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Abstract

This paper examines wage trends and wage inequality in Jordan from 2010 to 2025, a period characterized by challenging economic conditions. The paper begins with an overview of macroeconomic conditions in Jordan throughout 2010-25. Using data from the 2010, 2016, and 2025 waves of the Jordanian Labor Market Panel Survey (JLMPS), the analysis then explores changes in the wage distribution and trends across key demographic groups and job characteristics. It also examines the evolution of minimum wages in Jordan over the study's timeframe and identifies the share of workers earning below the minimum wage among the same subgroups. Then, the paper moves to addressing wage inequality, relying on several inequality measures such as the Gini index and percentile ratios.

Keywords: Wage, Inequality, Jordan
JEL Classifications: D31, J31, O15, O53

ملخص

تتناول هذه الورقة اتجاهات الأجور وعدم المساواة في الأجور في الأردن من عام 2010 إلى عام 2025، وهي فترة اتسمت بظروف اقتصادية صعبة. تبدأ الورقة بنظرة عامة على ظروف الاقتصاد الكلي في الأردن طوال الفترة 2010-2025. وباستخدام بيانات من موجات المسح التتبعي لسوق العمل في الأردن (JLMPS) للأعوام 2010 و2016 و2025، يستكشف التحليل التغيرات في توزيع الأجور واتجاهاتها عبر المجموعات الديموغرافية الرئيسية وخصائص الوظائف. كما يدرس تطور الحد الأدنى للأجور في الأردن خلال الإطار الزمني للدراسة ويحدد حصة العاملين الذين يكسبون أقل من الحد الأدنى للأجور بين نفس الفئات الفرعية. ثم تنتقل الورقة إلى معالجة عدم المساواة في الأجور، بالاعتماد على العديد من مقاييس عدم المساواة مثل مؤشر جيني والنسب المئوية.

1. Introduction

The Jordanian labor market has undergone significant changes over the past decade. These changes were influenced by several economic conditions, the most notable of which is the large influx of migrants resulting from regional conflicts since 2011. These developments have raised significant questions regarding the equitable distribution of wages within the workforce. Understanding wage inequality is essential not only for assessing living standards but also for informing policies aimed at promoting inclusive growth and social stability. In this context, this paper examines wage trends, distribution, and inequality in Jordan over the period 2010-25, accounting for the impact of the surge in migrant flows. The paper draws on the 2010, 2016, and 2025 waves of the Jordan Labor Market Panel Survey (JLMPS).[1]

The JLMPS surveys consist of a household questionnaire and an individual questionnaire. The household questionnaire collects data on topics such as living conditions and household income from various sources, including agricultural and non-agricultural businesses, capital income, domestic and international remittances, pensions, and transfer payments. The individual questionnaire collects data from each household member aged six and older on various aspects, including education, employment, and key labor market characteristics, wages and earnings, marriage, and attitudes. Wage data is provided at the individual level. Thus, for analyzing individual wages, cross-sectional data from the various 2010 to 2025 waves are utilized. The number of wage workers in the sample,[2] specifically those aged between 15 and 64, were 4,880, 5,443, and 6,836 workers in 2010, 2016, and 2025, respectively. Us

ing the aforementioned JLMPS data (OAMDI, 2026), we examine changes in individual wages and wage inequality across key demographic and job characteristics. We calculate the Gini coefficient using the Lorenz curve, which plots the cumulative percentage of the population against the cumulative percentage of total wages earned to measure wage inequality and against the cumulative percentage of total income earned to measure income inequality. Percentile ratios of hourly wages and hourly wage deciles are also calculated to compare wages at different points of the wage distribution.

This paper proceeds as follows. Section two provides an overview of Jordan's overall macroeconomic conditions, including the influx of migrants and their profiles. Section three tackles wage trends and distribution over the study period by subgroups defined by location, education, skill level, age group, the intersection of sector and formality, and nationality. Section four examines the minimum wage share and the share of workers earning below the minimum wage. Section five addresses wage inequality trends across subgroups over the study period using several inequality measures. Finally, section six concludes and summarizes the key findings.

[1] For more information, refer to Krafft, Assaad, and Ragab (2026).

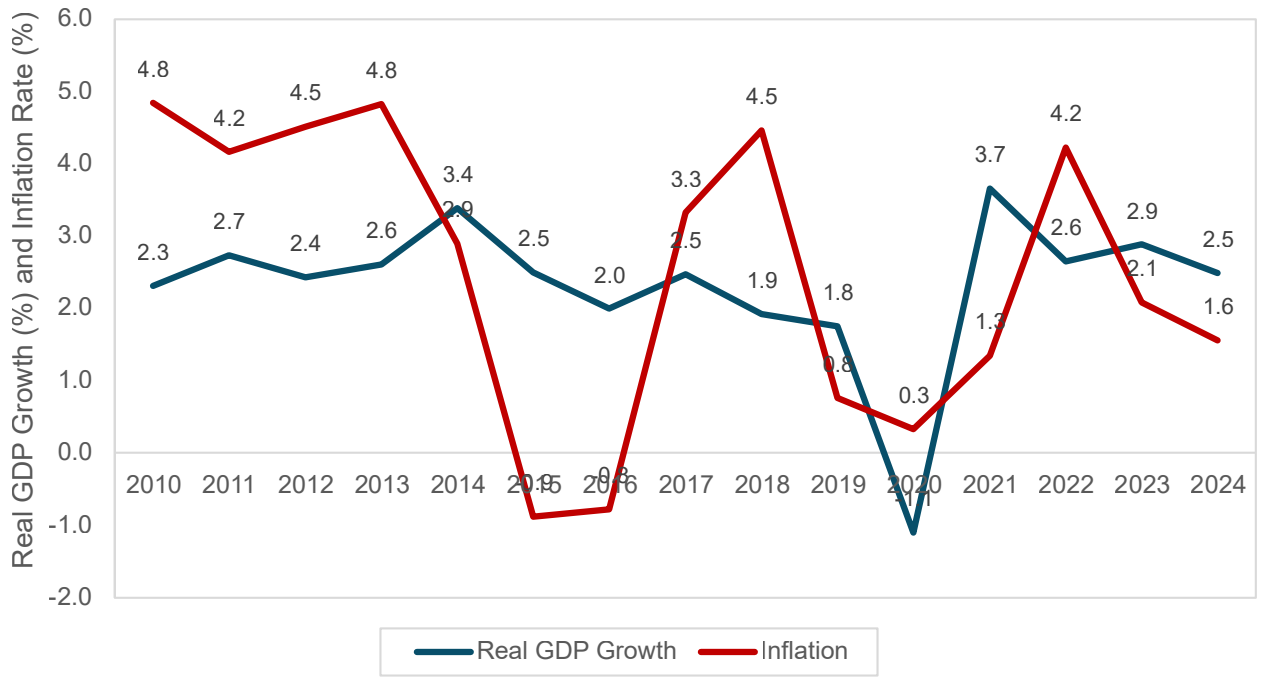
[2] Using the prior three months as a reference period.

2. Overview of the Jordanian economy (2010-25)

Real GDP growth in Jordan stagnated between 2010 and 2019, with an annual growth rate ranging from 1.8 percent to 3.4 percent and an average of 2.4 percent, as illustrated in Figure 1. This stagnation is actually broad-based, affecting almost all industries, and is attributed primarily to several external imbalances, including the implications of the global financial crisis in 2009, a shortage in energy supplies following the Arab Spring in 2011, and the eruption of the refugee crisis, primarily from Syria, which shares borders with Jordan. These imbalances strained the economy, limiting the fiscal space to implement stimulus packages that could promote economic growth (Almajali, 2023; Malaeb and Wahba, 2018).

Between 2010 and 2019, the general government's gross debt-to-GDP ratio increased dramatically from 59.4 percent in 2010 to 95.9 percent in 2024 (International Monetary Fund, 2025)currency and deposits, debt securities, loans, insurance, pensions and standardized guarantee schemes, and other accounts payable. Thus, all liabilities in the GFSM 2001 system are debt, except for equity and investment fund shares and financial derivatives and employee stock options. Debt can be valued at current market, nominal, or face values (GFSM 2001, paragraph 7.110. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and associated lockdowns led to a sharp decline in the real GDP growth rate, which fell to -1.1 percent. However, a notable recovery occurred in the following year, with growth reaching 3.7 percent before stagnating again in the remainder of the period (World Bank, 2025).

Figure 1. Economic growth and inflation in Jordan (2010-24)



Source: World Development Indicators database (WDI), World Bank.

Since Jordan is a resource-scarce and import-dependent country (Istaiteyeh and Najem, 2023), inflation dynamics are primarily driven by cost-push factors, most notably fluctuations in oil prices rather than by domestic demand pressures. During the early 2010s, oil prices were stable but high, resulting in rising energy costs and inflation, which averaged 4.6 percent over these years. The inflation rate dropped sharply until 2016, reaching -0.8 percent amid a sharp decline in oil prices, from USD 105 per barrel in 2014 to USD 30 per barrel in 2016 (Almajali, 2023). The inflation rate then rose again, peaking at 4.5 percent in 2018. This increase was due to three main factors: (1) a global recovery in international oil and food prices; (2) the introduction of tax-enhancing measures (e.g., introducing taxes, fees, and customs duties and removing sales tax exemption following the economic reform program with the International Monetary Fund); and (3) the depreciation of the US dollar to which the Jordanian Dinar is pegged (Al-Tamimi and Jaradat, 2018). The following decline in inflation is primarily linked to the contraction in global demand and prices following the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the inflation rate rose again after global prices increased following the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

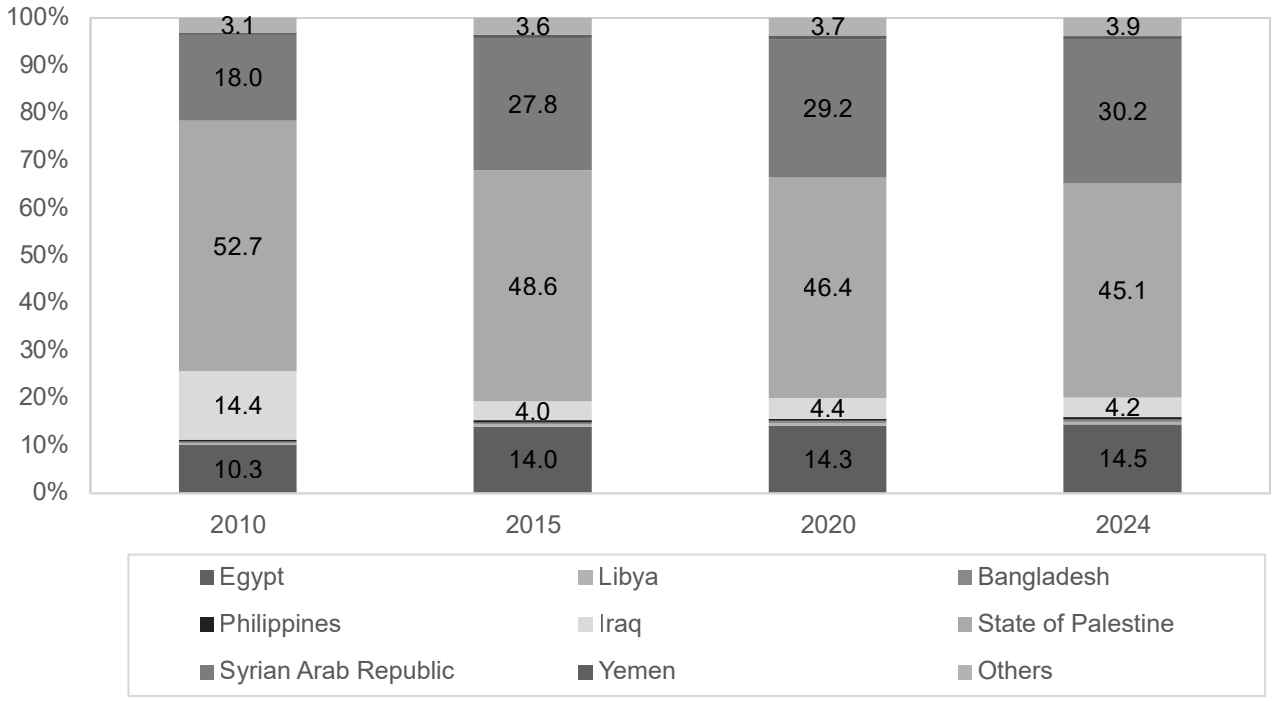
Jordan is also a net receiver of migrants, including refugees, mainly from neighboring Arab countries. The gap between immigrant and emigrant flows is widening over time because of the steady increase in immigrant flows, particularly after the influx of Syrian migrants to Jordan following the war there after 2011. Between 2010 and 2024, the number of immigrants increased from 3.7 million to 5.2 million, whereas the number of emigrants remained far lower, increasing from 0.5 million to 0.7 million (UNDESA, 2022). In 2010, before the war, the State of Palestine, the Syrian Arab Republic, Iraq, and Egypt were the top countries of origin, with shares of total immigrants of 52.7 percent, 18 percent, 14.4 percent, and 10.3 percent, respectively (see Figure 2). Since 2015, Syrian migrants have consistently trailed behind Palestinian migrants, with their share of the total migrant population steadily increasing from 27.8 percent in 2015 to 30.2 percent in 2024 (UNDESA, 2022).[3] While immigrants are concentrated in low-skilled jobs and earn relatively low wages, emigrants earn wages abroad that are approximately four times higher than those in Jordan, contributing to the rentier-state phenomenon that characterizes the Jordanian economy (Wahba, 2014).[4] This is reflected in the share of remittances to GDP, which is far higher in Jordan than in the lower-middle-income group (11.7 percent compared to 4.9 percent, respectively, over the average period), despite this share's tendency to decrease over time in the lower-middle-income group of countries (World Bank, 2024).

Jordan has applied the minimum wage policy since the introduction of Labor Law No. 8 of 1996 and its amendments in 2010 and 2019. The minimum wage level is determined by the Tripartite Committee for Labor Affairs, which considers cost of living indicators and includes representatives from the Government (Ministry of Labor), worker groups, and employer associations. The minimum wage is not necessarily uniform at the national level; it can be set either generally or for a specific area, occupation, or group of workers. The evolution of national minimum wage levels for Jordanians and

[3] Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that after the fall of the Assad regime in December 2024, there has been a notable increase in both actual returns and intentions to return. Between December 2024 and December 2025, the average number of UNHCR-registered refugees returning to Syria reached 13,633 (UNHCR 2026).

