversations at dinner tables and market places: who is marrying whom and why is a sensitive topic which resulted in paying lip service to the openness and possibilities the political openness is given to them, but if push

comes to shove, only those who are marginalized by a name less fortunate than the others, are embracing the new openness. The others prefer 'a good name', 'a good tribe' or in some case 'a wealthy spouse'.

During the interviews another aspect emerges: social media as a tool to enter the marriage market. The researcher took this as a sign of 'modernity at large', framed by Appadurai, whereby new concepts are introduced to a group connected to the wider world by technology. One of the results is that the tribe plays a much greater role than the researcher would have had expected in an era of modernization. The new political openness is working on several levels, women think of even trying to choose a partner via social media, but mostly secretly. Without the consent of the family it seems impossible to get married, but the sheiks influence is diminished in a short timeframe. The elderly or the tribe has not the final word anymore in Oman.

## 5 Conclusion & Discussion

In this chapter the research question is answered. Also suggestions for further research will be provided. This chapter concludes with an evaluation of this research.

The research question was:

*‘What kind of implications has the new political openness in Oman towards the individual freedom of its citizens with regard to the choice of a marriage partner?’*

This question could be answered with the help of a literary study of the history of Oman and the origin of the tribal and religious structures, and through ethnographic fieldwork conducted with interviews and informal conversation. The answer is surprisingly simple and very complex at the same time: The ‘old’ traditions, thoughts and views about strong family ties and a good tribal name are influencing the minds of future suitors and married couples. Romantic love was not on their minds, but social and cultural change was. Through material circumstances women entering in the workplace, as well as open access to all Omani institutions for all citizens, opens up minds and the possibility to think about marriage partner outside the family and tribal structures. The findings confirm what had been found in the literature: the contemporary choice of marriage by young, urban, educated citizens of Oman shows certain ambivalence toward what modernity and urbanization brings. On the one hand, the choice is there, on the other the wish to please the family and even much stronger, to keep or gain a ‘good tribal name’ proved even stronger than the wish to choose freely.

For the analysis the historical background was needed to understand the interviewees and the way they are embedded in Omani history by knowing the stories of the ancestors and the ‘imagined communities’ like the Islam, and with the help of ‘invented traditions’. The role of women changed in Oman, and with education, urbanization and modernization the possibility for a free marriage choice, which would mean without consent of the family. The family values have changed from traditional to modern values, as the Omani society presents itself as truly cosmopolitan. The role of a wife and spouse has changed in Oman society, since women started to gain economic independence and access to the labor market. This changed the role of the elder generations. Children gained more freedom and became less dependent

on their parents. However, the power of the family decisions is visible in the interview, and most of all, the urge to marry ‘well off’.

Although in contemporary, cosmopolitan Oman all tribes, i.e. all families with a name worth mentioning in a positive (wealthy, strong, rich ancestry) and negative (slave origin) mingle at the same places for education, health services and at work places, the mentioning of a name resonates the past up to now. Someone with a ‘bad tribal name’ has got to have at least wealth and educational background to make a chance, and even then the ‘blood ties’ and the idea of family bound and tribal structures, which are translated in modern times into strong economic and political powerful family ties – are the wish of many Omanis. Women and men were tied to the traditions of the past in choosing their partners; however, they are free, or better more than a few years ago to choose whomever they want. Internet made it easier for them to communicate with each other before marriage especially since society does not accept unmarried people dating.

The influence of tribe exists parallel to the idea of modernization and equality, especially in the matter of marriages. Omanis do not accept to marry from a different tribe unless that tribe is in the same or better social and financial status. Men and especially women should always consult their parents or guardians in choosing their spouses because it is a family concern and it determines the identity of the spouse’s children. This made people prefer arranged kinship marriage, as they know the spouse's family well. Those who are affected by the recent freedom of choice confess that even though they choose their spouses themselves, they still face confrontations from their parents because of the traditional norms; norms of tribal status, norms of the original family. The result of the interviews who, that people of different origin like Baluchi, Lawati, Zanzibari, have their own traditions, which are different even in marriages procedures and the interviewees did not want to mingle, except for the Baluchi respondent. Moreover, interviewees consider divers Islamic movements as problematic. Still, the elderly religious advisors of the past are not relevant anymore for the young, urban, educated.

One of the interesting findings of this research is that the building of the nation state goes hand in hand with the opening for autonomous marriage choices. Here modernity at large is visible, and the tribal structure change into global networks of strong multinational global players. The Sultan opened Oman with his speech (cited at the first page of this thesis) to the

wider world, to make the ideas of equality and social change, hence mobility possible for his country. Tribalism should be something of the past, but a 'good name' is something, which is highly desired by the respondents of this research. Their view is not representative of all Omanis' and can give only a glimpse about the diverse society Oman today is. However, particular the way they thought about political openness and their personal choices shows strata of society in – albeit slow – change. The research showed that the choice of a marriage partner is very much linked to the political project of a nation in building. A tribal structure can be incorporated or vanish, when a person is foremost a citizen. It is not only 'a good tribal name', which is important in Oman, where political openness lead to new thinking, but the citizens of Oman do think in tribal names, even if this is not the official doctrine. This process is a work in progress and this research could only be a 'snapshot in time' and give a glimpse of the influence the new political openness provided the citizen of Oman with regard to their marriage choices,

## **Discussion**

'*Good and bad names*' and all the connotations which come with these names are something which ought to be researched in more detail. 'What's in a name?' and how does identity constituted with this name giving? In the scope of this research it was not possible to look deeper at the sources of this identity project in Oman and further research is necessary. Does the modern project of autonomous individual thinking replace the 'good names'? The method chosen in this research are limited due to the sensitive topic and the ethnic background of the researcher. The access to a vast population of people who experience social and cultural changes in so many ways, should be given a quantitative research with hundreds of respondents; or a truly ethnographic fieldwork conducted in a way that could offer a deeper insight in the changing social matrix of this open state Oman, which is unique in the region and offers their citizens the possibility to choose.

As an Omani I saw myself in a challenging position: the distance to the research object and topic was not always given, it took sometime to take a step back and look at one's own society with distance, but I was able to conduct fieldwork and to gather material which contributes to the wider discussion of social change and marriage choices in Oman. The political openness provides us Omani with the change to reflect upon our heritage and the future in an open way. Whom we marry is also a question about what kind of nation state

Oman will be. I do hope an open one, where people can marry the spouse they want to marry, and where the name does not matter anymore.

*“I will proceed as quickly as possible to transform your life into a prosperous one with a bright future. Every one of you must play his part towards this goal. Our country in the past was famous and strong. If we work in unity and co-operation, we will regenerate that glorious past and we will take a respectable place in the world. (...) Yesterday it was complete darkness and with the help of God, tomorrow will be a new dawn on Muscat, Oman and its people.”<sup>78</sup>*

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<sup>78</sup> Ministry of Information Sultanate of Oman. The royal speeches of his Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said 1970-2010. 23/7/1970. Royal speech on the day of his accession. 23 July 1970

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## Appendix 1: Geo-political overview

The culture and tradition of Oman have similarities to other countries of the Arab world and the Arabian Peninsula. However, Oman geographical features contributed to the isolation of some parts of the population. Therefore some tribes were situated in remote areas and kept to certain trade. The citizens of the Sultanate of Oman mainly live in two regions, namely the Northern region and the Southern region of Oman. Oman has a long coast, which is about 2400 km. The long coastline made Oman a strategic place for trading. Ports like Sohar, Qalhat and Muscat) made it possible for Omanis to integrate with people with other nationalities that use the trade routes, especially with people from East Asia and Africa. Therefore, some of the citizens who live in the coastal areas have a mixed origin; some are from India, others from Persia like the Balushis and Lawaties tribes. In the interior part of Oman people only live in areas that have water resources, like wells (ground water), and Aflaj, which are water channels that transport water. These Aflaj can be used for underground water, springs or surface water. In Oman live bedu and hadhar. Bedu are Bedouins, nomadic, rural, of the desert, whereas hadhar denotes a civilized region, the settled population, and town dwellers. People of this dichotomy complete each other, especially in needs and demands of basic living. Bedouins sell their cattle and their products to the town people. Villagers work on farms and grow the basic products they need, like dates, vegetables, fruit, wheat, and food for animals. Bedouins who stay in the desert usually travel a lot with their cattle and camels according to the monsoons. However, in the summer they come close to the villages for date harvest and in the case water is scarce.

