

The Evolution of the Structure of Employment and Job Quality in Jordan: 2010-2025

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Abstract

This paper examines the evolution of the structure of employment and job quality in Jordan over the period 2010 to 2025 using data from three waves of the Jordan Labor Market Panel Survey conducted in 2010, 2016 and 2025. Jordan's economy has experienced relatively slow growth in the aftermath of the pandemic, resulting in limited employment growth and declining employment rates, at least for Jordanians. Nevertheless, private wage employment has been growing faster than overall employment in the 2016-25 period, mostly at the expense of own-account work. However, a concerning trend is the growth of informal wage employment outside of establishments – a highly precarious form of employment—among poor and less educated Jordanian men. Private sector employment growth has been concentrated among small and medium establishments, at the expense of micro and large establishments. From an industry perspective, there has been rapid growth in accommodation and food service (tourism), information and communication technology, and utilities, although these sectors remain small relative to total employment. Despite the slow growth in employment, there has been an intensification of work for those who are employed with a substantial increase in the proportion of workers working excessive hours. With regard to job quality, the employment of Jordanians in the private sector is becoming increasingly formal, with substantial success in extending social security coverage to waged workers. This formalization of employment in the private sector was accompanied by other improvements in working conditions for Jordanians, including a reduction in employment irregularity, increased eligibility for paid vacations and sick leave, and increased employer-provided health insurance. Subjective measures of job satisfaction indicate a growing share of workers in Jordan say that they are fully satisfied with their employment situation.

Keywords: Employment structure, employment quality, job creation, labor market, Jordan

JEL Classifications: E24, J21, J23, N35

ملخص

تتناول هذه الورقة تطور هيكل التشغيل وجودة الوظائف في الأردن خلال الفترة من 2010 إلى 2025 باستخدام بيانات من ثلاث موجات من المسح التتبعي لسوق العمل في الأردن الذي أجري في الأعوام 2010 و2016 و2025. وشهد الاقتصاد الأردني نمواً بطيئاً نسبياً في أعقاب الوباء، مما أدى إلى نمو محدود في العمالة وانخفاض معدلات التشغيل، على الأقل بالنسبة للأردنيين. ومع ذلك، كان نمو العمالة بأجر في القطاع الخاص أسرع من نمو العمالة الإجمالية في الفترة 2016-2025، وذلك في الغالب على حساب العمل للحساب الخاص. ومع ذلك، فإن الاتجاه المثير للقلق هو نمو العمالة غير الرسمية بأجر خارج المنشآت - وهو شكل من أشكال العمالة غير المستقرة للغاية - بين الرجال الأردنيين الفقراء والأقل تعليماً. وتركز نمو العمالة في القطاع الخاص بين المنشآت الصغيرة والمتوسطة، على حساب المنشآت الصغيرة والكبيرة. ومن منظور الصناعة، شهدنا نمواً سريعاً في قطاعات الإقامة وخدمات الأغذية (السياحة)، وتكنولوجيا المعلومات والاتصالات، والمرافق، على الرغم من أن هذه القطاعات لا تزال صغيرة نسبياً مقارنة بإجمالي العمالة. وعلى الرغم من بطء نمو العمالة، فقد تم تكثيف العمل للعاملين مع زيادة كبيرة في نسبة العاملين الذين يعملون لساعات طويلة. وفيما يتعلق بجودة الوظائف، أصبح تشغيل الأردنيين في القطاع الخاص رسمياً بشكل متزايد، مع تحقيق نجاح كبير في توسيع نطاق تغطية الضمان الاجتماعي ليشمل العاملين بأجر. ورافق هذا إضفاء الطابع الرسمي على التشغيل في القطاع الخاص تحسينات أخرى في ظروف العمل للأردنيين، بما في ذلك الحد من عدم انتظام التشغيل، وزيادة الأهلية للحصول على إجازات مدفوعة الأجر وإجازات مرضية، وزيادة التأمين الصحي الذي يقدمه صاحب العمل. تشير المقاييس الذاتية للرضا الوظيفي إلى أن نسبة متزايدة من العاملين في الأردن يقولون إنهم راضون تماماً عن وضعهم الوظيفي.

1. Introduction

The Jordanian economy has been buffeted by large external shocks since the Arab Spring uprisings of 2011 and has, as a result, been struggling to maintain sufficiently high growth rates to provide enough employment for its growing population. These shocks include the disruption of trade, investment, and tourism flows, the Syrian civil war and the concomitant Syrian refugee influx that Jordan had to accommodate, followed by the pandemic and its huge economic disruptions, and the war in Gaza (World Bank 2024). In the decade preceding the pandemic (2010-2019), GDP growth averaged a modest 2.4% per annum (p.a.), which compares to 6.9% p.a. in the preceding decade (2000 to 2009). This slowdown in growth occurred a time of accelerating population growth with the large inflows of Syrian refugees post-2012. Population growth averaged 5.4% p.a. in the 2010-2019 decade, up from 3.5% p.a. in the previous decade (Department of Statistics, Jordan 2025b). Although GDP growth recovered somewhat after the pandemic, averaging 2.9% p.a., and population growth slowed to 2% p.a., the growth was still not sufficient to raise employment rates. In fact, employment rates among Jordanians 15 and older, already among the lowest in the world, declined steadily from 35% in 2010 to 26% in 2020, only to remain stagnant at that level until 2025 (Department of Statistics, Jordan 2025a).

We rely in this analysis primarily on the Jordan Labor Market Panel Survey (JLMPS) carried out in 2010, 2016 and 2025 to ascertain the developments in the structure of employment and job quality in Jordan during this period. This chapter updates and complements a chapter that analyzed the period from 2010 to 2016 using the same data (Assaad and Salemi 2019). An analysis of the evolution of the major labor market aggregates, such as labor force participation, employment and unemployment rates for the period 2010 to 2025 is presented in C. Krafft et al. (Forthcoming).

Notwithstanding the disappointing trajectory of overall employment alluded to above, we find that the employment of Jordanians is generally becoming more formal and this more stable and of better quality. However, there are important exceptions to this trend. A growing proportion of poorer and less educated Jordanians are finding themselves in increasingly precarious forms of employment, such as informal wage employment outside of establishments, which in the past used to be limited to non-Jordanians. Within establishments, the share of employment contracted at the two ends of the size scale, namely micro and large establishments, and expanded substantially for small and medium establishments. The two most rapidly expanding economic sectors in terms of employment were accommodation and food services, associated with the recovery in tourism, and in information and communication. Other growing sectors include utilities, mining and manufacturing, and personal services.

Prior work has established that there are two primary axes of segmentation that fundamentally shape labor market outcomes in Jordan, namely sex and nationality (Assaad and Salemi 2019; Assaad 2014). Accordingly, we disaggregate all our analyses along these dimensions. Jordanian women's

participation in employment is not only low, but also highly selective by educational level, resulting in the fact that much of women's employment in Jordan is dominated by professionals and other white collar workers, many of whom are located in the public sector. Non-Jordanians, on the other hand, continuing to be almost exclusively in informal and often precarious forms of employment. While non-Jordanians were not properly captured by official employment statistics prior to 2017 and were probably understated in the 2010 wave of the JLMPS, we present statistics on the structure of Jordanian and non-Jordanian employment in all three years. Population estimates of the number of non-Jordanians workers in Jordan suffer from a degree of uncertainty given the fluidity of this population. Besides the incomplete inclusion of non-Jordanians in the 2010 wave of the JLMPS, the data collection for the 2025 wave occurred at a time when many Syrians in Jordan were returning to Syria, resulting in some uncertainty as to the size of the non-Jordanian population at that time. We therefore refrain from calculating any employment growth rates for non-Jordanians and limit these calculations to Jordanians.

We begin by examining in Section 2 the relationship between economic growth and employment in Jordan. In Section 3, we analyze the evolution of the structure of employment in Jordan along various dimensions, including type of employment, employment in and out of establishments and by size of establishment, sector of economic activity, and occupational group. Section 4 examines the evolution of job quality among Jordanians, including the hours of work, regularity, coverage by social security, access to paid vacations and sick leave, and access to health insurance. In section 5 we examine subjective measures of worker satisfaction with different aspects of their jobs, and Section 6 concludes.

2. Economic growth and employment since 2010

The Jordanian economy experienced relatively slow economic growth since 2010, with gradually declining employment rates and rising unemployment rates. The period since 2010 can be usefully sub-divided into three sub-periods: 2010-2017, a period dominated the Syrian refugee influx, 2018-2021, a period of slowing growth followed by the large economic contraction of the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery from it, and 2022-2025, the post-pandemic period, characterized by a series of external shocks. Because of the need for annual employment data to assess the relationship between employment and economic growth, we rely in this section on data from the official Employment and Unemployment Survey (Department of Statistics, Jordan 2025a) rather than the Jordan Labor Market Panel Survey, which is the primary source for the subsequent analysis.

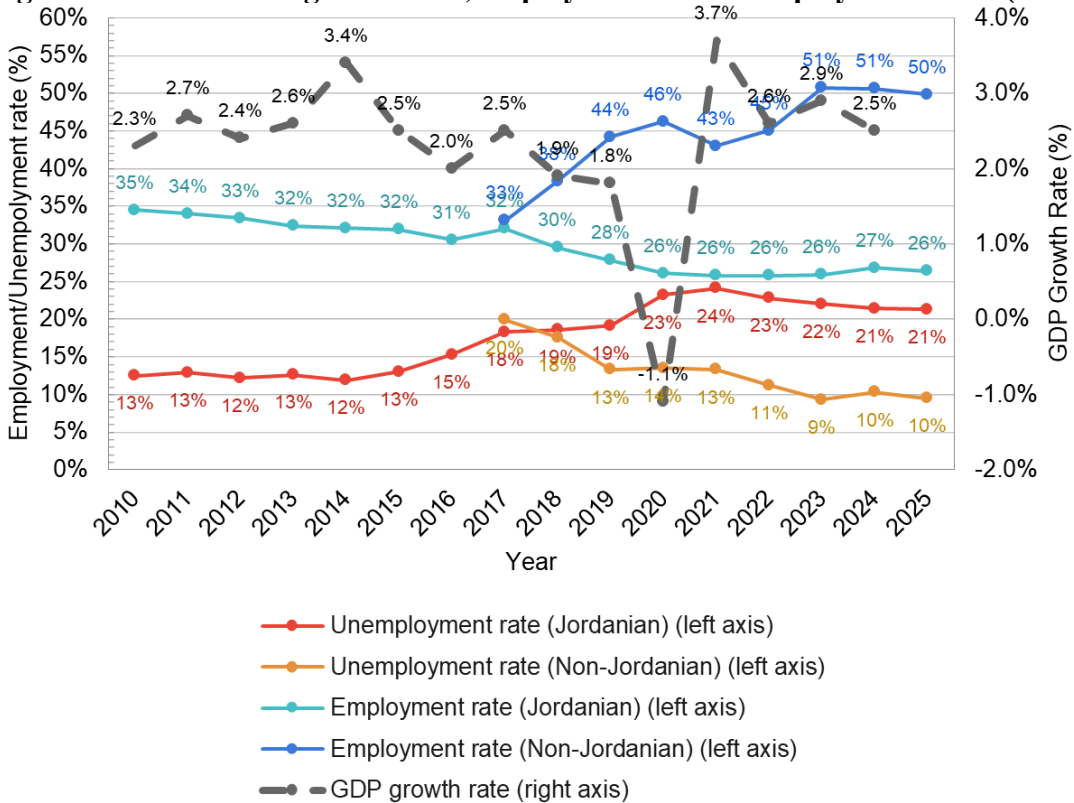
As shown in Figure 1, GDP growth rates hovered around 2.5% per annum (p.a.) in the first sub-period (2010-2017); a time when the influx of Syrian refugees led to a surging population growth at an average of 6% p.a. (Department of Statistics, Jordan 2025b). While there are no official employment statistics prior to 2017 for non-Jordanians, the employment-to-population ratio (or employment rate for short) of the Jordanian population 15 and older declined steadily from just under

35% in 2010 to 31% in 2016, only to recover slightly to 32% in 2017 (Figure 1). Despite the steady decline in employment rates, the unemployment rate for Jordanians remained steady at about 13% from 2010 to 2015 and then climbed sharply to 18% by 2017.

The second sub-period, 2018 to 2021, was characterized by slowing economic growth even before the COVID-19 pandemic hit. As shown in Figure 1, growth had already slowed to 1.8-1.9% p.a. before the pandemic slowdown, which led to a 1.1% contraction in GDP followed by a modest recovery in 2021. This sub-period was characterized by an acceleration in the decline of the employment rate of Jordanians, which fell to 26% in 2021, and has since not recovered. After an initial slowdown in the growth of the Jordanian unemployment rate, it surged to 23% during the pandemic and continue to increase through 2021 despite the recovery in GDP growth. Despite the slowing economy and the onset of the pandemic, employment rates of non-Jordanians rose substantially, and their unemployment rates fell, a possible indication of the growing integration of Syrian refugees in the Jordanian economy and labor market. After a slight dip in 2021, the employment rate of non-Jordanians continued to increase, reaching 51% in 2023 and remaining at this elevated level through 2025. Similarly, their unemployment rate declined from 2021 to 2023 and then stabilized at around 10% through 2025.

The final sub-period, 2022-2025 is one of relative stability, but at depressed levels for both GDP growth and employment. As shown in Figure 1, GDP growth returned to the pre-2017 level, averaging about 2.7% p.a., the employment rate for Jordanians stagnated at roughly the level at which it had bottomed out in 2021 (26%), and their unemployment rate declined slowly from the peak of 24% reached in 2021 to only 21% in 2025, still well above its pre-pandemic level of 19%. With the reversal of refugee inflows, Jordan's population growth slowed during this period relative to the earlier period but still averaged 2% p.a. through the end of 2024 (Department of Statistics, Jordan 2025b).

Figure 1. Annual GDP growth rate, employment and unemployment rates (2010-2024)



Source: GDP Growth Rate from World Bank Development Indicators (World Bank 2026), Employment and unemployment rates are from the Employment and Unemployment survey (Department of Statistics, Jordan 2025a).

Note: Employment and unemployment rates for non-Jordanians are not available prior to 2017.

According to the JLMPS, employment growth among Jordanians accelerated slightly in recent years from 0.8% p.a. in 2010-16 to 1.9% p.a. in 2016/25 (Figure 3). Nonetheless, it remains well below the population growth rate of 2% p.a. during this period, thus the slowly declining employment rates observed above.

