

pational mobility in this period were the increased volume of demand for cheap Arab labour needed in military installations; the rationalization and centralization of recruitment, regardless of village origin; the higher availability of alternative employment possibilities; and the physical separation of the workers from the village (in labour encampments near military bases).

The effects of the new influx of migrant workers on village stratification set the stage for later developments under Jordanian and Israeli rule. The rise in the prices of food during the war contributed to a rise in village standards of living. It also raised the demand for, and cost of, agricultural wage workers. In general, greater inequalities in wealth emerged as some farmers were capable of investing their cash flows in further land consolidation, while others - the landless and those badly affected by price inflation, went under (Taqqu, 1980:274-275). But the evidence is not entirely consistent with this conclusion, since "many labourers could return with relative ease and regularity to seasonal work in their villages [which] placed limits on the differentiation of the rural wage force" (ibid.:273), and the fact that most peasants - having now access to money wages - were able to relieve themselves from the burden of debts to village notables.

The most dramatic change in this second cycle of labour migration was its impact on local political structures. Taqqu proposes that the main impact of peasant migration was a weakening of the traditional elite and the emergence of new alternative "transient stratum" of labour contractors (ibid.:279). The traditional elders were challenged not only because of the loss of their mediatory role in labour recruitment, but also due to the decline of their status in their capacity as landowners, relative to the advantages obtained from wage remuneration. The impact