[4] Syrians, for instance, are concentrated in sectors like construction, agriculture, wholesale and retail trade, manufacturing and garment industries, services and janitorial work, domestic work and other informal activities (Hoogeveen and Obi, 2024).

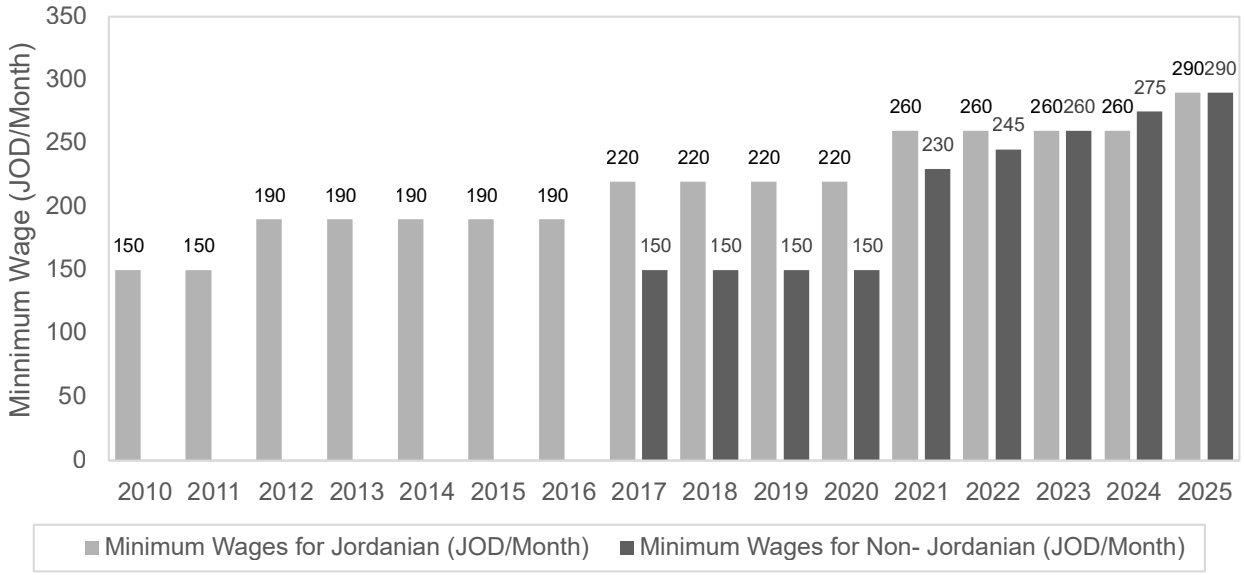
Figure 2. Immigrants by nationality (2010-24)



Source: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA).

non-Jordanians over the study period is presented in Figure 3. As shown in the figure, the minimum wage for Jordanians was JOD 150 per month in 2010 and has witnessed several increases in 2012 (JOD 190), 2017 (JOD 220), 2021 (JOD 260), and 2025 (JOD 290). The law imposes financial penalties on employers who pay wages below the statutory minimum wage, ranging from JOD 500 to 1,000, and doubles the penalties for repeat offenses (WageIndicator, 2025). Initially, the law excluded agriculture workers, domestic workers, and non-wage family workers from minimum wage coverage. However, over time, many other categories have been included, like clothing production workers, domestic workers, and non-Jordanian workers (Alhawarin and Kreishan, 2017). In 2010, the minimum wage was set at JOD 150 per month and changed three times until 2020. First, it increased to JOD 190 per month during 2012-16, then to JOD 190 per month during 2017-20, and to JOD 260 per month since 2021. The minimum wage was first applied to non-Jordanians in 2017, and it was substantially lower than that for Jordanians (only JOD 150). However, the wage gap between the two groups narrowed over time, reaching parity since 2023 (ILO, 2022).

Figure 3. Minimum wage levels for Jordanians and non-Jordanians (2010-25)



Source: ILO (2022).

3. Wages distribution and trends in Jordan (2010-25)[5]

3.1. Wage distribution[6]

The evolution of median real hourly wages in Jordan for both Jordanians (Panel A) and non-Jordanians (Panel B) is illustrated in Figure 4. For Jordanians, median real hourly wages were largely stable over time, whereas wage dispersion rose. Median real hourly wages rose slightly from JOD 2.2 per hour in 2010 to JOD 2.4 in 2016, before dipping to JOD 2.3 in 2025. Men's wages mirrored this trend throughout the period. In contrast, women's wages first decreased from JOD 2.5 per hour to JOD 2.4, then increased to JOD 2.6. As shown in the figure, women's wages were consistently equal to or higher than men's across all waves. These higher wages for women are attributable to the fact that the vast majority of women with low levels of education were not economically active; thus, most employed women had higher levels of education and were typically employed in high-skilled, high-paid jobs (ILO, 2010). The figure also shows that median wage dispersion increased over time overall and for both men and women, and was generally higher among women than men.

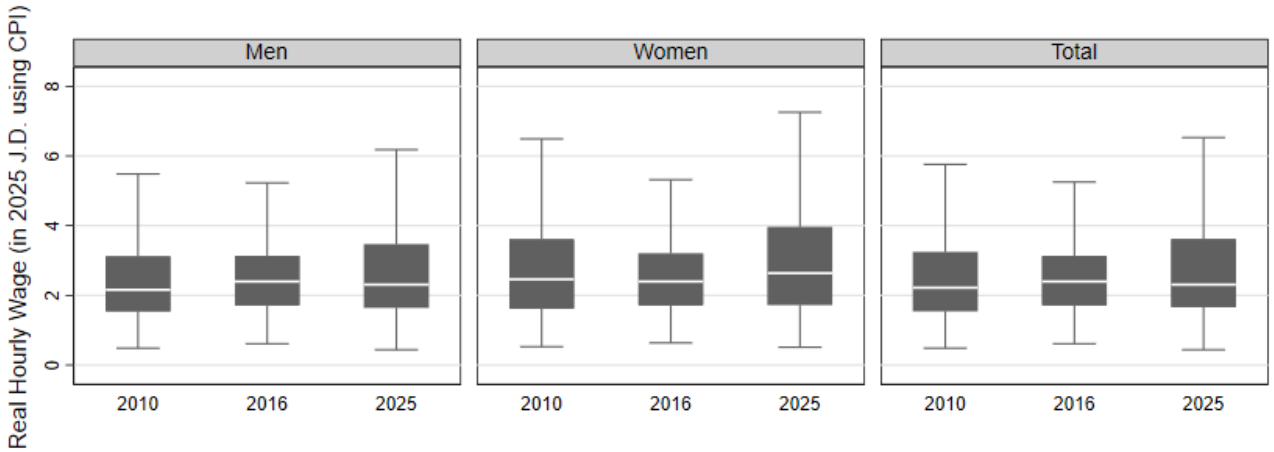
Median wages for non-Jordanians were considerably lower than those for Jordanians and remained fairly stable over time at JOD 1.3 and JOD 1.4 per hour, respectively. Wage trends for non-Jordanian

[5] Only wages of the primary job are considered in the analysis. Incidence of having a secondary waged job didn't exceed 0.5 percent in the JLMPS 2025.

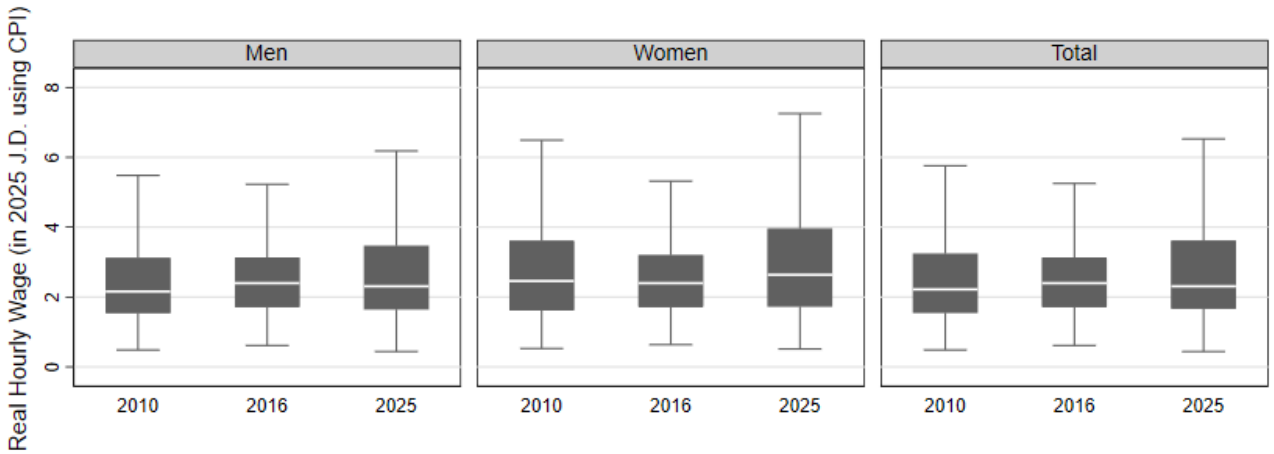
[6] The "outdetect" command in Stata (Belotti et.al., 2022) was applied to detect and assess the sensitivity of wage outliers. It identifies the variable transformation that best normalizes the distribution and flags an observation as an outlier if its z-score exceeds a conventional threshold of 3. The outliers were dropped from the analysis, and their percentage varied between five to seven percent of the non-missing observations for the wages.

Figure 4. Distribution of real hourly wages (in constant 2025 prices) (primary jobs) by sex for Jordanians and non-Jordanians, (2010-25)

A. Jordanians



B.Non-Jordanians



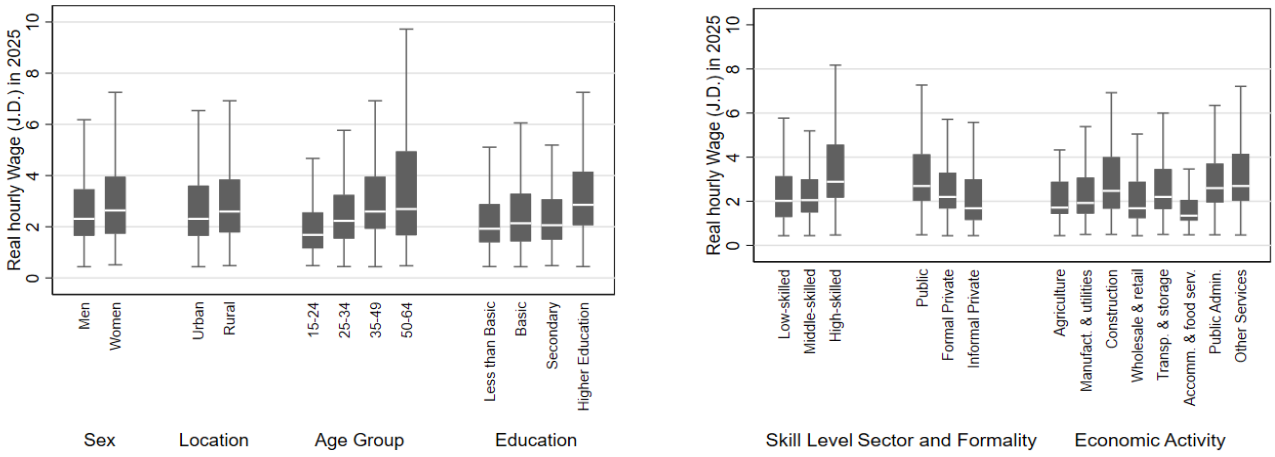
Source: Authors' calculations based on the JLMPS (2010, 2016, and 2025).
Notes: Using the Consumer Price Index of the average first three months of 2025 as the base year.

men and women were similar to those of Jordanians. On the one hand, men's wages first increased from JOD 1.3 per hour to JOD 1.4 between 2010 and 2016, then fell back to JOD 1.3 in 2025. On the other hand, women's wages declined from JOD 1.8 per hour to JOD 0.9 before increasing to JOD 1.2. Unlike Jordanians, non-Jordanian men earned higher wages than non-Jordanian women, except in 2010. Wage dispersion also had a decreasing rather than an increasing trend for non-Jordanians. However, this decreasing trend was particularly the case among non-Jordanian men. Women also had higher wage dispersion than men.

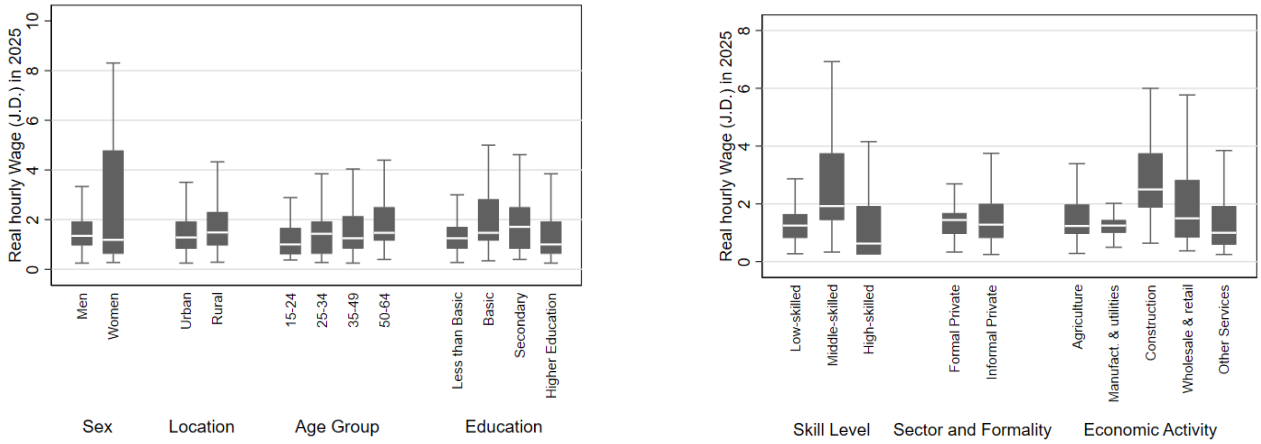
Figure 5 showcases the differences in median real hourly wages across subgroups according to demographic and work characteristics, for both Jordanians and non-Jordanians in 2025. For Jordanians, as illustrated in panel A of the figure, median real hourly wages were higher among women, rural

Figure 5. Distribution of real hourly wages (in constant 2025 prices) (primary jobs) by subgroups in 2025

A. Jordanians



B.Non-Jordanians



Source: Authors' calculations based on the JLMPS (2010, 2016, and 2025).

workers, young workers, public sector workers, and construction workers. Additionally, inequality was more pronounced among women, rural workers, older age workers, highly educated and highly skilled workers,[7] public-sector workers, and construction workers.