3. The Evolution of the structure of employment along various dimensions

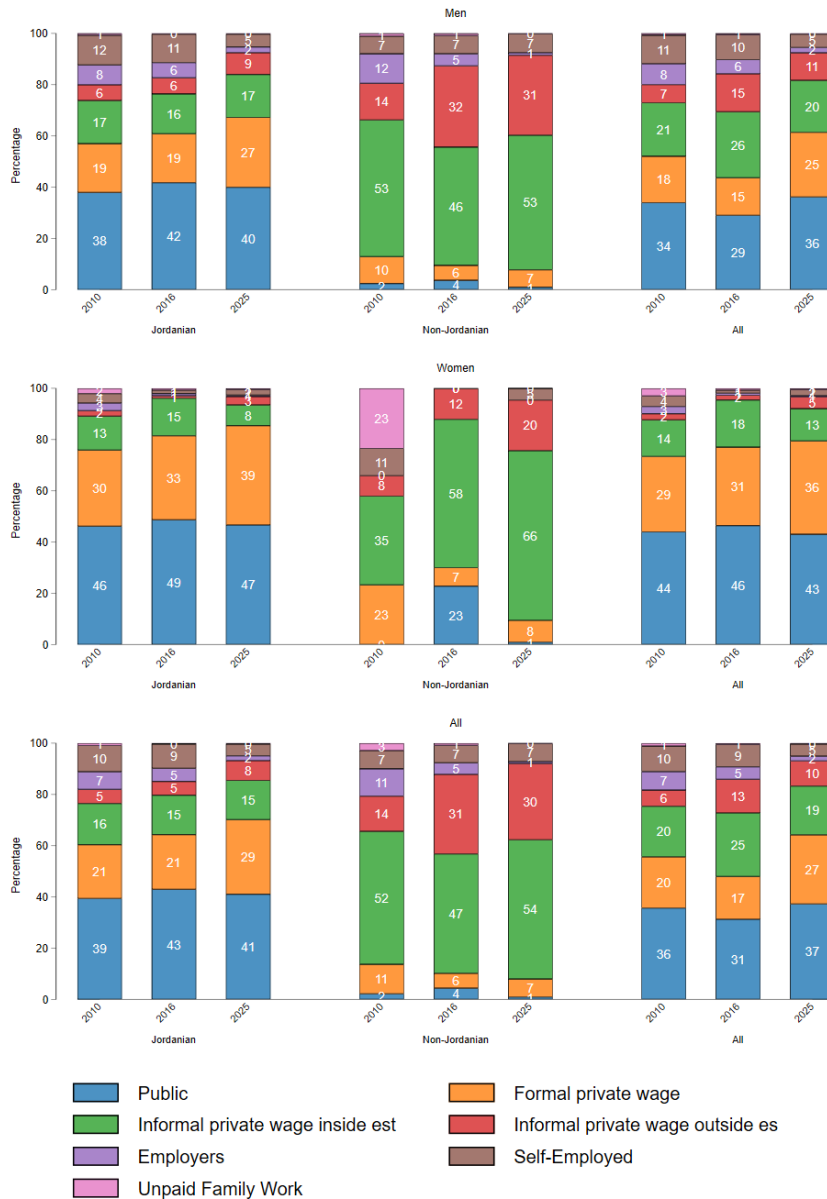
3.1. The structure of employment by type of employment, nationality and sex

Because the Jordanian labor market is highly segmented along gender and nationality lines, we will generally present results disaggregated along these two dimensions. We begin with an analysis of the structure of employment by type of employment, which takes into account the institutional sector, the employment status of workers (e.g. wage, own account, etc.), the formality of employment, and whether it takes place inside fixed establishments or outside establishments. We thus define seven employment types as follows: (i) public, which includes workers in government and state-owned enterprise, (ii) formal private wage, which includes wage workers in private

enterprise who are hired formally, meaning that they benefit from social security coverage, (iii) informal private wage inside establishments, which includes private wage workers hired informally (without social security coverage) who work inside fixed establishments, (iv) informal private wage outside establishments, which includes private wage workers hired informally (without social security coverage) who work outside fixed establishments, (v) employers, meaning own-account workers who hire others, (vi) self-employed, meaning own account workers who do not hire others, (vii) unpaid family workers, meaning workers who work in their own family's enterprises without pay.

Public-sector employment has remained a major source of work in Jordan, accounting for 37% of total employment. However, public sector employment is almost exclusively limited to Jordanians, with 41% of Jordanians working for the public sector and fewer than 1% of non-Jordanians in 2025. As shown in Figure 2, Jordanian women are even more heavily reliant on public sector work than Jordanian men, with 47% of them employed in the public sector in 2025. The share of the public sector in the employment of Jordanians has increased from 2010 to 2016 but then declined slightly from 2016 to 2025. In fact, as shown in Figure 3, public employment among Jordanians grew at 1.4% p.a. from 2016 to 2025, just below the overall rate of growth of employment of 1.9% p.a. This is a substantial deceleration from the 2.1% p.a. growth rate it recorded from 2010 to 2016.

Figure 2. Structure of employment by type of employment, nationality and sex (2010, 2016, 2025)



Source: Authors calculations using data from the Jordan Labor Market Panel Survey (OAMDI 2026).

Note: the number of non-Jordanian women in the sample in 2010 is too limited to make any reliable inferences.

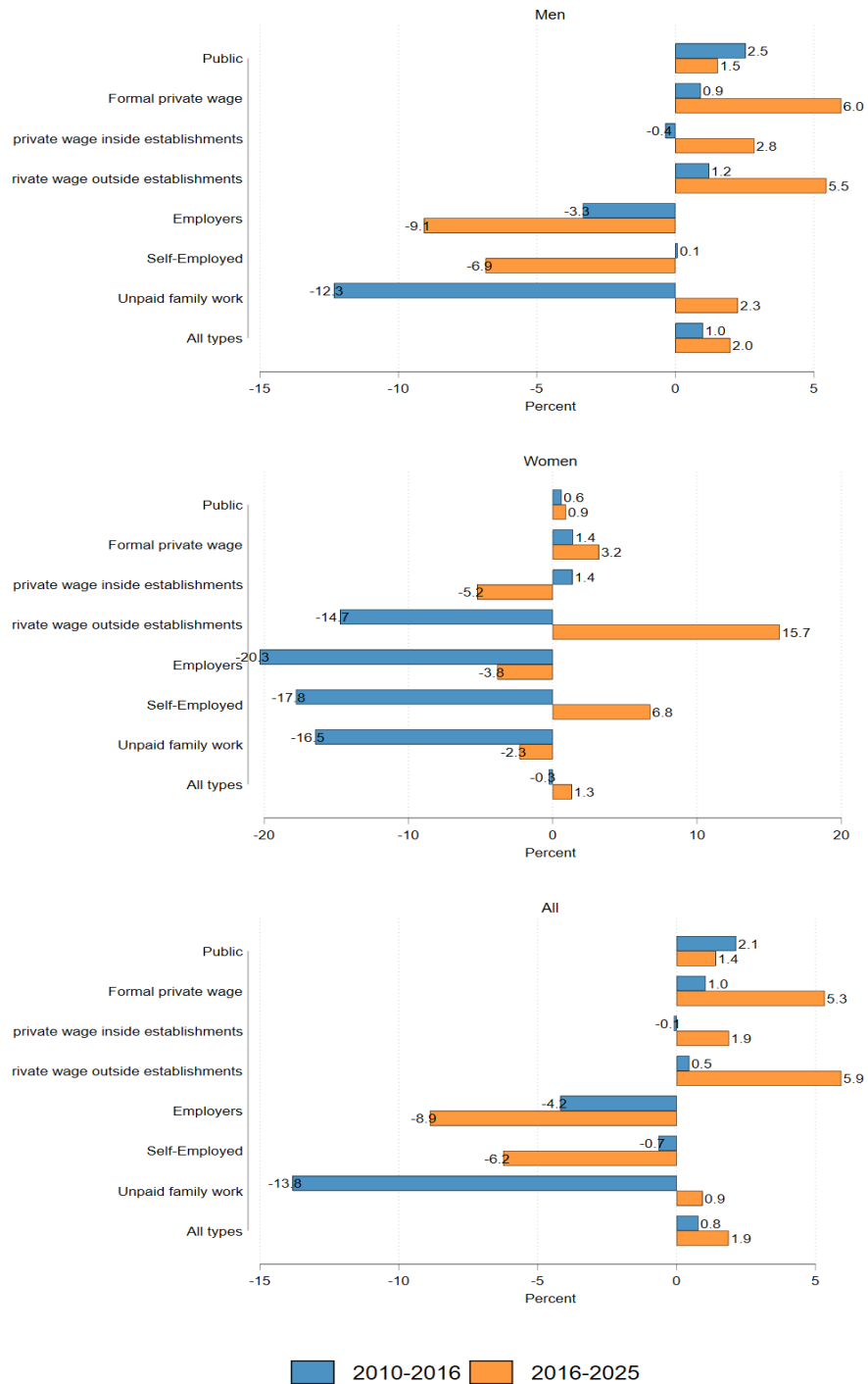
Similarly to public sector employment, formal employment in the private sector is also mostly limited to Jordanian citizens, with 29% of Jordanians in such employment compared to only 7% of non-Jordanians in 2025 (Figure 2). Thus, almost 70% of Jordanians are formally employed for wages in the public or private sectors, compared to only 8% of non-Jordanians. This proportion is even higher among Jordanian women, for whom 86% of employment is formal wage employment.

The share of formal private-wage employment declined from 2010 to 2016, mostly a result of the influx of large numbers of non-Jordanians into the Jordanian labor market, who are primarily employed informally. However, it recovered substantially from 2016 to 2025 as the influx of non-Jordanians slowed, going from 17% to 27% of overall employment. Among Jordanians, the share of formal private employment was stable from 2010 to 2016 but then surged from 21% to 29% from 2016 to 2025. The increase from 2016 to 2025 was primarily among Jordanian men, who saw their formal private sector share increase from 19% to 27%, whereas the share for women increased by from 33% to 39%. As shown in Figure 3, the growth of formal private wage employment among Jordanians accelerated appreciably from 2010/16 to 2016/25, going from 1.0% p.a. to 5.3% p.a. and this is mostly due to its acceleration among men.

The acceleration of the growth of private wage employment among Jordanians seems to have come at least partially at the expense of the share of informal private wage employment inside establishments, which suggests that efforts to formalize private wage employment may have borne some fruit in the 2016-2025 period. The share of informal private-wage employment inside establishments among Jordanians declined slightly from 16% in 2010 to 15% in 2016 and remained stable at that level through 2025. This share has dropped even more among Jordanian women. This form of employment represents more than half of employment for non-Jordanians; a share that has remained broadly stable over time.

Another even more precarious form of informal wage employment is informal wage employment outside establishments. This is a form of employment that Jordanians appear to avoid, as it only represents 8% of total Jordanian employment. Given its exposure to the public space, it is a form of employment that Jordanian women avoid almost entirely. However, it is a form of employment that non-Jordanians men and women must heavily rely on, with almost 30% of them engaged in such employment (31% of men and 20% of women). In a sign of increased precariousness of employment, the growth of informal employment outside establishments has accelerated among Jordanians from 0.5% p.a. in 2010/16 to 5.9% p.a. in 2016/25 as its share of Jordanian employment went from 5% in 2016 to 8% in 2025.

Figure 3. Average annual employment growth rate by type of employment and sex for Jordanians (2010–2016, 2016–2025)



Source: Authors calculations using data from the Jordan Labor Market Panel Survey (OAMDI 2026).

Note: We refrain from presenting growth rates of employment for non-Jordanians given the uncertainty associated with the number of non-Jordanians in Jordan.

The final three types of employment, employers, self-employed workers, and unpaid family workers are quite rare in Jordan and increasingly so over time. They made up only 7% of overall employment in 2025, down from 18% in 2010 and 14% in 2016. They are equally limited among Jordanians and non-Jordanians, and even more so among women than among men. The decline of non-wage employment among Jordanians is further indicated by the mostly negative growth rates for these types of employment shown in Figure 3.

To summarize, the structure of employment in Jordan appears to be highly bifurcated by nationality, with Jordanians increasingly concentrated in formal public and private wage employment and non-Jordanians highly concentrated in informal private wage employment, both inside and outside fixed establishments. Although formal private wage employment appears quite dynamic for Jordanians, growing at over 5% p.a., the public sector is a slowing source of new jobs, growing at about 1.4% p.a. in recent years. Some of the growth of formal private employment for Jordanians comes from the formalization of informal jobs, but some also comes from the decline in own-account work. One worrisome note is the acceleration in the growth informal private wage employment outside establishments for Jordanians, a highly precarious form of employment.

3.2. The structure of employment by type of employment and socioeconomic status for Jordanians

We now investigate the relationship between type of employment and socioeconomic status in more detail, limiting our analysis to the Jordanian population. We have already established that most non-Jordanians, who are likely concentrated at the bottom of the socioeconomic distribution, are predominantly engaged in informal types of employment. We measure socioeconomic status in two main ways, first by household wealth and second by educational attainment. Household wealth is based on an index summarizing household ownership of durable goods and housing quantity and quality.³ The household wealth index is then subdivided into five quintiles going from the poorest 20% of households to the richest 20%. Education is coded into 5 categories: (i) less than basic, which includes illiterate, read and write and primary, (ii) basic, which includes 10 years of basic education or 9 years of preparatory education (under the old system), (iii) secondary, which refers to the receipt of the secondary diploma after 12 years of education, (iv) post-secondary, which includes two-year community college degrees, and (v) university or more, which includes bachelor and graduate degrees.

As shown in Figure 4, it is clear that Jordanian workers across the socioeconomic spectrum are strongly reliant on public sector employment. Among male workers, the share of public sector employment has been gradually falling among the poorest. It is being replaced in part by private

³ The index is calculated using factor analysis using a method proposed by Filmert and Pritchett (2001). It is then standardized to have mean zero and units of standard deviations, separately for every round of the survey.

formal wage employment, but also by informal wage employment outside establishments, which increased its share among these workers from 10% in 2016 to 16% in 2025. This trend underscores the growing vulnerability of poor Jordanian workers, who may be increasingly competing with non-Jordanians for these highly precarious jobs.

Another notable trend among male Jordanian workers seen in Figure 4 is the fact that formal private wage employment has increased its share across the socioeconomic spectrum, suggesting that efforts to extend social security coverage to Jordanians workers in the private sector have been fairly inclusive. We also note the large increase in the share of male workers in the highest wealth quintile who have entered public sector and formal private sector employment, mostly at the expense of the share of own account work.

