Highly Skilled but Unequally Integrated: Gendered Migration and Labor Outcomes of Arab Israelis in Germany

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Abstract

This article explores the labor market integration of highly skilled Arab citizens of Israel who have migrated to Germany, with a specific focus on gendered experiences. Drawing on qualitative data from in-depth interviews, this exploratory study examines how intersecting factors such as marital status, caregiving responsibilities, and occupational fields influence Arab Israeli migrants' employment trajectories and satisfaction levels. Rather than offering generalizations, the analysis identifies recurring patterns and interpretive tendencies. The findings suggest notable differences based on gender. While men typically report better occupational and economic outcomes, women, particularly those with caregiving responsibilities, describe constraints that limit their professional advancement. Despite often acquiring better German language skills, some women experience occupational downgrading, part-time employment, and lower income levels. The study also suggests that previous minority status in Israel may shape perceptions of discrimination in Germany, in ways that might differ from migrants arriving from countries where they are the majority. By integrating the concepts of double disadvantage and minority-to-minority migration trajectories, the study provides a nuanced, context-sensitive understanding of how structural conditions and subjective experiences intersect to shape the migration and integration trajectories of highly skilled Arab Israelis in Germany.

Keywords: Arab-Israeli migrants; gender and migration; double disadvantage; high-skilled migration; motives for migration; labor market integration; emigration from Israel; integration in Germany

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Introduction

This study investigates the migration drivers and occupational integration of highly educated Arab citizens of Israel who have moved to Germany, a growing yet understudied destination for Israeli migrants. Drawing on qualitative data from in-depth interviews with Arab Israeli men and women residing in Germany, this exploratory research aims to fill a gap in migration scholarship by examining an overlooked population within the Israeli emigration literature. While most existing studies have focused primarily on Jewish Israeli migrants (see e.g., Altman, 2019; Rebhun, Kranz & Sünker, 2022; Rebhun & Lev-Ari, 2010; Stauber, 2017), only a few notable exceptions have addressed Arab Israelis specifically (e.g., Cohen, 1996; Ibrahim, 2010; Kislev, 2014).

In recent years, Germany, and particularly Berlin, has become a prominent destination for young, highly educated Israelis seeking cultural diversity, professional opportunities, and a cosmopolitan lifestyle. Scholars have analyzed this growing migration mainly through the lens of Jewish Israelis' experiences. Studies by Remennick (2019) and by Rebhun, Kranz, and Sunker (2022) document that Jewish Israelis' motives for moving to Germany combine economic, professional, political, and lifestyle considerations, often accompanied by a search for personal autonomy and liberal social environments. These migrants are typically young, secular, and middle-class, and their relocation is frequently portrayed as an expression of cosmopolitanism rather than economic necessity.

By contrast, the migration of Arab Israelis to Germany remains largely unexamined. No systematic research has yet been conducted on their motivations or on how their minority status in Israel shapes their experiences abroad. Moreover, while the literature on Jewish Israelis in Germany provides important insights into migration motives and social integration, it has not addressed occupational incorporation, a central aspect of migrants' long-term adaptation and social positioning. This study addresses these lacunae by examining the motives and occupational trajectories of highly skilled Arab Israelis in Germany, situating their migration within the broader framework of minority-to-minority mobility and intersectional disadvantage.

The paper has three primary research objectives. First, it seeks to identify the key factors motivating highly educated Arab citizens of Israel to migrate to Germany, viewing these motives not as discrete categories but as constellations of interrelated economic, political, and family considerations. It emphasizes how these intertwined motives vary across gender and marital status, examining how gender roles, family responsibilities, and individual aspirations interact to shape decision-making.

Second, the study explores the occupational integration experiences of these migrants in the German labor market, focusing on how gender influences their employment trajectories, income attainment, and occupational satisfaction. By employing a qualitative approach, this paper captures subjective dimensions of labor market integration that large-scale surveys often overlook.

Third, the analysis draws on the theoretical concepts of "double disadvantage" and "minority-to-minority migration trajectories." The former refers to the compounded marginalization facing migrant women as a result of the intersection between gender and migrant status (Liversage, 2009; Raijman & Semyonov, 1997). The latter captures how prior experiences of belonging to a marginalized minority influence migrants' perceptions, strategies, and integration outcomes when entering a new society where they again constitute a minority. These concepts serve as analytical lenses that guide the interpretation of the empirical material, helping us understand how Arab Israelis' experiences of exclusion in Israel inform their perceptions of integration and discrimination in Germany. By foregrounding intersectionality, particularly the interaction between gender, ethnicity, and minority status, this study provides a nuanced, context-sensitive understanding of how structural conditions and subjective experiences intersect to shape the migration and integration trajectories of highly skilled Arab Israelis in Germany.

The paper proceeds as follows. Section 1 provides background on the socio-political and economic context of Arab citizens in Israel, highlighting the structural inequalities and gender-specific barriers that drive their migration. Section 2 introduces the theoretical frameworks guiding the analysis, particularly the concepts of push-pull factors, gendered disadvantages, minority-to-minority migration, double disadvantage and triple disadvantage. Section 3 outlines the research methodology. Section 4 presents the empirical findings detailing the gendered differences in migration motivations and occupational integration outcomes. The final section synthesizes the findings and reflects on their broader theoretical and empirical implications.

1. Setting the Context: Minority Status and Emigration from Israel

1.1. Contextualizing Inequality: Arab Citizens in Israel

The Arab population in Israel, which constitutes about 21% of the total population (CBS, 2024), includes Muslims (83%), Christians (9%), and Druze (8%). These groups differ in religion, socio-economic status, and political orientation but share a minority position within a Jewish-majority state. While Muslim Arabs, the largest group, tend to identify with Palestinian nationalism and face structural discrimination, Christian Arabs and Druze occupy somewhat different socio-political positions, with varying degrees of integration (Hasisi, 2007). Given this internal diversity, the term *Arab citizens of Israel*—and, for brevity, *Arab Israelis*—is used here instead of *Palestinian citizens*.[1]

Numerous studies highlight the persistent inequalities between Jewish and Arab citizens in employment, education, housing, infrastructure, and public services (see e.g., Lewin-Epstein & Semyonov, 1993; Khamaisi, 2013; Khattab & Miaari, 2013; Yashiv & Kasir, 2013; Bar-Haim &

[1] Although the majority in the sample study is Muslim, there is one Druze and one Christian interviewee. Therefore, we use the term "Arabs" instead of "Palestinians."

Semyonov, 2015; Yaish & Gabay-Egozi, 2021). This inequality has been conceptualized as a "triple ethnic order," with Ashkenazi Jews (those with European ancestry) at the top, Mizrahi Jews (those originating from Asian and African countries) in the middle, and Arabs at the bottom (Soen, 2012).