Panel B of the figure shows median real hourly wages for non-Jordanians.[8] Similar distributions and wage dispersion were observed among non-Jordanians, with the exception of non-Jordanian men, who receive higher wages and experience less wage dispersion than women. Median wages were also higher and more scattered among those with middle education and skills. Additionally, as shown in

[7] Occupational skill levels are defined as follows: High – managers, technicians, and associate professionals; Middle – clerical support, plant and machinery, and craft and trade workers; Low – agricultural, service and sales, and other elementary occupations.

[8] Categories with less than 30 observations are not shown in the figure.

panel B of the figure, non-Jordanians were typically concentrated in the private sector, both formal and informal, and in particular economic activities such as construction and wholesale and retail trade.

3.2. Wage trends

Trends in real hourly wages by detailed groups are shown in Figure 6. Some general observations can be drawn from these trends. First, unlike men's wages, which showed consistent convergence over time across most subgroups, women's wages exhibited sharp divergence. This confirms the conclusion from Figure 4 that wage inequality was higher and increasing among women than men in all groups considered in the analysis.

Second, whereas wages increase monotonically with age, education, and skills, the wage gap between education and skill groups narrowed over time, particularly between 2010 and 2016. This is mainly driven by a decline in wages for highly educated and skilled workers compared to their less-educated and less-skilled counterparts, indicating a decrease in the education and skill premium in the Jordanian labor market.

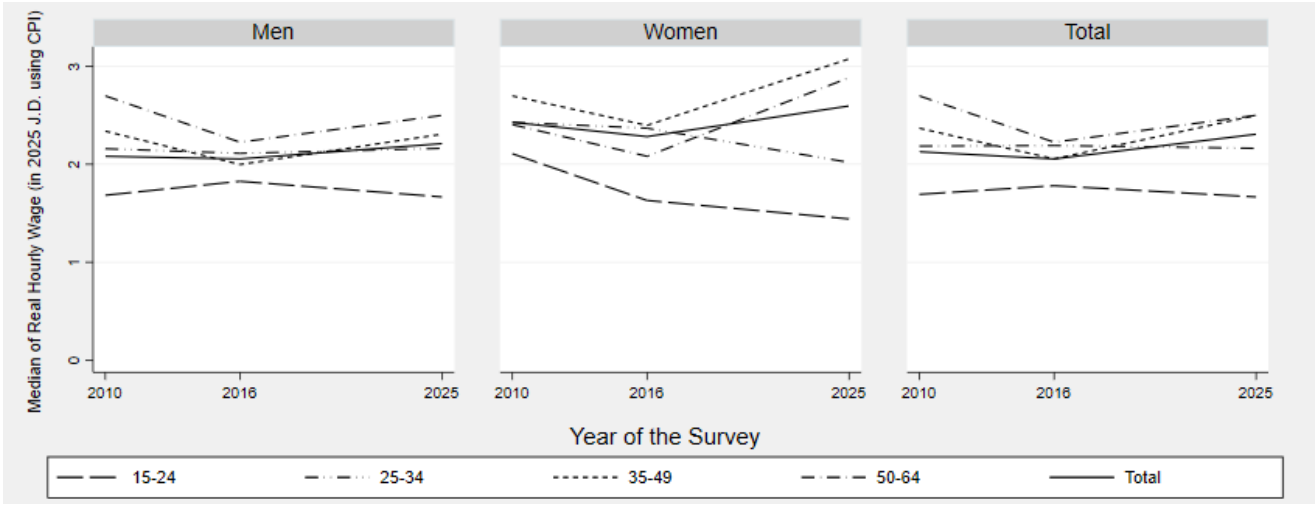
Third, the public sector constantly paid higher wages than the formal and informal private sectors across all survey waves.

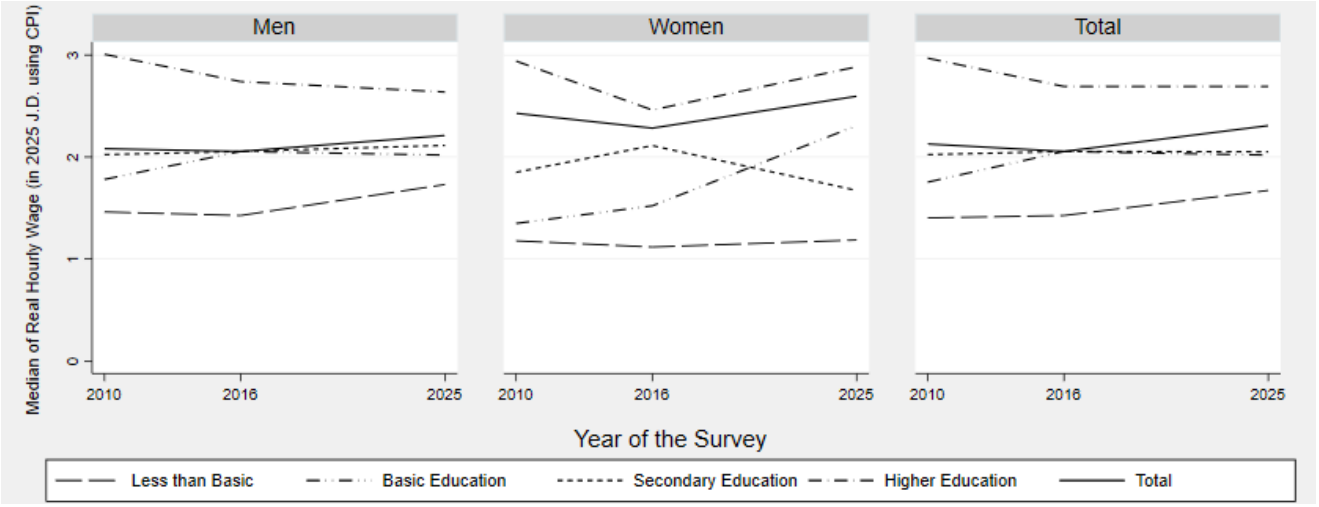
Fourth, the figure suggests a substantial wage gap favoring rural workers. While this seems unexpected, it is due to the fact that the majority of wage workers in rural areas, approximately 63.6 percent, work in the public sector, which pays higher wages than both the formal and informal private sectors. This also partly explains why Jordanians tend to have higher wages, as they are more likely than non-Jordanians to work in the public sector.

Delving into wage growth among each group individually in Figure 7, it is apparent that growth patterns differed greatly between the two periods. Median real hourly wages declined overall during the first period (2010-16). Over this period, wage decline happened among both men (0.2 percent) and women (1.0 percent); urban workers (0.4 percent); oldest age groups (35-49 by 2.4 percent and 50-64 by 3.2 percent); those with higher education (1.6 percent percent); workers with either low (1.6 percent) or high (2.0 percent) skill levels; and workers in some economic activities such as other services (2.8 percent) and accommodation and food services (0.5 percent).

For the second period (2016-25), wages increased by 1.3 percent. The increase happened for both men (0.8 percent) and women (1.4 percent); urban (1.1 percent) and rural workers (1.4 percent); oldest age groups (35-49 by 2.2 percent and 50-64 by 1.3 percent); those with less than basic education (1.8 percent); low-skilled and high-skilled workers (1.4 and 0.6 percent, respectively); private-sector workers (0.4 and 1.2 percent, respectively); and those working in manufacturing and utilities (0.6 percent), construction (1.8 percent), and public administration (0.5 percent).

Figure 6. Evolution of real median hourly wages (in constant 2025 prices) (primary jobs) by sex, age, education, sector, location, and nationality (2010-25)





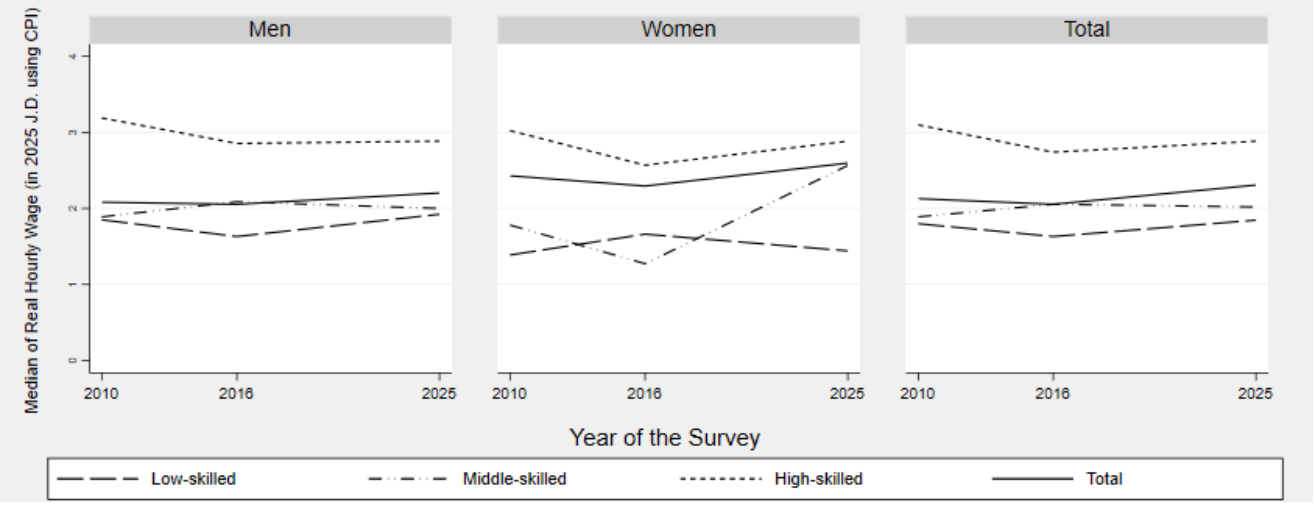
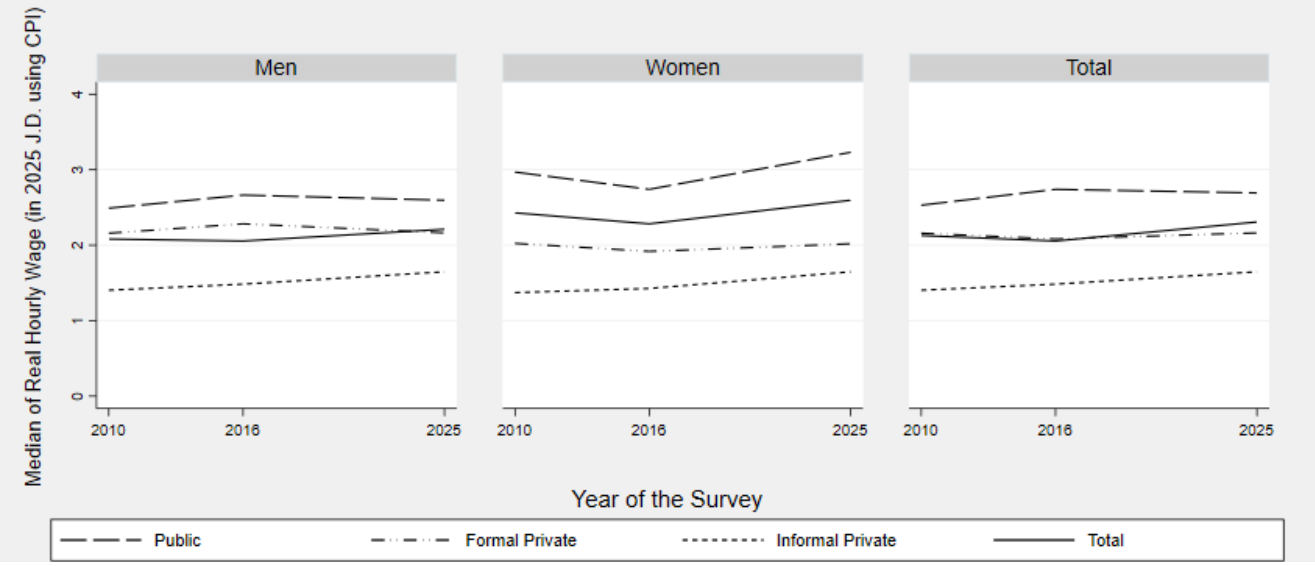
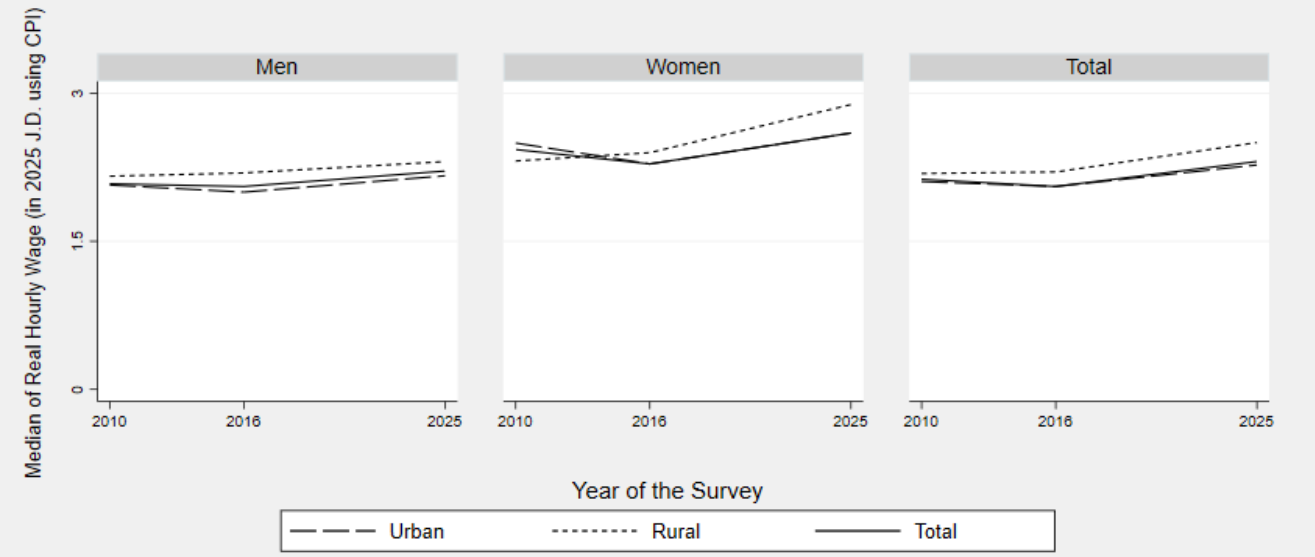
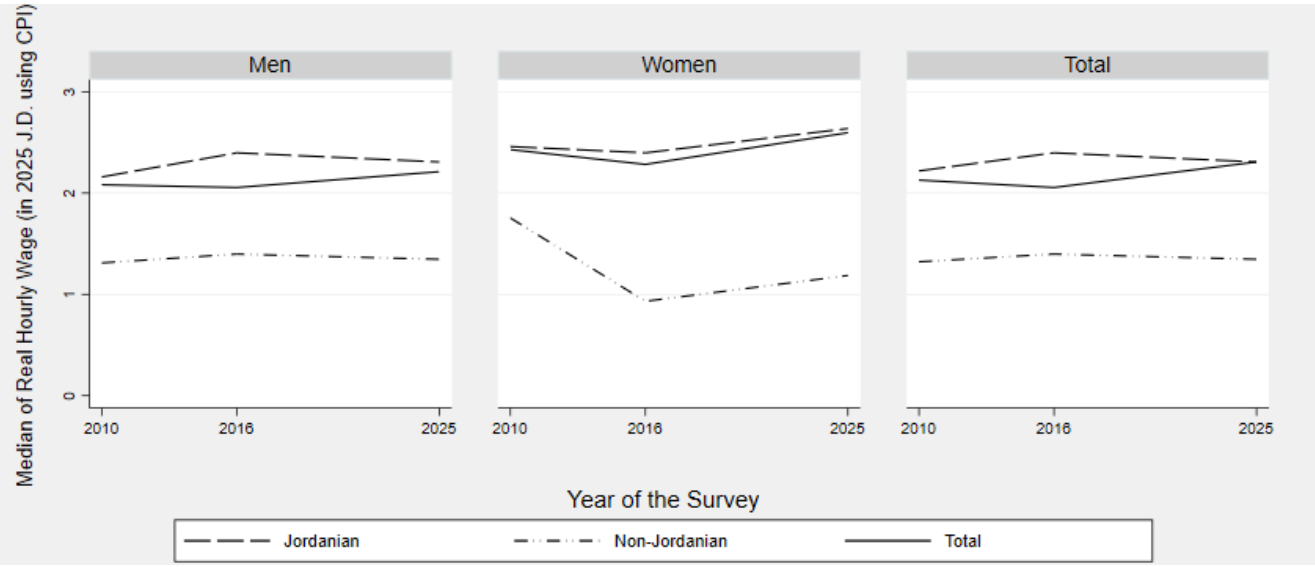