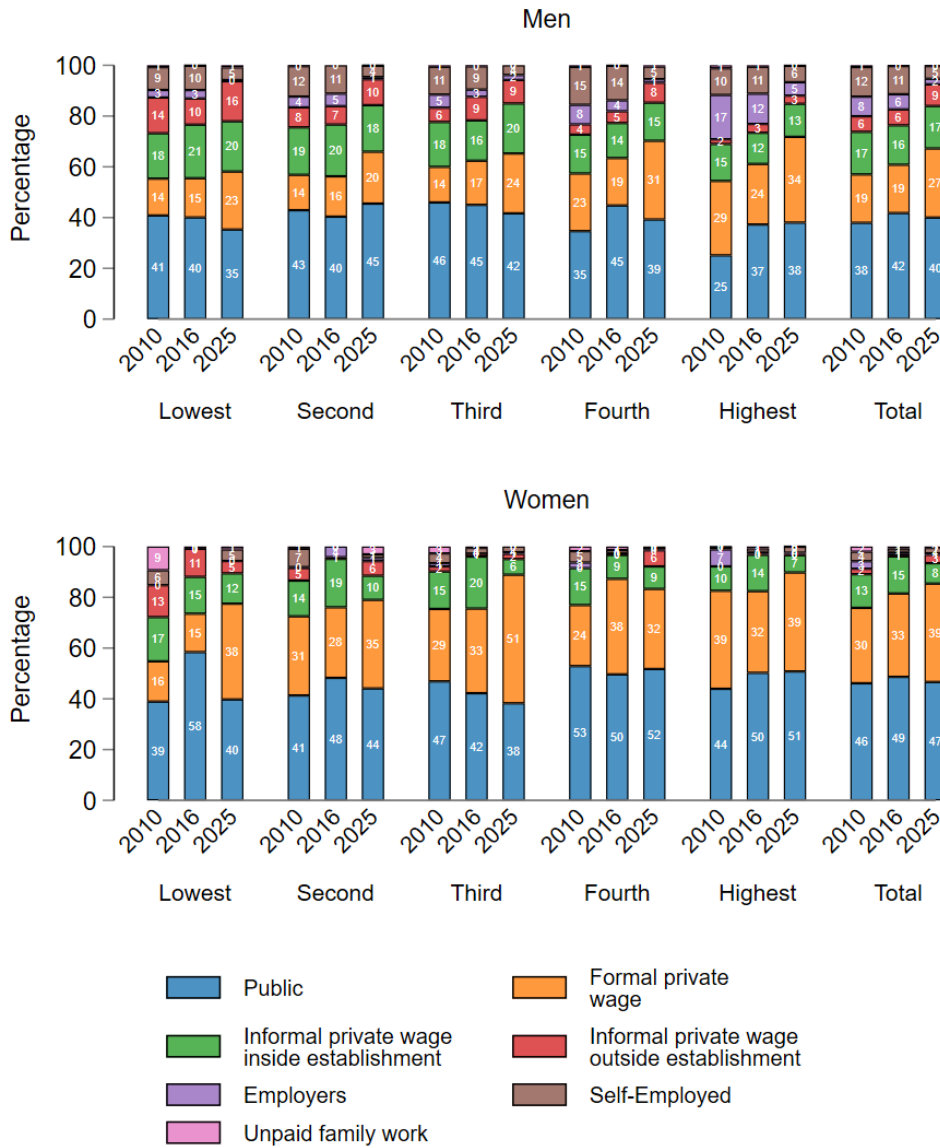
Among Jordanian women, the reliance on public sector work also spans the socioeconomic distribution but is lowest for women in the bottom three quintiles who appear to rely more on formal private sector wage work. The increase in such work is particularly notable for women in the middle of the wealth distribution. Like their male counterparts, women at the top of the wealth distribution are relying increasingly on public sector work and formal private wage work.

An examination of the evolution of the employment structure by levels of educational attainment, shown in Figure 5, reveals that even the lowest educational groups in Jordan, those without a basic schooling and those with just a basic certificate are increasing their share in both public and private formal employment, but they are also the groups that, at least among men, is increasing its involvement in informal wage work outside establishments. In fact, this highly precarious form of employment is making up a fifth of all employment for Jordanian men with less than basic education in 2025, up from 11% in 2016.

Besides the increase in public and formal private wage employment among less educated Jordanian women, there is also a noticeable increase in the share of informal wage employment outside establishments in 2025, as is the case for their male counterparts. Although Jordanian university-educated women had been very strongly concentrated in public sector employment, this is now giving way to more formal private wage employment, whose share has increased from 34% in 2016 to 40% in 2025.

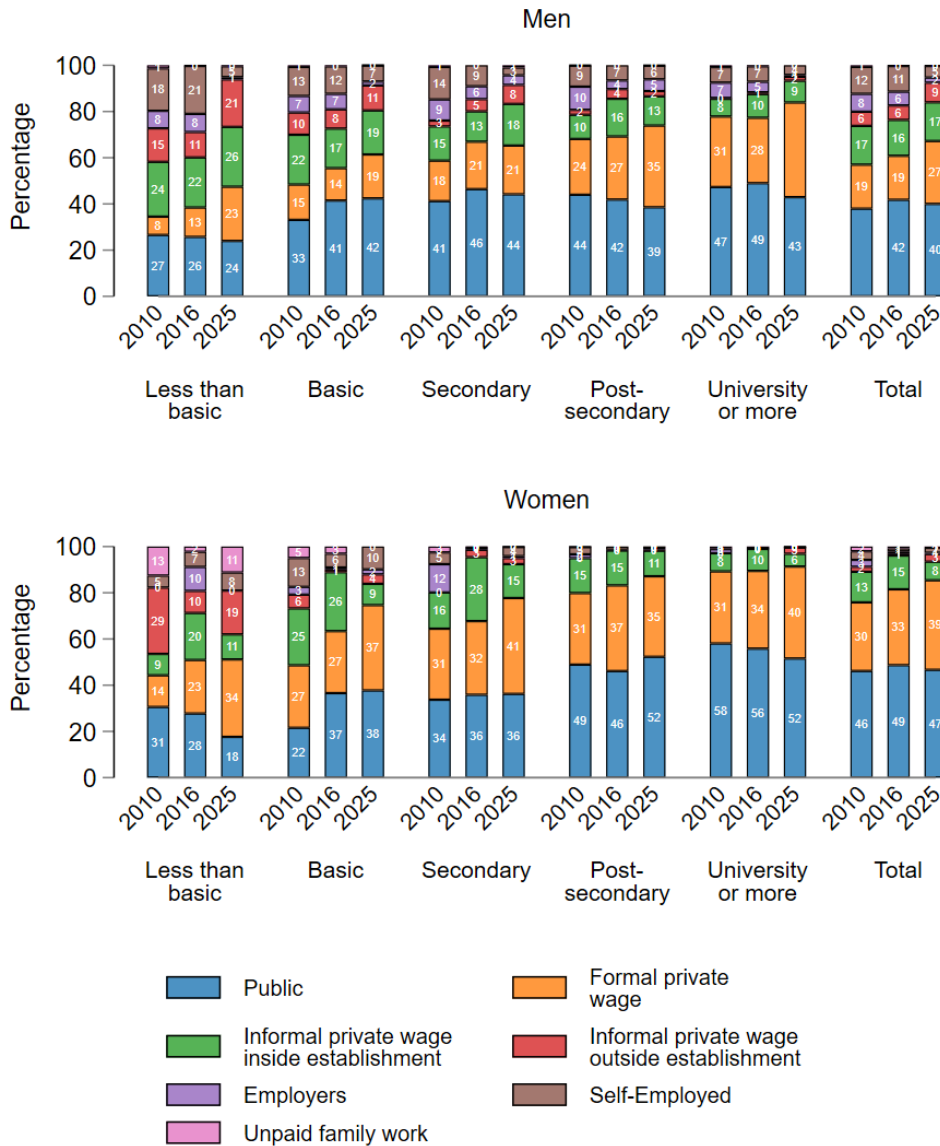
Taken together, the results suggest that employment structure for Jordanians is becoming less polarized across the educational spectrum from 2010 to 2025. The share of public sector employment is converging, rising for less educated groups and falling for the more educated, and the share of formal private wage employment is rising across the board. The main worrisome trend is the increase in precarious forms of employment among the least educated males.

Figure 4. Structure of employment by type of employment, household wealth quintile, and sex, Jordanians only (2010, 2016, 2025)



Source: Authors calculations using data from the Jordan Labor Market Panel Survey (OAMDI 2026).

Figure 5. Structure of employment by type of employment, educational attainment, and sex, Jordanians only (2010, 2016, 2025)



Source: Authors calculations using data from the Jordan Labor Market Panel Survey (OAMDI 2026).

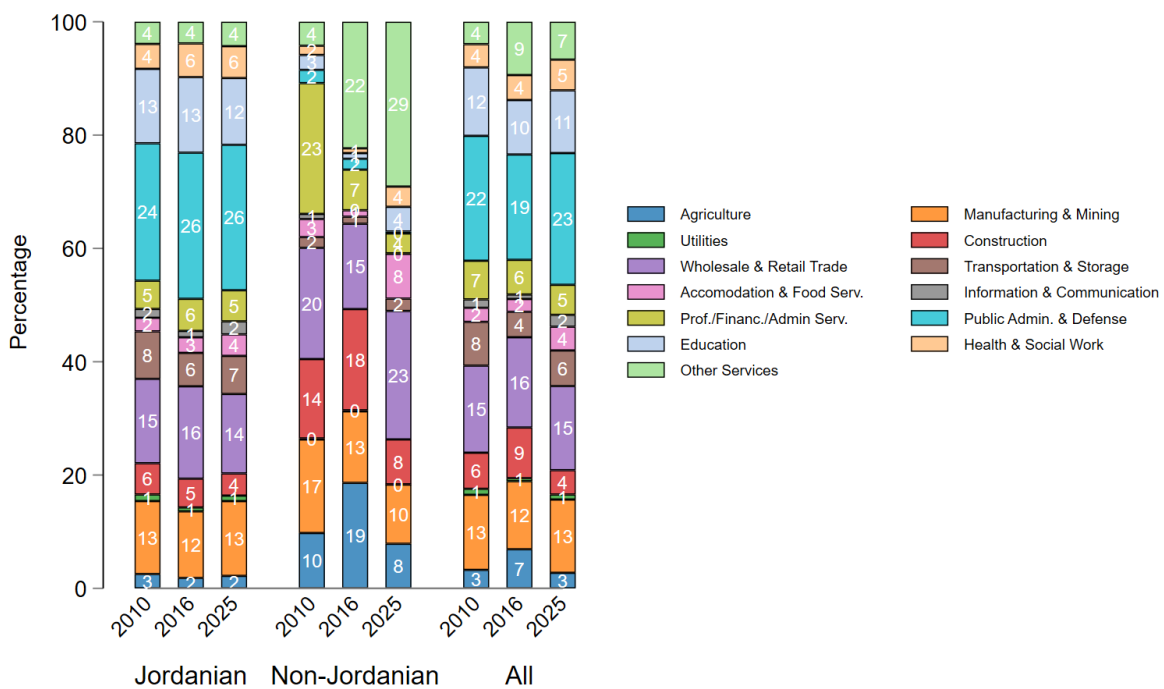
3.3. The structure of employment by economic activity

Reflecting the dominance of services in the Jordanian economy, Jordan’s employment structure is heavily and increasingly weighted toward the services sectors. As shown in Figure 6, only 21% of the employment in Jordan in 2025 was in goods producing sectors, including 3% in agriculture, 13% in manufacturing and mining, 1% in utilities, and 4% in construction. This share had increased from 23% in 2010 to 29% in 2016, but dropped in 2025, primarily as a result of a drop in the share of

agriculture and construction, two sectors that are dominated by non-Jordanian workers. Among Jordanians, the share of goods producing sectors has been stable at about 20%.

The largest employment sector for Jordanians has been public administration and defense, who share has remained fairly stable over time, followed by wholesale and retail trade. Although still relatively small in size, the accommodation and food service sector has been growing rapidly in share, going from 2% to 4% of Jordanian employment from 2010 to 2025.

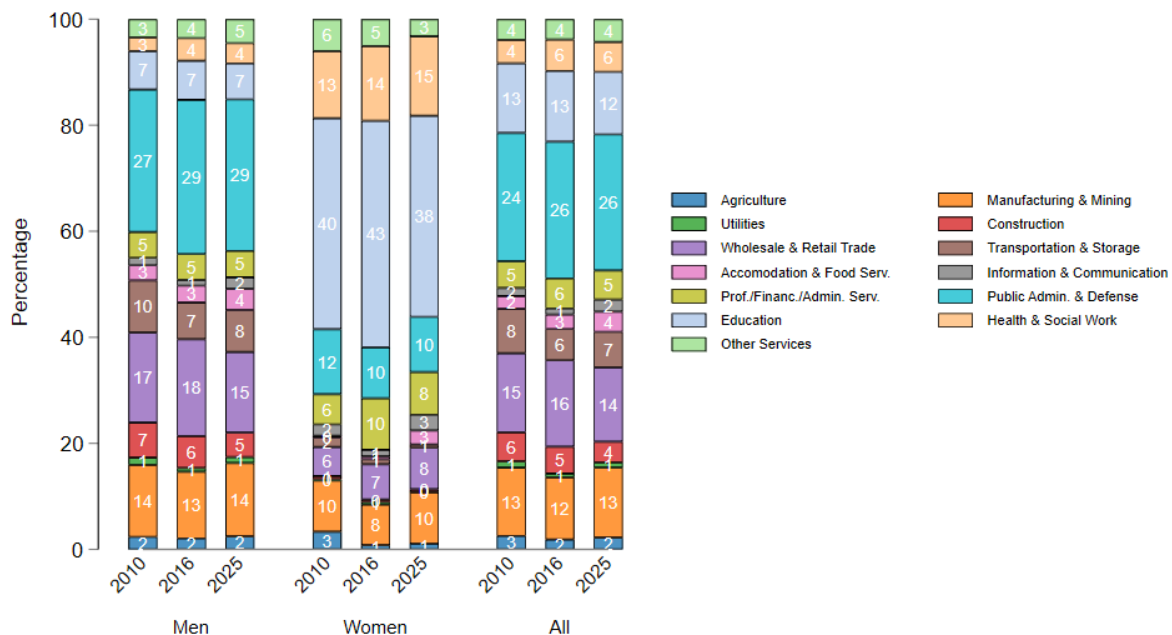
Figure 6. Structure of employment by sector of economic activity and nationality (2010, 2016, 2025)



Source: Authors calculations using data from the Jordan Labor Market Panel Survey (OAMDI 2026).