Throughout the past centuries Omanis have migrated to other parts of the world. In the 19th century, Omanis immigrated to East Africa, due to the severe drought in the Sultanate and the scarcity of jobs <sup>79</sup>. Omanis travelled to East Africa because this was one of the successful business routes. Some Omanis stayed in East Africa to work there. Other Omanis decided to make it their permanent home. They got married there and integrated with the locals. After the Revolution in Zanzibar and formation of a new government in Oman in 1964 many Omanis decided to come back to Oman<sup>80</sup>. However, there is a distinction from

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<sup>79</sup> Valeri, Marc. Nation-building and communities in Oman since 1970: The Swahili-speaking Omani in search of identity. (*African Affairs*, 2007. 106, vol. 424), 479-496.

<sup>80</sup> Al Azri, Khalid. Social and gender inequality in Oman: The power of religious and political tradition. (Routledge, 2012), 24

those who came have the origin of Arab Omanis and who came back to Oman and those who are brought to Oman as servants and are not originated from the Arab Omanis<sup>81</sup>.

Today, the Omani society is of tribal nature. Oman embraced Islam during the lifetime of Prophet Mohammed. There are different Islamic sects in Oman, namely Ibadhi, Suni, and Shi'i. The tribes are divided into Ghafri and Hinawi. The majority of Omanis are Arabs, except some small communities like Baluchi who have migrated from Baluchistan in Pakistan and Iran to Oman. Another minority in Oman are the Lawaties, who have Indian origin and Al Al Ajam, who descends from Persia. These communities mostly live in coastal areas due to the business line between Oman and these countries at that time<sup>82</sup>

In some cases a tribe took a wadi (Valley) and made this wadi its territory. The village structure is based on tribal organization, relationship among family members, and the wider social relations and interactions with the people around. Sometimes people are called according to their place of residence. Dhofari are from the southern region of Oman, Zanzibari have relatives from East Africa or Zanzibar and Suri are from Sur city. In other cases they are called Ahil (which means 'the people of'), e.g. Ahil Asharqia (the people of Eastern region of Oman) and Ahil Al Batinah (the people of Northern Coast of Oman).

The origin of the tribes in Oman descends from Qahtani (Bani Hina), who came from Southern Arabia and from Adnani (Bani Ghafir), who came from Northern Arabia. Bani Hina and Bani Ghafi have always been opponents and have always affected the tribal distribution in the Sultanate. The alliances of Hinawi or Ghafri are not stable. This is caused by the location and political matters between the tribes. Within the same village or tribe people are divided according to their origin, language, or social status. People are qibali or alsi (people that originally belong to the tribe/nobles), khdam (servants), zutis (gipsies) and bayassra (people who are a mixture of Arabs and slaves). Slaves are considered as subordinate to the tribe.

The division of the tribes is also related to other factors like the civil wars in Oman during the nineteenth century and the Ibadi ruling. The society was in a tribal-religious civil war. Oman has two different political systems, namely: Ibadism and the modern state system. Ibadism was a religious political system in which the Imam is the ruler. Ibadism unified

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<sup>81</sup> Khalid Al Azri, *Social and gender inequality in Oman: The power of religious and political tradition*. (Routledge 2012), 28

<sup>82</sup> Marc Valerie, 2010. High Visibility, low profile: The Shi'a in Oman under Sultan Qaboos. *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol.42, 251-268.

Oman as a nation, which resulted in a development. The interior part of the country was never as prosperous as the coastal parts, due to geographic isolation. The coastal area was under the power of the Sultanate and the interior area was under the power of the Imamate. This situation continued until 1955. In that year the Sultanate prevailed with the assistance of British Forces.

The Ibadism had a democratic system in which the Imam gave the sheikh the role to represent his tribe and solve its problems. However, with the help of Saudi intervention this system changed in 1954 after the death of the old Imam and due to the Conflict of Hinawi and Ghafri. The discovering of oil in the Gulf initiated a new era. In 1959 all of Oman was brought under the Sultan's control and all the tribes were unified in an alliance to the Sultan. This resulted in the decline of tribalism in the society.

In the past, almost every tribe had a leader, which was called the sheikh. He was a man of knowledge in religion, leadership and community administration. People respected him being an elder and wise man. Strongly knit tribes are under the leadership of a tamimah, or paramount sheikh, who exercises political authority over all sections of the tribe. The tamimah was the source of power and authority in the village for his tribe and allies. Some small tribes do not have a tamimah, so they refer to the tamimah of another tribe, in order to share solidarity and strength. The tamimah solves problems, helps the needy by collecting money from the other members of the tribe, and he is the one responsible for protecting the tribe's reputation. The tamimah represents his people in almost all accusations, especially in signing treaties with other tribes or with the state. People do not hesitate to go to him and he is required to be with his people in good and evil<sup>83</sup>.

After the reunification of Oman in 1955, the Sultan appointed a Wali for certain areas to represent the government in dealing with the different sheikhs of that area. This made all sheikhs work according to the orders and commands of the Sultan. The Sultan involves the wali in the government as members of the state in planning and giving their opinions about concerns in society. The political development in Oman, as in other Gulf States, saw three phases, namely: the rise of certain powerful tribes to political prominence, the accrual of autocratic powers by the sheikhs of these tribes and the eventual appearance of territorial states in a constitutional framework. During the past centuries there were several tribes that

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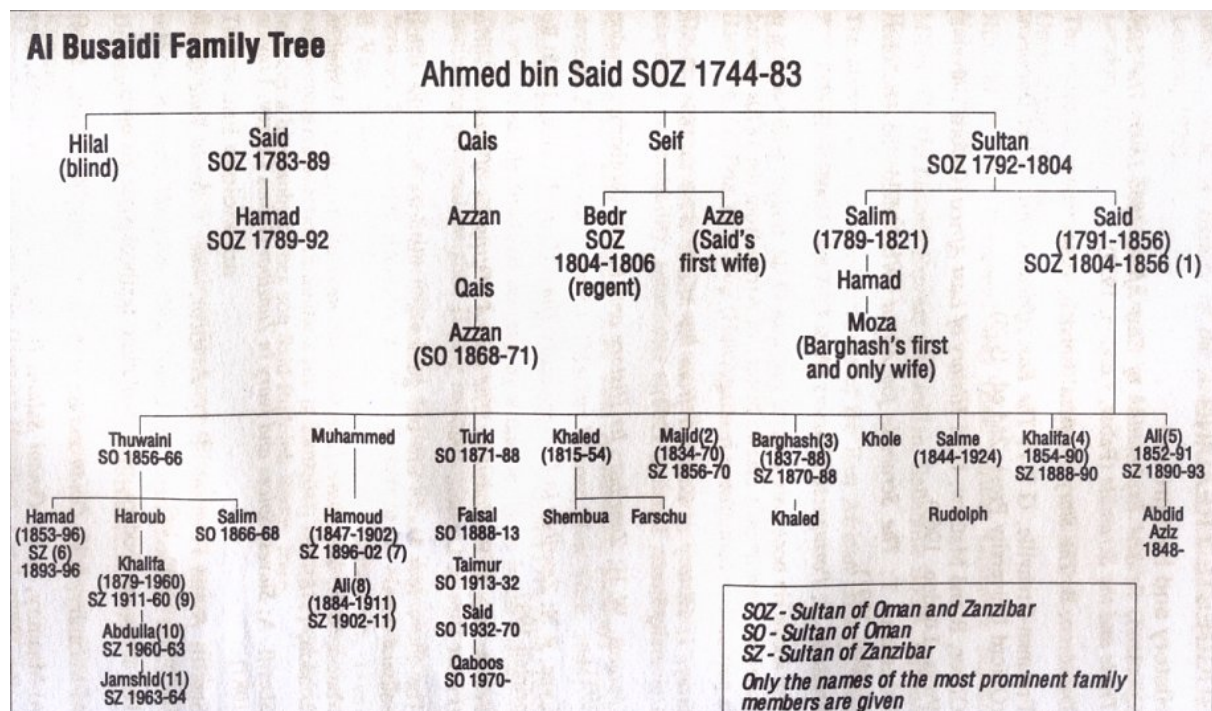
<sup>83</sup> Al Azri, Khalid. *Social and gender inequality in Oman: The power of religious and political tradition*. New York: Routledge, 2012.