Figure 6. Evolution of real median hourly wages (in constant 2025 prices) (primary jobs) by sex, age, education, sector, location, and nationality (2010-25) (Continued)







Source: Authors' calculations based on the JLMPS (2010, 2016, and 2025).

Figure 7. Annual growth rate of real median hourly wage (in constant 2025 prices) (primary jobs) by demographics (sex and location), education, skills, and sector (2010-25)

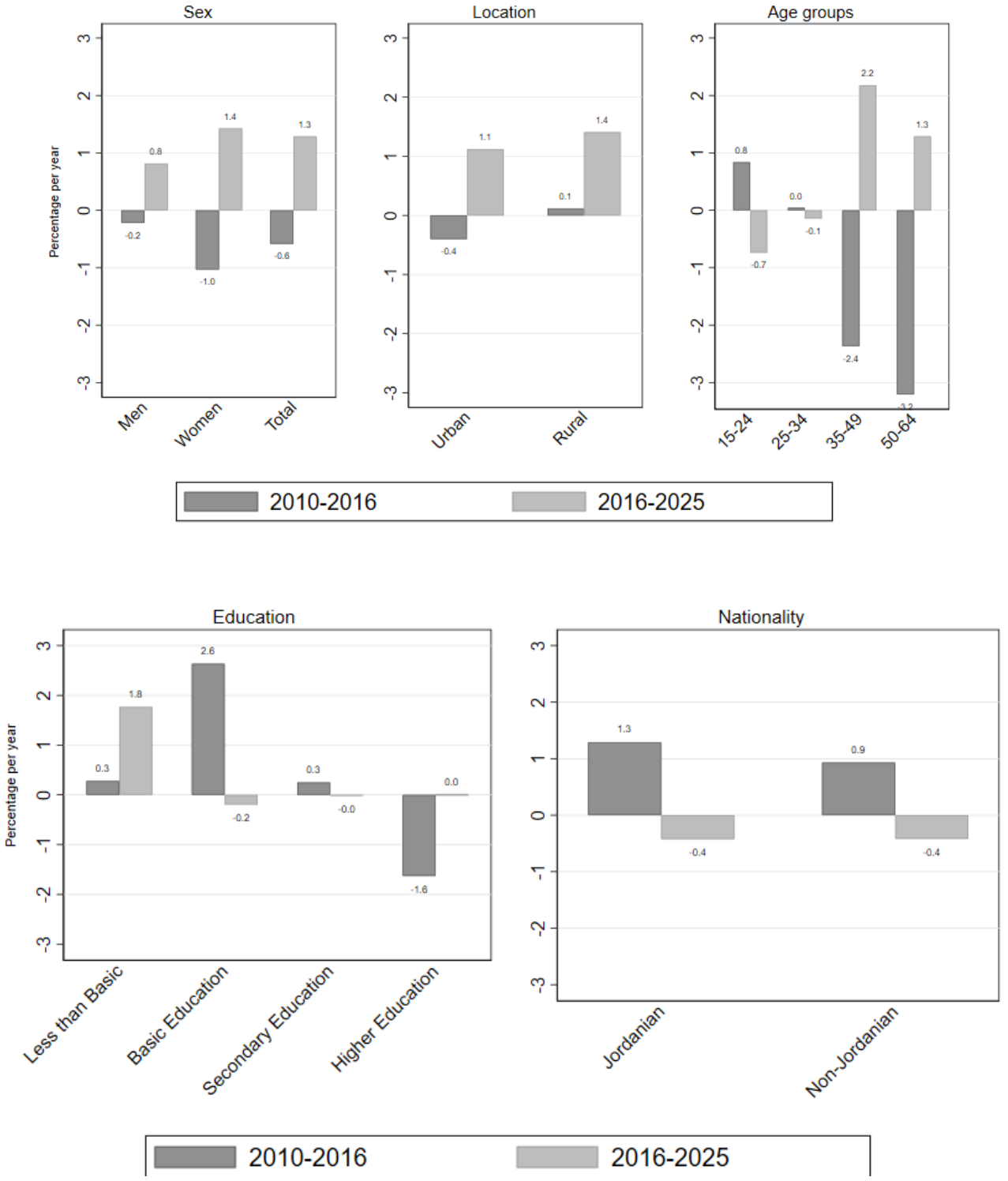
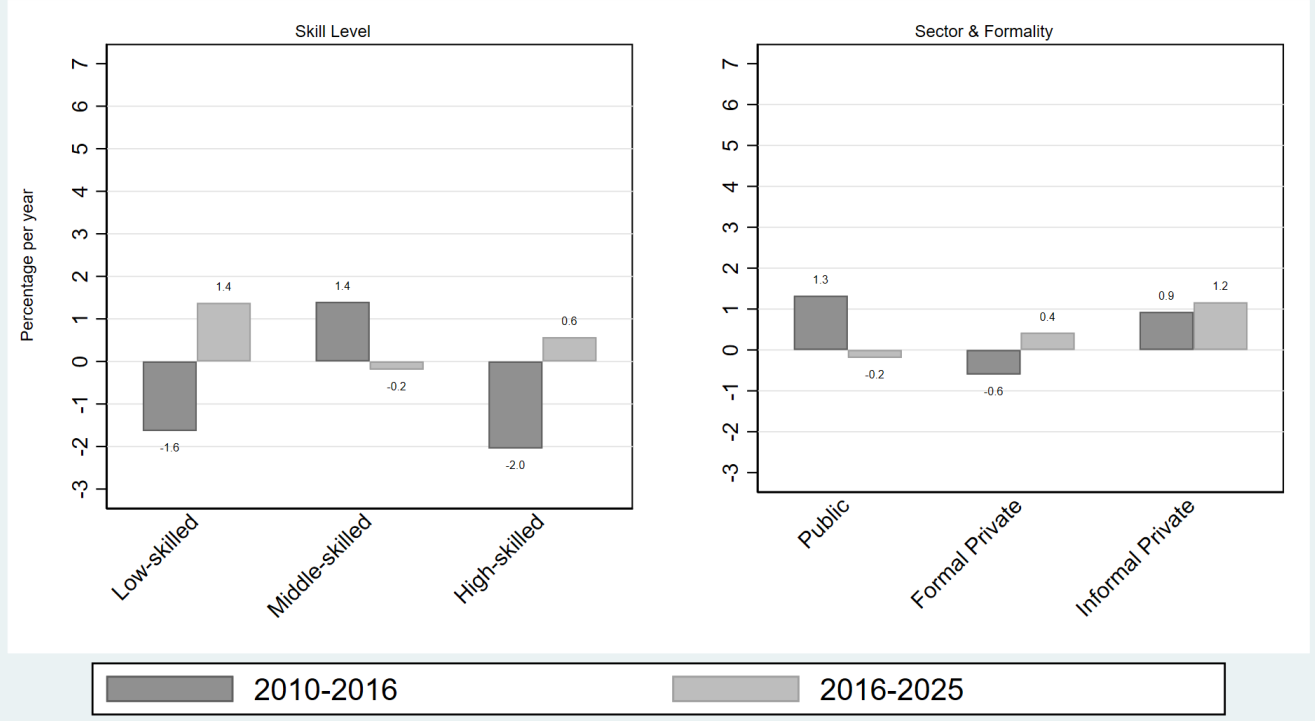
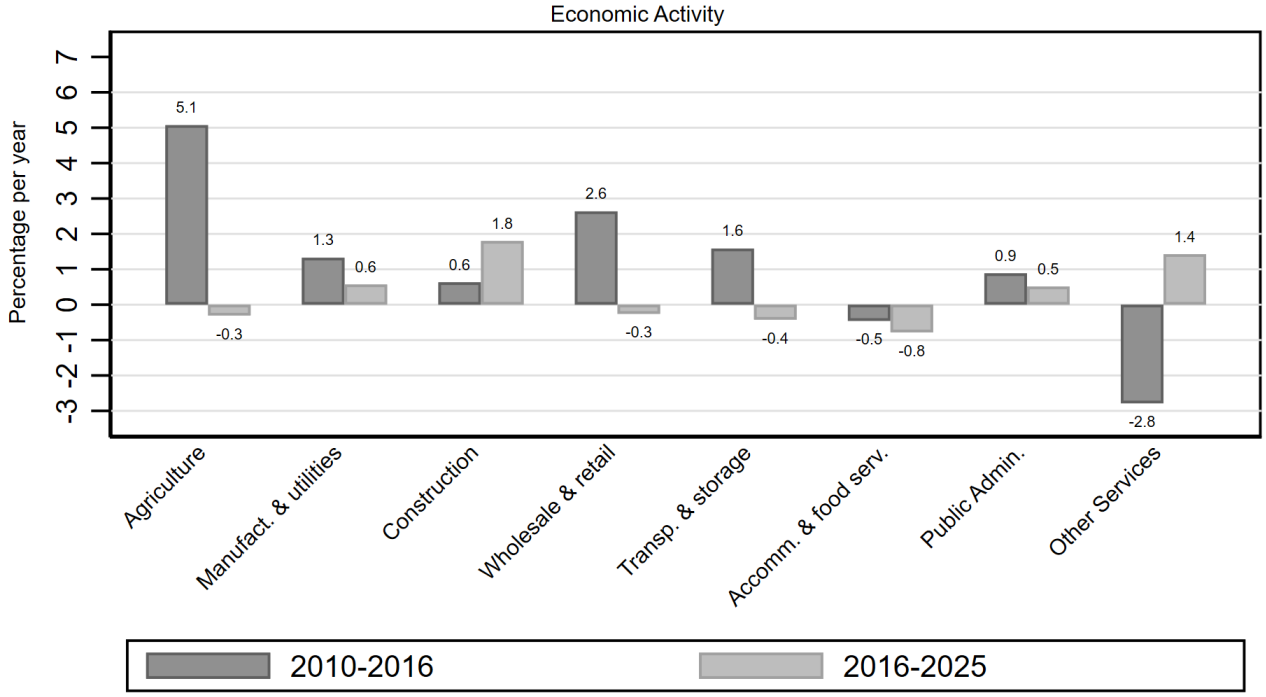


Figure 7. Annual growth rate of real median hourly wage (in constant 2025 prices) (primary jobs) by demographics (sex and location), education, skills, and sector (2010-25) (Continued)