The structure of employment by industry varies considerably for men and women among Jordanians. As shown in Figure 7, Jordanian women are strongly concentrated in the care economy sectors of education, health, and social work. Together these sectors make up 53% of Jordanian female employment as compared to only 11% of Jordanian male employment. In addition to slower public sector growth, this concentration may also place a ceiling on further growth in female employment. In contrast, Jordanian male workers are concentrated in public administration and defense and to a lesser extent in wholesale and retail trade.

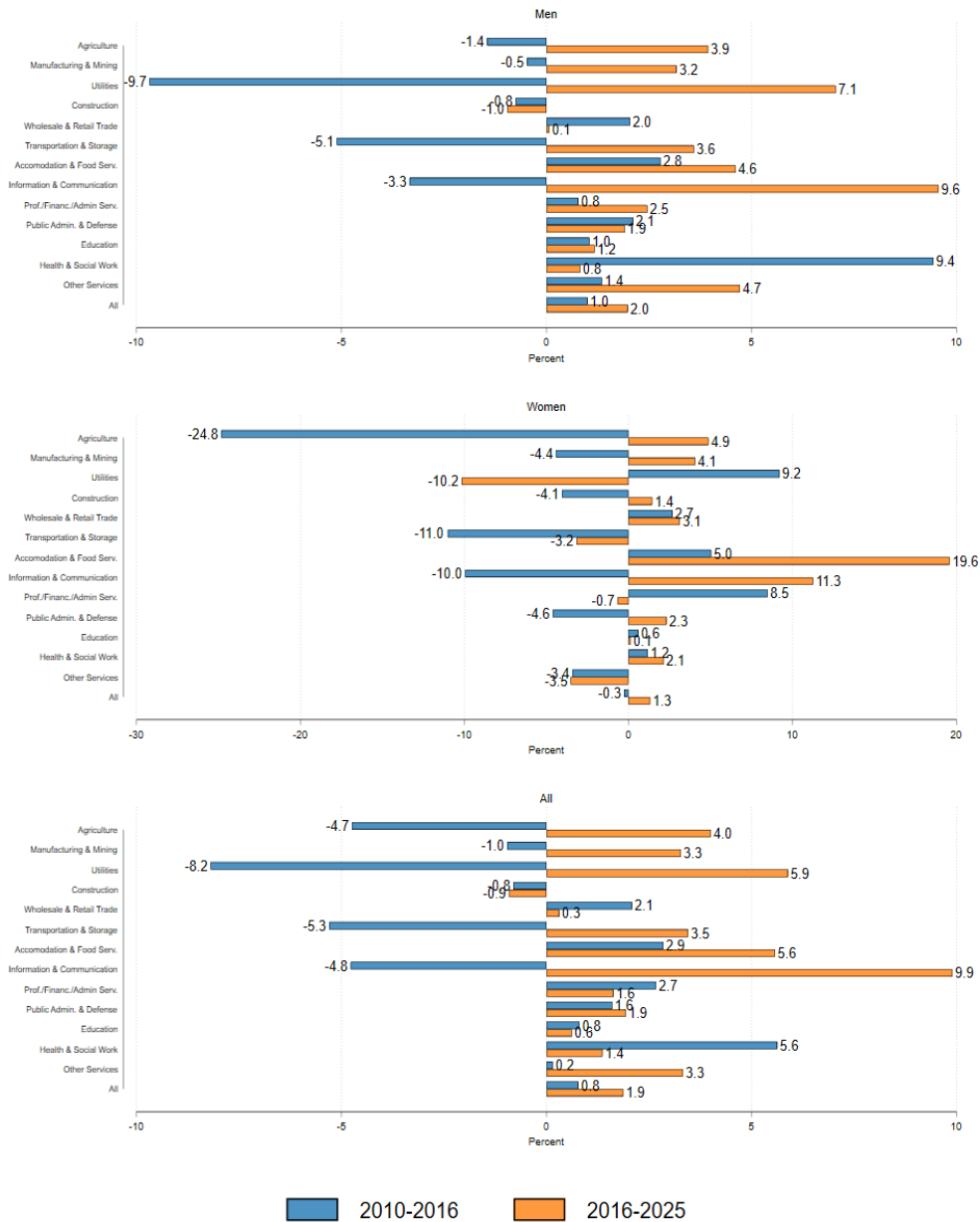
Figure 7. Structure of employment by sector of economic activity and sex, for Jordanians only (2010, 2016, 2025)



Source: Authors calculations using data from the Jordan Labor Market Panel Survey (OAMDI 2026).

Although education, health, public administration and defense, and wholesale and retail trade make up a substantial share of employment, they are not the fastest growing sectors of the economy. This distinction goes to sector that still make up fairly small shares of Jordanian employment, such as information and communication, which has grown at 9.9% p.a., utilities, which has grown at 5.9% p.a. and accommodation and food service, which has grown at 5.6% p.a. from 2016 to 2025 (See Figure 8). Accommodation and food services represents the recovery and growth of the tourism industry after the deep slump caused by Arab Spring uprisings and later by the COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, information and communications services increased its share from 1% in 2016 to 2% in 2025. Among Jordanian women, by far the fastest growing employment sectors have been accommodation and food service, and information and communication. This suggest that further growth in female employment may depend on whether women are supported to access growing sectors beyond their traditional concentration in care economy sectors. It is also worth noting that much of the growth in information and communications services has been in private formal wage employment. Among Jordanians working in ICT, the share employed in formal private wage work has increased from 47% in 2016 to 86% in 2025. Combined, these patterns point to the importance of a fast growing sector not only in expanding formal private wage employment, but also in broadening opportunities for women’s employment.

Figure 8. Average annual employment growth rate by sector of economic activity and sex, for Jordanians only (2010–2016, 2016–2025)



Source: Authors calculations using data from the Jordan Labor Market Panel Survey (OAMDI 2026).

Note: We refrain from presenting growth rates of employment for non-Jordanians given the uncertainty associated with the number of non-Jordanians in Jordan.

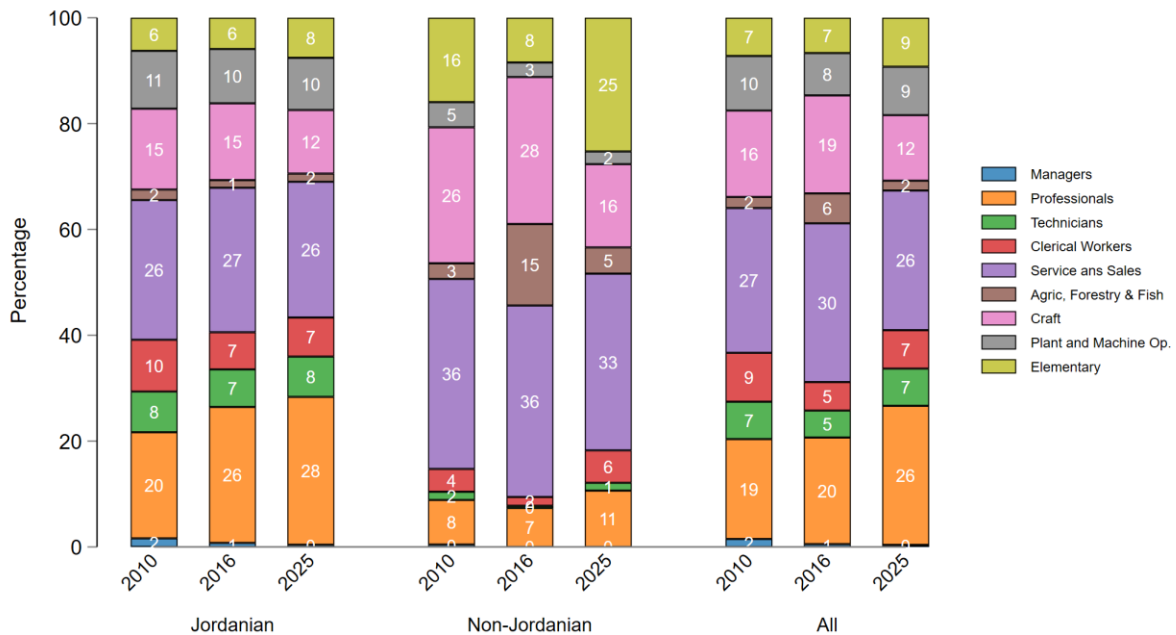
3.4. The structure of employment by major occupational group

The structure of employment by occupation in Jordan reflects the dominance of services in Jordan’s economic structure. As shown in Figure 9, services and sales workers and professionals make up

the largest two groups at 26% of total employment each. The share of services and sales has declined since 2016 and that of professionals has increased, probably a reflection of the decline in the relative weight of non-Jordanian workers in the economy. Blue-collar workers in agricultural, craft, production, transportation, and elementary occupations make up less than a third of total employment in Jordan, again, a share that has declined slightly since 2016, but that is back to where it was in 2010.

The employment of Jordanians is even more dominated by white collar and service occupations that total employment and the share of these occupations has been increasing over time for Jordanians. As expected, non-Jordanians are mostly engaged in blue collar work, but a substantial proportion are also in services and sales occupations. A substantial fraction (25%) is in the mostly unskilled elementary occupations category.

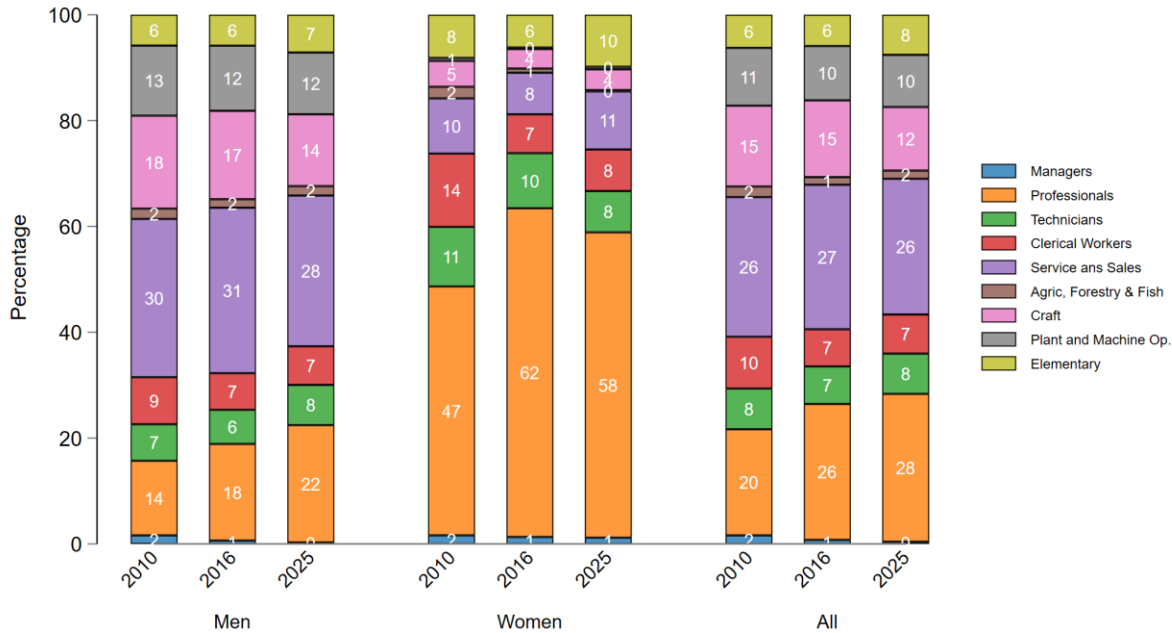
Figure 9. Structure of employment by major occupational group and nationality, 2010, 2016, 2025



Source: Authors calculations using data from the Jordan Labor Market Panel Survey (OAMDI 2026).

Examining the occupational structure of Jordanian employment by sex in Figure 10, we that women’s employment is dominated by professionals, reflecting the importance of teachers and health workers. Less than a fourth of female employment is in services, sales or blue-collar occupations, suggesting that these occupations are mostly closed to women due to prevailing social norms. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that services and sales occupations have increased their share of employment among Jordanian women from 8% in 2016 to 11% in 2025.

Figure 10. Structure of employment by major occupational group and sex (Jordanians only), 2010, 2016, 2025



Source: Authors calculations using data from the Jordan Labor Market Panel Survey (OAMDI 2026).

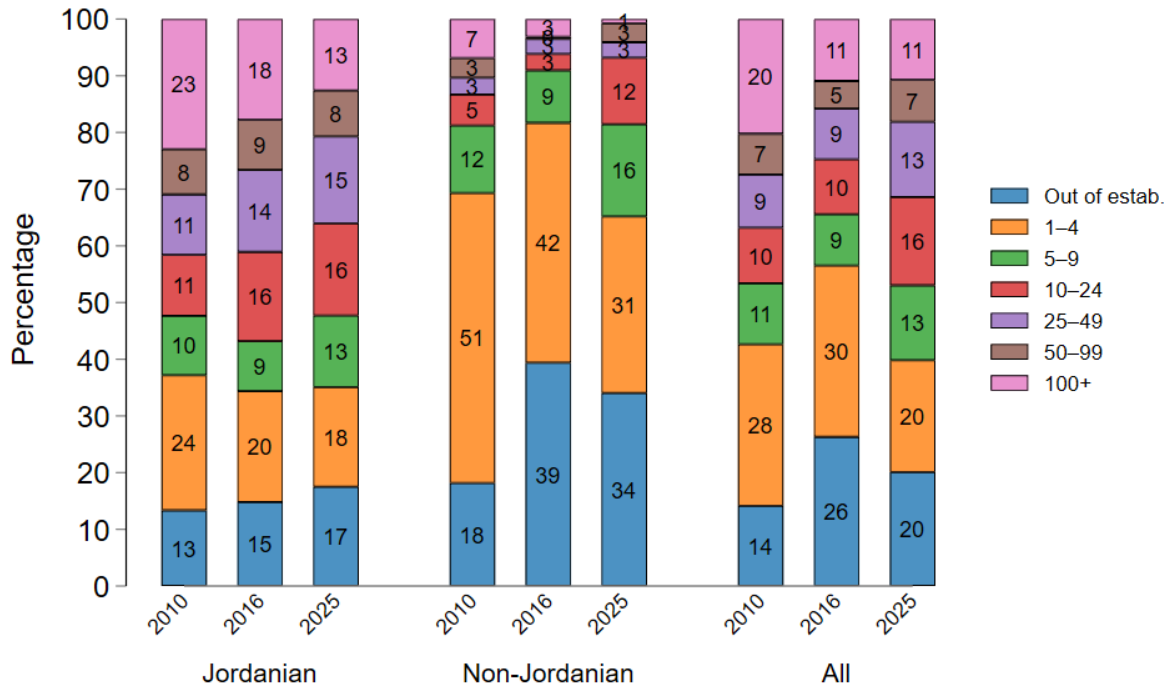
3.5. The structure of private wage employment by in/out of establishment and establishment size

We limit our attention in this section to private wage employment, including its formal and informal components. As shown in Figure 11, nearly a fifth of private wage employment in 2025 is outside fixed establishments and another fifth is in micro establishments of fewer than 5 workers. The share of private wage employment outside establishments has fluctuated since 2010 probably in proportion to the weight of non-Jordanian workers in the economy, but, as we noted earlier, it has increased steadily among Jordanians, a sign of greater precarity of employment, at least for some workers. In contrast, the employment in micro establishments has fallen both overall and among Jordanians. This portends a positive trend in the size distribution of employment within establishments as the share of small and medium establishments grows appreciably over time. Over the 2016-25 period, establishments of 5-9 workers increased their share from 9% to 13%, both overall and among Jordanians. Establishments with 10-24 workers increased their share from 10% to 16%, and those with 25 to 49 workers from 9% to 13%. Similar trends are apparent when we limit our attention to Jordanians only.⁴ These trends suggest the emergence of what is often referred to as the “missing middle” of the Jordanian economy, which portends well for the quality of employment in Jordan. In

⁴ Non-Jordanians continue to be concentrated outside fixed establishments and in micro establishments, but their share in small enterprise is rising.

contrast, the share of employment in large establishments of 100+ workers has been falling steadily among Jordanians and such employment is virtually non-existent among non-Jordanians.

