

The patterns that emerge here show significant differences between urban and rural workers. While rural workers constitute 77.9% of the total labour force working in Israel, they still constitute a higher portion of those workers in construction (82%) or agriculture (83.3%). Conversely, out of the 28,500 workers from villages who work in Israel, about half (48.2%) work in construction, contrasted with their employment in industry (21.5%) or agriculture (12.3%). Industry, on the other hand is the main occupation of urban-based workers (38.7%), while only about a quarter (27.3%) work in construction. Only workers originating from refugee camps show similar patterns to those of village workers.

How does this sectoral distribution of employment in Israel compare with employment inside the West Bank? Unfortunately, in the data that are available, refugee camps are statistically collapsed within the two population groups within which they live. But since employment patterns of refugees in Israel correspond roughly to villagers employed in Israel, the distortion is likely to appear in urban figures only, if at all. Table B (appendix) shows significantly different patterns of sectoral distribution of employment inside the West Bank for both urban and rural workers. In the cities the three primary branches of employment are industry (27.2%), commerce, and public services (each 20.6%). In the rural sector agriculture, as expected, occupies 40% of total employment, followed by construction (24%) and industry (12.9%) (QSAT, IX:2 1979, Table 12, 130). Thus we find that industry (for urban-based workers), and construction (for villagers) are respectively the main areas of common employment for those working on both sides of the Green Line.

What makes employment in construction the mainstay of village workers and in such a manner that it has kept a consistent pace over the