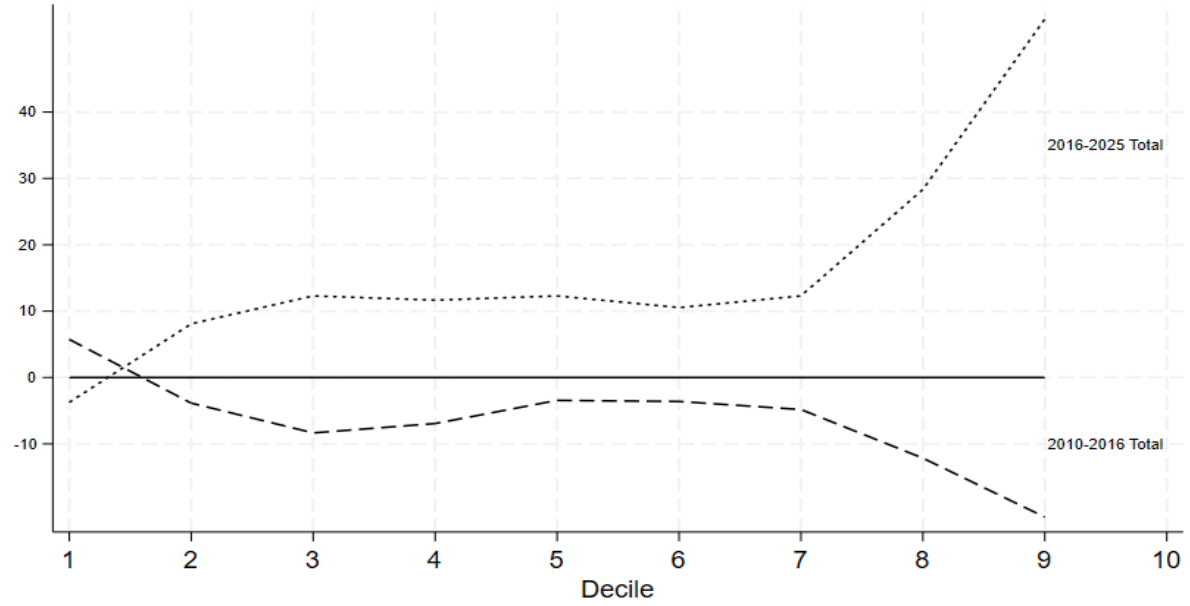




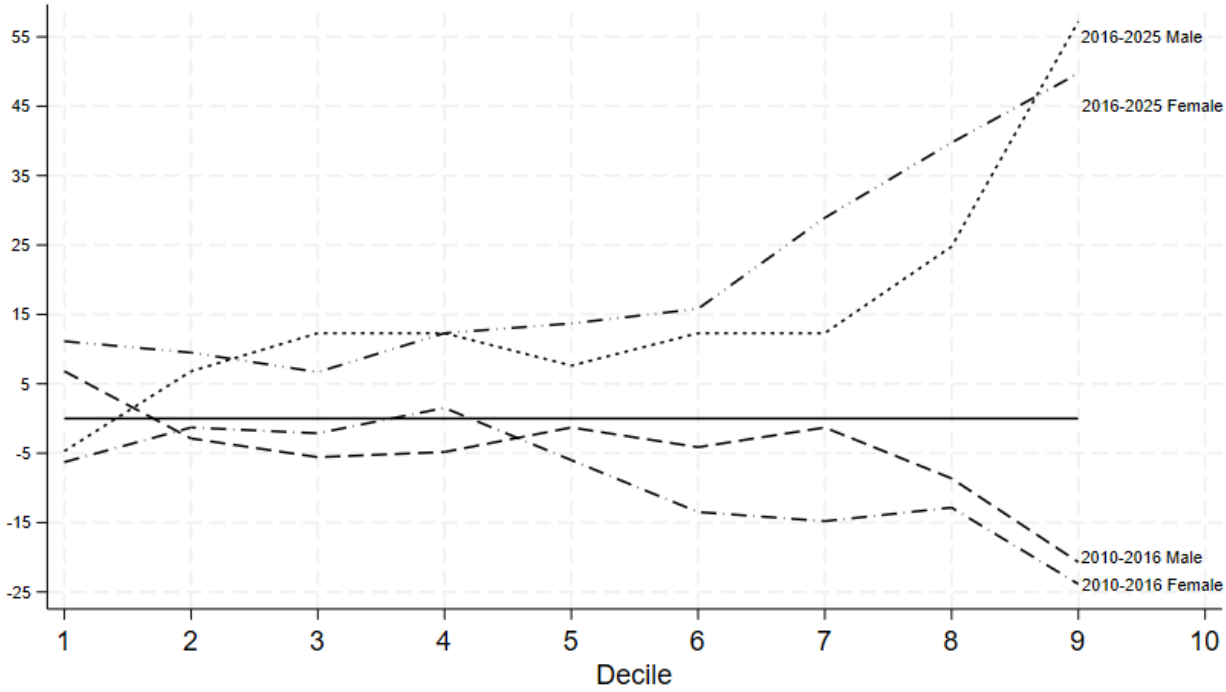
Source: Authors' calculations based on the JLMPS (2010, 2016, and 2025).
Notes: Annual growth rates for the median income are calculated using the formula:ln(Median wage in current round/Median wage in previous round)/Number of years between the two years

Figure 8. Relative changes in real hourly wages (in constant jan. 2025 prices) (primary jobs) by wage deciles

A. Overall



B.By Gender



Source: Authors' calculations based on the JLMPS (2010, 2016, and 2025).
Notes: Wage deciles are computed in each round separately by splitting wage workers into ten equal groups based on their real wages. The real wage, below which 10 percent, 20 percent,…,90 percent of the target group earns is computed in each round. Then, the relative change in wages per decile between any two years is calculated by subtracting the previous wage of a particular decile from its current wage and dividing it by its previous wage. Finally, this ratio is multiplied by 100 to get the percentage change.

Relative changes in real hourly wages by wage decile for the periods 2010-16 and 2016-25, both overall and by gender group, are illustrated in Figure 8. During the first period, wages declined across all wage deciles, with the decline stronger in the highest-wage deciles, suggesting a reduction in overall wage inequality. However, inequality expanded notably during the second period. While all wage deciles experienced wage growth, the growth was sharper among the highest wage deciles.

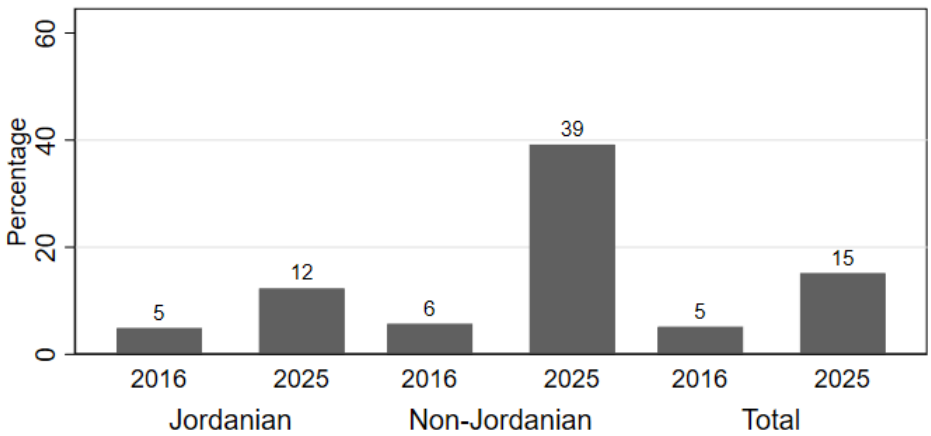
Disaggregating relative changes by gender reveals no major change in the overall pattern. The main difference during the first period is that men experienced a stronger wage decline than women in the lower wage deciles. The reverse is true for higher wage deciles, where the wage decline was stronger among women. During the second period, wage growth was pervasive across all wage deciles. Men generally experienced lower wage growth than women, especially from the fourth wage decile onward, and the gap between the two expanded at higher wage deciles.

4. Minimum wages and working hours

Non-Jordanians were first subject to a minimum wage in 2017, initially set at JOD 150, which was below the JOD 220 floor that applied to Jordanians. By 2025, however, both groups converged to the same minimum wage of JOD 290. The proportion of workers earning less than the monthly minimum wage increased from around five percent in 2016 to 15 percent in 2025. The proportion varied by nationality. While the percentage of Jordanian workers more than doubled, from five percent in 2016 to around 12 percent, the proportion of low-paid non-Jordanian workers tripled, from 12 percent in 2016 to 39 percent in 2025 (Figure 9).

It is important to note that the value of the minimum wage influences the increase in the percentage of employees receiving it through multiple channels, one of which is that the value of JOD 290 exceeds the inflation-adjusted value of the original 2010 minimum wage of JOD 150, which is estimated at around JOD 210 in 2025. Additionally, the wage structure for non-Jordanian workers appears not to have evolved at the same pace as minimum wage legislation.

Figure 9. Percentage of workers receiving below the minimum monthly wages (primary jobs) by nationality (2010-25)



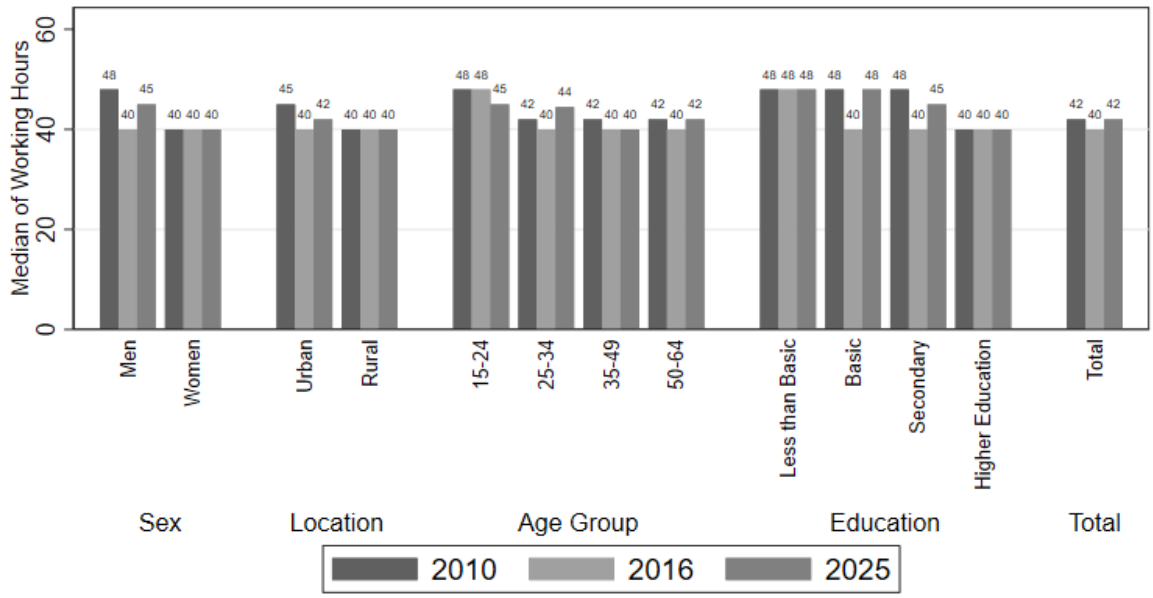
Source: Authors' calculations based on the JLMPS (2010, 2016, and 2025).

To compare the percentage of low-paid workers across subgroups, the minimum hourly wage was calculated using different regulated working hours: a 40-hour-per-week norm was applied to the public sector, and the legally permitted extended 48 hours per week was applied to the private sector. Consequently, the percentage of those earning less than the minimum hourly wage was calculated. It is important to note that the legal framework permits private-sector work hours to extend to 48 hours (Ministry of Labor, n.d.).

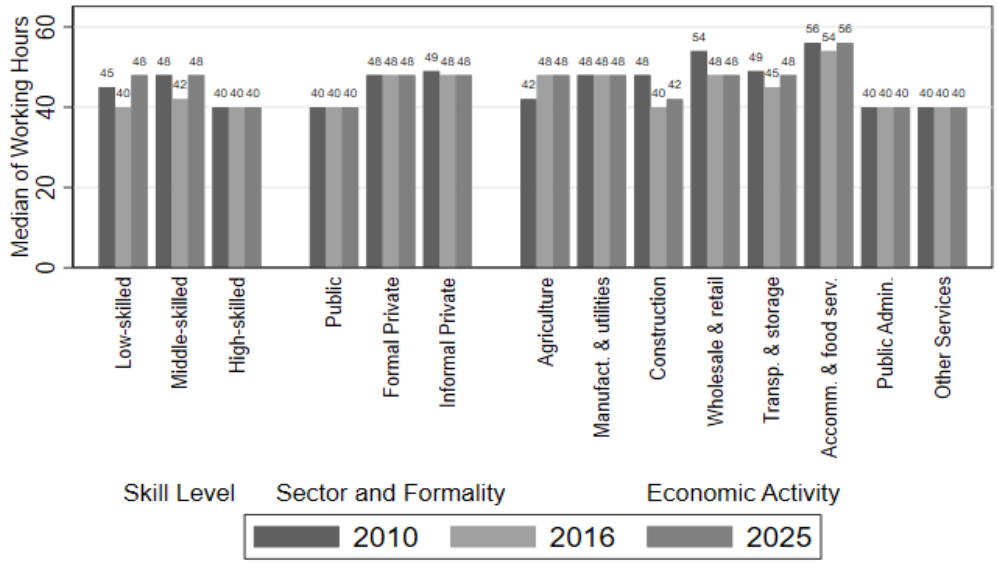
By looking at the change in the median weekly working hours across waves, Figures 10 and 11 illustrate the increase between 2016 and 2025 for both Jordanians and non-Jordanians but with different rates.

