**Summary and conclusion**

In 2015, on the one-year anniversary of his tenure, President Rivlin, the tenth President of the State of Israel, delivered a speech entitled “Tribal Speech.” In his speech, Rivlin claimed that demographic processes have in fact created a “new Israeli order” containing "four main tribes—secular, religious, ultra-Orthodox, and Arab, whose hostility is growing.The president’s unusual speech put a spotlight on a phenomenon that until that moment had been perceived as trivial. Separation between groups, especially between Jews and Arabs, is undisputed and has existed in the country since its establishment. The president’s point is that school segregation and integration and their implications are not limited to the education system, but affect the nature of society as a whole, its solidarity and cohesion. The President’s speech centered the need to connect communities, even without the complete abolition of separation, in order to create a partnership between all parts of society.

Mixed schools are therefore a unique and unusual phenomenon in the Israeli landscape. Circumstantially, mixed Hebrew schools exist mostly in mixed cities and bring together groups that do not always choose to associate. From a number of cases I have followed in recent years, it seems that the Jewish majority group is able to ‘tolerate’ the presence of the Arab minority only if it remains limited, similar to the ‘white flight’ phenomenon in schools, neighborhoods, and cities that we have seen in other parts of the world. In contrast, in multicultural-bilingual schools, there is a kind of symmetrical choice of Jews and Arabs. As we have seen in this study, those who enroll in multicultural and circumstantially mixed Hebrew schools differ in the identity and cultural choices of Jewish and Arab students alike, as well as being different from those that enroll in separate schools.

**Main research findings**

This research examined the differences between Jewish and Arab students studying in different types of schools with regard to their dimensions of acculturation—identity, values, ​​and lifestyles—as well as relations between them.

The first chapter focused on identity perceptions of Jewish and Arab students in different schools and the connection between identity and attitudes towards outgroups. The chapter found that when asked freely, Arab students tend to emphasize their collective identity—whether religious or national—more so than Jews. This is probably related to their status as a minority, compared to the identity of the Jewish majority, which is more transparent to itself. Examining differences between students in different school types reveals that, while differences are minor among the Jewish group, Arab students from different schools make completely different identity choices. While those studying in circumstantially mixed Hebrew schools identify and feel a sense of belonging to an Israeli identity, those studying in multicultural and Arab schools emphasize Palestinian identity. Arab identity is an identity that is relatively common in all groups. These patterns of identification were very similar to those observed among parents sending their children to study in each of the schools, which contributed to the understanding that there was a selection effect strengthened by schools’ ideology.

With regard to attitudes, my research found that there is a connection for Arabs between identification with Israeli identity and attitudes toward Jews. In other words, Arabs who define themselves as Israelis tend to have more positive attitudes toward Jews. No such connection was found among Jews.

The second chapter focused on the values of Jewish and Arab students in different school types and the degrees of similarity and difference between them. My research found that, overall, Jews and Arabs are monolithic groups with specific value orientations, however, internal differences can be seen within each group. In the Arab group, those who enroll in segregated schools attribute greater importance to Conservation values than those who attend mixed schools. Among the Jewish group, those who choose to enroll in multicultural schools attribute greater importance to Self-Transcendence values than their Jewish peers in circumstantially mixed Hebrew schools.

Nevertheless, when examining the importance of values in regression equations, the main finding of this analysis is the dominant effect of religiosity in the importance groups attribute to different values. Religiosity is the primary variable that seems to predict all higher order values, more so than the variables of nationality and school type, for both Jewish and Arab students. In addition, in circumstantially mixed Hebrew schools, Jews and Arabs are similar in the importance they attribute to values.

In the third chapter, I discuss my research finding that that Arabs consume more Arab and less Israeli lifestyles compared to Jews; however, they still consume Israeli lifestyles, suggesting an omnivorous orientation. Interestingly, there is no gap between Jews and Arabs with regard to popular English culture, indicating its global influence, especially on girls. When examining the Arab sample separately, Arabs who attend circumstantially mixed Hebrew schools were found to consume more Israeli lifestyles and less Arab lifestyles compared to their peers in segregated and multicultural schools. Their adoption of Israeli culture is probably related to their strategic decision to assimilate into Israeli society. Students in multicultural schools consume both cultures, while students in segregated schools primarily consume Arab culture. While the main predictor for attributing importance to values was religiosity, with regards to lifestyles, the main predictor is gender, as both Jewish and Arab girls consume more Western-oriented culture, while Arab boys tend to like “Boys culture.”

In the fourth chapter, which examined the relations between the various dimensions of acculturation among the Arab population, my research found that the dimensions are not necessarily intertwined. While in some dimensions, Arabs tend to adopt the majority culture, in others they choose to preserve their own, a phenomenon which I call an ‘Acculturation Mismatch,’ in which dimensions of acculturation do not necessarily correspond.

Most Arabs live in residential and educational segregation, which preserves Arab culture and tradition and maintains cultural enclaves; therefore, Arab students in segregated schools have almost exclusively Arab-oriented lifestyles, values, and an unchallenged Arab identity. They are exposed to a limited degree to Israeli and Western-oriented culture through their encounters in Israel or with the global changes taking place in the Arab world, and they occasionally choose to adopt specific dimensions of these cultures.