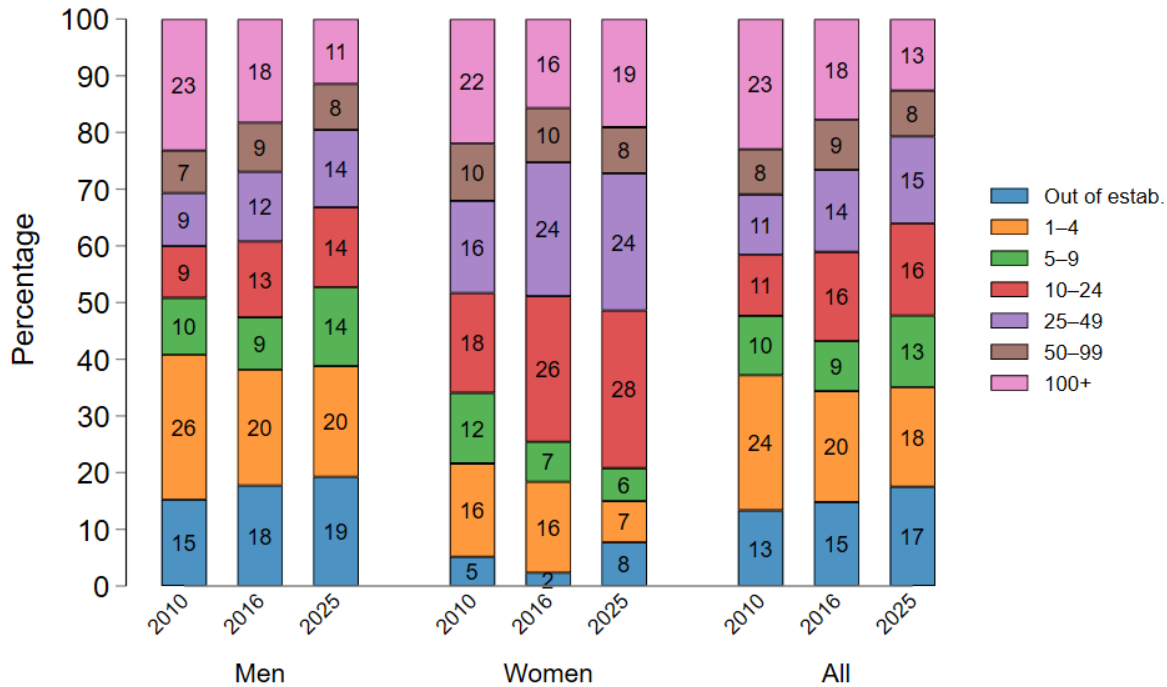
Figure 11. Structure of private sector wage employment in and out of establishments and by establishment size and nationality (2010, 2016, 2025)



Source: Authors calculations using data from the Jordan Labor Market Panel Survey (OAMDI 2026).

Focusing our attention on Jordanians only now, we can see from Figure 12, that Jordanian women are much less likely than their male counterparts to be working outside establishments or in micro establishments, because these work environments are considered too risky for women under prevailing social norms. Nonetheless, the proportion of Jordanian women working outside establishments has increased appreciably since 2016, suggesting growing employment precarity among women as well. Jordanian women tend to be over-represented in the middle and at the top of the enterprise size distribution, that is in establishments of 10-24 and 25-49 workers, and in large establishments, where the presence of other female workers can provide a sense of safety and protection from harassment. In fact, as is the case for Jordanian men, there is growth in the proportion of female private sector employees in establishments of 10-24 workers and 25-49 workers, especially in the period from 2010 to 2016 at the expense of micro and small establishments, but not large establishments.

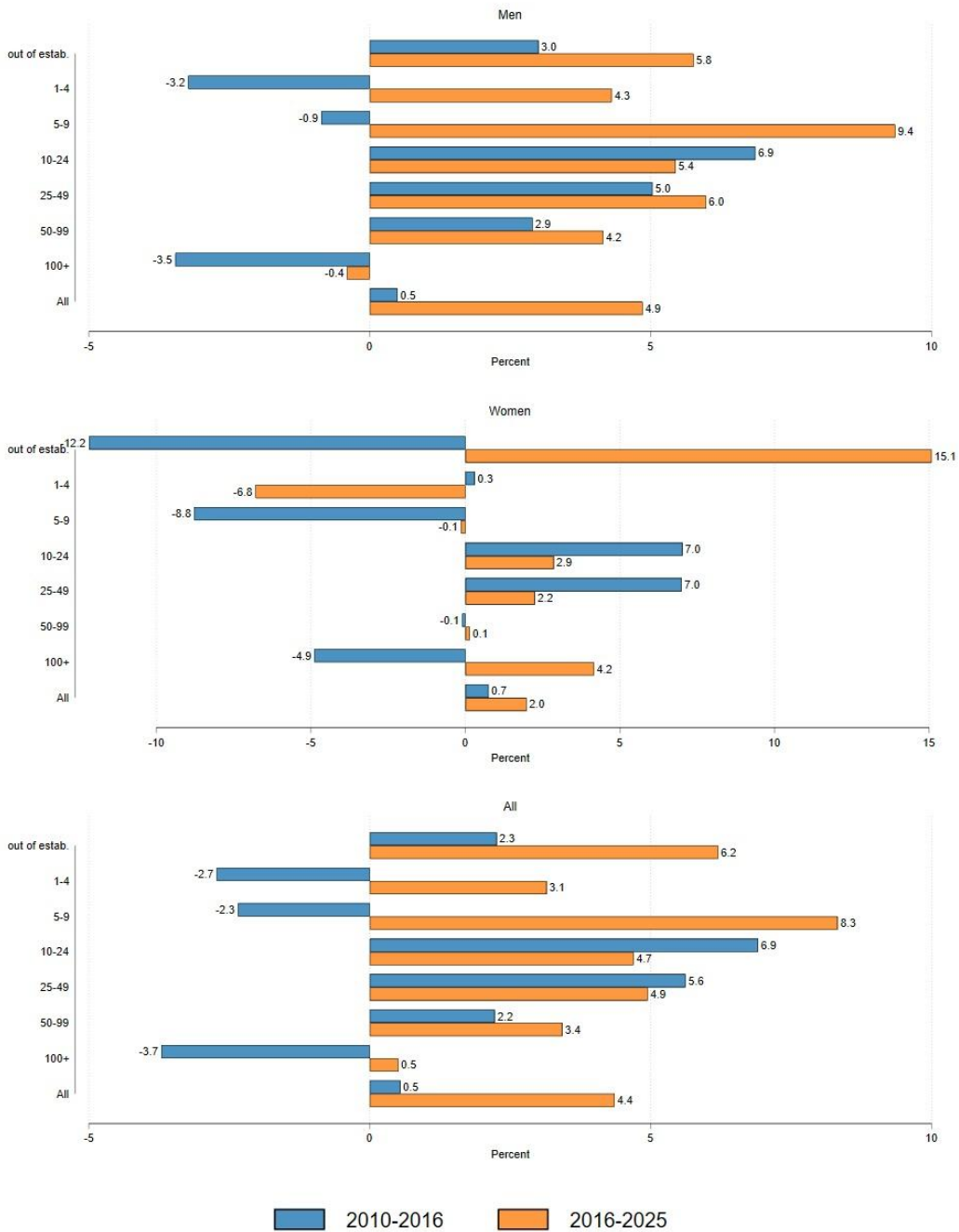
Figure 12. Distribution of private wage employment in establishments by establishment size category and sex, for Jordanians only, 2010, 2016, 2025



Source: Authors calculations using data from the Jordan Labor Market Panel Survey (OAMDI 2026).

An examination of growth rates of employment by establishment size among Jordanian workers confirms the dynamism of small and medium establishments in the Jordanian private sector. Overall, private wage employment for Jordanians grew at 4.4% p.a. from 2016 to 2025 which is much faster than the growth of overall Jordanian employment in that period (1.9% p.a.) and also much faster than the growth of private wage employment in the 2010-16 period (0.5% p.a.). As shown in Figure 13, the average annual growth rates of Jordanian employment in small establishments of 5 to 9 and 10 to 24 workers were 8.3% p.a. and 4.7% p.a., respectively, in the 2016-25 period. Establishments of 25-49 also grew faster than average in this period at 4.9% p.a. in contrast to private wage employment in large establishments, which grew at a mere 0.5% p.a. after having declined in absolute terms in the previous period. The rapid growth of the middle of the size distribution is a very promising trend for job quality generally, but it is counteracted by the equally fast-growing trend of employment outside establishments among Jordanians, which tends to be associated with low job quality.

Figure 13. Average annual growth rate of private sector wage employment outside of establishments and by establishment size in establishments and sex, Jordanians only (2010–2016, 2016–2025)



Source: Authors calculations using data from the Jordan Labor Market Panel Survey (OAMDI 2026).

Among Jordanian women, the fastest growing category in the 2016-2025, by far, is employment outside fixed establishments, which mirrors the pattern seen for Jordanian men. However, the second fastest growing category is employment in large establishments, which accelerated to 4.2%

p.a. after having declined by 4.9% p.a. in the previous period. Among Jordanians, female private sector wage employment overall grew at less than half the rate for their male counterparts (2.0% p.a. vs. 4.4% p.a.).

4. The evolution of the quality of employment for Jordanians

We examine the quality of employment in Jordan along various dimensions, including the intensification of employment as indicated by weekly work hours, the regularity of employment, the extent to which it is covered by social security, the extent to which it benefits from representation by labor unions, and the extent to which it benefits from paid leaves. In this analysis, we strive to distinguish by the different types of employment identified above, and within private sector wage employment, by work in or out of establishments and establishment size. In examining the quality of employment, we limit our analysis to Jordanians, since most non-Jordanians are generally in poor quality informal and precarious employment, with limited change over time.

4.1. The evolution of weekly hours of work

To examine the possible intensification of employment, we classify weekly hours of work into three broad categories: (i) part-time work, which is less than 35 hours per week, (ii) full-time work, which ranges from 35 to 48 hours per week, and (iii) overemployment, 49 hours per week or more.⁵ Long work hours not only threaten peoples work-life balance but could pose a serious barrier to entry into paid employment for groups that suffer from time poverty, such as married women. Similarly, the greater availability of part-time work would allow for greater access to paid work for married women, whose main social roles as homemakers implies long hours of unpaid care work.

The most notable trend in the Jordanian labor market appears to be the increase in the share of workers in overemployment (49+ hours). As shown in Figure 14, this share grew from 32% in 2010, to 33% in 2016, only to reach 35% in 2025. Rates of part-time work (less than 35 hours per week) are low and have remained stable over time at around 15%. As expected, the share of workers in overemployment is more than 2.5 times higher among men than women in Jordan, but has increased for both genders. Conversely the share of part-time workers is 1.5 times higher among women than among men, but has increased faster among men.

⁵ The ILO uses the proportion of employees working more than 48 hours per week as a measure of “overemployment” a measure of those who work beyond what is considered “normal hours” (ILO, 2026)

Figure 14. Distribution of employment by working hours (part-time <35 hours per week, full-time 35-48 hours per week, and overemployment, 49+ hours per week) by type of employment and sex, for Jordanians only (2010, 2016, 2025)



Source: Authors calculations using data from the Jordan Labor Market Panel Survey (OAMDI 2026).

Note: there are too few female unpaid family workers to be able to make reliable inferences.

The intensification of employment is most visible in private wage work. As shown in Figure 14, the share of workers in overemployment at 51% is highest in informal private wage work inside establishments, but has remained fairly stable in that group. In contrast, it increased substantially among formal private wage workers from 33% in 2016 to 38% in 2025. Even employment in the public sector in Jordan has intensified, with the share reporting overemployment increasing from

18% in 2016 to 22% in 2025. Although own-account workers (employers and self-employed) also work long hours, they have not experienced the same degree of intensification.

Although less likely to be overemployed than their male counterparts, Jordanian women have also experienced an intensification of employment, especially in formal private wage employment. Female self-employed workers and unpaid family workers have much higher rates of part-time work, which indicates that when women are able to set their own work time, they strongly prefer part-time work given their substantial unpaid care responsibilities. The inability to do so in wage work undoubtedly presents a serious obstacle to employment for women.

The fact that employers would rather increase work time (the intensive margin of employment) rather than hire more workers at the extensive margin suggests that the fixed costs of employment in Jordan are high, pushing employers to increase work hours rather than create new jobs when faced with increased activity. Policy attention should focus on reducing such fixed costs of employment and making the cost of employment more variable (as in hourly rather than monthly).