Figure 10. Median weekly working hours for Jordanian by subgroups, (2010-2025)

A. Jordanian by demographic characteristics



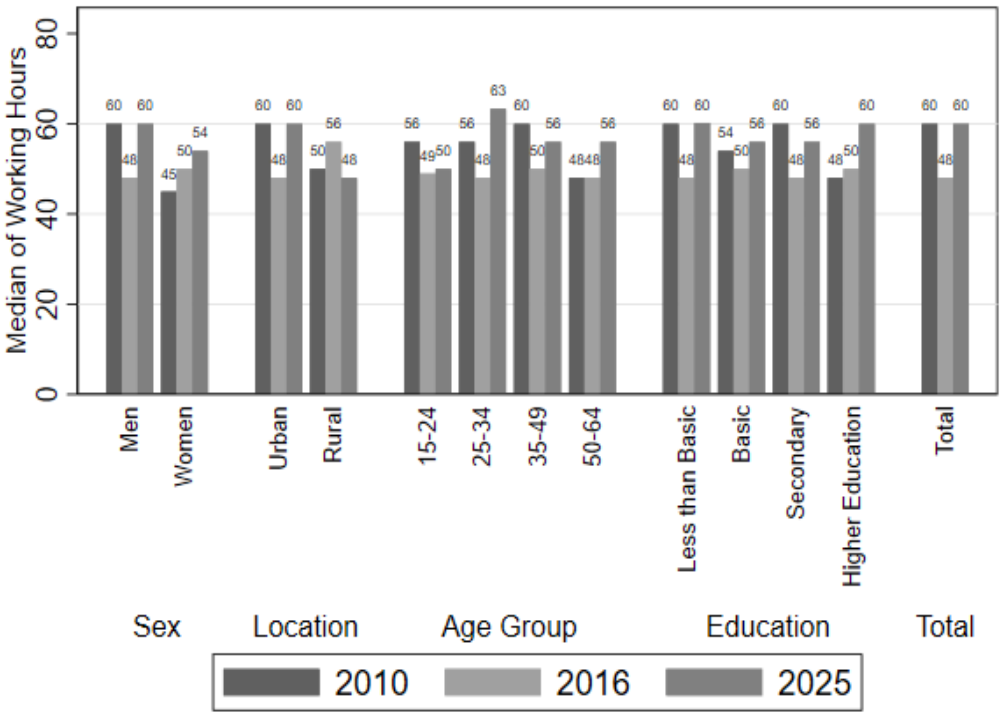
B. Jordanian by job characteristics



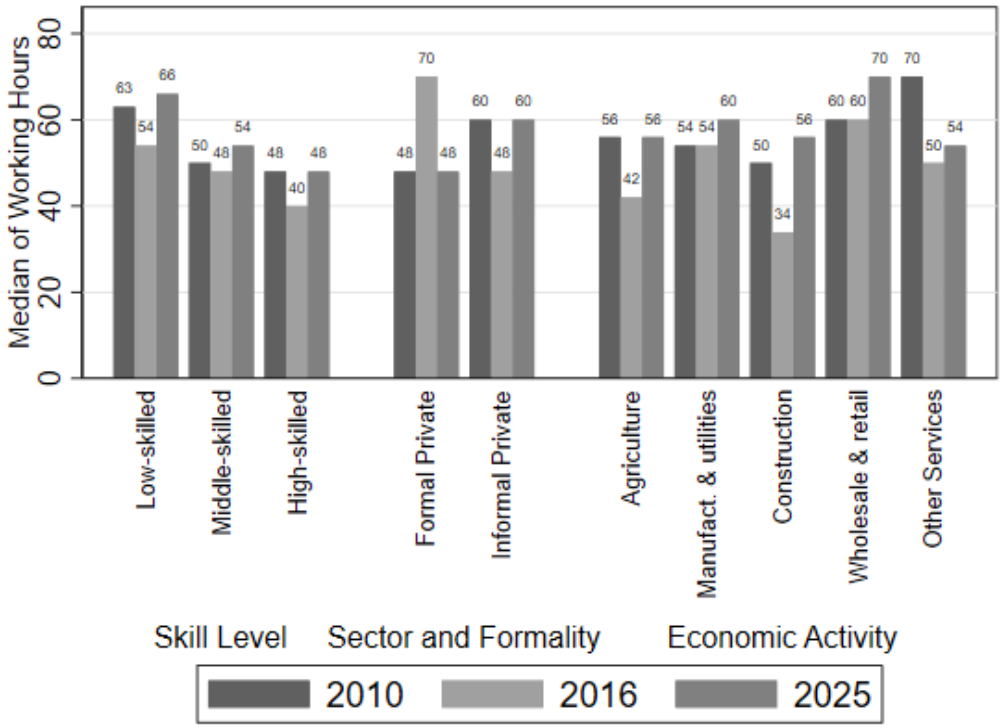
Source: Authors' calculations based on the JLMPS (2010, 2016, and 2025).

Figure 11. Median weekly working hours for non-Jordanian by subgroups, (2010-2025)

A. Non-Jordanian by demographic characteristics



B. Non-Jordanian by job characteristics



Source: Authors' calculations based on the JLMPS (2010, 2016, and 2025).

While it increased by five percent for Jordanians (40 hours in 2016 vs. 42 hours in 2025), non-Jordanian workers experienced a 25 percent increase from 48 hours per week in 2016 to 60 hours in 2025.

Additionally, Figure 10 shows that Jordanian workers in the private sector worked approximately eight more hours per week than those in the public sector (48 hours vs. 40 hours). The average weekly working hours jumped to 60 hours in 2025 for non-Jordanians in the informal private sector, 12 hours higher than non-Jordanians employed in the formal private sectors (48 hours) (Figure 11).

Considering the increase in median working hours and the minimum hourly wage, the proportion of workers earning less than the minimum wage in Jordan increased notably, reaching approximately 28 percent in 2025 compared to around 14 percent in 2016.

The gap in the proportion of low-paid workers between Jordanian and non-Jordanian workers widened in 2025, with around three-fifths (61 percent) of non-Jordanian workers earning less than the minimum hourly wages, compared to around one quarter (24 percent) of Jordanian workers.

This wide gap can be attributed to several factors, one of which is that the law exempts workers, including domestic workers.[9] The JLMPS 2025 data show that 18 percent of the non-Jordanian workers were in the household activities sector, constituting over 80 percent of total workers in this sector, which means that the minimum wage law does not apply to them.

Furthermore, public sector employment—in which around 45 percent of Jordanian workers were employed—typically mandates a minimum of 35 hours per week, extendable to a maximum of 40 hours (which is also the median). In contrast, almost all non-Jordanian workers were employed in the private sector,[10] where the median working hours were 48 in the private formal sector (aligning with the permitted working hours), but rose to 60 hours in the informal sector.

While the share of minimum wage workers varied considerably across subgroups, its increase was pervasive. This could be partially attributable to widespread violations of minimum wage requirements by the private sector, driven by weak law enforcement, particularly among the vulnerable groups mentioned (Alhawarin and Kreishan, 2017). For Jordanians, while the gender gap in the share of minimum wage was very narrow in 2016, it widened by 2025, reaching 25 percent for men and 19 percent for women. The overall pattern of shares remained largely similar between 2016 and 2025. However, the share was particularly high among less-educated workers (reaching 36 percent among those with less than basic education and 33 percent among those with basic education); less-skilled workers (37 percent); younger workers (45 percent); and informal private-sector workers (40 percent). By 2025, the pattern had reversed across several groups: the share of low-paid workers was higher among men than women (63 percent vs. 54 percent), higher in urban than rural areas (62 percent vs. 55 percent), and elevated among workers in high-skilled occupations.

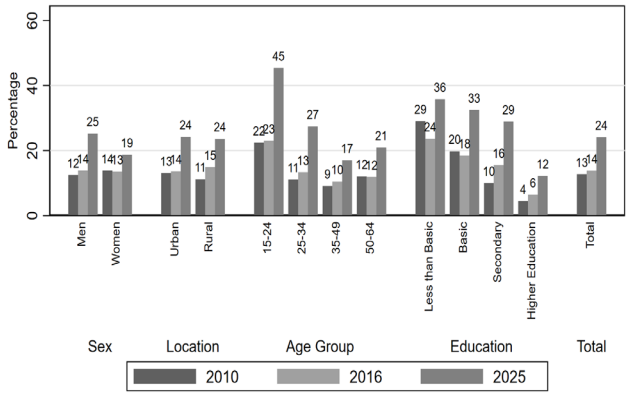
[9] Workers in garment and textile occupations are exempt by law, but the data did not provide a sufficient number of observations to estimate the proportion of non-Jordanian workers in this sector.

[10] Authors' calculations using JLMPS 2025 data.

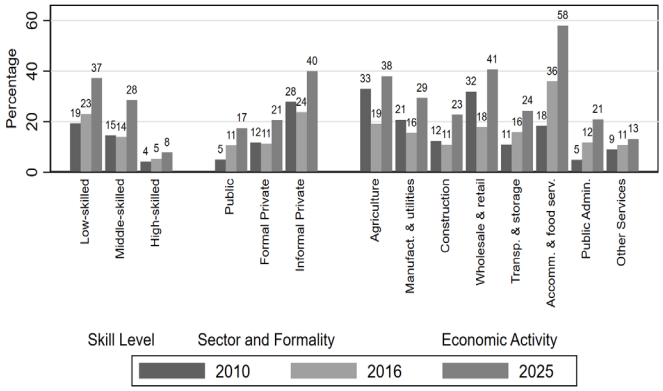
Differences among non-Jordanian groups were similar to those among Jordanians in most groups, with a few exceptions. In 2016, the share of low paid workers was higher among women than men (54 vs. 12 percent) and among middle-aged workers (18 percent in the age group 35-49 years) than younger workers, and in rural areas compared to urban areas (22 vs. 13 percent). Another unexpected difference was the increase in highly educated low-paid workers in 2016 and 2025 (20 and 69 percent, respectively). In 2025, the pattern had reversed across several groups: the share of low-paid workers was higher among men compared to women (63 vs 54 percent), higher in urban than rural (62 vs. 55 percent), and higher among workers in high-skilled occupations (66 percent).

Figure 12. Percentage of Jordanian workers receiving hourly wages below the minimum hourly wage level by subgroups (2010-25)

A. Non-Jordanian by demographic characteristics



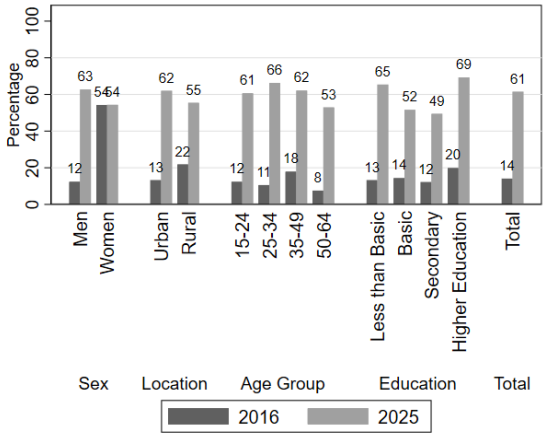
B. Non-Jordanian by job characteristics



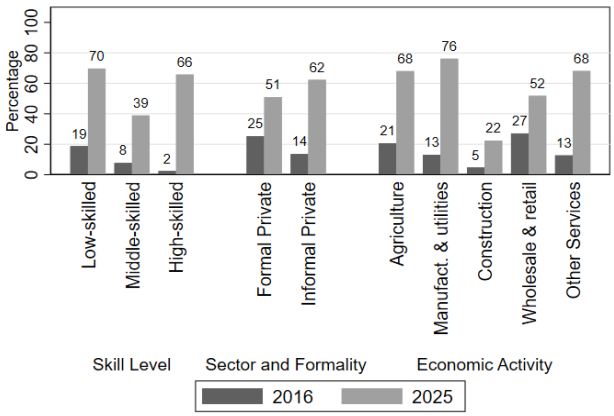
Source: Authors' calculations based on the JLMPS (2010, 2016, and 2025).
Notes: The share in each year is calculated based on comparing the nominal wage received by each subgroup in each year with the minimum wage level prevailing in that year.

Figure 13. Percentage of non-Jordanian workers receiving hourly wages below the minimum hourly wage level by subgroups, (2010-25)

A. Non-Jordanians by demographic characteristics



B. Non-Jordanians by job characteristics



Source: Authors' calculations based on the JLMPS (2010, 2016, and 2025).

5. Wage inequality

Outliers can distort the accuracy of inequality measures, particularly when the Gini coefficient is applied to wage data (World Bank, 2017). The Gini index of hourly wage inequality indicates that overall inequality dropped from 41 to 33 between 2010 and 2016, then increased again in 2025, reaching 40—slightly lower than the 2010 level.

The same pattern is observed across all subgroups. As shown in panel A of Figure 14, while the Gini coefficients in these subgroups declined in 2016, they rebounded by 2025. When disaggregated by sex and location, Gini values in 2025 were closely clustered, ranging between 39 and 40. Wage inequality was higher among non-Jordanian workers (41, compared with 39 for Jordanian workers), among workers aged 55 and above (43), and among workers with basic education (43).

The Gini index in 2025 also varied by job characteristics subgroups. It decreased with the skill level of the occupations. As illustrated in panel B of Figure 14, the Gini index was highest in the informal private sector with a value of 42, followed by the public sector (38), and lowest in the formal private sector (35).

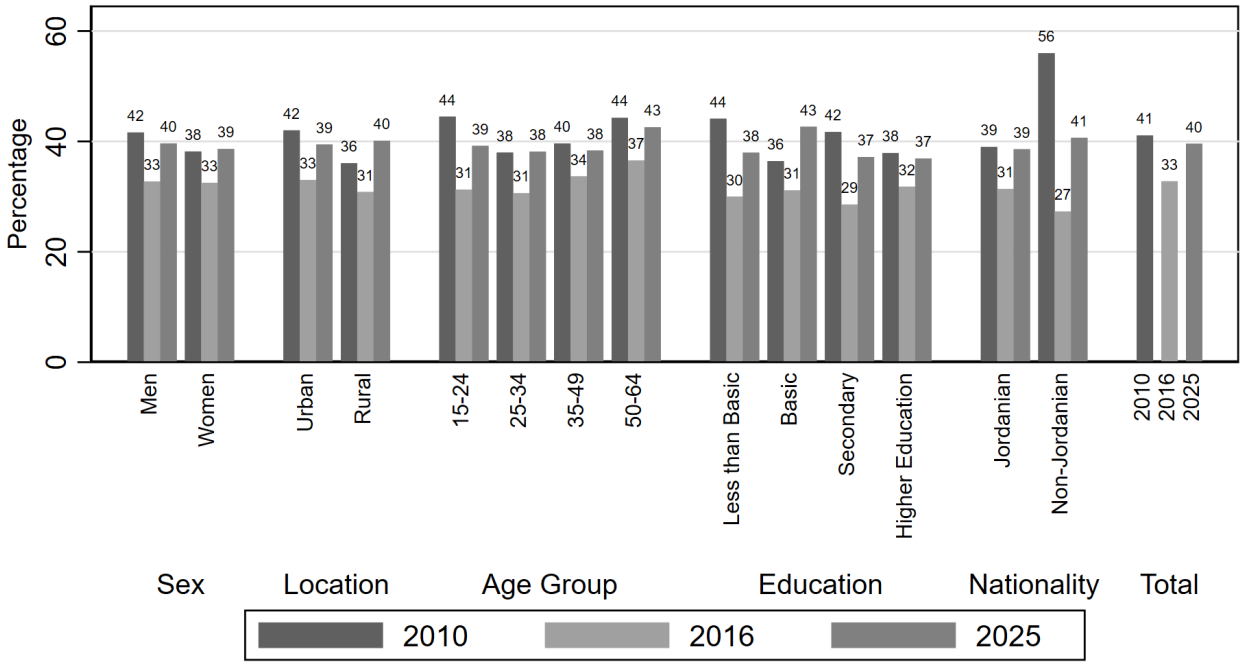
Examining wage inequality around the median across the three rounds in Figure 15 shows that the ratio of the lowest 10 percent wages to the median wage slightly declined over time, with workers at the bottom 10^{th} percentile earning around 50 percent of the median wage in 2010 and 2016, and 40 percent in 2025. The value of the highest 90^{th} percentiles was more than twice the median wage, with a slight decline to 1.9 times the median wage in 2016 to 2.5 times in 2025. However, when comparing the 90^{th}-percentile wage to the 10^{th}-percentile wage, the gap widened in 2025 after a decline in 2016, reaching a level where the top 10 percent of workers earned around six times as much as the lowest 10 percent. While the aforementioned inequality measures show a slightly stable, moderate level of overall wage inequality in Jordan, they don't reveal whether there were wage disparities within groups.