took the power and leadership in the Sultanate, like Al Al Nabhani (1624 – 11540), Al Al Yarubi (1624 – 1749), and Al Al Busaidi tribes (since 1799).<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>84</sup>Jeremy Jones, & Nicholas Ridout, *A History of Modern Oman*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2015), 6

## Appendix 2: An example of a Omani family tree



### Appendix 3: Interview questions and answers

#### Role of the tribe on partner choice

##### 1. Is your tribe's name important for you and your parents? Why and why not?

<b>Name: B. A.R.</b> <b>Age: 30years old</b> <b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: Yes</b> <b>Education: Bachelor degree</b> <b>Children: 2</b> <b>Region: AL hajar Al sharqi</b> <b>Religion: Muslim Ibadhi</b>	<p>Yes, having a tribe is very important for me and my family because having a tribe is having an identity in Omani society. Having a tribe make me feel proud and strong and prove that I am an Arab</p>
<b>Name: F. A. R.</b> <b>Age: 34years old</b> <b>Gender: female</b> <b>Married: Yes</b> <b>Education: bachelor</b> <b>Children:4</b> <b>Region: AL hajar Al sharqi</b> <b>Religion: Muslim Ibadhi</b>	<p>Yes, it is very important for me and my parents, it has a value and reputation in my village because it has wealthy. It's give me a status in the society.</p>
<b>Name: H.A. R.</b> <b>Age: 35years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: Yes</b> <b>Education: Master in education</b> <b>Children: 2</b> <b>Region: Samail</b> <b>Religion: Muslim Ibadhi</b>	<p>My tribe does not have any importance for me but I am proud of my tribe. I am proud to have a tribe because I belong to my family, the descent of my family.</p>
<b>Name: M. A. H.</b> <b>Age: 33years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: yes</b> <b>Education: High school</b> <b>Children:3</b> <b>Region: Al Sharqiyah</b> <b>Religion: Muslim Ibadhi</b>	<p>Having a tribe is very important for me and my parents. It is our identity, having a tribe make us feel that I belong to Omani nation. My tribe comes from generation to generation, we cannot let it disappear. We need to keep it exist.</p>
<b>Name: M. A. H.</b> <b>Age: 34 years old</b> <b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: yes</b> <b>Education: Bachelor of science</b> <b>Children: 3</b> <b>Region: Al Sharqiyah</b> <b>Religion: Muslim Ibadhi</b>	<p>Having a tribe is very important for me and my parents. Tribe is reflecting to our origin, it is show us where we are coming from, our origin.</p>
<b>Name: A. A. B</b> <b>Age:33 years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: Yes</b> <b>Education: High school</b>	<p>Having a tribe for me is not that important for me, I am myself. I don't need a tribe to have an identity.</p>



<b>Children: 5</b> <b>Region: Buraymi</b> <b>Religion: Muslim</b>	
<b>Name: S.A. B.</b> <b>Age: 28 years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: Yes</b> <b>Education: bachelor</b> <b>Children:1</b> <b>Region: Al Sharqiyah</b> <b>Religion: Muslim Ibadhi</b>	Tribe is very important for me and my parents because it let you origins and its give me a status in our society.
<b>Name: F. A. H</b> <b>Age: 31years old</b> <b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: Master</b> <b>Children: No</b> <b>Region: Al Batnah</b> <b>Religion: Muslim Ibadhi</b>	of course, as Omani, tribe is very important for me and my family. My father always keeps telling us the history of our tribe, how our tribe is important. Having a tribe is a honor, pride and identity for us.
<b>Name: M.A. B.</b> <b>Age: 25years old</b> <b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: College, business administration</b> <b>Children: No</b> <b>Region: Muscat</b> <b>Religion: Muslim Ibadhi</b>	Having a tribe for me and my parents is very important. I grew up in Africa; our tribal name was our identity. People were calling us by our tribal name that was our identity. My tribe is my identity and my family too.
<b>Name: K.A. B.</b> <b>Age:22 years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: Doing a Master</b> <b>Children: No</b> <b>Region: Al Sharqiyah</b> <b>Religion: Muslim Ibadhi</b>	Having a tribe is very important for me, my family and I also think to all Omanis because it is our Identity. I and my family are very proud to belong to a tribe.
<b>Name: S. A. A.</b> <b>Age:30 years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: Future husband to be</b> <b>Education: High school</b> <b>Children: No</b> <b>Region: Al Wusta</b> <b>Religion: Muslim Ibadhi</b>	Our identity me and my family is our tribe and we are very proud to belong to a tribe.
<b>Name: S. A. H.</b> <b>Age:20 years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: Bachelor</b> <b>Children</b> <b>Region: Al Batinah</b>	Yes, Having a tribe in our family is very important because it to shows that we are Omani nation, we belong to Oman. Our ancestries are Omanis. And they have played a big role in Omani history.

<b>Religion: Muslim Ibadhi</b>	
<b>Name: K. A M.</b> <b>Age: 24years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: no</b> <b>Education: High school</b> <b>Children: No</b> <b>Region: Al Wusta</b> <b>Religion: Muslim Ibadhi</b>	Tribe is very important for us (family). It is a prove that I am Arab and Omani.
<b>Name: Z.A.B.</b> <b>Age:29 years old</b> <b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: Master</b> <b>Children: No</b> <b>Region: Al Sharqiyah</b> <b>Religion: Muslim Ibadhi</b>	For me as a women, having is not that important but I would like to marry someone who has a good tribe's name for my children. So my children will have an Identity.
<b>Name: N.A. K.</b> <b>Age: 27years old</b> <b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: College</b> <b>Children: no</b> <b>Region: Al Batinah</b> <b>Religion: Muslim Ibadhi</b>	Yes, having a tribe is very important for me and my family. It is our identity.

**2. Does the sheikh of a tribe have the right to choose a spouse for someone? Does that person have to accept the choice of the sheikh?**

<b>Name: B. A.R</b> <b>Age: 30years old</b> <b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: Yes</b> <b>Education: Bachelor degree</b> <b>Children: 2</b> <b>Region: AL hajar Al Shariq</b> <b>Religion: Muslim Ibadhi</b>	<b>No, The sheikh does not have right to choose a spouse for someone. He can give advices to the family who want to marry their children to another tribe.</b>
<b>Name: F.A. R.</b> <b>Age: 34years old</b> <b>Gender: female</b> <b>Married: Yes</b> <b>Education: Bachelor</b> <b>Children:4</b> <b>Region: AL hajar Al Shariq</b> <b>Religion: Muslim Ibadhi</b>	<b>They don't have right to choose the spouse for someone. If they do, they do it for their own children and not for other family.</b>
<b>Name: H. A.R.</b> <b>Age: 35years old</b>	<b>My tribe decided not to have a sheikh, if my tribe could have a Sheikh, the sheikh will not have right to choose a spouse for</b>