Politically, Arabs face multiple challenges due to their minority status within a predominantly Jewish state. They often experience political marginalization and have limited political representation and influence in decision-making bodies (Jamal, 2011). Legislative measures such as the 2018 Nation-State Law have reinforced perceptions of institutional discrimination, exacerbating the sense of exclusion among Arab citizens (Adalah, 2018; Kislev, 2014; Rouhana & Sabbagh-Khoury, 2019).[2] Finally, Arab women face an additional set of challenges, navigating both structural exclusion and patriarchal norms that restrict their academic and professional mobility (Saar, 2007). While Arab women in general contend with lower rates of labor force participation and limited access to quality employment, highly skilled women often encounter a mismatch between their qualifications and available opportunities. As a result, they are often underemployed (Miaari, Sabbah-Karkabi & Khattab, 2020) or decide to emigrate for professional advancement (Ibrahim, 2010).

It is within this broader constellation of economic, social, and political inequalities that the emigration of Arab Israelis must be understood. It reflects their responses to systemic marginalization and their pursuit of improved opportunities and living conditions elsewhere. In this paper, we analyze all of these interconnected economic, social, and political issues to better understand their implications for the emigration of Arab citizens from Israel.

1.2. Emigration from Israel

Despite being an immigration-receiving country[3], Israel is also characterized by the emigration of its residents to other countries. At the end of 2021, there were between 571,000 and 613,000 Israelis living abroad (CBS, 2024). Among the Jewish and other groups who left Israel, 45% were born in Israel and 55% were born abroad, most of whom immigrated to Israel after 1990 (Rebhun, 2024).

In general, until 2014, Arabs constituted about 6% of the total emigrants from Israel each year (Cohen-Castro, 2014). From a 2020 report on the exits and returns of Israelis who stayed abroad for a year or more consecutively, Arab Israelis accounted for 5.3% of those leaving, although their share in the general population was 21%. The proportion of Arabs who left the country remained low and almost

[2] The Nation-State Law, officially titled *Basic Law: Israel – The Nation-State of the Jewish People*, was passed by the Israeli Knesset in July 2018. It defines Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish people and enshrines elements such as the Hebrew language as the state's official language, Jewish settlement as a national value, and the Jewish calendar as the official calendar. While supporters view it as affirming Israel's Jewish identity, critics argue that it undermines the democratic rights of non-Jewish minorities, particularly Arab citizens, by prioritizing Jewish identity in constitutional terms.
[3] In 2022, foreign-born Israeli Jews constituted 21% of the population. See Table 2.6. Statistical Yearbook, Number 74, 2023.

unchanged throughout the period. Among the population of academic degree holders in Israel, the population group with the highest percentage of academic graduates abroad is Jews (5.9%), while the percentage of Arabs is the lowest (2.2%). However, among those with doctoral degrees, the percentage of those remaining abroad from both populations is identical (about 10.5%).[4]

The destination country for half of the Israelis living abroad is the United States, with additional destinations being Canada (6%), Western Europe (France, England, and Belgium) (25%), former Soviet Union countries (5% - mainly returnees from Israel) and the rest in Latin America, Oceania, and Asia-Africa (Rebhun, 2024).

In recent years, Germany, and especially its capital, Berlin, has become a migration destination for thousands of Israelis. The number of Israelis in Germany is estimated between 20,000 and 25,000, and 60% of them live in Berlin. This number of Israelis in Germany is about 4% of the total number of Israelis currently residing abroad. Israeli migrants to Germany are generally secular, have leftist political views, and are graduates of humanities programs. About 69% have university degrees (Rebhun et al., 2022). Although Arab Israelis also migrate to Germany, no studies have specifically examined this group. By focusing on highly educated Arab citizens of Israel who have migrated to Germany, this study contributes to the expanding research on emigration from Israel, offering new insights into their migration and integration experiences.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Motives for Migration: Push and Pull Factors

While classic migration theory often distinguishes between push and pull factors, recent scholarship has emphasized that motives are rarely singular. Rather, they occur in constellations, in which economic, political, and family-related considerations intersect and reinforce each other. Although we recognize this multidimensionality, for analytical clarity the literature discusses these motives under three overarching themes: economic, political, and family-related (Urbański, 2022).

Push factors

Push factors can be classified into three main areas: economic, social, and political (Urbański, 2022). Economic factors include lack of jobs, low wages, and poor living standards. Limited employment

[4] The Knesset, Research and Information Center. (2020, June 29). *Israeli academics abroad and efforts to bring them back to Israel* [in Hebrew] https://main.knesset.gov.il/EN/activity/mmm/IsraeliAcademicsAbroad.pdf

opportunities and population pressures in developing countries often drive migrants to seek better futures abroad (Ibrahim et al., 2019). For many, migration is a strategy to improve their living conditions and integrate into stronger labor markets (Llull, 2017; Parkins, 2010). Among high-skilled minorities, such as Arab Israelis, push factors also include employment barriers, structural discrimination, and political and social constraints on mobility. Despite high levels of education, many face difficulties securing work in their fields due to institutional obstacles and labor market discrimination (Semyonov & Lewin-Epstein, 2011).

Beyond the economic aspects, there are also social and political factors that influence the choice to emigrate. Lack of educational opportunities, institutionalized discrimination, and religious intolerance are among the central factors pushing migrants out of their country. Political factors also play an important role. Unequal legal systems, government corruption, armed conflicts, terrorism, and authoritarian regimes cause many to seek a more stable and equal political environment in other countries (Doerschler, 2006).

In addition, social and political factors also influence migration decisions, especially among national minorities. A sense of institutional exclusion, lack of adequate representation in decision-making centers, and the intensification of policies perceived as discriminatory contribute to a sense of employment and social insecurity among educated Arabs (Jabareen, 2008). The combination of these barriers could lead some educated Arabs to seek better opportunities outside Israel (Ibrahim et al., 2019).

Gender shapes both individual and family migration patterns. Women often migrate as part of family decisions, typically following male partners whose careers drive the family's relocation. Such choices reinforce traditional gender roles and limit women's decision-making power (Boyd & Grieco, 2003). However, migration can also empower women, offering them greater personal and professional autonomy. For single women, it may represent both economic mobility and an escape from social constraints (Ibrahim, 2010). Married women frequently balance career ambitions with family needs. In some cases, migration enables them to access educational or employment opportunities not available at home, potentially reshaping traditional roles (Boyd & Grieco, 2003).

Pull factors

Migration is often influenced by pull factors that make certain destination countries particularly attractive. Economic considerations such as higher wages, better job prospects, and more open labor markets are central to these decisions. For highly skilled migrants, these pull factors include access to knowledge economies, strong research and innovation sectors, streamlined visa procedures, and professional development opportunities, which are often embedded in broader strategies to attract talented workers (Cerna, 2016). Beyond the economic factors, social and political conditions, including greater religious tolerance, inclusive welfare systems, access to high-quality education, and a more

welcoming environment for minorities, also contribute to the appeal of a destination country (Urbański, 2022; Zoelle, 2011).

Incorporating a gender perspective further enriches the understanding of pull factors. Women may be drawn to destinations perceived to offer greater gender equality, access to quality childcare, family-friendly labor policies, and protections against workplace discrimination. Migration can thus represent an avenue for enhanced personal and professional autonomy for women, particularly in contrast to restrictive gender norms or limited opportunities in their countries of origin (Kofman et al., 2005; Lutz, 2010).

