

Thus the release of household labour is dependent on the relationship between five crucial variables: the size of the land; the number of adult sons in the household; the annual cycle of olives (masiah/shalatuneh) and the degree of attraction of wage labour outside the village. To this we must add, for medium and big landlords, the cost of hiring labour during the picking and pressing period. It is obvious by now that with the (relatively) high wages paid to workers in Israel (and Jordan since 1974) the last variable has become the decisive factor determining allocation of household labour, while land fragmentation (due to inheritance) and negative attitudes to agricultural work (all workers interviewed, without exception, expressed disdain towards work on the land) have become contributing factors to the marginalization and neglect of the family farm.

Although we subsumed migration (above) under work opportunities outside the village, it should be treated in fact as a separate factor affecting the allocation of household labour. Migration involves the physical absence of able-bodied sons, and, unlike work in Israel, it cannot be tapped occasionally for periodical help in the family farm. Moreover, money sent from abroad often becomes the most crucial variable in alienating family members from their agricultural land, since the sums sent allow the remaining members to become village entrepreneurs, or in some cases, to engage in businesses in the district centre.<sup>10</sup>

Nevertheless, when all those factors are considered, individual initiative plays an important role in improving the family land. To illustrate this, we will cite the example of Husam and Mustafa. Their fathers were brothers who inherited 20 dunums from their father during Jordanian rule. The two brothers worked their land jointly, and continued to work in neighbouring fields as well as in Ramallah as hired labourers (ujara). When Mustafa and his brothers grew up enough to help, their