<b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: Yes</b> <b>Education: Master in education</b> <b>Children: 2</b>	someone of my family. -Why your tribe does not have a sheikh? people of my tribe decided not to have a sheikh because we didn't want to have all tribal problems - What kind of tribal problems you avoided? We avoided that the sheikh impose us who to marry, intervene between fighting tribe. We wanted to solve problems ourselves without any sheikh intervention.
<b>Name: M.A. H</b> <b>Age: 33years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: yes</b> <b>Education: High school</b> <b>Children:3</b> <b>Region: Al Sharqiyah</b> <b>Religion: Muslim Ibadhi</b>	In the past the sheikh could choose a spouse for someone and the person should accept otherwise it could be a shame to reject the sheikh's demand. But nowadays, the sheikh of the tribe does not have that power, he can give us advice who to marry but he cannot choose for someone a spouse, may be for his children but not for other people.
<b>Name: M. A.H</b> <b>Age: 34 years old</b> <b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: yes</b> <b>Education: Bachelor of science</b> <b>Children: 3</b> <b>Region: Al Sharqiyah</b> <b>Religion: Muslim Ibadhi</b>	The Sheikh does not have a right to choose a partner for someone because choosing a partner is personal. The sheikh may propose someone but not impose someone. They can solve problems between other tribes or give an advice for a couple who want to get married.
<b>Name: A.A.B.</b> <b>Age:33 years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: Yes</b> <b>Education: High school</b> <b>Children: 5</b> <b>Region: Buraymi</b> <b>Religion: Muslim</b>	The Sheikh should not play any role because things have change since 1970. People are educated, they have a free dome to choose who they want to marry. They should help solve problems between other tribes.
<b>Name: S.A.B.</b> <b>Age: 28 years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: Yes</b> <b>Education: bachelor</b> <b>Children:1</b> <b>Region: Al Sharqiyah</b> <b>Religion: Muslim Ibadhi</b>	They should not play any role. Choosing a partner does not have to do with tribe. It is a personal issue not a tribal issue. The sheikh can give an advice for the marry couple.
<b>Name: F. A. H.</b> <b>Age: 31years old</b> <b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: Master</b> <b>Children: No</b> <b>Region: Al Batinah</b> <b>Religion: Muslim Ibadhi</b>	They should not play any role, because choosing a partner is a personal issues or family affair not a sheikh affair.
<b>Name: K.A.B.</b> <b>Age:22 years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: Doing a Master</b>	They should not play any role, because choosing a partner is a personal issues or family affair not a sheikh affair. The sheikh should give an advice to a couple who want to get married.

<b>Children: No</b> <b>Region: Al Sharqiyah</b> <b>Religion: Muslim Ibadhi</b>	
<b>Name: M. A.B.</b> <b>Age: 25years old</b> <b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: College, business administration</b> <b>Region: Muscat</b> <b>Religion: Muslim Ibadhi</b>	<b>The sheikh of a tribe should not have a right to choose a spouse for someone. If they choose for someone, the person should not accept. It is also a family affair, some sheikh chooses for their children and the children accept because they cannot refuse their father wishes. They will accept because of the respect to their parents.</b>
<b>Name: S. A.A.</b> <b>Age:30 years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: Future husband to be</b> <b>Education: High school</b> <b>Children: No</b> <b>Region: Al Wusta</b> <b>Religion: Muslim Ibadhi</b>	<b>The sheikh does not have right to choose a partner for someone. If their do, it depends of the person, he can accept or reject the proposal of the sheikh. The person have to make his decision not what a sheik decided for him</b>
<b>Name: S.A.H</b> <b>Age:20 years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: Bachelor</b> <b>Children : No</b> <b>Region: Al Batinah</b> <b>Religion: Muslim Ibadhi</b>	<b>In the past, the sheikh had power to choose a partner for someone. The sheikh of our tribe chose a wife for my father and that was my mother. My father could not refuse what the sheikh recommends him. But nowadays, the Sheikh does not have power as before; he cannot choose a partner for someone. May be he can choose for his children but the children does not have to accept. It is more family issues</b>
<b>Name: K. A.M</b> <b>Age: 24years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: no</b> <b>Education: High school</b> <b>Children: No</b> <b>Region: Al Wusta</b> <b>Religion: Muslim Ibadhi</b>	<b>The Sheikh does not have power to choose a partner for someone. May be he can choose for his children but the children does not have to accept his choice. It is more family issues.</b>
<b>Name: Z. A. B.</b> <b>Age:29 years old</b> <b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: Master</b> <b>Children: No</b>	<b>Choosing a partner it is a family issue but in my village a sheikh can choose a partner for someone and it is difficult to say no. The sheikh is much respected in our village so saying no is to disrespect the sheikh.</b>
<b>Name: N.A.K.</b> <b>Age: 27years old</b> <b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: College</b> <b>Children: no</b>	<b>The sheik does not have right to choose a spouse for someone but if he could choose for me, I won't say no because he is wise and for sure he will choose someone good for me.</b>

### 3. What role the tribe should play in the choice of partner and why?

<b>Name: B. A.R.</b> <b>Age: 30years old</b> <b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: Yes</b> <b>Education: Bachelor degree</b> <b>Children: 2</b>	Tribe is very important, as I said in the beginning, it is our identity. Yes I think in order to keep our tribal name, our family lineage, tribe should play a big role when someone wants to choose a partner. We have to get marry to a same tribe or to good tribe.
<b>Name: F. A.R.</b> <b>Age: 34years old</b> <b>Gender: female</b> <b>Married: Yes</b> <b>Education: Bachelor</b> <b>Children:4</b>	.Personally, I think before accepting someone for marriage, we should look from which tribe he/she is. Marrying a good tribe is very important in our society
<b>Name: H. A. R.</b> <b>Age: 35years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: Yes</b> <b>Education: Master in education</b> <b>Children: 2</b> <b>Region: Samail</b> <b>Religion: Muslim Ibadhi</b>	Tribe should not play any role in the choice of partner because people are free to choose who and which tribe they want to marry too.
<b>Name: M.A.H.</b> <b>Age: 33years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: yes</b> <b>Education: High school</b> <b>Children:3</b>	The tribe should play a big role because when someone gets married is a mixing of two families from different tribe or same tribe. It is important that tribe play a role in the choice of partner because a good tribe cannot mix with a bad tribe.
<b>Name: Mariam Al Harthy</b> <b>Age: 34 years old</b> <b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: yes</b> <b>Education: bachelor of science</b> <b>Children: 3</b>	Tribe should play a big role in the choice of partner because everyone in the future wants that she /he children have a good tribal name. Having a good tribal name is a honor.
<b>Name: A.A.B</b> <b>Age:33 years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: Yes</b> <b>Education: High school</b> <b>Children: 5</b>	. Tribe should not play any role on the choice of partner because everyone is free to marry who they want. I don't really care if I get marry to a good or bad tribe.
<b>Name: S.A.B.</b> <b>Age: 28 years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: Yes</b> <b>Education: bachelor</b> <b>Children:1</b>	Tribe should play a role on the partner choice. I order to keep our blood and our tribal name we should marry from the same tribe or a tribe not far from our tribe.
<b>Name: F.A. H.</b> <b>Age: 31years old</b> <b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: Master</b> <b>Children: No</b>	Tribe should play a role. We have young and small population. In order to keep our identity, we should marry from the same tribe or a tribe which is closer to our tribe.
<b>Name: M. A.B.</b> <b>Age: 25years old</b> <b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: College, business administration</b>	Tribe should not play a role on the partner choice but I am coming from a good tribe and I think in order to keep our tribal name, our family lineage, tribe should play a big role when someone wants to choose a partner. We have to get marry to a same tribe or to good tribe

<b>Children: No</b>	
<b>Name: K.A.B.</b> <b>Age:22 years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: Doing a Master</b> <b>Children: No</b>	Tribe should play a role on choosing a partner because you want to have children in the future who will carry their ancestry name.
<b>Name: S. A. A.</b> <b>Age:30 years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: Future husband to be</b> <b>Education: High school</b> <b>Children: No</b>	Tribe should play a role in the choice of partner. Omani are small in number and in order to keep our Omani blood our ancestry name, we should choose someone who has a good tribal name.
<b>Name: S.A.H.</b> <b>Age:20 years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: Bachelor</b> <b>Children</b>	Before accepting someone for marriage, we should look from which tribe he/she is. Marrying a good tribe is very important in our society. Tribe should play a role in the choice of partner
<b>Name: K. A.M</b> <b>Age: 24years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: no</b> <b>Education: High school</b> <b>Children: No</b>	To keep our Arab (Omani) blood, tribe should play a robe on the choice of partner.
<b>Name: Z. A.B.</b> <b>Age:29 years old</b> <b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: Master</b> <b>Children: No</b>	The tribe should play a role in the choice of partner. In order to keep our tribal name, we need to marry each other so the Sheikh should insist that people marry from the same tribe
<b>Name: N. A. K.</b> <b>Age: 27years old</b> <b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: College</b> <b>Children: no</b>	I am from a good tribe and I should marry someone who has a same tribe on a good tribe as me. So tribe should play a role by choosing a partner