In this paper, we examine how the migration of Arabs from Israel to Germany is shaped by a combination of push factors, such as structural barriers in Israel, and pull factors, including perceived opportunities in Germany. Our analysis emphasizes the migrants' subjective interpretations of their motives and decisions. We also incorporate a gender perspective, highlighting how gendered constraints, family dynamics, and labor market conditions intersect to influence migration pathways, lived experiences, and expectations regarding quality of life and integration.

2.2. The Integration of Migrants into the Labor Market

The socio-economic achievements of immigrants are mainly influenced by the human capital that they bring with them, including their education, skills and abilities, type of occupation and its transferability to the destination country, command of the destination country's language, and experience in the labor market (Chiswick et al., 2005; Friedberg, 2000; Reitz, 2007; Semyonov et al., 2015).

New migrants often face difficulties securing jobs that match their skills in the destination country. A major barrier is credential recognition. Employers may struggle to evaluate foreign degrees, while licensing rules hinder the recognition of professional certificates (Dorn & Zweimüller, 2021; Reitz, 2007). Consequently, many migrants work in low-wage positions below their qualifications. Over time, however, employment outcomes tend to improve as migrants gain experience, acquire language proficiency, and expand their networks, gradually narrowing their economic gaps with the local population (Friedberg, 2000; Semyonov et al., 2016).

Command of the destination country's language is a decisive factor in labor market integration (Chiswick et al., 2020; Semyonov et al., 2016). Lack of proficiency in the local language can not only limit employment opportunities but also harm work productivity and the ability to integrate socially into the host country. However, proficiency in additional languages, especially those used by migrant communities, may up open employment opportunities in service and community fields where proficiency in the migrants' language becomes an asset (Budría & Swedberg, 2014).

Another factor affecting migrant integration is discrimination in the labor market. Employers may prefer local candidates, pay lower wages to migrants, or refuse to employ them despite having educations and experience similar to those of locals (Reitz, 2007). Discrimination may also be related to a migrant's religion, with Muslims in Western countries often experiencing Islamophobia and significant employment obstacles (Weichselbaumer, 2020).

While much of the literature on migrant integration emphasizes discrimination in the host society, it often overlooks how migrants' prior social status in their country of origin, whether as members of a majority or a minority, shapes their perceptions and responses to exclusion. To address this gap, it is useful to distinguish between "minority-to-minority" and "majority-to-minority" migration trajectories.

Minority-to-Minority vs. Majority-to-Minority Migration Trajectories

Scholars have distinguished between minority-to-minority and majority-to-minority migration trajectories to explain variations in migrants' integration experiences (Cohen, 1996; Kislev, 2014; 2018). These trajectories capture how migrants' pre-migration social position (whether privileged or marginalized) influences their adaptation strategies and expectations in the host society.

Cohen (1996) showed that Arab Israelis migrating to the United States integrated more rapidly than Jewish Israelis, attributing this difference to their prior minority status and their weaker incentives to return to Israel. Building on this insight, Kislev (2014; 2018) analyzed multiple minority groups in the U.S., including Arab Israelis, Algerian-French, and Pakistani-British migrants. The research found that minorities migrating from exclusionary to more egalitarian societies often experience transnational social mobility, meaning their economic progress abroad exceeds that of majority-origin migrants despite comparable human capital. This pattern reflects what Kislev terms a "discrimination gap," whereby release from systemic exclusion in the country of origin motivates stronger adaptation and achievement in the host society. However, this outcome is not universal. Racial minorities, particularly Black migrants in Europe and the United States, continue to face structural racism that constrains their mobility and reproduces inequality (Kislev, 2018).

By contrast, majority-to-minority migrations often entail an abrupt reversal of status, as migrants who were part of dominant groups in their countries of origin confront new forms of marginality abroad. Several studies on Turks in Germany, North Africans in France, and Egyptians and Syrians in Western Europe document how this shift from majority to minority status generates feelings of dislocation, downward occupational mobility, and heightened perceptions of discrimination (Adida, Laitin & Valfort, 2016; Di Stasio et al., 2021; Kaas & Manger, 2012). These migrants experience what has been described as *integration paradoxes* (discrepancies between their extensive human capital and limited social inclusion) showing that higher education and stronger integration efforts can coincide with increased perceptions of discrimination (Tolsma, Lubbers, & Gijsberts, 2012; Steinmann, 2019).

Taken together, these trajectories highlight how pre-migration social positioning (whether as part of the majority or minority) continues to shape post-migration adaptation. Migrants who were members of the minority in their country of origin might be more resilient and know how to navigate inequality. In contrast, those transitioning from majority to minority status often face sharper losses of status and adjustment challenges. The case of Arab Israelis in Germany, therefore, provides a valuable opportunity to examine how earlier experiences of being a disadvantaged minority are reconfigured within a new, less polarized, more pluralistic environment.

While the minority-to-minority framework explains how prior disadvantage shapes migrants' strategies, it must be complemented by a gender lens that captures internal differences in migrants' opportunities, constraints, and adaptation.

Gender disparities in labor market integration

Alongside these broader factors, studies consistently highlight substantial gender disparities in migrants' labor market integration (Bevelander & Groeneveld, 2012; Rebhun, 2008; Salikutluk & Menke, 2021). First, gendered patterns in educational and occupational choices play a significant role. Male migrants often hold qualifications in technical or scientific fields, which facilitates smoother transitions into relevant employment in host countries. Conversely, migrant women typically have training in fields that require high language proficiency, such as education, healthcare (particularly nursing and paramedical professions), and social services. These fields present substantial barriers due to stringent credential recognition requirements and demanding language proficiency standards in the host country (Palencia-Esteban & del Rio, 2024; Raijman & Semyonov, 1997).

Second, the pathways through which men and women enter the destination country often differ significantly. Men typically migrate for specific professional opportunities or labor contracts, which integrate them directly into the employment market. Conversely, women frequently migrate as dependents accompanying partners or family members. As a result, they are more vulnerable to visa restrictions, limited employment rights, or delayed work permits, thereby reducing their ability to utilize their professional skills promptly (Boucher, 2007).

Third, traditional gender roles and household responsibilities, particularly childcare and domestic duties, limit women's availability and flexibility in the labor market, reducing their chances of securing employment that matches their skills and qualifications (Boyd & Grieco, 2003; Kofman & Raghuram, 2006). For immigrant women, these constraints are often intensified by the absence of extended family or local support networks in the host country. Such dynamics contribute to what scholars describe as a gender penalty, whereby women, especially married or recently arrived migrants, encounter greater barriers to labor market integration than men (Lutz, 2010; Phizacklea, 2004; Raijman & Semyonov, 1997).

