

Equally important from the point of view of the Arab worker, is the more relaxed atmosphere at work in Israeli sites. Although in the subcontracting system described above, the number of working hours per day in Israel are not shorter, daily supervision over the workers is in the hands of the Arab mu'alleem, who is mostly one of their work mates; while in the West Bank, workers are subjected to the continued scrutiny of the owner of property or, in the case of bigger enterprises, of the building contractor himself. In addition, work in major cities like Tel Aviv has the added benefit of providing access to a variety of entertainment facilities which do not exist in the West Bank, including the availability of Jewish prostitutes.

While Arab workers in the construction sector have numerous contacts with Jewish contractors, they rarely work with Jewish workers on the same site. In fact most of their contacts, both in going to work and in the construction site, happen to be with people from their own village, and often from their own clan. In villages around Ras el-Tin (e.g. Deir es-Sudani, Beitillo, Deir Ghassaneh, Deir 'Ammar, 'Abud), buses transport villagers to their work site in Israel and bring them back in the evening, thus reinforcing this village identity. When they do have contacts with Jewish workers, politics are rarely discussed; social interaction is amiable but is kept at a minimum. On the Israeli side the villager's contact is mostly with the contractor, the boss, the police, the prostitutes and the border guard. Despite his deep penetration into the Israeli economy and his workable command of Hebrew, the Arab peasant-worker's conception of Jewish society remains that of a closed and undifferentiated mass.