## B. Influence of tribal culture in partner choice:

### Married Couple

#### 1. Who choose your spouse and how? (Did you choose/ your mother/ father/ sheikh)?

<b>Name: B.A.R.</b> <b>Age: 30years old</b> <b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: Yes</b> <b>Education: Bachelor degree</b> <b>Children: 2</b>	Parents choose for me. If my parents could not be there, my brothers could choose for me. They are the one who are wise and they will always choose for me a good person.
<b>Name: F. A.R.</b> <b>Age: 34years old</b> <b>Gender: female</b> <b>Married: Yes</b> <b>Education: Bachelor</b> <b>Children:4</b>	I choose myself. My sister in law recommended him to me and he is a cousin of my sister in law. My family and I knew that he was a good person and coming from a good family. My sister in law arranges a meeting in her house, so I could meet him and talk about our future marriage. For me was a smooth marriage, they were not disagreement between me and my parents. My parents

	<p>accept him easily.</p> <p>2. Is your spouse from the same tribe as you? If yes, why did you choose a spouse from the same tribe?</p> <p>F.A.A.: No my husband is not from the same tribe as me but he is related family.</p>
<p><b>Name: H. A. R.</b>  <b>Age: 35years old</b>  <b>Gender: Male</b>  <b>Married: Yes</b>  <b>Education: Master in education</b>  <b>Children: 2</b></p>	<p>I choose my first partner myself and she was not Omani. My second wife is an Omani and my parents introduce her to me.</p>
<p><b>Name: M. A.H</b>  <b>Age: 33years old</b>  <b>Gender: Male</b>  <b>Married: yes</b>  <b>Education: High school</b>  <b>Children:3</b></p>	<p>I choose my wife myself; I meet her in my work place. We fall in love each other and we stay in the relation for one year without someone knowing, till we decided to get married.</p>
<p><b>Name: M.A. H.</b>  <b>Age: 34 years old</b>  <b>Gender: Female</b>  <b>Married: yes</b>  <b>Education: Bachelor of science</b>  <b>Children: 3</b></p>	<p>My mother chooses a spouse for me. She choose for me my cousin</p>
<p><b>Name: A.A.B.</b>  <b>Age:33 years old</b>  <b>Gender: Male</b>  <b>Married: Yes</b>  <b>Education: High school</b>  <b>Children: 5</b></p>	<p>My parents choose for me</p>
<p><b>Name: S. A. .B.</b>  <b>Age: 28 years old</b>  <b>Gender: Male</b>  <b>Married: Yes</b>  <b>Education: bachelor</b>  <b>Children:1</b></p>	<p>She was friend of my sister, my mum likes her and she chooses her for me.</p>

2. **Married couple: Is your spouse from same tribe as you? If yes, why did you choose a spouse from the same tribe?**

<p><b>Name: B. A. R.</b>  <b>Age: 30years old</b>  <b>Gender: Female</b>  <b>Married: Yes</b>  <b>Education: Bachelor degree</b>  <b>Children: 2</b></p>	<p>No my husband is not from the same tribe as me but he is related family.</p>
<p><b>Name: F. A. R.</b>  <b>Age: 34years old</b>  <b>Gender: female</b>  <b>Married: Yes</b>  <b>Education: Bachelor</b>  <b>Children:4</b></p>	<p>My second wife is from the same tribe as me. I choose her because I had a bad experience with my non Omani ex-wife and I have 3 children with her. I decided to marry someone from the same tribe as me because I know her and her family from my childhood. We have same culture, we speak same language, she respect me and listening to me. We fight less and she is raising our children according to our culture and religion.</p>

<b>Name: H. A. R.</b> <b>Age: 35years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: Yes</b> <b>Education: Master in education</b> <b>Children: 2</b>	<p>My wife is not from the same tribe as me and she is not from a good tribe.</p> <p><b>- What was your parent's reaction when you told them that your wife was not from the same tribe as you?</b></p> <p>My parents did not seem happy; they started to convince me to marry my cousin. I rejected their demand of marrying my cousin. At the end they accepted that I marry my wife because my children will follow my tribe's name and not their mother's tribe's name. I am for sure if my sister could want to marry a man from not a good tribe, my family will refuse because it is a shame and her children will have bad tribal name for life.</p>
<b>Name: M. A.H.</b> <b>Age: 33years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: yes</b> <b>Education: High school</b> <b>Children:3</b>	<p>Yes my wife is from the same tribe as me. My mother chooses her because we have same traditions and same culture. I am more comfortable with her because we have many things in common.</p>
<b>Name: M. A.H.</b> <b>Age: 34 years old</b> <b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: yes</b> <b>Education: Bachelor of science</b> <b>Children: 3</b>	<p>My husband is not from the same tribe as me but he is coming from a good tribe</p>
<b>Name: A. A.B.</b> <b>Age:33 years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: Yes</b> <b>Education: High school</b> <b>Children: 5</b>	<p>My husband is from the same tribe as me, he is my cousin. We grew up together; our families share everything together so getting married to him was easy and not expensive.</p>
<b>Name: S. A. B.</b> <b>Age: 28 years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: Yes</b> <b>Education: bachelor</b> <b>Children:1</b>	<p>My wife is coming from a different tribe as me but her tribe is closer to my tribe. I got married because we have same tribal culture.</p>

### 3. Would you like your children to marry in your tribe?

<b>Name: B.A.R.</b> <b>Age: 30years old</b> <b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: Yes</b> <b>Education: Bachelor degree</b> <b>Children: 2</b>	<p>Yes, I would like that my children marry a same tribe as me or a high tribe not a low tribe. It is very important to marry someone who has a good tribe name; it is for the future of your children and an honor to your family. It is a shame in my family if you marry someone who has low level as my tribe. I am always proud when I mention my children's tribe's name because it is a good tribe.</p> <p><b>- If one of your children go study abroad and follow in love with someone how does not have same level (low level) of tribe as your child, could you accept that?</b></p> <p>No, I will never accept, I will respect her or him as a person but I will never accept him or her as a part of the</p>
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	<p>family.</p> <p><i>-Why?</i></p> <p>This is already in my blood, My parents always teach me to have a good tribe's name is very important because it is my identity and I grew up with this in my mind.</p> <p><i>-You are a well-educated mother you and your husband and you travel the world, you have seen all the changes in Oman, especially in Muscat, you will still refuse your children to marry someone who is not from the same tribe or a higher level as your tribe ?</i></p> <p>I will always refuse, even we are well educated and we travel a lot, we should put a line on certain things, we should not let our traditions disappear or let modernization dominate our culture and traditions. We should fight for our culture and traditions. We should push that our tribe's name stays for generation and generations, we should not let it disappear.</p> <p><i>-How you want to make your tribe survive from generation to generation?</i></p> <p>By intermarriage within our tribes.</p>
<p><b>Name: F.A.R.</b>  <b>Age: 34years old</b>  <b>Gender: female</b>  <b>Married: Yes</b>  <b>Education: Bachelor</b>  <b>Children:4</b></p>	<p>Not necessary, nowadays we are an open society. Everyone choose who their like. For me is very important that my children marry someone who is a Sunni Muslim and who respect our culture</p> <p><b><i>Do you think is there a change in marriage before modernization and now?</i></b></p> <p>Yes, absolutely, very big changes. Nowadays, People meet each other before marriage which in the past was almost impossible. Men and women are now mixt, in their job place, in the parties. People are nowadays well educated and women have their right in society.</p> <p><b><i>- What I understand is that nowadays, tribe is not that important in the case of marriage?</i></b></p> <p>Tribe is not that important when you want to choose a spouse. You can meet someone you love and get marry to him/ her.</p> <p><b><i>- Is your children married? Who choose her partner?</i></b></p> <p>My daughter is married and she chooses her partner herself.</p> <p><b><i>- If your daughter chooses someone not from a good tribe, what could be your reaction?</i></b></p> <p>F.A.A.: It depends, the family should discuss the issue if it is a good boy or coming from a good family. If the man is from not a good tribe, we will reject the marriage because we still hold our tradition, rules and culture.</p> <p><b><i>- As I understand, tribe still important in the case of choice of partnership?</i></b></p> <p>Yes, it is important and it is in our community, coming from a good tribe is very important. It is an honor, pride</p>