Finally, migrant women are subject to structural gender discrimination that intersects with their migrant status, resulting in compounded marginalization. Scholars describe this situation as a form of "double disadvantage", emphasizing that migrant women face biases both as migrants and as women (Liversage, 2009; Rebhun, 2008; Raijman & Semyonov, 1997). In some contexts, particularly for Muslim migrant women, discrimination intensifies due to their religious identity, resulting in a triple disadvantage based on gender, migrant status, and religion (Donato et al., 2006; Kofman, 2004). Such intersectionality leads to severe underemployment and the concentration of these women in jobs significantly below their educational level and professional experience (Fernandez-Reino, Di Stasio & Veit, 2023).

Based on the theoretical frameworks outlined above, this study analyzes the labor market integration of highly educated Arab men and women from Israel in Germany. This analysis aims to deepen our understanding of their integration trajectories, highlighting gender gaps and responses to structural and institutional barriers.

3. Methodology

To conduct our study, we used a qualitative method based on ten in-depth, semi-structured interviews conducted during 2020–2021. [5] Given the small, purposive sample of ten cases, the study should be understood as exploratory: it seeks to identify emerging patterns and generate theoretical insights rather than to provide statistically generalizable findings. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of participants' lived experiences and of the gendered aspects of migration and integration that may be less visible in quantitative studies.

We recruited our interviewees using the snowball method, drawing on social networks. The interviews were conducted in Arabic by one of the authors and later translated into Hebrew. They lasted between one and two hours and covered topics such as reasons for migration, professional occupation prior to migration, current employment and working conditions (salary, working hours), language acquisition, job satisfaction, and income levels. We interviewed five women and five men, all with academic training. A detailed overview of the participants' socio-demographic characteristics is provided in Appendix 1.

The interview transcripts were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Shkedi, 2004). We began with repeated readings of the transcripts to gain familiarity with the material, writing initial notes and identifying preliminary ideas. Next, we engaged in systematic coding,

[5] The decision to work with 10 interviews was established at the outset, within the framework of a master's thesis conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. While the sample is small, the interviews were rich in detail and varied in the participants' backgrounds.

labeling meaningful segments of text that reflected the participants' experiences and perspectives. Following the thematic approach, these codes were grouped into broader "units of meaning" through a process of comparison and reorganization, while maintaining sensitivity to the context of the participants' narratives. At this stage, we also compared the cases to identify both similarities and differences in the ways the participants described their motives and integration experiences. Categories were then refined into themes that captured not only the semantic content but also the underlying processes relevant to the research questions.

The analysis was primarily inductive, allowing themes to emerge from the data, but it was also informed by the theoretical background of the study. To ensure analytic rigor, we documented our coding decisions, discussed our interpretations between us, and refined the themes until a coherent structure was reached. This process produced a set of themes that illuminate the migration motives, integration challenges, and gendered dynamics in the experiences of highly skilled Arab Israelis in Germany. The use of detailed migration stories and the participants' own interpretations further highlight the key factors shaping their decisions to migrate and their subsequent integration into the German labor market.

4. Findings

4.1. Reasons for Migration

As Table 1 shows, the migration decisions of Arab Israelis were shaped by constellations of overlapping motives, rather than by a single, distinct reason. Economic, professional, political, and family-related considerations appeared in nearly every narrative, although their relative weight and configuration varied by gender, marital status, and professional background. While our analysis is organized into three broad categories -economic, political, and family-related- it is important to emphasize that these dimensions were deeply interwoven.

Economic Reasons

Economic goals such as the search for a better job, higher income, and improved living conditions were the most common motives mentioned, especially among men. Seven of the 10 interviewees referred to their migration as being primarily related to employment or economic advancement. Three male participants had jobs secured prior to their departure. Ahmad, a 32-year-old business development vice president, obtained his position in Berlin through contacts made in his Israeli workplace; Anan, a 39-year-old engineer, was offered a position at a German high-tech company through colleagues; and Rami, a 28-year-old dentist, arranged his employment through an uncle already residing in Germany. Samir, a social worker, found a position shortly after arrival, with his new workplace assisting him in the early stages of settlement.

Table 1: Reasons for Migration by Gender and Marital Status

			Reason for Migration
Name	Gender	Marital Status	
Women			
Laila	Woman	Married	**Family reasons** but also the desire to live abroad in search of a **better quality of life and economic conditions**. Went with her husband who went to study in Germany and stayed to work there for economic reasons.
Rasha	Woman	Married	**Family reasons**. Went with her husband who was studying for his doctorate and after finishing, decided to stay in Germany.
Zina	Woman	Married	**Family reasons** but also the desire to live abroad in search of a **better quality of life and economic conditions**. Went with her husband who studied medicine in Berlin and stayed to work there.
Malak	Woman	Divorced	**Political** and **economic** reasons
Rula	Woman	Single	**Political** reasons, feeling of lack of belonging to Israeli society, and f**amily** reasons
Men			
Raid	Man	Married	**Economic** and **professional** reasons. **Family** reasons: Migration following his wife's work.
Ahmad	Man	Single	**Professional** reasons, **economic** opportunity, search for a different lifestyle, and **family** reasons (lack of privacy in Israel)
Anan	Man	Married	**Professional** and **social** reasons and economic opportunity
Samir	Man	Single	**Professional** and **economic** reasons
Rami	Man	Single	**Economic-professional, social, political, and family** reasons

Ahmad's narrative illustrates the interaction of his economic and lifestyle aspirations:

> During my work in Israel, we worked with a customer from China whose company has several branches in Europe. I was in good contact with the VP at the company's office (the Chinese customer's company) located in Berlin. She was Israeli. She helped me get accepted for the position they offered me as business development manager.

He added:

> It's a job opportunity, but it's important for me to say that I always wanted to move to Europe. I traveled to Europe every year before migrating. I really connected to the different lifestyle. And I had a plan in advance. After I finished my degree, I would work for a year in Israel and then go to work abroad. I really connected to the multi-culture in Berlin, to the atmosphere. It's cheap here, reasonable prices, everything is nice, everything is organized, people are polite, respect others, etc.

For Raid, a theatre actor, financial insecurity was decisive. Despite maintaining an active career in Israel, he struggled to earn enough for a reasonable standard of living, and his wife's job offer in Berlin became a turning point for the family's economic prospects.

Among women, economic motives were often interwoven with family and marital considerations. For some married women, migration involved their husbands' studies but was also motivated by the expectation of better economic conditions. As Laila, a worker in a municipal welfare department, explained, "I knew that salaries are higher than in Israel," while Zina, a 35-year-old English teacher, noted, "I knew that the conditions were better than in Israel."

By contrast, two unmarried women, Malak (36, a business development manager) and Rola (28, an Arabic teacher), associated economic advancement with personal independence and political disillusionment. For Malak, professional mobility was closely linked to a wish to leave a restrictive social and political environment, whereas Rola sought both career opportunities and autonomy from familial expectations.

Taken together, economic aspirations appeared as a major but not isolated factor. For men, they were often linked to professional mobility and future planning; for women, they were interwoven with family or political reasons. These variations illustrate how economic considerations intersected with other dimensions of life, forming part of a broader constellation of interrelated motives.