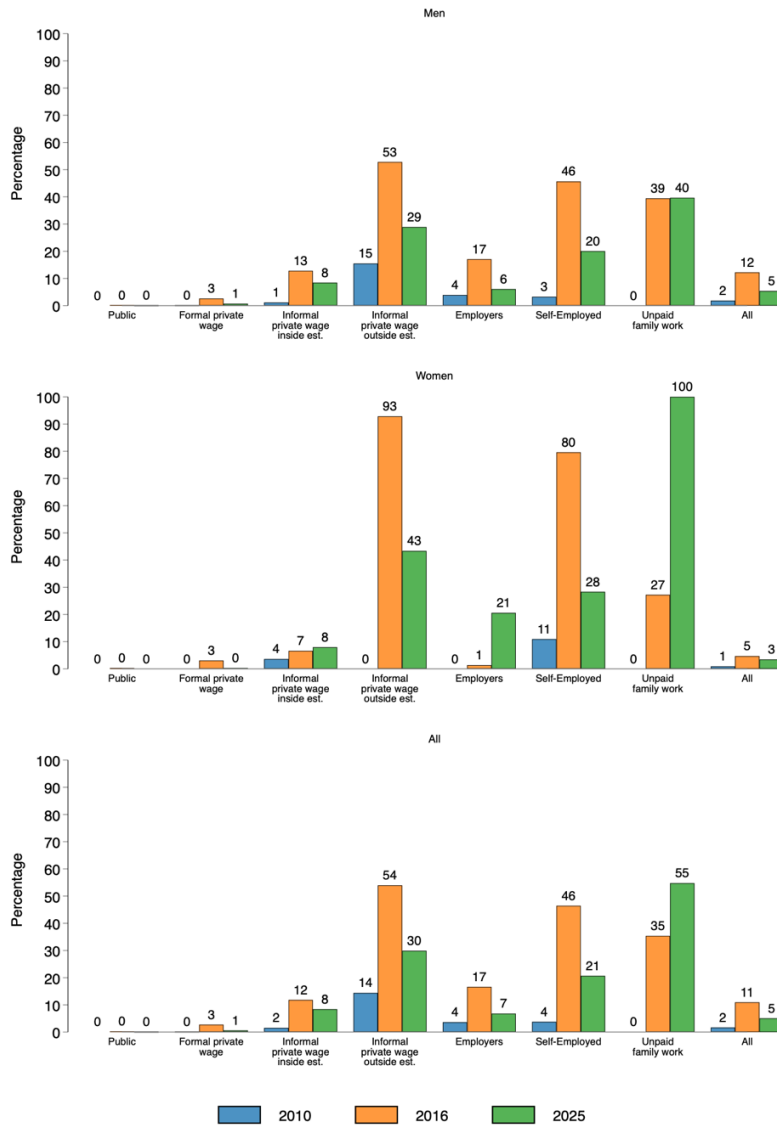
4.2. Employment regularity

An important aspect of job quality for Jordanians is the extent to which employment is regular and provides a reliable source of livelihood. Since regularity of employment is the norm, we measure irregularity as defined by the incidence of intermittent or seasonal employment. As shown in Figure 14, irregular employment is relatively rate for Jordanians, falling from 11% in 2016 to 5% in 2025. It is mostly concentrated among informal private wage workers, and particularly those working outside fixed establishments, and some non-wage workers. In fact, there is virtually no irregularity of employment among formal wage workers, whether in the public or private sectors, which is fortunate as these types of employment are making up a growing majority of jobs for Jordanians.

As shown in Figure 15, workers in all types of employment have seen reductions in irregularity from 2016 to 2025, with the exception of the small category of unpaid family workers. Although irregularity has declined among private wage workers outside establishments, at 30% it is still quite high among this group, underscoring the precariousness of their employment, at a time when low-income Jordanians are increasingly relying on this kind of work (see Figure 4). Female workers in Jordan have lower rates of irregularity, partly because they tend to eschew highly exposed forms of employment, such as informal wage work outside establishments, and partly because few of them are in non-wage work. Nonetheless, rates of irregularity are high for the small proportion of women who end up in such jobs.⁶

⁶ The proportion of women in irregular employment in informal wage work outside establishments and in self-employment and unpaid care work must be interpreted with care given the small number of women in the sample in these types of work.

Figure 15. Proportion in irregular employment (%) by type of employment and sex (Jordanians only)



Source: Authors calculations using data from the Jordan Labor Market Panel Survey (OAMDI 2026).

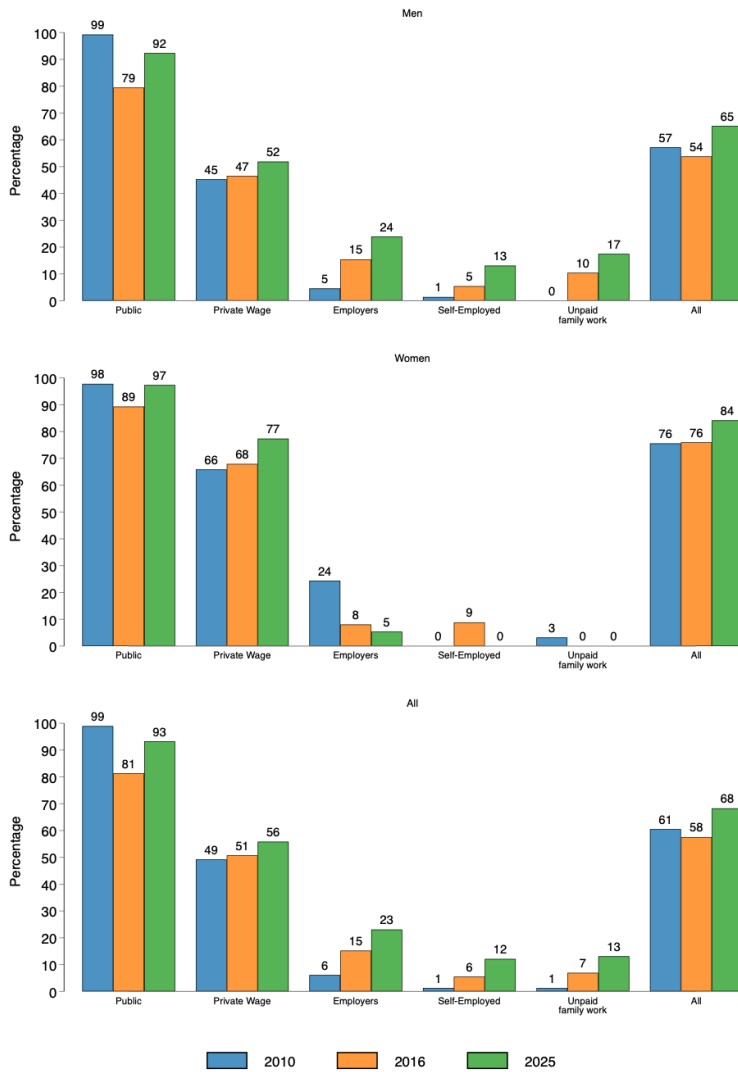
Note: There are too few female unpaid family workers to be able to make reliable inferences.

4.3. Social security coverage

Another important marker of job quality is whether the job is covered by social security. In fact, according to the 21st Conference of Labour Statisticians the presence of social security coverage is the main indicator of the formality of employment for wage workers (ILO 2023). Although we distinguished between formal and informal wage employment in our discussion of type of employment above, we now bring together all forms of private wage employment in one category to examine the rate of social security coverage (formality) within it.

As shown in Figure 16, nearly two-thirds of Jordanian workers are covered by social security through their work, a figure that has increased substantially from 2016 to 2025. Coverage by social security is virtually universal in the public sector, but is far from being so in private sector wage employment and even less so in non-wage employment. Women are more likely to have social security coverage than men, due to their higher concentration in the public sector and their avoidance of highly exposed types of employment such as wage employment outside of establishments. In fact, women in private wage employment are substantially more likely to be covered by social insurance than their male counterparts (77% vs 52%). As is the case for men, Jordanian women's social security coverage has increased appreciably from 2016 to 2025, with the increase concentrated among private wage workers. Nevertheless, women in non-wage work are very unlikely to be covered by social security. While such coverage is also low among male non-wage workers as well, unlike women, it has been increasing over time.

Figure 16. Social security coverage rate by type of employment and sex (2010, 2016, 2025), Jordanians only



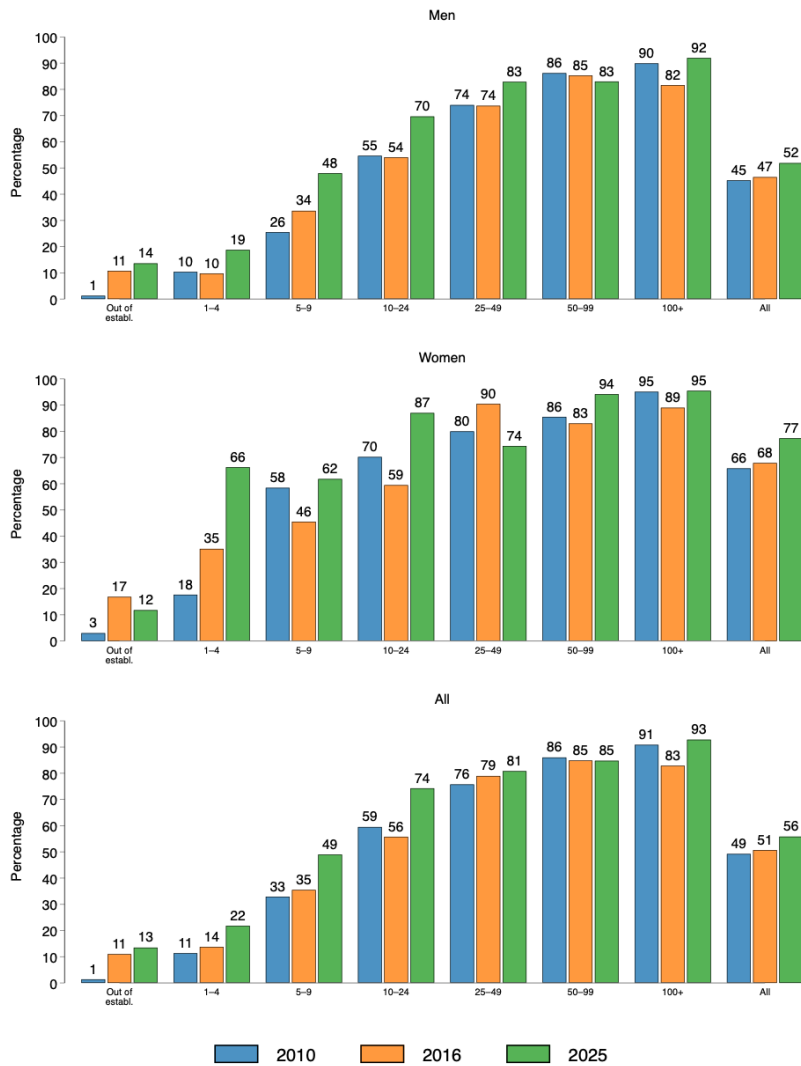
Source: Authors calculations using data from the Jordan Labor Market Panel Survey (OAMDI 2026).

The increase in coverage among Jordanian private sector wage workers is a notable achievement that deserves further scrutiny. To further explore this trend, we examine the pattern of social security coverage by in/out of establishments status and establishment size for these workers. As shown in Figure 18, we can see that there were substantial increases in social security coverage among low-coverage segments of the private sector, namely workers in micro establishments (1-4 workers) and in small establishments (5-9 and 10-24 workers). This is quite a notable achievement since this happened at a time when the employment and employment share of small establishments was rising rapidly (See Figure 12 and Figure 13). Coverage even increased substantially among workers working outside fixed establishments, especially in the period from 2010 to 2016. These are usually among the most difficult workers to reach with social security coverage.

Social security coverage in medium establishments (25-49 and 50-99 workers) and large establishments (100+ workers) was already quite high, so there is not much scope for an increase there. Thus, the increase in coverage can be partly attributed to the increasing share of small and medium establishment – what we termed the emergence of the missing middle of the economy – but also the successful efforts of the social security administration in extending coverage to hard to cover workers, such as workers working outside establishment and in micro and small establishments.

An examination of the gender pattern of coverage in Figure 17 confirms that women have higher coverage rates than men in almost every size category of establishment in the private sector. This is notable given that women tend to withdraw from the workforce early before they fulfill the minimum contribution requirements to receive an old-age pension. The increase in coverage among women in micro and small enterprises is particularly notable.

Figure 17. Social security coverage among Jordanians in private wage employment by in and out of establishments and establishment size and sex (2010, 2016, 2025)



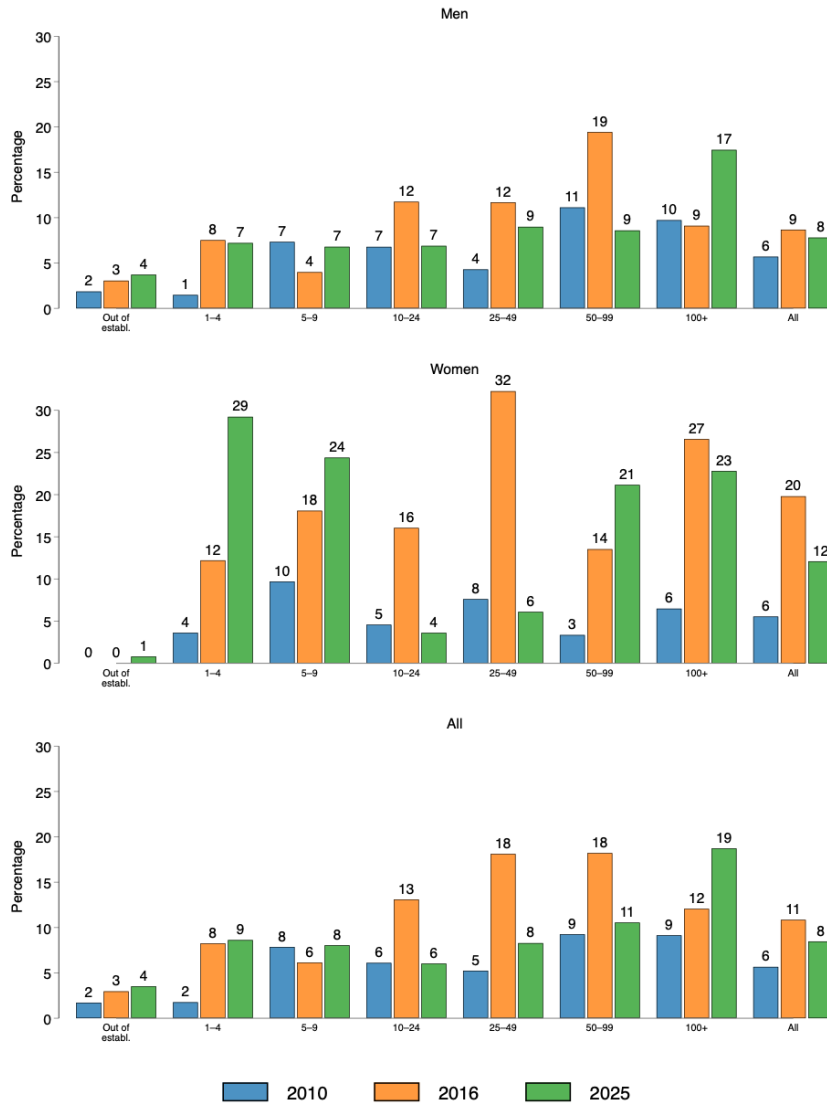
Source: Authors calculations using data from the Jordan Labor Market Panel Survey (OAMDI 2026).