To examine wage gaps and disparities in Jordan by sex, nationality, and sector, we estimated and plotted hourly wages across the distribution for each group. Figure 16 presents the estimated hourly wages for men and women by decile. The results indicate that women out-earned men across the entire wage distribution. While the wage gap widened monotonically with income, it narrowed at the top decile. However, it is important to note that this observed wage advantage for women may be driven by gender segmentation in the Jordanian labor market, where the JLMPS 2025 data shows that two-thirds (66 percent) of women wage workers were in high-skilled occupations compared to only around one-third (29 percent) of men wage workers. It is important to note that implementing a universal public minimum hourly wage across all workers, regardless of sector, leads to an increase of more than 10 percentage points in the share of low-paid workers in Jordan (Figure 16).

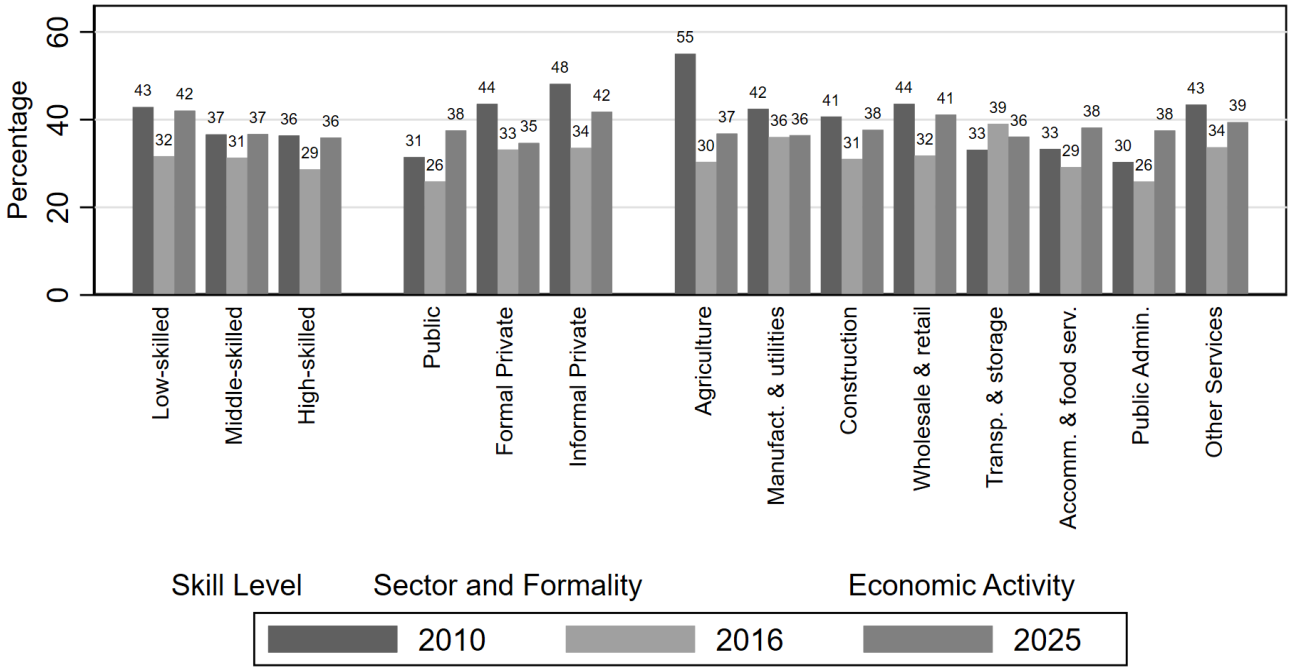
Analyzing the wage gap by nationality reveals a pronounced disparity that widened progressively with wage (Figure 17). Specifically, the data indicate that slightly less than 70 percent of non-Jordanian workers earned below the minimum hourly wage when applying the 40 hours of the public sector workweek criterion, compared to only 40 percent of Jordanian workers. The wage disparity between Jordanians and non-Jordanians reflects underlying differences in sector and occupational distributions

Figure 14. Gini index of hourly wages for primary job (2010-25)

A. Demographic characteristics

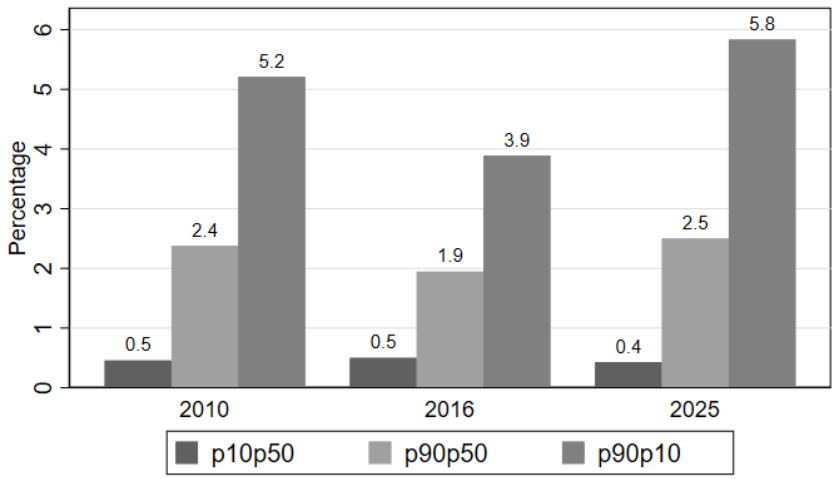


B. Job characteristics



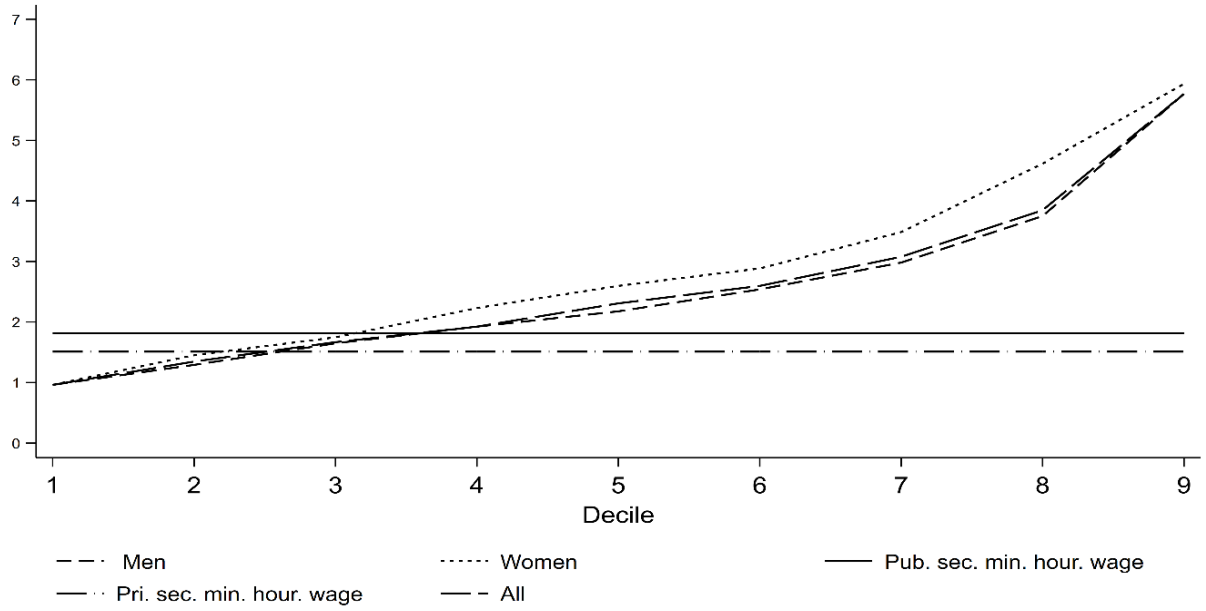
Source: Authors' calculations based on the JLMPS (2010, 2016, and 2025).

Figure 15. Percentiles ratios of hourly wages (2010-25)



Source: Authors' calculations based on the JLMPS (2010, 2016, and 2025).

Figure 16. Hourly wages deciles by sex in Jordan (2025)



Source: Authors' calculations based on the JLMPS (2010, 2016, and 2025).

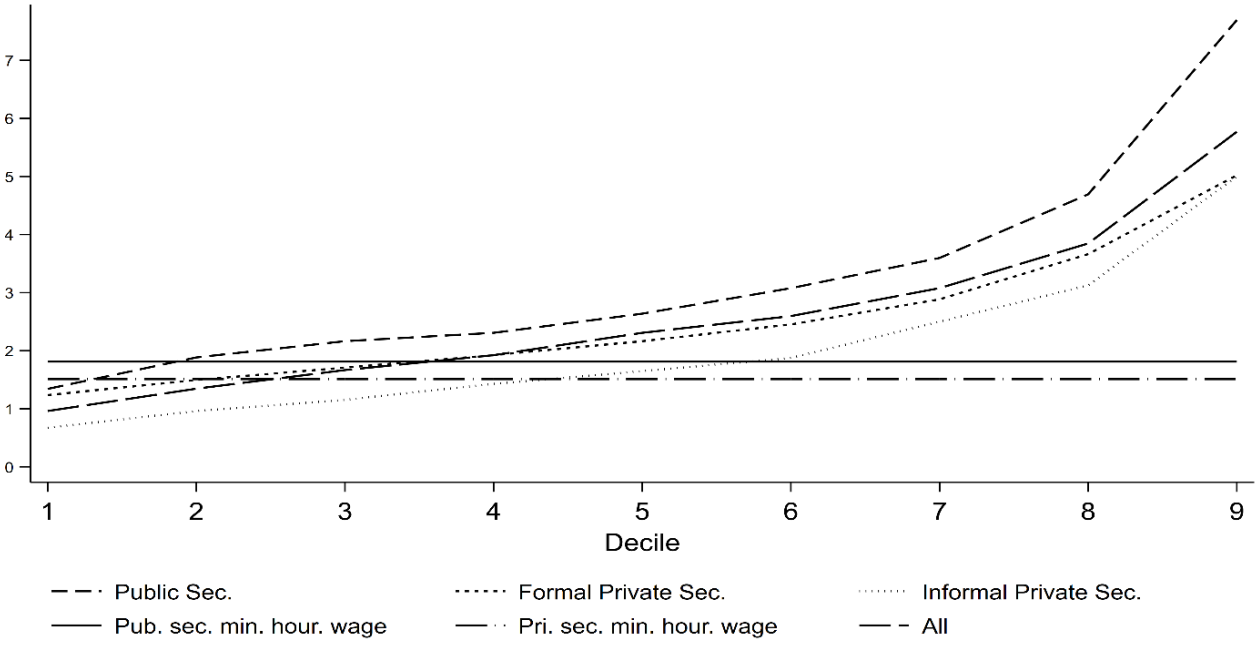
between the two groups. Specifically, while 62 percent of non-Jordanians were employed in low-skilled occupations, and over 90 percent work in the informal sector, only around one-third (34 percent) of Jordanian wage workers were in low-skilled occupations, and one in four Jordanian wage workers were employed in the informal sector.

Figure 18 confirms that workers in the informal private sector earned the lowest hourly wages across all deciles, whereas public sector employees consistently out-earned their counterparts in both the formal and informal private sectors. While the first hourly wage decile was almost the same for both the public and formal private sectors, the wage gap between the two sectors widened progressively as wages increased.

Figure 17. Hourly wages deciles by nationality in Jordan (2025)

Source: Authors' calculations based on the JLMPS (2010, 2016, and 2025).

Figure 18. Hourly wages deciles by sector in Jordan (2025)



Source: Authors' calculations based on the JLMPS (2010, 2016, and 2025).

6. Conclusion

Median real hourly wages in Jordan remained relatively stable between 2010 and 2025 for both Jordanians and non-Jordanians, although Jordanians consistently earned higher wages. Jordanian women's wages were consistently equal to or higher than Jordanian men's, largely because employed women tend to have higher levels of education and work in higher-skilled jobs, while many less-educated women remain outside the labor force. Wage dispersion increased over time among Jordanians, particularly among women. In contrast, non-Jordanian wages were notably lower, and wage dispersion generally decreased, especially among men. Unlike Jordanians, non-Jordanian men typically earned more than their female counterparts.

Major differences in median wages are observed across subgroups for both Jordanians and non-Jordanians. Namely, median real hourly wages were higher among women, rural workers, young workers, public sector workers, and construction workers. However, non-Jordanian men received higher wages and were typically concentrated in the private sector, both formal and informal, particularly in economic activities such as construction and wholesale and retail trade.

Trends in real hourly wages revealed that inequality was higher and increased among women than among men for both Jordanians and non-Jordanians in all groups considered in the analysis. There was also a monotonic increase in median wages with age, education, and skills, and a narrowing of the wage gap between education and skill subgroups over time. Wages of public sector workers were consistently higher in Jordan compared to those of private sector workers. This also raised rural workers' wages above those of their urban counterparts because most were employed in the public sector.

Median wage growth patterns showed contrasting trends across the two periods. Between 2010 and 2016, wages generally declined, affecting many groups, including men, women, urban workers, older workers (ages 35-49 and 50-64), highly educated workers, and both low- and high-skilled workers, as well as employees in sectors such as other services and accommodation and food services. In contrast, during the 2016-25 period, wages increased overall by about 1.4 percent, with gains observed among both men and women, urban and rural workers, older age groups, workers with less than basic education, low-skilled workers, and informal private-sector workers. Wage growth was also evident across several sectors, particularly agriculture, wholesale and retail trade, and transportation and storage.