Political Reasons

Three of the 10 interviewees (two women and one man) identified political dissatisfaction as a main reason for leaving Israel. Their accounts referred to three interrelated issues: the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, disillusionment with the state of democracy, and experiences of discrimination. These political

factors were not separate from their economic and personal motives but were instead tightly connected to them.

Malak, who migrated in 2013, expressed deep frustration with the political situation:

> Political reasons especially... I'm tired of my people being under occupation. What's happening in the country is not a real democracy. I realized that I didn't want to live there anymore.

Although Malak also mentioned career and financial motivations, her anger at the political climate in Israel emerged as a dominant theme in her narrative.

Rola described alienation and repression resulting from her political activism:

> It all started when I campaigned against the conscription of the Druze community to the IDF. I was politically active since I finished school. I studied at XX College for a year and was expelled due to my political activity.

She added:

> I decided to emigrate. The anger is not just about being deprived of the opportunity to study communication, but also about the state's policy that didn't suit me at all. I eventually realized that it was absurd to study communication in the country. They talk about freedom of expression and democracy, but it doesn't happen in reality.

Rami (29, a dentist) spoke of political and civic discrimination, particularly in housing and land rights:

> Let's start with the issue of building permits. My father has a piece of land, and it was planned to build on it, but to this day we haven't received a building permit. This is a serious problem that many people in Arab society suffer from, so many people build illegally because there is no choice.

Although not all participants cited discrimination explicitly as a reason for migration, it surfaced indirectly in several interviews. Rasha (a hospital nurse) recounted daily experiences of racism:

> When I worked in a hospital in Israel, I experienced racism every day. I always heard the sentence, 'I don't want an Arab nurse to take care of me,' 'Goya, Goya' [gentile].

These narratives demonstrate that political and civic frustrations were often inseparable from economic and professional concerns. Political motives thus formed an integral component of the broader constellation shaping migration decisions.

Family Reasons

Family considerations appeared most prominently among married female participants such as Rasha, Laila, and Zina, where migration decisions were initially linked to their husbands' studies or employment abroad.

Rasha, a 31-year-old hospital nurse, explained:

> We went to Germany because of my husband's doctoral work. After he finished, we decided to stay in Germany

Laila (48, a worker in a municipal welfare department) also emphasized her husband's role in the decision:

> I migrated because of my husband. My husband studied electronic engineering in Germany and stayed to work there.

However, these choices were not solely about family support; they also reflected shared expectations of improved economic stability and living standards that migration to Germany could provide.

Men also related their migration decisions to family circumstances, although typically in connection with professional planning rather than direct household responsibilities. Anan (39, an engineer) explained that he had secured employment in Germany before migrating, whereas his wife, who held two academic degrees in mathematics and statistics, initially prioritized family care and language learning:

> She is not working yet. She is studying German in the meantime. Now it's difficult for her to start working because of the baby who's five months old. But she intends to work. She is a mathematics teacher, and she also has a bachelor's degree in statistics.

Anan's account illustrates how, in some dual-career households, men's professional trajectories may continue with limited disruption, while women's careers are temporarily adjusted to accommodate childcare and the family's early adaptation period.

Raid, a theatre actor, provided an additional example of how family and economic dynamics were intertwined. He described how his family's migration was made possible by his wife's professional opportunity in Berlin:

> My wife received a job offer in Berlin, and that's what made the move possible. I had an active career in theatre and television in Israel, but I couldn't earn enough to maintain a reasonable standard of living.

In his case, economic necessity and family dynamics were inseparable: the relocation offered both his wife's professional advancement and the prospect of greater financial stability for the household.

These narratives reveal how gender and family structure shape migration as a negotiated process rather than a unidirectional one. Among married women, family migration often involved accommodating their husbands' educational or occupational trajectories, but it was also tied to shared aspirations for upward mobility and improved living standards. For men, family circumstances often reflected and reproduced social expectations that women would temporarily reduce their professional engagement during the early years of childcare, maintaining a gendered division of labor even in transnational contexts. Raid's case, however, illustrates that migration decisions can also invert these dynamics. It was his wife's professional opportunity that was the catalyst for their relocation, highlighting that career strategies within families may be negotiated, reciprocal, and adaptive rather than fixed. Single and divorced women, by contrast, framed migration as a pathway to personal and professional autonomy. Across these varied cases, the findings show that gender and family status intersect in shaping distinct yet interconnected migration logics, each embedded in a broader constellation of economic, social, and political motives.

4.2. Employment Integration in Germany: Gender Differences

This section deals with the study's second research question, exploring how gender shapes occupational integration trajectories among highly skilled Israeli Arab migrants in Germany. It highlights clear gender differences in occupational pathways, language skills, and satisfaction with employment conditions (jobs, wages, and working hours). Table 2 presents the data relevant to this analysis.

Occupational Segregation by Gender

A major pattern emerging from Table 2 is the gendered distribution across occupational sectors. Male participants are primarily employed in high-tech, engineering, and business development roles, fields that are relatively well paid, offer opportunities for advancement, and provide full-time employment. In contrast, female participants are concentrated in education, welfare, and caregiving professions, often among populations where they can utilize their Arabic language skills. These occupations, while socially valuable, are often associated with lower salaries, part-time contracts, and fewer promotion opportunities.

Language Proficiency and Employment Integration

Language acquisition played a critical role in shaping labor market trajectories, though its effects were clearly gendered. In general, men reported limited German proficiency upon arrival, as many, particularly those in high-tech or globally oriented sectors, began working immediately. These men frequently relied on their strong English skills, which were sufficient for their jobs and often seen as more professionally valuable than German. Raid, a 40-year-old theater actor, was an exception. His profession demands fluency in German, and his limited command of the language has made

professional integration more difficult, though he has managed to memorize and perform scripts in German.

By contrast, married women in the sample, particularly those with young children, initially stayed home and used this time to invest in formal German language learning. Several women studied for extended periods, six months to a year, before seeking employment. This period of intensive study enabled them to acquire strong language skills before entering the labor market. However, as the data reveal, this early linguistic advantage did not necessarily lead to higher-status employment or salaries. Zina and Laila, for example, reported very good German but held relatively low-paid or precarious jobs, highlighting the structural gender penalty in labor market integration.

Notably, not all women followed the pattern of withdrawal from the workforce. Unmarried women, such as Rola (single) and Malak (divorced), entered the labor market more quickly, acquiring German alongside their employment. Their experiences suggest a third trajectory, somewhere between men's English-reliant labor market insertion and married women's language-focused deferral of employment. These cases point to the role of individual agency, economic necessity, and professional background in shaping the balance between language acquisition and employment.

Recognition of Academic Credentials and the Portability of Human Capital

A key dimension of employment integration is the recognition of academic degrees obtained in the migrants' country of origin. Prior research has shown that employers often devalue foreign qualifications, which, in turn, limits migrants' access to jobs that match their skills and education (Reitz, 2007). However, for Arab citizens of Israel, the situation appears to be different. Many interviewees reported that their academic degrees from Israeli institutions were well recognized and valued in Germany. Several quotations confirm this perception. Laila, a social worker in the welfare department, noted: "Yes, I felt that my degree was valued. Most likely because it's from Israel."