4.4. Representation by labor unions and syndicates

Workers can achieve greater voice with regard to their working conditions and engage in collective bargaining over the terms of their employment if they are represented by labor unions or other workers' syndicates. However, as shown in Figure 18, there appears to be limited progress toward worker representation in Jordan, with only 8% of Jordanian private wage workers represented by labor organizations in 2025 and no clear trend over time. As expected, workers working in medium and larger size establishments have a higher likelihood of being represented, but even among establishments of 100 workers and more, fewer than a fifth of workers are members of labor organizations. Rates of union membership appear to be slightly higher among female workers, but

given the small sample size of female workers, these differences may not be statistically significant. Moreover, the pattern of union membership by establishment size category for women appears to be somewhat inconsistent and volatile.

Figure 18. Labor union membership among Jordanians in private wage employment by in and out of establishments and establishment size and sex (2010, 2016, 2025)



Source: Authors calculations using data from the Jordan Labor Market Panel Survey (OAMDI 2026).

4.5. Eligibility for paid vacation and sick leave

An important aspect of worker rights in formal employment is eligibility for paid vacations and sick leave. Therefore, an important dimension of job quality is the proportion of workers able to benefit from such leaves. According to the JLMPS, 52% of Jordanian private wage workers are able to

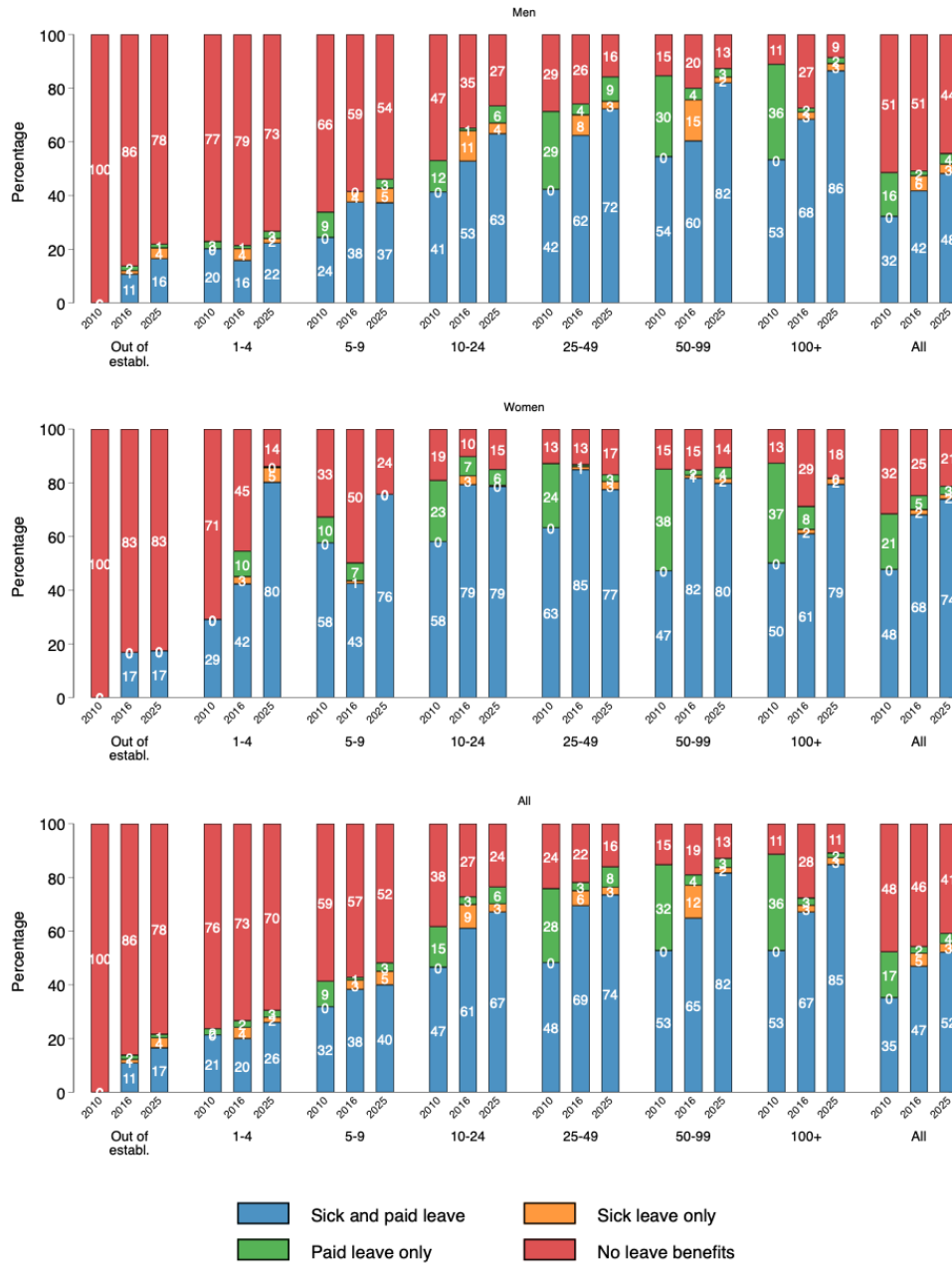
access both paid vacations and sick leaves in 2025, with an additional 7% having access to one or the other (Figure 19). This is up from 47% with full access in 2016, and 35% in 2010. Women, who tend to be in more formal forms of employment compared to men, have greater access to paid vacations and sick leave, with 74% of them having access to both in 2025, compared to 68% in 2016.

Like social security coverage, access to paid leave among Jordanians in private wage employment remains highly dependent on being in an establishment, and on establishment size, with markedly better access in larger establishments. In 2025, only 26% of those employed in micro establishments (1–4 employees) reported having access to paid vacation and sick leave, compared to 85% among those working in large establishments with 100+ employees (Figure 19).

While access has improved across the board, the largest improvements can be observed for those with the lowest rates, namely those working outside fixed establishments and in micro establishments. Some gendered patterns emerge. Women working in micro establishments saw significant gains in access to paid leave, which rose sharply from 42% in 2016 to 80% in 2025. This is a notable shift that surpasses gains made by their male counterparts.

These patterns underscore the fact that efforts to extend employment formality to workers in what are typically precarious forms of employment through the extension of social security coverage can have other benefits on job quality, such as access to paid vacations and sick leaves.

Figure 19. Access to paid leave among Jordanians in private wage employment by in and out of establishments and establishment size and sex (2010, 2016, 2025)



Source: Authors calculations using data from the Jordan Labor Market Panel Survey (OAMDI 2026).

4.6. Access to employer-provided health insurance

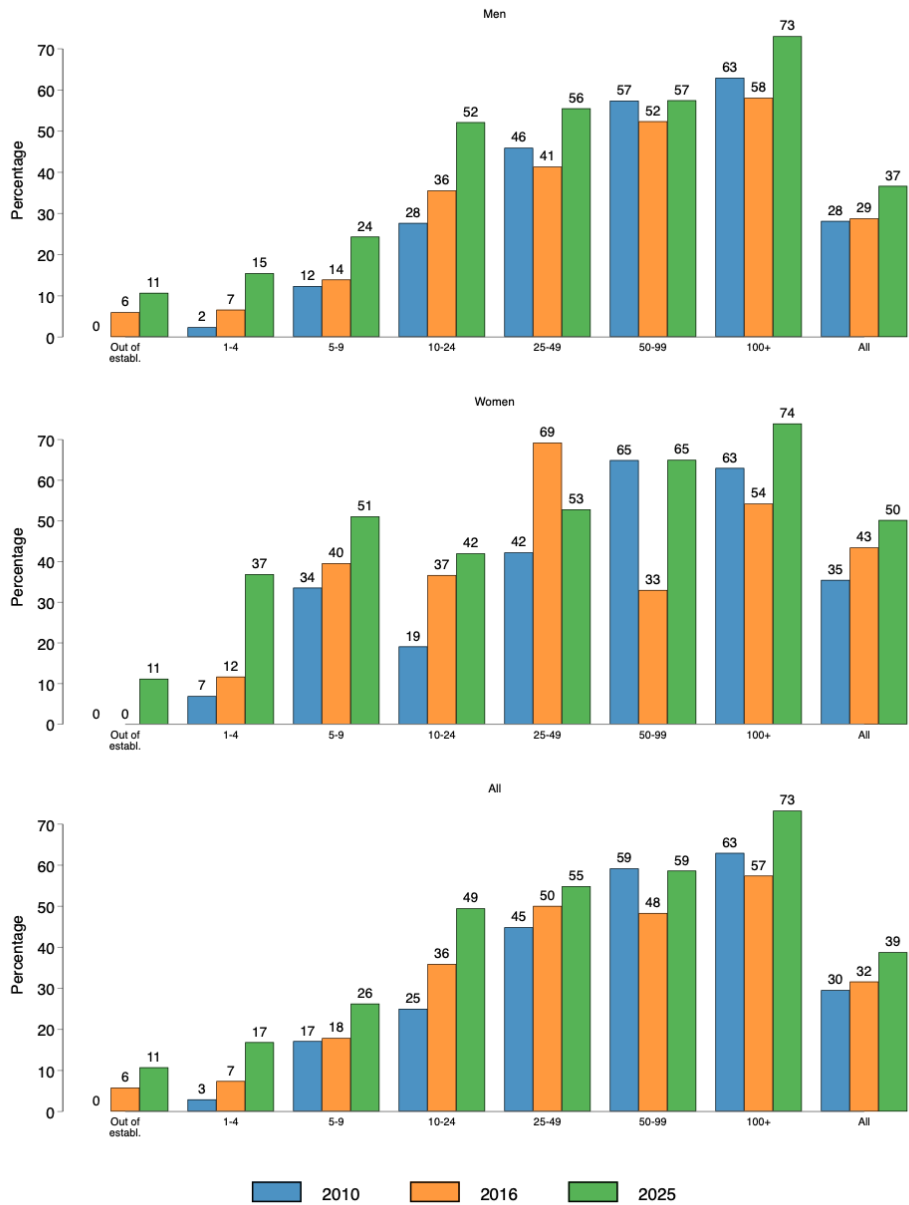
The last objective indicator of job quality that we examine is access to employer-provided health insurance. Such access is still somewhat limited for private sector workers in Jordan and is even more strongly dependent on establishment size than access to social security and paid leaves. As

shown in Figure 20, less than 40% of Jordanian private sector wage workers had access to employer-provided health insurance, but this represents a substantial improvement over 2016, when it was only 32%. Again, because women tend to have more formal employment than men, rates of access to health insurance are substantially higher for female workers than male workers, especially in micro and small establishments.

Access to employer-provided health insurance remains closely tied to working in establishments and, if so, to establishment size. In 2025, 73% of Jordanian private sector wage workers in large firms (100+ workers) had access to such insurance, up from 57% in 2016. Rates of access to health insurance rise steadily from 17% for workers in micro establishments to 55% for workers in medium establishments of 25-49 workers, remaining roughly that level through medium establishments of 50-99 workers, only to jump again for large establishments.

Access has increased substantially over time for workers outside of establishments, and for workers in micro, small and even medium establishments of 25-49 workers, stagnated for medium establishments of 50-99 workers, but increased for large establishments. This is further evidence that efforts to extend the formalization of employment to workers outside of establishments and to micro and small establishments bore fruit in terms of access to employment benefits such as employer-provided health insurance.

Figure 20. Access to employer-provided health insurance among Jordanians in private wage employment by in and out of establishments and establishment size and sex (2010, 2016, 2025)



Source: Authors calculations using data from the Jordan Labor Market Panel Survey (OAMDI 2026).

5. Subjective measures of job satisfaction with different aspects of employment

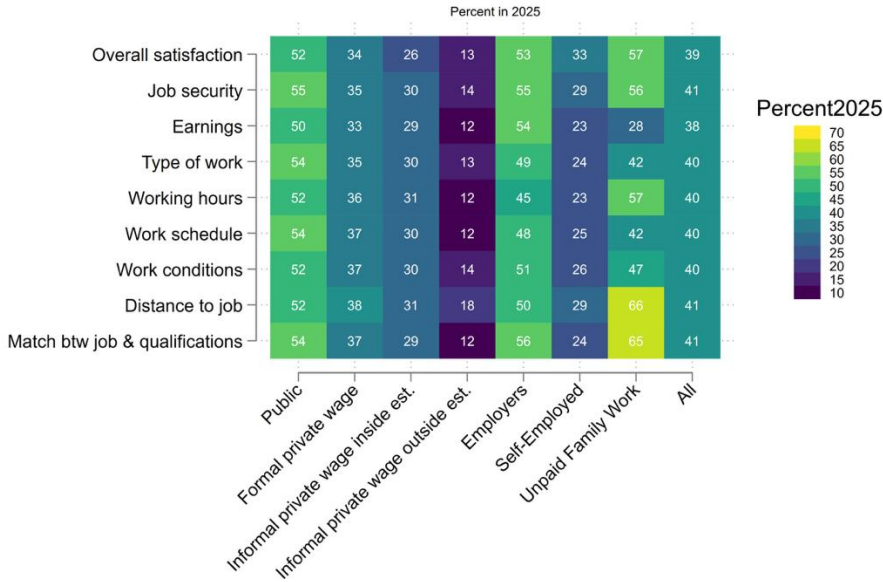
Another measure of job quality over time is workers' subjective level of job satisfaction with their jobs overall and with different aspects of their employment. Since most people report some level of satisfaction with their employment situation, we use the percentage of those stating that they are fully satisfied to get sufficient variation in this outcome. The remainder are therefore either somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or fully dissatisfied.

While overall job satisfaction averaged 39% in 2025, there are wide differences across types of employment, as shown in Figure 21. The highest levels of satisfaction are found among unpaid family workers, who report being particularly content with the match between their job and their qualifications and the distance to the job. This is followed by employers, who appear to be satisfied with most aspects of their jobs, with the possible exception of working hours. Public sector workers follow closely, expressing full satisfaction levels of over 50% across all aspects of their work.