	<p>if you come from a good tribe.</p> <p>Tribalism still play a big role and still exist nowadays. It will take long time to change and it is</p>
<p><b>Name: H. A.R.</b>  <b>Age: 35years old</b>  <b>Gender: Male</b>  <b>Married: Yes</b>  <b>Education: Master in education</b>  <b>Children: 2</b></p>	<p>For me my children can choose who their want as long as the person is Muslim. However, they have to choose who has same social level, same education. The person has to be responsible, have good manner and having a good tribe is not that important for me.</p>
<p><b>Name: M.A. H.</b>  <b>Age: 33years old</b>  <b>Gender: Male</b>  <b>Married: yes</b>  <b>Education: High school</b>  <b>Children:3</b></p>	<p>Yes, I would like my children to marry not necessary from my tribe but from a good tribe.</p>
<p><b>Name: M. A. H.</b>  <b>Age: 34 years old</b>  <b>Gender: Female</b>  <b>Married: yes</b>  <b>Education: Bachelor of science</b>  <b>Children: 3</b></p>	<p>Yes why not. My children will feel comfortable if they marry the same tribe as them or the tribe which is more harmonized like our tribe in terms of tradition and culture.</p> <p><b><i>- If your children choose someone from a different tribe what could be your reaction?</i></b></p> <p>There are some tribes that I will not allow my children to marry to because they have different culture, some of tribes have different Islamic rules (Shi`a). We have rules in our traditions and I won't accept my children break our rules.</p>
<p><b>Name: A.A. B.</b>  <b>Age:33 years old</b>  <b>Gender: Male</b>  <b>Married: Yes</b>  <b>Education: High school</b>  <b>Children: 5</b></p>	<p>Not necessary, it can be any one as long as the person is a good Muslim, having a good tribal name.</p>
<p><b>Name: S.A.B.</b>  <b>Age: 28 years old</b>  <b>Gender: Male</b>  <b>Married: Yes</b>  <b>Education: bachelor</b>  <b>Children:1</b></p>	<p>Yes, I would like my children to marry same tribe as me because it will be nice if we keep our tribal name in the coming generation.</p>

**Not Married: How you will choose your future spouse and who will choose for you? Is your future spouse should be from a same tribe as you? And why?**

<p><b>Name: F. A. H</b>  <b>Age: 31years old</b>  <b>Gender: Female</b>  <b>Married: No</b>  <b>Education: Master</b>  <b>Children: No</b></p>	<p>Oman has diverse society. We have pure Omani who are born here and did not mix with other people, we have people coming from Africa or have African back ground and we have Baluchi, who are from Baluchistan. With all diverse people, we have diverse culture. I have African back ground it will be difficult for me to marry someone who does not have same culture as me. Is better for me to marry someone who has same culture. But if I found someone who respect me and is a good person is fine. We can always try to adjust our cultural difference.</p>
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	It is a matter of understanding each other.
<b>Name: M. A.B.</b> <b>Age: 25years old</b> <b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: College, business administration</b> <b>Children: No</b>	A friend can introduce me to someone than I will contact that person to see if we can build a future together. it doesn't matter from a same tribe as long as I am comfortable with the person and we respect each other. As long as the person is Muslim I can marry him.
<b>Name: K.A.B.</b> <b>Age:22 years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: Doing a Master</b> <b>Children: No</b>	I am free to choose who I want to marry to. My future husband should be well educated and having e same financial status as me. - <b>Why?</b> Because having same financial status facilitate our relation, everyone will independent and free and I believe in a relation independency is very important, it is avoid fight between couples. My future husband does not have to be from a same tribe as me but he has to be from a good tribe.
<b>Name: S. A.A.</b> <b>Age:30 years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: Future husband to be</b> <b>Education: High school</b> <b>Children: No</b>	I am free to choose who I want to marry. I hope to meet my future husband via friends or family. <b><i>Would you like to marry someone from the same tribe as you, if so why?</i></b> Not necessary, I can marry any one from a different tribe as long as is a good tribe.
<b>Name: S. A.H.</b> <b>Age:20 years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: Bachelor</b> <b>Children</b>	I hope to meet my future husband on my work place, introduced by friends or family. I prefer someone from the same tribe. Than we can keep our tribal name.
<b>Name: K.A. M.</b> <b>Age: 24years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: no</b> <b>Education: High school</b> <b>Children: No</b>	We live in a society where man and women are separated. Finding a partner is not easy. I am waiting in till God will decide for me. I would like to marry a foreigner. <b>Why?</b> I think, marrying a foreigner, will respect you more and I will be freer.
<b>Name: Z A.B.</b> <b>Age:29 years old</b> <b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: Master</b> <b>Children: No</b>	I hope to find my husband via my friends. I would like to marry someone who has a good tribal name because my children will carry his name. Tribal name is very important in our society, it is our identity.
<b>Name: N.A. K.</b> <b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: College</b> <b>Children: no</b>	I hope to find someone who has same financial status. I can marry any one I want but I am afraid of my family. They won't me to marry any tribe. I don't have a choice.

**Would you prefer to marry your cousin or someone far from your family and why?**

**What could be your reaction if your parents denied permission to marry man/women of your choice?**

<b>Name: F.A.H.</b> <b>Age: 31years old</b> <b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: Master</b> <b>Children: No</b>	<p>No, I would not like to marry my cousin because we grew up together and my cousin is like my brothers, I cannot marry my brother.</p> <p><b><i>-What could be your reaction if your parents denied permission to marry man/women of your choice?</i></b></p> <p>If my parents refuse, they have the reason; parents look always at future for their children. My parents have to give me a good reason why they refuse the person I want to marry too.</p> <p><b><i>-If your parents give you the reason why they refused, what you will do?</i></b></p> <p>will keep try convincing my parents but the person I want to marry should deserve to fight for. If the reason of refusing the person is right, I will believe my parents and I won't marry the person.</p> <p><b><i>- Do you think your parents have power to choose for you a partner or to refuse a partner you want to marry to?</i></b></p> <p>Yes my parents have power choose for me and to refuse as well, but they should come with a good reason than I can accept their choice.</p>
<b>Name: M.A.B.</b> <b>Age: 25years old</b> <b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: College, business administration</b> <b>Children: No</b>	<p>I don't have any preference, marry a cousin or not, it doesn't make any difference. What the most important is what we want in our relation, understand each other and support each other in a good or bad time.</p> <p><b><i>What could be your reaction if your parents denied permission to marry man/women of your choice?</i></b></p> <p>I.A.S.: My parents will advise me and guide me and if I still insist, they will let me take my decision. I am for sure my parents will respect my decision.</p>
<b>Name: K.A.B.</b> <b>Age:22 years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: Doing a Master</b> <b>Children: No</b>	