Anan, a high-tech engineer, echoed this sentiment:

> Yes, I felt they viewed it differently. It influenced my job acceptance and admission to a master's program. Getting into the master's program was very easy. I believe a Technion degree [Israel's leading university for scientific studies] carries significant weight.

Similarly, Rasha, a nurse, stated:

> The hospitals I worked at in Israel are highly respected worldwide. I believe my degrees from the University of Haifa helped me. Academic degrees from Israel are well regarded in Germany.

Table 2: Employment Characteristics in Germany

Interviewee	Current Job	Weekly Hours	Knowledge of German	Monthly Salary (Euros)	Satisfaction with Salary	Job Satisfaction	Satisfaction with Working Hours
Women							
Laila	Welfare department in the municipality	25	Very good - studied German at a language school for 9 months	1100	Very satisfied	Very satisfied	Satisfied
Rasha	Nurse at a hospital	32	Very good - private course for 6 months	2000-2500	Not very satisfied	Satisfied	Satisfied
Zina	English teacher at a language school	Varies by period	Excellent - language school for a year	500	Partially satisfied	Not very satisfied	Not very satisfied
Rola (single)	Arabic teacher (at school and privately)	About 20	Good - private course for 6 months	1500-2000	Not very satisfied	Quite satisfied	Not very satisfied
Malak (divorced)	Business development manager at a start-up company	50	Good	2500-2800	Satisfied	Satisfied	Satisfied
Men							
Ahmad	VP of Business Development at a high-tech company	40	Limited - private course for 6 months - didn't connect with the language	6000-8000	Very satisfied	Very satisfied	Very satisfied
Raid	Theater actor	40	Limited - studied sporadically	3000	Satisfied but thinking of moving elsewhere to earn more	Satisfied	Not relevant
Anan	Engineer at a high-tech company	40-45	Good - university course for a year	6000	Satisfied	Satisfied	Satisfied
Samir	Therapist at a rehabilitation center for trauma victims	30	Limited - currently learning	Not reported	Satisfied	Satisfied	Satisfied
Rami	Intern at a dental clinic	35	Good	2500	Partially satisfied	Satisfied	Satisfied

These accounts suggest that academic qualifications from Israeli institutions, as well as prior professional experience in Israel, constitute a form of both human and symbolic capital that is relatively portable and valued in the German labor market. This recognition facilitates smoother professional integration and may partly offset the disadvantages commonly faced by migrants with foreign credentials.

4.3 Multidimensional Satisfaction Analysis: Occupation, Income, and Working Hours

Based on the narratives, this section explores possible gendered differences in satisfaction with multiple aspects of the labor market in Germany. It considers how occupational achievement, income, and work–family balance intersect in shaping diverse integration experiences.

Female Experiences: Navigating Multiple Constraints

Female migrants consistently reported less satisfaction with their occupational, economic, and work-family life. Most of this dissatisfaction was rooted in a complex interplay of constraints that limited their labor market integration.

Rasha, a hospital nurse with a master's degree in nursing and public health, exemplifies the multilayered challenges facing married women. She works at 70% capacity due to family responsibilities, earning €2,000–2,500 monthly. While a relatively high salary for part-time work, she remains economically dissatisfied. Moreover, despite her advanced qualifications, she experiences occupational dissatisfaction stemming from a skills mismatch between nursing in Israel and Germany:

> Nursing in Germany is not an academic profession, just a certification... it's different... in terms of salary, authority, professional conduct, etc... In my opinion, nursing today in Germany is like nursing in Israel 20 years ago.

Rasha's case illustrates how occupational, income, and family considerations form an interconnected web of compromise. Her reduced working hours result from caregiving duties, while her decision to remain in an unsatisfying role is shaped by the availability of childcare at the hospital, which she describes as "the best kindergarten in the city." Her story underscores how women's labor market decisions are rarely based solely on professional considerations but are significantly shaped by family needs.

Laila, an employee in a municipal welfare department, represents a case of mixed satisfaction levels that reinforces this pattern. While she achieved professional integration in her field of special education and feels fulfilled working with vulnerable families, her economic satisfaction remains low. Earning €1,100 monthly, she also faces work-hour constraints due to childcare responsibilities: "I'm

limited because of my children. I cannot work full-time." The emotional toll of these constraints is considerable. Laila shares that she has experienced depression and remarks: "My expectations were very high... when I came to Germany. I understood that it's not easy."

Her case highlights a commonly overlooked dimension of integration, namely, the psychological strain created by the gap between professional aspirations and constrained realities.

Women without family responsibilities face different, yet equally significant, integration challenges. Rola, a single Arabic teacher, entered the labor market under difficult conditions:

> I immigrated to Germany under very difficult circumstances. Economically, my situation was not good. I didn't know people in Germany. I had no connections with anyone… I didn't speak the language; all these factors made the whole process difficult for me.

Initially working illegally in a restaurant kitchen, Rola experienced significant occupational downgrading. Now teaching Arabic part-time, she still finds her income (€1,500–2,000 monthly) and the match between her job and qualifications unsatisfactory, given her academic background in communication studies and East Asian studies. Yet, she expresses some occupational satisfaction:

> Teaching your mother tongue to others is amazing, in addition to the different cultures of the students. It's interesting and challenging.

Her case shows how, even in constrained situations, women develop strategies to derive meaning and professional fulfillment from their work.

Malak, a divorced development manager at a start-up, is the exception among the female interviewees. She works full-time and earns €2,500–2,800 monthly, expressing satisfaction with both her salary and occupation. Her employment in the high-tech sector, a higher-paying industry, and the absence of current family constraints contribute to her greater satisfaction with all areas of her life. Malak's case highlights how fewer caregiving obligations and sectoral positioning enable greater occupational and economic satisfaction.

Comparing these varied experiences reveals a critical insight. Women's labor market satisfaction correlates strongly with their degree of freedom from family responsibilities. Those with fewer domestic constraints demonstrate greater occupational engagement and higher satisfaction with their professional situation. This finding underscores the influence of gendered family roles in shaping integration outcomes.

Male Experiences: Greater Satisfaction with All Areas of Life

In contrast to the complex negotiations that characterize women's experiences, male migrants consistently reported higher levels of satisfaction with their occupational and economic lives and working hours. Their narratives reflect greater professional recognition, economic advancement, and relative freedom from caregiving responsibilities.

Ahmad, the Vice President of Business Development at a high-tech firm, expressed a great deal of satisfaction with his job, salary, and work conditions. While noting that "salaries in Berlin are not so high," he valued the promotion opportunities and reported earning significantly more than in his previous job in Herzliya, Israel. Given that he is single, this may have allowed him to focus more intensively on professional growth and financial advancement, free from family-based compromises that often shape others' migration experiences.

