

farmers and, if we exclude the city of Jericho, perhaps 95 percent. Landlessness, and the influx of refugees to the Valley camps gave rise to a complexity of tenure relationships ranging from absentee holdings to agricultural wage labour. In between exists the myriad of sharecropping compacts which gives Jordan Valley agriculture its unique features.

One of those distinguishing features of Valley farming has been the relative absence of rentier landlords and the predominance of "absentee" landlords who supervise their own farms under share-contracts with refugee tenants. The recent introduction of irrigation technology and plastic tunnels to the Valley has further increased the significance and political weight of landlords and commission agents at the expense of tenants who were incapable of investing in the new capital-intensive agriculture. Access to credit became crucial for those sharetenants who wanted to continue their status as "partners" to their landlords. Many submerged to the status of simple croppers.

While similar conditions of tenancy prevailed on both sides of the River, it is important to distinguish variations between the Eastern and Western Valley since their political separation in 1967:

First, access to land in the Eastern Valley is restricted only by the availability of working capital and water resources (within the boundary of maximum landholding regulated by law), hence cash rentals are on the rise at the expense of share-rentals and "mixed" farming. In the Western Valley availability of land to Palestinian farmers is restricted by military seizure of plots and transfer of water resources to Jewish settlements. Here cash rentals is almost absent and sharetenancy is the predominant mode of cropping.