<b>Name: S. A.A.</b> <b>Age:30 years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: Future husband to be</b> <b>Education: High school</b> <b>Children: No</b>	<p>Not necessary, I can marry any one from a different tribe as long as is a good tribe.</p> <p><b><i>What could be your reaction if your parents denied permission to marry man/women of your choice?</i></b></p> <p>I am 35 years old and independent, I won't listen to my parents, and I will follow my feelings.</p> <p><b><i>–What about if your parents reject you, they are angry of you and don't want to see you because you marry someone they did not want.</i></b></p> <p>I believe that as parents you will always forgive your children. They will be angry and will reject me at the end they will forgive me. This happened to a lot of my friends, they got marry to someone the family did not like at the end they forgive them.</p> <p>.</p>
<b>Name: S. A. H.</b> <b>Age:20 years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: Bachelor</b> <b>Children</b>	<p>Yes, because we have same family, same financial status and same tradition.</p> <p><b><i>What could be your reaction if your parents denied permission to marry man/women of your choice?</i></b></p> <p>I will keep insist, if they will still refuse, I will give up because parents have marriage experience, they know what is good and what is bad for their children.</p>
<b>Name: K.A.M.</b> <b>Age: 24years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: no</b> <b>Education: High school</b> <b>Children: No</b>	<p>I don't have a choice, my parents choose for me.</p> <p>- <b><i>If you refuse the choice of your parents, what could happen?</i></b></p> <p>I will never be against my parents will.</p>
<b>Name: Z. A.B.</b> <b>Age:29 years old</b> <b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: Master</b> <b>Children: No</b>	<p>I would not like to marry my cousin because we have consanguineous disease in my family and my parents won't want me to marry my cousin.</p>
<b>Name: N. A. K.</b> <b>Age: 27years old</b> <b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: College</b> <b>Children: no</b>	<p>My cousin is like my brother, I won't want marry him but if my parents insist I will do that.</p>
	<p>I will never marry my cousin and if my parents insist, I will take them to court. I am now almost 35 years old. So I have the right to choose who I want.</p>

### Both Married and not married couple

#### 5- Do you think is there a change in marriage before modernization and now?

<b>Name: B. A.R.</b> <b>Age: 30years old</b> <b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: Yes</b> <b>Education: Bachelor degree</b> <b>Children: 2</b>	<p>Yes, there is a change. Before we use to marry only cousins but nowadays, we marry with other tribe but a tribe how has same level as us or higher level.</p> <p>Before my family use to marry only with Ibadhi but now we can marry someone who is Sunny but not Shi'a.</p>
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	<p>Even till now my father still want our family to marry Ibadhi only and not Shi`a or Sunni</p> <p><b>-Why not Shi`a?</b></p> <p>Because Shi`a people are not Arabs, they have different culture, traditions than us. Their practice of Islam is different than Sunni and Ibadhi.</p> <p><b>-What about you? Could you marry your children to an Ibadhi, Sunni or a Shi'a?</b></p> <p>I can marry them to a Sunni or a Ibadhi as long as the person is from a good tribe and as long as he/ she is not a Shi`a.</p>
<p><b>Name: F.A.R.</b>  <b>Age: 34years old</b>  <b>Gender: female</b>  <b>Married: Yes</b>  <b>Education: Bachelor</b>  <b>Children:4</b></p>	<p>Yes, absolutely, very big changes. Nowadays, People meet each other before marriage which in the past was almost impossible. Men and women are now mixt, in their job place, in the parties. People are nowadays well educated and women have their right in society.</p> <p><b>- What I understand is that nowadays, tribe is not that important in the case of marriage?</b></p> <p>Tribe is not that important when you want to choose a spouse. You can meet someone you love and get marry to him/ her.</p> <p><b>- Is your children married? Who choose her partner?</b></p> <p>My daughter is married and she chooses her partner herself.</p> <p>- If your daughter chooses someone not from a good tribe, what could be your reaction?</p> <p>It depends, the family should discuss the issue if it is a good boy or coming from a good family. If the man is from not a good tribe, we will reject the marriage because we still hold our tradition, rules and culture.</p> <p><b>- As I understand, tribe still important in the case of choice of partnership?</b></p> <p>Yes, it is important and it is in our community, coming from a good tribe is very important. It is an honor, pride if you come from a good tribe.</p> <p>Tribalism still plays a big role and still exists nowadays. It will take long time to change and it is in Omani people`s blood.</p>
<p><b>Name: H.A.R.</b>  <b>Age: 35years old</b>  <b>Gender: Male</b>  <b>Married: Yes</b>  <b>Education: Master in education</b>  <b>Children: 2</b></p>	<p>They are many changes nowadays. Tribe does not play a big role in terms of marriage or divorce. Lot of young people went to study abroad, they come back to Oman having different mentality and they marry who they want.</p> <p>There is some exception, for example a friend of mine from Al Hinai tribe and who is 37 years old, her family rejected her marriage because the man was from a different tribe. Her family wants her to marry a man from the same tribe as her or a man from Al Busaidy</p>

	tribe. She is now getting old and is difficult for her to find a spouse because of her exigent parents.
<b>Name: M.A.H.</b> <b>Age: 33years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: yes</b> <b>Education: High school</b> <b>Children:3</b>	Yes, there is a big change. Nowadays you can marry who you want and from any tribe. Even if the sheikh or parents reject the marriage, we have support from our government. Tribal culture still exist, but things have change, people are educated, travel to discover other world, in the city Muscat, we have a lot of foreign, we respect each other and we exchange our culture and tradition. Tribal marriage still exists but it is a family issues and it is depend from family to family.
<b>Name: M.A. H.</b> <b>Age: 34 years old</b> <b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: yes</b> <b>Education: Bachelor of science</b> <b>Children: 3</b>	Yes, there is a big change. Before it use to be tradition marriage. For example a family could choose someone for you without even knowing and you will meet her or him in the wedding day. Nowadays you can marry who you want and from any tribe. People became more educated, they build a relation before getting married.
<b>Name: A. A. B.</b> <b>Age:33 years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: Yes</b> <b>Education: High school</b> <b>Children: 5</b>	Yes. Nowadays, young people get marry and divorce easily. They choose their partner easily, they want just to get marry for a status a marry woman or man, after few month they divorce.
<b>Name: S. A. B.</b> <b>Age: 28 years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: Yes</b> <b>Education: bachelor</b> <b>Children:1</b>	Yes, nowadays some parents respect their children choice on marriage, people do not have to marry from the same tribe.
<b>Name: F. A. H.</b> <b>Age: 31years old</b> <b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: Master</b> <b>Children: No</b>	Yes, nowadays when young people and parents look more at financial issues before marriage. Parents want that their children marry someone who is wealthy enough to marry their children For example, they don't want that their daughter get marry and live with her family in law. They want that their children get marry and have their one living place. Having their one living place avoid family problems. I the past, you could get marry and live with your family in law and share everything in the house. New generation even their parents who faced that experience, want to be independent financially.
<b>Name: M.A. B.</b> <b>Age: 25years old</b> <b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: College, business administration</b>  <b>Children: No</b>	Yes, nowadays some parents look more at financial issues than a tribe before marriage. Parents want that their children marry someone who is wealthy enough to marry their children For example, they don't want that their daughter get marry and live with her family in law. They want that their children get marry and have their one living place. Having their one living place avoid family problems. I the past, you could get marry and live with your family in law and share everything in the house. New generation even their parents who faced that experience, want to be independent financially. Parents