Anan, an engineer in a high-tech company and one of the two married men in the sample, also reported general satisfaction:

> I am very satisfied with the work. I'm not considering looking for something else at the moment. What I also like is that we always go out from the office to different places and don't just stay in the offices.

He highlighted Germany's favorable economic environment:

> I knew beforehand that there is a better standard of living in Germany... there are fewer taxes, living costs are relatively cheaper than in Israel, and even though I receive the same salary I received in Israel, in Germany it's worth more.

Unlike the married women, Anan did not reference family-related constraints, suggesting a gendered asymmetry in how caregiving responsibilities are distributed and how they shape labor market outcomes. This difference points to the relative insulation of married men from the domestic burdens that significantly affect women's professional engagement.

Even in less stable fields, male migrants reported a generally positive view of their circumstances. Raid, a 44-year-old theater actor and married, acknowledged the limitations of his profession but emphasized his relative economic improvement:

> Now I earn more than I would earn in Israel... I compare myself to my friends who work in Israel in the same field and I see that I earn more money...

Although Raid is married, his narrative—like Anan's—does not refer to family-related compromises, illustrating how male migrants may experience fewer domestic constraints in shaping their careers.

Similarly, the other single men in the sample described high levels of professional satisfaction, with minimal reference to external limitations.

Across these narratives, a pattern emerges of fewer barriers to integration, greater decision-making autonomy, and a strong focus on optimizing economic and professional outcomes. Marital status appears to play an important role in this dynamic: single men enjoy maximum flexibility, while even married men report relatively unconstrained experiences. This tendency contrasts sharply with the complex compromises and negotiations that characterize women's migration experiences, underscoring how caregiving expectations remain deeply gendered. These observations suggest that labor market outcomes are shaped not only by individual human capital but also by the intersecting effects of gender, family structure, and industry placement—what may be termed a structural gender penalty.

The next section explores how these labor market experiences intersect with perceptions of discrimination and minority status in both national contexts

4.4. Being a Minority in Israel and Being a Minority in Germany: How Migrants Perceive Discrimination Against Them in Both Countries

A recurring theme in the participants' narratives is the contrast between their minority status in Israel and in Germany. Their experiences reveal how previous exposure to systemic discrimination in Israel shaped both the decision to migrate and the way they interpret interactions in their new environment.

Rasha, a nurse, described moments of discrimination in Israel, where Jewish patients refused treatment from Arab workers. In Germany, by contrast, she noted: "Here the situation is different; there is mutual respect."

Ahmad, a 32-year-old VP of business development, reflected more on the anxiety of potential discrimination than on direct incidents: "Who knows if the manager (in Israel) is racist or not?" He added that in Germany he felt safer and unburdened by such uncertainty.

Raid, a theatre actor, highlighted the limitations he encountered when working in Israel, where his roles were limited to stereotypical "Arab" characters. In Germany, however, he found the theatre world to be more cosmopolitan and inclusive, a place where he is evaluated on his talent rather than ethnicity.

Malak, a business development manager, spoke with urgency and disillusionment:

> I decided to leave. I didn't like how the state treats us. I despaired. I'm tired of constantly justifying the fact that I am an Arab to every Israeli Jew.

Her experience in Berlin, by contrast, is characterized by pluralism and acceptance:

> Everyone who comes to Berlin understands that Berlin accepts them as they are. Here, an Israeli, Turk, Palestinian, Iranian, and German can live side by side in the same neighborhood without problems, and everyone gets along and respects everyone.

These cases, each distinct, share a central theme. While discrimination in Israel was often experienced as explicit, systemic, or psychologically burdensome, Germany was perceived as offering greater civic equality. This finding underscores the relevance of a minority-to-minority migration trajectory framework. Many participants arrived in Germany with prior experience navigating exclusion, which may have equipped them to better adapt to a society where ethnic or religious differences are less central to social hierarchies. The contrast between the two national contexts not only highlights differences in their institutional structures but also reflects how migrants' past experiences condition their sense of inclusion, belonging, and discrimination in new environments.

5. Discussion, Theoretical Implications, and Research Limitations

This exploratory study contributes to the literature on high-skilled migration by illuminating the gendered migration trajectories and labor-market integration of highly educated Arab citizens of Israel in Germany, an underexplored group in both Israeli and international migration research. Drawing on qualitative interviews, it shows how structural inequalities in Israel, gender norms, and migration pathways converge to shape diverse and context-dependent outcomes — that is, outcomes conditioned by the specific social and institutional environments of both Israel and Germany. Given the small purposive sample, the findings should be interpreted as analytical tendencies that highlight underlying processes rather than as statistically generalizable results.

An important analytical focus of this study is the context-specific examination of gendered migration motivations, emphasizing how structural and social dynamics within Israel shape migration decisions. Our findings indicate that, for Arab Israelis, the decision to migrate was rarely driven by a single factor but rather by constellations of interrelated motives—economic aspirations intertwined with family obligations, political disillusionment, experiences of social exclusion and discrimination, and lifestyle considerations. These overlapping motivations varied by gender and marital status. For men, economic and professional ambitions often combined with the desire for personal mobility and a change in lifestyle, while for married women, family trajectories and economic considerations were deeply connected. Single and divorced women were more likely to cite political disillusionment, personal autonomy, and professional advancement as key drivers of their migration. Recognizing these constellations rather than discrete categories provides a more nuanced understanding of the complexity underlying migration decisions.

The findings further suggest how family structure interacts with labor-market outcomes, reinforcing the notion of a structural gender penalty. Women, particularly those with caregiving responsibilities, tended to experience a mismatch between their qualifications and employment opportunities, lower income levels, and limited upward mobility. However, these disparities cannot be attributed solely to caregiving responsibilities. Gendered occupational segregation also plays a central role, as women were often concentrated in sectors such as education and social services, which tend to offer lower wages, limited advancement opportunities, and greater vulnerability to precarious employment. In contrast, men were more frequently employed in higher-paying, full-time positions in fields such as engineering, business development, and the arts. While these tendencies are not generalizable, they point to broader mechanisms through which gendered divisions of labor persist across national contexts.

A key tendency emerging from the participants' narratives concerns the migrants' experiences of discrimination in both countries. Many interviewees described feeling excluded and marginalized in Israel, citing explicit racism or systemic disadvantage. In contrast, their experiences in Germany were often characterized by a more inclusive and respectful atmosphere. For some, particularly in the arts and business sectors, Germany offered broader professional opportunities and less ethnic profiling. These observations illustrate how migration can alter the salience and form of perceived exclusion. While the participants remained minorities in Germany, their interactions with institutions and employers were often described as more merit-based and less politicized.

Overall, these accounts show how earlier experiences of inequality in Israel shaped the participants' perceptions of fairness, and economic opportunities in Germany. Migrants frequently contrasted the symbolic and structural hierarchies of Israel's ethnonational system with the more bureaucratic but less identity-driven constraints they encountered in Germany. These nuanced comparisons reveal how discrimination and adaptation are contextually redefined through migration.