Although the minimum wage for non-Jordanians was only introduced in 2017 at a lower level, by 2025, both Jordanians and non-Jordanians were subject to the same monthly minimum wage of JOD 290. Between 2016 and 2025, the proportion of workers earning less than the minimum wage in Jordan increased substantially from five percent to 15 percent, especially among non-Jordanian workers. When adjusting for working hours by using a minimum hourly wage, the proportion of low-paid workers increased further, from 14 percent in 2016 to 28 percent in 2025, indicating longer working hours, particularly among non-Jordanian workers. This could be explained in part by the concentration of non-Jordanian workers in the private sector—especially in informal employment and domestic work, which are exempt from minimum wage regulations. Across subgroups, low pay was more prevalent among less-educated, lower-skilled, younger, and private-sector workers, though a notable increase was also observed among highly educated and high-skilled workers.

Wage inequality, as measured by the Gini index, fluctuated over time, declining from 41 in 2010 to 33 in 2016 before rising again to 40 in 2025, with the same pattern observed across all subgroups. Wage inequality in 2025 was higher among non-Jordanian workers, among workers aged 55 and above, and among workers with basic education. It also decreased with the skill level of the occupations. It was highest in the informal private sector, followed by the public sector, and lowest in the formal private sector. Inequality around the median wage reveals that workers at the 10th percentile earned around 50 percent of the median wage in 2010 and 2016, and 40 percent in 2025. The value at the 90th percentile was more than twice the median wage, with a slight decline to 1.9 times the median wage in 2016 but increased sharply to 2.5 times in 2025. Disaggregated wage distributions revealed that women earned more than men, largely reflecting occupational segregation that concentrates women in higher-skilled jobs. Additionally, non-Jordanian workers earned substantially less than Jordanians and were largely concentrated in low-skilled and informal employment. Sectoral differences further show that public sector workers earned the highest wages across most of the distribution, while informal private sector workers consistently earned the lowest.

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Appendix

Table 1. Median of real hourly wage (primary job) by sex according to subgroups (2010-25)

Main Characteristics				Men Wave of the Survey (Year)			Women Wave of the Survey (Year)			Total Wave of the Survey (Year)		
	2010	2016	2025	2010	2016	2025	2010	2016	2025			
Location												
Urban	2.1	2.0	2.2	2.5	2.3	2.6	2.1	2.1	2.3			
Rural	2.2	2.2	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.9	2.2	2.2	2.5			
Age Groups												
15-24	1.7	1.8	1.7	2.1	1.6	1.4	1.7	1.8	1.7			
25-34	2.2	2.1	2.2	2.4	2.4	2.0	2.2	2.2	2.2			
35-49	2.3	2.0	2.3	2.7	2.4	3.1	2.4	2.1	2.5			
50-64	2.7	2.2	2.5	2.4	2.1	2.9	2.7	2.2	2.5			
Education												
Less than Basic	1.5	1.4	1.7	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.4	1.4	1.7			
Basic Education	1.8	2.1	2.0	1.3	1.5	2.3	1.8	2.1	2.0			
Secondary Education	2.0	2.1	2.1	1.9	2.1	1.7	2.0	2.1	2.1			
Higher Education	3.0	2.7	2.6	2.9	2.5	2.9	3.0	2.7	2.7			
Nationality												
Jordanian	2.2	2.4	2.3	2.5	2.4	2.6	2.2	2.4	2.3			
Non-Jordanian	1.3	1.4	1.3	1.8	0.9	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.3			
Skill Level												
Low-Skilled	1.9	1.6	1.9	1.4	1.7	1.4	1.8	1.6	1.8			
Middle-Skilled	1.9	2.1	2.0	1.8	1.3	2.6	1.9	2.1	2.0			
High-Skilled	3.2	2.9	2.9	3.0	2.6	2.9	3.1	2.7	2.9			
Sector and Formality												
Public	2.5	2.7	2.6	3.0	2.7	3.2	2.5	2.7	2.7			
Formal Private	2.2	2.3	2.2	2.0	1.9	2.0	2.2	2.1	2.2			
Informal Private	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.4	1.4	1.6	1.4	1.5	1.6			
Total	2.1	2.1	2.2	2.4	2.3	2.6	2.1	2.1	2.3			

Table 2. Median of real hourly wage (primary job) by subgroups in 2025

Main Characteristics	Jordanian Wave of the Survey (Year) 2010	2016	2025	Non-Jordanian Wave of the Survey (Year) 2010	2016	2025
Location						
Urban	45	40	42	60	48	60
Rural	40	40	40	50	56	48
Sex						
Men	48	40	45	60	48	60
Women	40	40	40	45	50	54
Age Groups						
15-24	48	48	45	56	49	50
25-34	42	40	44	56	48	63
35-49	42	40	40	60	50	56
50-64	42	40	42	48	48	56
Education						
Less than Basic	48	48	48	60	48	60
Basic Education	48	40	48	54	50	56
Secondary Education	48	40	45	60	48	56
Higher Education	40	40	40	48	50	60
Skill Level						
Low-Skilled	45	40	48	63	54	66
Middle-Skilled	48	42	48	50	48	54
High-Skilled	40	40	40	48	40	48
Sector and Formality						
Public	40	40	40	40	49	40
Formal Private	48	48	48	48	70	48
Informal Private	49	48	48	60	48	60
Economic Activity						
Agriculture	42	48	48	56	42	56
Manufact. & Utilities	48	48	48	54	54	60
Construction	48	40	42	50	34	56
Wholesale & Retail	54	48	48	60	60	70
Transp. & Storage	49	45	48	-	-	-
Accomm. & Food Serv.	56	54	56	-	-	-
Public Admin.	40	40	40	-	-	-
Other Services	40	40	40	70	50	54
Total	42	40	42	60	48	60

Notes: "-" indicates that the number of observations is less than 30.

Table 3. Growth rate of real median hourly wage (in constant Jan. 2025 prices) (primary jobs) by sub-groups, (2010-25)

Main Characteristics	Wave of the Survey (Year)	
	2010-16	2016-25
Location		
Urban	-0.4	1.1
Rural	0.1	1.4
Sex		
Men	-0.2	0.8
Women	-1.0	1.4
Age Groups		
15-24	0.8	-0.7
25-34	0.0	-0.1
35-49	-2.4	2.2
50-64	-3.2	1.3
Education		
Less than Basic	0.3	1.8
Basic Education	2.6	-0.2
Secondary Education	0.3	0.0
Higher Education	-1.6	0.0
Nationality		
Jordanian	1.3	-0.4
Non-Jordanian	0.9	-0.4
Skill Level		
Low-Skilled	-1.6	1.4
Middle-Skilled	1.4	-0.2
High-Skilled	-2.0	0.6
Sector and Formality		
Public	1.3	-0.2
Formal Private	-0.6	0.4
Informal Private	0.9	1.2
Economic Activity		
Agriculture	5.1	-0.3
Manufact. & Utilities	1.3	0.6
Construction	0.6	1.8
Wholesale & Retail	2.6	-0.3
Transp. & Storage	1.6	-0.4
Accomm. & Food Serv.	-0.5	-0.8
Public Admin.	0.9	0.5
Other Services	-2.8	1.4

Table 4. Percentage of workers receiving wages below the minimum hourly wage level by subgroups (2010-25)

Main Characteristics	Jordanian			Non-Jordanian	
	Wave of the Survey (Year)			Wave of the Survey (Year)	
	2010	2016	2025	2016	2025
Location					
Urban	13.1	13.6	24.2	13.2	62.0
Rural	11.1	14.9	23.6	21.8	55.4
Sex					
Men	12.4	13.8	25.3	12.3	62.6
Women	13.8	13.5	18.7	54.2	54.3
Age Groups					
15-24	22.4	23.0	45.4	12.3	60.6
25-34	11.1	13.3	27.4	10.5	66.3
35-49	9.1	10.4	17.0	17.8	62.1
50-64	12.0	11.9	20.9	7.5	52.9
Education					
Less than Basic	29.0	23.6	35.8	13.2	65.4
Basic Education	19.8	18.4	32.5	14.3	51.6
Secondary Education	10.0	15.5	28.9	12.1	49.4
Higher Education	4.4	6.4	12.2	19.8	69.3
Skill Level					
Low-Skilled	19.3	23.0	37.2	18.8	69.7
Middle-Skilled	14.5	13.9	28.5	7.7	38.9
High-Skilled	4.2	5.3	7.8	2.4	65.7
Sector and Formality					
Public	5.0	10.6	17.4	7.4	59.2
Formal Private	11.7	11.2	20.6	25.3	50.9
Informal Private	27.8	23.7	39.9	13.6	62.3
Economic Activity					
Agriculture	32.9	19.1	37.9	20.7	68.0
Manufact. & Utilities	20.7	15.5	29.3	13.0	76.2
Construction	12.3	10.9	22.7	4.8	22.4
Wholesale & Retail	31.8	17.8	40.6	27.1	51.8
Transp. & Storage	10.9	15.9	24.3	0.0	-
Accomm. & Food Serv.	18.3	35.9	57.9	2.9	-
Public Admin.	4.9	11.7	20.9	2.8	-
Other Services	9.0	10.7	13.1	12.7	68.1
Total	12.7	13.8	24.1	14.1	61.5

Notes: "-" indicates that the number of observations is less than 30.

Table 5. Percentage of workers receiving wages below the minimum monthly wage level by subgroups (2010-25)

Main Characteristics	Jordanian			Non-Jordanian	
	Wave Of The Survey (Year)			Wave Of The Survey (Year)	
	2010	2016	2025	2016	2025
Location					
Urban	7.6	4.9	12.6	5.7	39.1
Rural	6.5	4.9	10.2	5.8	40.2
Sex					
Men	6.4	3.9	11.6	5.8	40.6
Women	11.2	9.0	15.4	3.2	30.9
Age Groups					
15-24	14.9	9.0	27.8	6.3	58.2
25-34	5.5	4.0	11.1	9.1	34.2
35-49	5.7	2.9	8.3	3.8	40.7
50-64	5.2	8.6	17.4	0.0	26.2
Education					
Less than Basic	22.2	10.0	18.2	8.0	46.2
Basic Education	10.8	6.2	17.0	5.1	26.1
Secondary Education	5.6	3.7	12.8	0.3	38.3
Higher Education	2.9	3.0	6.9	5.9	39.5
Skill Level					
Low-Skilled	9.9	7.0	17.2	5.7	46.5
Middle-Skilled	8.9	5.7	13.4	7.2	23.4
High-Skilled	3.3	2.4	6.5	2.1	35.0
Sector and Formality					
Public	1.3	2.0	4.4	0.0	59.9
Formal Private	7.6	5.8	9.4	1.5	40.7
Informal Private	19.0	11.0	31.0	6.3	38.8
Economic Activity					
Agriculture	47.9	7.1	21.1	9.4	49.4
Manufact. & Utilities	12.1	7.5	13.4	0.6	35.2
Construction	20.1	7.4	22.7	19.9	20.9
Wholesale & Retail	12.9	8.3	26.4	4.3	28.7
Transp. & Storage	4.2	9.7	16.5	-	-
Accomm. & Food Serv.	8.2	5.7	17.1	-	-
Public Admin.	1.8	1.2	3.3	-	-
Other Services	5.7	5.2	11.8	3.4	53.7
Total	7.4	4.9	12.3	5.7	39.2

Notes: "-" indicates that the number of observations is less than 30.

Table 6. Median working hours by subgroups (2010-25)

Main Characteristics	Jordanian			Non-Jordanian		
	Wave of The Survey (Year)			Wave of The Survey (Year)		
	2010	2016	2025	2010	2016	2025
Location						
Urban	45	40	42	60	48	60
Rural	40	40	40	50	56	48
Sex						
Men	48	40	45	60	48	60
Women	40	40	40	45	50	54
Age Groups						
15-24	48	48	45	56	49	50
25-34	42	40	44	56	48	63
35-49	42	40	40	60	50	56
50-64	42	40	42	48	48	56
Education						
Less than Basic	48	48	48	60	48	60
Basic Education	48	40	48	54	50	56
Secondary Education	48	40	45	60	48	56
Higher Education	40	40	40	48	50	60
Skill Level						
Low-Skilled	45	40	48	63	54	66
Middle-Skilled	48	42	48	50	48	54
High-Skilled	40	40	40	48	40	48
Sector and Formality						
Public	40	40	40	40	49	40
Formal Private	48	48	48	48	70	48
Informal Private	49	48	48	60	48	60
Economic Activity						
Agriculture	42	48	48	56	42	56
Manufact. & Utilities	48	48	48	54	54	60
Construction	48	40	42	50	34	56
Wholesale & Retail	54	48	48	60	60	70
Transp. & Storage	49	45	48	-	-	-
Accomm. & Food Serv.	56	54	56	-	-	-
Public Admin.	40	40	40	-	-	-
Other Services	40	40	40	70	50	54
Total	42	40	42	60	48	60

Notes: "-" indicates that the number of observations is less than 30.

Table 7. Gini for hourly wages by subgroups (demographics) (2010-25)

Main Characteristics	2010	2016	2025
Location			
Urban	42	33	39
Rural	36	31	40
Sex			
Men	42	33	40
Women	38	33	39
Age Group			
15-24	44	31	39
25-34	38	31	38
35-49	40	34	38
50-64	44	37	43
Education			
Less than Basic	44	30	38
Basic	36	31	43
Secondary Education	42	29	37
Higher Education	38	32	37
Nationality			
Jordanian	39	31	39
Non-Jordanian	56	27	41
Total	41	33	40

Table 8. Gini for hourly wages by subgroups (work characteristics) (2010-25)

Main Characteristics	2010	2016	2025
Skill Level			
Low-Skilled	43	32	42
Middle-Skilled	37	31	37
High-Skilled	36	29	36
Sector and Formality			
Public	31	26	38
Formal Private	44	33	35
Informal Private	48	34	42
Economic Activity			
Agriculture	55	30	37
Manufact. & Utilities	42	36	36
Construction	41	31	38
Wholesale & Retail	44	32	41
Transp. & Storage	33	39	36
Accomm. & Food Serv.	33	29	38
Public Admin.	30	26	38
Other Services	43	34	39