<b>Name: K. A. B.</b> <b>Age:22 years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: Doing a Master</b> <b>Children: No</b>  <b>Name: S. A.A.</b> <b>Age:30 years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: Future husband to be</b> <b>Education: High school</b> <b>Children: No</b> <b>Name: S.A. H.</b> <b>Age:20 years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: Bachelor</b> <b>Children</b> <b>Name: K. A. M</b> <b>Age: 24years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: no</b> <b>Education: High school</b> <b>Children: No</b> <b>Name: Z. AB.</b> <b>Age:29 years old</b> <b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: Master</b> <b>Children: No</b> <b>Name: N. A. K.</b> <b>Age: 27years old</b> <b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: College</b> <b>Children: no</b>	<p>don` reject marriage of their children as before, they accept because they don`t want their daughter get old without getting married.</p>
	<p>Yes, there is a big change. Before it use to be tradition marriage. For example a family could choose someone for you without even knowing and you will meet her or him in the wedding day. Nowadays you can marry who you want and from any tribe. People became more educated, they build a relation before getting married</p>
	<p>Some family did not change their culture. For them modernization is more having materials (job, car, house, travel) but in the marriage issue, still the old culture exist.</p>
	<p>Modernization for some Omani people is outside the family. When family is together nothing change from their culture. Some young people do according what their family wants some of them refuse what their family impose them.</p>
	<p>For me is difficult to see the changes in the marriage. Most of people I know want to marry in a tribal culture, having a spouse who has same tribal status.</p>
	<p>Yes, there is a big change. Nowadays you can marry who you want and from any tribe. Even if the sheikh or parents reject the marriage, we have support from our government. But still some people cannot go against their parents will.</p>
	<p>Yes, nowadays some parents respect their children choice on marriage, people do not have to marry from the same tribe</p>

### **The use of social media (new technology) in partner choice:**

**What is your current use of social media? Which media do you use and how many hours a week?**

<b>Name: B.A. R.</b> <b>Age: 30years old</b> <b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: Yes</b> <b>Education: Bachelor degree</b> <b>Children: 2</b>	<p>Facebook, what`s up and Immo. I don`t count hours, I use them every day.</p>
<b>Name: F. A .R.</b>	<p>I use what`s up chatting with my family and friends, and</p>



<b>Age: 34years old</b> <b>Gender: female</b> <b>Married: Yes</b> <b>Education: Bachelor</b> <b>Children:4</b>	I use Facebook spying on them. I don't know how many hours per week; I use the social media almost every day.
<b>Name: H.A.R.</b> <b>Age: 35years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: Yes</b> <b>Education: Master in education</b> <b>Children: 2</b>	I use what's up chatting with my family and friends, I use the social media almost every day.
<b>Name: M.A.H.</b> <b>Age: 33years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: yes</b> <b>Education: High school</b> <b>Children:3</b>	I use what's up chatting with my family and friends, I use the social media almost every day.
<b>Name: M. A. H.</b> <b>Age: 34 years old</b> <b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: yes</b> <b>Education: Bachelor of science</b> <b>Children: 3</b>	I use what's up chatting with my family and friends. I use it when I am connected to internet
<b>Name: A. A. B.</b> <b>Age:33 years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: Yes</b> <b>Education: High school</b> <b>Children: 5</b>	I use almost all social media and every day
<b>Name: S.A.B.</b> <b>Age: 28 years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: Yes</b> <b>Education: bachelor</b> <b>Children:1</b>	Yes, every day. I use Facebook, what's up, immo.
<b>Name: F. A.H.</b> <b>Age: 31years old</b> <b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: Master</b> <b>Children: No</b>	Don't like social media and I stop being on face book.
<b>Name: M. A.B.</b> <b>Age: 25years old</b> <b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: College, business administration</b>  <b>Children: No</b>	I use social every day
<b>Name: Khalid Al Busaidy</b> <b>Age:22 years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: Doing a Master</b> <b>Children: No</b>	I use what's up, Instagram, Facebook I use social every day
<b>Name: S. A.A.</b> <b>Age:30 years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b>	I don't use any social media, I use only my phone to call my family

<b>Married: Future husband to be</b> <b>Education: High school</b> <b>Children: No</b>	
<b>Name: S.A. H.</b> <b>Age:20 years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: Bachelor</b> <b>Children</b>	I use social media, to call free
<b>Name: K. A.M</b> <b>Age: 24years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: no</b> <b>Education: High school</b> <b>Children: No</b>	I am old fashion; I refuse to use any social media.
<b>Name: Z. A. B.</b> <b>Age:29 years old</b> <b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: Master</b> <b>Children: No</b>	It is cheap for me to use social media as communication
<b>Name: N. A. K.</b> <b>Age: 27years old</b> <b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: College</b> <b>Children: no</b>	

**. How will your family react if you choose a spouse through social media?**

<b>Name: B.A. R.</b> <b>Age: 30years old</b> <b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: Yes</b> <b>Education: Bachelor degree</b> <b>Children: 2</b>	B.A.R.: I won't accept, that because people who meet via social media, they don't look for serious relation. It is a shame in our family to say that I meet someone from a social media. We get use to arrange marriage
<b>Name: F. A. R.</b> <b>Age: 34years old</b> <b>Gender: female</b> <b>Married: Yes</b> <b>Education: Bachelor</b> <b>Children:4</b>	I won't have a problem, I would like to meet that person and investigate him and his back ground. If he is a good man and coming from a good family (tribe), I won't have a problem.
<b>Name: H. A. R.</b> <b>Age: 35years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: Yes</b> <b>Education: Master in education</b> <b>Children: 2</b>	I will be against social media; I will refuse my children idea of meeting someone via social media. All in the social media is not reality but at the end it is their choice.
<b>Name: M. A. H</b> <b>Age: 33years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: yes</b> <b>Education: High school</b> <b>Children:3</b>	This is not acceptable in our society, but young generation use social media to meet a partner which is easy for them. We live in the society where men and women are separated, social media facilitate meeting, communication between man and women. I won't be surprise if one of my children chooses a partner via social media. I will advise them not to do that but at the end it will be their choice.
<b>Name: M. A. H.</b> <b>Age: 34 years old</b>	I don't trust social media; I will give them my opinion

<b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: yes</b> <b>Education: Bachelor of science</b> <b>Children: 3</b>	and my advice. I will convince them to trust the social media.
<b>Name: A. A. B.</b> <b>Age:33 years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: Yes</b> <b>Education: High school</b> <b>Children: 5</b>	<p>My parents will be against but you need to convince your parents. Social media facilitate communication between people. It is easy to know someone personality via social media. It facilitates boys and girls to know each other before marriage. But again young people will go back to their family to get family advice or opinion.</p> <p><b>- How?</b> by looking as his pictures, who are his friends, you can spy the person without that he knows.</p> <p><b>- What about if what he was posting was not true, or he put someone else picture and not his pictures?</b> Than you have a problem.</p>
<b>Name: S. A. B.</b> <b>Age: 28 years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: Yes</b> <b>Education: bachelor</b> <b>Children:1</b>	I don't use social media and I will never like to introduce someone to parents who I meet through social media.
<b>Name: F.A. H.</b> <b>Age: 31years old</b> <b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: Master</b> <b>Children: No</b>	I have very open minded parents, they will accept the person I choose through social media as long as is a good person and coming from a good tribe.
<b>Name: M. A.B.</b> <b>Age: 25years old</b> <b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: College, business administration</b>  <b>Children: No</b>	My parents are old fashioned people, they won't accept the person
<b>Name: K. AB.</b> <b>Age:22 years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: Doing a Master</b> <b>Children: No</b>	It will be a shame if I tell my parents that I meet my future partner via social media. They won't take me serious. introduce my parents
<b>Name: S. A.A.</b> <b>Age:30 years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: Future husband to be</b> <b>Education: High school</b> <b>Children: No</b>	I don't trust social media and I will never introduce someone from social media to my parents.
<b>Name: S. A. .H</b> <b>Age:20 years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: Bachelor</b>	I won't accept that my children marry someone their met through social media

<b>Children</b>	
<b>Name: K.A.M.</b> <b>Age: 24years old</b> <b>Gender: Male</b> <b>Married: no</b> <b>Education: High school</b> <b>Children: No</b>	It is a taboo to say that you meet someone through social media, if I will do that I will hide to my parents, I won't tell them the truth.
<b>Name: Z.A B.</b> <b>Age:29 years old</b> <b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: Master</b> <b>Children: No</b>	My parents are ok, they are more open minded.
<b>Name: N. A.K.</b> <b>Age: 27years old</b> <b>Gender: Female</b> <b>Married: No</b> <b>Education: College</b> <b>Children: no</b>	I have a close friend (secret) from outside Oman. I meet him through social media and we are looking to have a future together. I know that my parents won't take me serious but I don't mind, I will fight to get married to him.