Taken together, these findings indicate tendencies rather than universal patterns. They emphasize that economic integration is not solely a matter of individual effort or human capital but is structured by intersecting social hierarchies, gender, family status, ethnicity, and migration trajectory, that shape opportunities and constraints. An intersectional and contextualized approach is therefore essential to understanding these differentiated yet interconnected trajectories of highly skilled migrants.

Beyond the empirical findings, these tendencies also have broader theoretical implications. The patterns observed, particularly the gendered intersections of family, labor, and minority status, point to the need for conceptual frameworks that capture the layered and shifting nature of inequality across migration contexts. The discussion below elaborates on two central analytical lenses that help interpret these findings: the notions of *double disadvantage* and the concept of *minority-to-minority migration trajectories*. Together, these frameworks provide a deeper understanding of how gender, ethnicity, and pre-migration minority experiences interact to shape migrants' positioning and strategies in the host country.

Double Disadvantage and Triple Marginalization: Context-Dependent Intersectionality

The study shows that patterns of inequality among Arab Israeli migrants cannot be understood through gender or minority status alone, but through their intersection and shifting salience across contexts. The concept of double disadvantage—capturing the dual constraints faced by migrant women as both women and non-natives—offers a useful interpretive lens for understanding these dynamics (Anthias & Pajnik, 2014; Donato et al., 2006; Kofman, 2004; Liversage, 2009; Raijman & Semyonov, 1997).

For Arab women in Israel, inequality was shaped by the intersection of gender, ethno-national minority status, and religion, producing what can be described as a form of *triple disadvantage* within a Jewish-majority society. They experienced overlapping exclusion as women, as members of a national minority, and as Muslims in a predominantly Jewish state. Upon migration to Germany, this configuration shifted. While ethnic and religious boundaries became less salient, gender and migrant status continued to create structural barriers, transforming the *triple disadvantage* experienced in Israel into a form of *double disadvantage* in the host society. This shift illustrates how migration may simultaneously alleviate and reproduce inequality, reconfiguring hierarchies rather than erasing them.

These patterns indicate that intersectional disadvantage is context-dependent and dynamic, changing as migrants move across national and institutional settings. They also underscore that gendered inequalities may persist even when ethnic or religious boundaries become less visible, reinforcing the need for frameworks that treat intersectionality as a fluid configuration rather than a fixed hierarchy.

Minority-to-Minority Migration Trajectories: Continuity and Transformation

The study further develops and refines the concept of *minority-to-minority migration trajectories*, which describes cases in which individuals already positioned as minorities in their home country relocate to another context where they again constitute a minority (Cohen, 1996; Kislev, 2014; Rebhun et al., 2022). This perspective emphasizes continuity rather than rupture in social positioning. Two main outcomes are possible: (1) pre-migration experiences of structural inequality and discrimination may foster adaptive strategies for navigating exclusion, or conversely, (2) heightened sensitivity toward new forms of disadvantage in the host society.

For Arab Israelis in our sample, migration appears to have resulted primarily in the first outcome. Their prior experiences of disadvantage in Israel shaped how they perceived social relations abroad, yet the new environment—geographically and politically distant from the Israeli–Palestinian conflict—created markedly different conditions. Many described Germany as a space where ethnic and religious identities were less politicized and where interactions were based more on professional competence than on national belonging. In this context, earlier experiences of exclusion did not

translate into new forms of disadvantage but instead fostered a comparative sense of relief and normalcy. Migration thus reduced the salience of ethnonational boundaries, allowing participants to renegotiate what it meant to be a minority within a more pluralistic and less conflict-driven society.

Taken together, these frameworks of *double and triple disadvantage,* and *minority-to-minority trajectories,* provide complementary insights into how migrants' pre- and post-migration positionalities intersect. Nonetheless, both concepts have limitations. The double-disadvantage framework risks overgeneralizing women's experiences if applied without attention to variations in class, marital status, and religion. Similarly, the *minority-to-minority trajectory* lens may overstate continuity and underplay how migration reshapes the meaning and implications of disadvantage in new contexts. Both frameworks must also be understood as context-dependent and mediated by the host-country environment. Differences in welfare regimes, labor-market structures, and gender norms, such as those distinguishing more egalitarian or inclusive societies from more segmented or exclusionary ones, can significantly influence how gender and minority status interact to shape migrants' outcomes.

Finally, while this study focuses on Arab Israelis, the findings also invite a cautious and conceptually grounded comparison with Jewish Israelis who have migrated to Germany. Previous research (Rebhun, Kranz, & Sünker, 2022; Remennick, 2019) shows that Jewish Israelis, typically young, educated, and secular, often migrate for a combination of economic, professional, and lifestyle reasons, sometimes accompanied by political disillusionment. By contrast, Arab Israelis' migration, while also economically motivated, is more strongly shaped by limited structural opportunities and systemic exclusion within Israel's labor market. This contrast highlights how similar patterns of outward mobility can stem from unequal social positions within the same national context, reinforcing the analytical value of minority–majority frameworks for interpreting migration motives.

Future research could deepen this comparison by examining how minority and majority migrants from Israel experience labor-market integration and barriers to advancement in Germany and other European destinations. This study provides an initial conceptual foundation for such work, emphasizing that mobility must be understood in relation to the structural hierarchies and opportunity regimes that condition access to employment and allow for economic integration. In this sense, its contribution lies less in offering definitive empirical generalizations than in advancing theoretical and interpretive insight into how gender, minority status, and professional mobility intersect across migration contexts.

Research Limitations

The study's limitations must be acknowledged. It is based on a small, purposive sample of 10 individuals, and while it provides analytical depth, it does not aim for statistical generalizability. In addition, the research includes only those who remained in Germany and does not capture the experiences of returnees or those who left due to failed integration. Future research could benefit from a larger and more systematically diverse sample to further validate and extend these findings across

different contexts and subpopulations. Nevertheless, the rich narratives provide valuable qualitative insights into emerging patterns and tensions that can inform future research and policy on minority integration in global labor markets.

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Appendix 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Interviewees

Name	**Age**	**Religion**	**Years in Germany**	**Marital Status at Interview**	**Number of Children**	**Legal Status in Germany**	**Place of Residence**
Women							
Laila	48	Muslim	14	Married	2	Permanent Resident	Amberg, Bavaria
Rasha	31	Muslim	5	Married	2	Residence Permit	Aachen
Zina	35	Muslim	6	Married	2	Residence Permit	Aachen
Malak	36	Muslim	7	Divorced	0	Work Visa	Berlin
Rula	28	Druze	3	Single	0	Work Visa	Berlin
Men							
Ahmad	32	Muslim	5	Single	0	Entrepreneur Visa	Berlin
Raid	44	Christian	7	Married	1	Family Reunification Visa	Berlin
Anan	39	Muslim	3	Married	2	Work Visa	Aachen
Samir	32	Muslim	2	Single	0	Work Visa	Freiburg
Rami	29	Muslim	3	Single	0	Work Visa	Saxony-Anhalt