By contrast, the lowest job satisfaction rates are reported by informal private wage workers outside establishments, with only 13% being fully satisfied with their jobs, and no aspect of the job gaining more than an 18% full satisfaction rate. These levels of satisfaction are half as high as the next highest group, which is informal private wage workers inside establishments. These subjective levels of job satisfaction for informal wage workers outside establishments correspond to very low levels of objective job quality as measured by employment regularity, coverage by social security, access to paid leaves, etc. It also happens to be a type of employment that had mostly been the purview of non-Jordanians, but one that has been rising rapidly among Jordanian male and female workers (see Figure 3). Other private sector wage workers and self-employed workers express intermediate levels of satisfaction, but ones that are significantly lower than those of public sector workers (Figure 21).

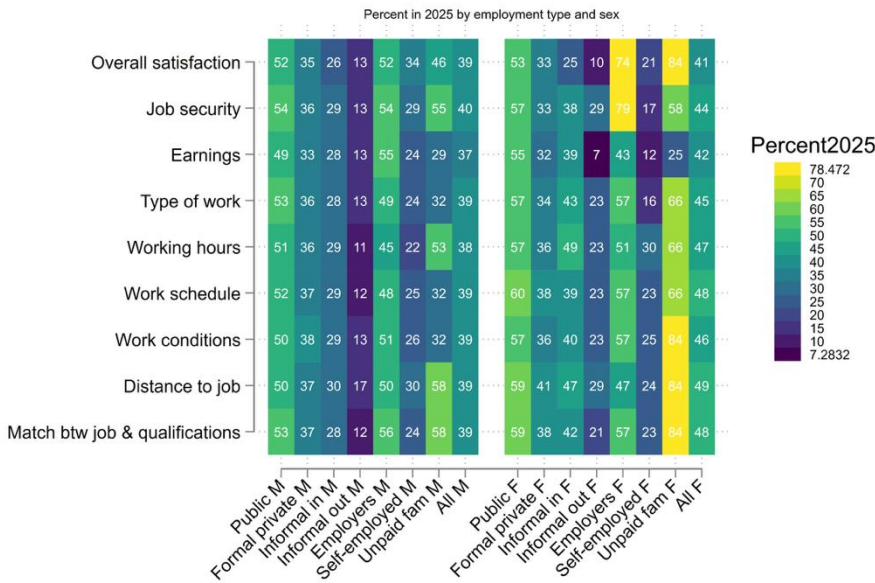
Comparing job satisfaction by sex shows only small differences overall, with average rate fully satisfied of 41% among women and 39% among men. As shown in Figure 22, both men and women report the lowest satisfaction levels with private informal wage work outside of establishments. It is not surprising that women are even less satisfied than men with this kind of precarious work, because it likely exposes them to the public space and is thus highly stigmatized. Surprisingly, the second lowest rate of job satisfaction for women is in self-employment, which probably also exposes them to actual and reputational threats. This is the only kind of work where women's satisfaction levels are well below those of men. Women rank earnings as the aspect of these types of employment that they are least satisfied with. In contrast, women tend to be most satisfied when they are unpaid family workers or employers, though there may be some sample size concerns in these categories.

Figure 21. Percentage reporting full job satisfaction by aspect of employment, by type of employment, only for Jordanians (2025)



Source: Authors calculations using data from the Jordan Labor Market Panel Survey (OAMDI 2026).

Figure 22. Percentage reporting full job satisfaction by aspect of employment, type of employment and sex, for Jordanians only (2025)

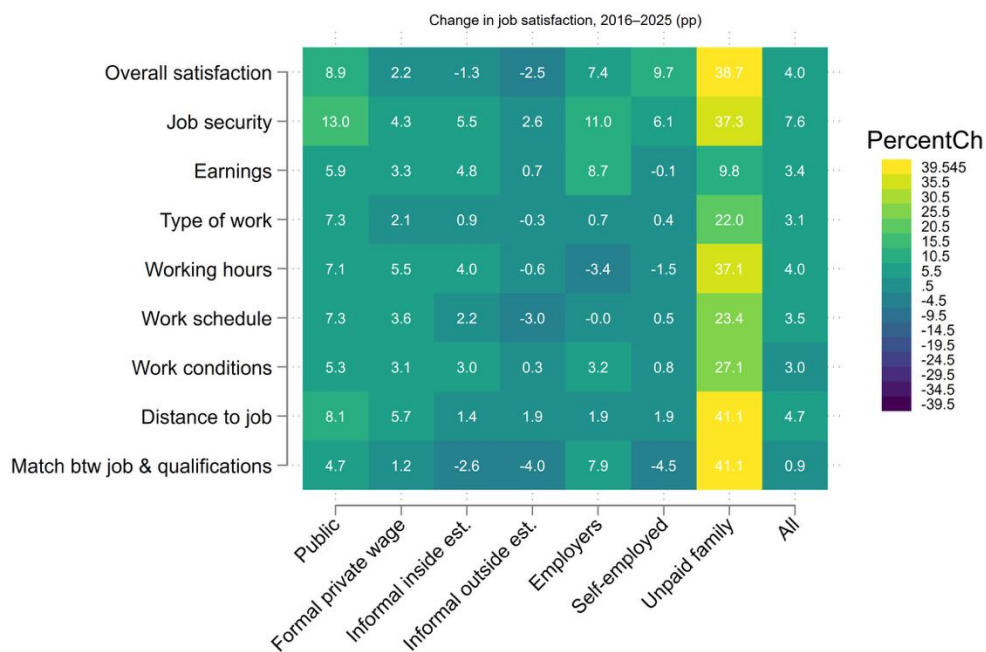


Source: Authors calculations using data from the Jordan Labor Market Panel Survey (OAMDI 2026).

An examination of changes in job satisfaction levels between 2016 and 2025 shows that overall job satisfaction increased modestly by 4 percentage points. The largest improvement was reported in job security, which rose by 7.6 percentage points, while satisfaction with the match between job and qualifications showed the smallest gain, rising by just 0.9 percentage points.

Differences across employment types remain substantial. Unpaid family workers reported the largest increase in overall satisfaction, rising by nearly 39 percentage points from 2016 to 2025, although these changes must be interpreted with caution given the small samples involved for this category of workers. Other types of employment where workers report larger increases in satisfaction include the self-employed and public sector worker. The only group of workers to report a decline in job satisfaction are informal private workers, with those inside establishments reporting a decline of 1.3 percentage points and those outside fixed establishments reporting a decline of 2.5 percentage points. The job aspects that show the largest declines for these workers are match between job and qualification and work schedule for those outside establishments.

Figure 24. Change in job satisfaction levels by aspect of employment, type of employment, for Jordanians only (2016–2025)

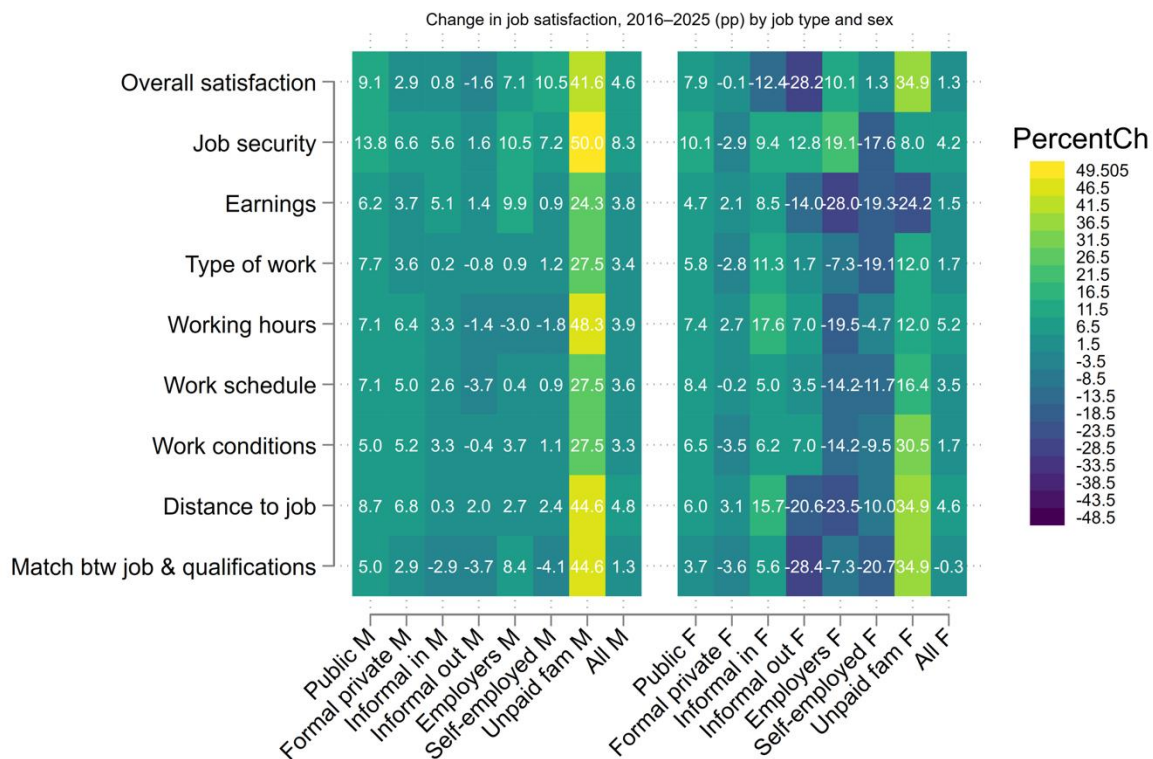


Source: Authors calculations using data from the Jordan Labor Market Panel Survey (OAMDI 2026).

As shown in Figure 25, Jordanian men reported a larger increase in satisfaction levels than women between 2016 and 2025, with the proportion fully satisfied with their jobs increasing by 4.6 percentage points for men compared to only 1.4 percentage points for women. The largest increases in satisfaction for both sexes are among unpaid family workers, but this category constitutes a

diminishing proportion of the workforce in either case. The second largest increase for both sexes is among public sector workers. Both sexes report substantial declines in satisfaction among private informal wage workers outside establishments, but the decline among women is much larger. Women in private informal wage work in establishments also report large declines in satisfaction. This suggests that women find the conditions of employment in informal wage work less than satisfactory, which explains the unwillingness to take on such work.

Figure 25. Change in job satisfaction levels by aspect of employment, type of employment and sex, for Jordanians only (2016–2025)



Source: Authors calculations using data from the Jordan Labor Market Panel Survey (OAMDI 2026).

6. Conclusions

The Jordanian labor market continues to be characterized by low and declining employment rates and persistent structural dualities between Jordanians and non-Jordanians, and between men and women. Over the past decade, employment levels have remained constrained by relatively slow economic growth, as well external shocks and shifts in regional conditions. Nevertheless, the decline in employment rates for Jordanians has slowed, if not stabilized, since the end of the pandemic and unemployment rates have come down modestly since their peak in 2021.

The labor market operates as a dual system in which formalization has advanced for Jordanians, while non-Jordanians remain concentrated in informal and precarious work. Seventy percent of Jordanians are now formally employed in either the public or private sectors, a share that has increased from 60% in 2010. This reflects ongoing efforts to extend social security coverage to informal private sector workers, but also a steady decline in own-account and unpaid family work. While this is an important achievement that is reflected in other aspects of job quality, it is accompanied by an increase in employment precariousness among the most vulnerable Jordanians. In fact, there has been a substantial increase in informal wage work outside of establishments, one of the most precarious forms of employment, among poor and less educated Jordanian males. In the past, this form of employment was mostly limited to non-Jordanian workers. This suggests that even as formalization advances among Jordanians, parts of the workforce remain excluded from stable and secure employment.

While non-Jordanians in Jordan have seen increasing employment rates and declining unemployment rates, their employment conditions continue to be highly precarious, with over 90 percent of them in some kind of informal employment. Nearly thirty percent are in the most precarious form of employment in 2025, namely informal wage employment outside establishments. While similar shares of non-Jordanian men were in this kind of precarious employment in 2016, its share has increased substantially among non-Jordanian women, despite the strong stigma attached to these kinds of jobs for women.

Private sector wage employment has been more dynamic than overall employment for Jordanians, growing almost 2.5 times faster. Private sector wage employment has also accelerated considerably from the 2010-16 period to the 2016-25, going from 0.5% p.a. to 4.4% p.a.. In terms of industries, employment growth for Jordanians was fastest in the information and communications sector, followed by utilities, accommodation and food services, transportation and storage, manufacturing and mining, and other services. All these sectors grew faster than average. The slowest growing sectors were construction, whose employment actually contracted for Jordanians from 2016 to 2025, wholesale and retail trade and education.

Jordan has some of the world's lowest employment rates among women, and the gender gap in access to employment has been growing in recent years. Overall employment has been growing more slowly for Jordanian women compared to men (1.3% p.a. vs 2.0 p.a.). This is partly because women tend to be concentrated in the slower growing public sector. They are also highly concentrated in the care economy industries of education and health care, which have grown more slowly than overall employment in recent years. Nonetheless, even when we focus on the rapidly growing private wage employment, women's employment is growing at nearly two fifths the rate of men (2.0% p.a. vs 4.9% p.a.). Among rapidly growing industries, women's employment is growing rapidly only in accommodation and food service and information and communication, and to a lesser extent in manufacturing and agriculture.

Job quality trends for Jordanians point to a complex picture. The most striking development is the intensification of work and the rise in overemployment, with nearly a third of all Jordanian workers working 49 hours or more per week by 2025, especially among men and private wage employees. This trend toward the intensification of employment in the private sector poses an increasingly insurmountable barrier to married women in the Jordanian labor market given their heavy responsibilities for unpaid care work (Boustati and Hesham 2026). Labor union membership remains very low and stagnant in Jordan. Yet other markers of job quality, especially those associated with employment formality, show encouraging progress. Irregular employment has declined, and social security coverage has been extended to even difficult-to-reach segments of the labor force, including those in micro enterprises or those working outside establishments. Almost 68% of Jordanian workers were covered by social insurance in 2025 compared to just 58% in 2016. These gains appear to have had spillover effects, with growing shares of Jordanian workers also reporting access to paid leave and employer-provided health insurance.

Another perspective on job quality comes from workers' own subjective assessments. Since 2016, reported job satisfaction has increased modestly. Satisfaction is highest among employers and public sector workers, and lowest among informal wage workers outside establishments, reflecting persistent poor working conditions at the lower end of the labor market.

Overall, these findings portray a labor market that is slowly formalizing yet remains deeply segmented along nationality and gender lines. While the share of formal jobs has increased access to employment benefits has broadened, employment creation remains weak, work intensity has risen, and inequalities by gender, nationality, and socioeconomic status endure. Jordan's challenge is not only to sustain job growth but also to extend the gains in formality and job quality to the workers who remain at the margins of its evolving economy.

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