

as each job is finished. As it stands, he currently has 13 regular customers.

Bosses and Contractors

Unlike the industrial sector and agribusiness in Israel, where a semi-proletariat is emerging among village migrant workers, the nature of work in the construction sector lends itself to a hierarchy of bosses and contractors. Such a hierarchy is implicit in the mode of recruitment of Arab workers: an Israeli firm would contract an Israeli businessman to recruit the necessary number of workers to finish the job. He in turn would hire a number of Arab sub-contractors (their number depending on the size and complexity of the project) who undertake the recruitment directly. Among the sub-contractors one observes an overlap in the identity of boss, mu'alleem, and worker, since most sub-contractors work with their team of recruits. Normally, those are composed of family members, relatives and other mates. Almost always they come from the same village, and rarely do Jewish and Arab workers work together on the same assignment. Ahmad, 23, describes this process thus:

"The company gives the assignment to a Jewish contractor, he hands it over to an Arab (sub)-contractor, (my brother Sa'id), who in turn employs seven Arab workers. The Jewish contractor has no contact with us. He deals only with my brother, while we work with Sa'id."

Although at work there are some differences between such sub-contractors and workers in the degree of skill, age, their ability to make contacts and their command of the Hebrew language, these differences are not crucial since they can be acquired by many workers in a relatively short time, and -- as we shall see -- there is a continuous mobility of workers into the position of sub-contractors, and vice versa. The