In mixed cities, we can find two types of Arab residents. The more religious residents (the majority) send their children to study in segregated schools. These students are more similar to students who live in segregated communities. The less religious residents in mixed cities are more likely to send their children to Hebrew schools. Students in these schools seem to adopt an Israeli orientation much more than their peers in other schools. Arab students attending multicultural schools demonstrate a strong Palestinian affiliation; however, their values and lifestyles lean toward integration and openness to Israeli/Western-oriented culture. The multicultural school population clearly reflects the Acculturation Mismatch. On the one hand, their lifestyles are becoming similar to the majority culture, but on the other hand, their ethnic identity is strengthening.

**Research significance and contribution**

This research contributes to the literature on educational strategies in multiethnic contexts in several ways.

First, it shows that the assimilation strategy, which is promoted in circumstantially mixed Hebrew schools, encourages more similarity between minority and majority group culture and identity. In Alba and Nee’s (2009) definition, when made voluntarily by minority members, this process is positive, as it is showing a decline in ethnic distinction, which makes ethnic origin less important. The process thus encourages more similarity and therefore might enhance minority groups’ ability to integrate and promote equality in various spheres of life.

The results, however, can be also interpreted in the opposite direction, by those who believe that the minority culture and identity are being oppressed, especially due to the attitude gap between Jews and Arabs. In this research, however, I adopt Alba and Nee’s perspective, stating that “If minorities make choices, that wittingly or unwittingly promote their assimilation – let them do so, because they believe their choices to be in their own best interest” (282). In sum, different life circumstances—economic, educational, geographical, political, etc.—push people to make different choices, which shouldn’t be judged.

Second, the research shows that multicultural schools emphasize difference and distinctions, as reflected in the social identities students chose. This finding reaffirms the study by Shwed, Kalish and Shavit (2018), which found fewer interethnic friendships in multicultural schools compared to assimilationist schools. However, the current study further complexifies this notion, as it seems that students in multicultural schools are culturally integrated but hold distinct identities.

This result leads to one of the theoretical contributions of the current research, by showing that acculturation dimensions may go hand in hand in some contexts and among some groups of people, while remaining distinct in others. In other words, a person or a group can adopt the majority’s habits, culture, and values, but not its identifications, or vice versa. This process, which I call an ‘Acculturation Mismatch,’ isn’t linear or necessarily coherent, but derives from choices in a complex reality.

Fourth, the study shows that the selection effect in schools is meaningful. Students follow in their parents’ footsteps, which was manifested mostly in their identity choices. In addition, the strategies of parents in making school choices are related to the structural opportunities they face, their religiosity level, education level, and standard of living. In addition, the type and geographic location of settlement they live in, whether mixed or homogeneous, creates additional opportunities and constraints, which can also lead to choosing different acculturation strategies.

Arabs who live in segregated settlements (more than 90% of the Arabs in Israel) tend to be more religious (at least the Muslim majority) and do not have many educational options other than segregated public schools. These schools, although supervised by the ministry of education, focus on Arab language, culture, and identity. The lack of encounters with Jewish population within school doesn’t challenge but rather reinforces separation strategy. The same goes for the Jewish majority population, who lack encounters with the Arab minority in most settlements and schools.

The situation is more complex within mixed schools—whether circumstantially mixed or multicultural. Arab parents who enroll their children in multicultural schools tend to be more academically educated and middle class and have encounters with the Jewish majority at work or their place of residence. They choose these schools because they want their children to acquire Jewish-Israeli habits, but also to maintain their Palestinian identity. On the other hand, those who choose to enroll their children in circumstantially mixed Hebrew schools live in mixed towns and are less educated and less religious. Their choice of Hebrew schools thus reflects the structure of opportunities they encounter after they take all of their options into consideration, as well as what they believe will be in the best interests of the child.

However, the effect of parents doesn’t exclusively determine identities, values, and lifestyles. Schools themselves, their acculturation strategy as reflected in their pedagogical perception, the language of study, composition, and curriculum, reinforce parents’ ideologies. Multicultural schools, with their emphasis on symmetry, equality, representation, and national distinction, contribute on the one hand to cultural diffusion, but also to the preservation of separate identities. Circumstantially mixed Hebrew schools on the other hand, which are used to operating according to separation logic in the education system, ignore differences as much as possible. The majority of their students are Jewish. They teach according to Hebrew schools’ curriculum, in Hebrew exclusively, and although some schools do mention Muslim or Christian holidays, their calendar is organized according to the Hebrew Jewish calendar. There is one dominant culture. These differences therefore reinforce parents’ choices and even amplify them.

Fifth, this research shows that, in general, most Arabs and Jews maintain different cultures, identities, and values. They are not encouraged to integrate.

This separation policy, promoted by the state, carries a price. On the one hand, it enables both groups to maintain their national and religious boundaries and in a certain way to feel more secure. This policy is also reinforced by the political discourse and tensions.

On the other hand, this lack of integration damages both the ability of the majority group to challenge its perception and stereotypes regarding Arabs and the minority group’s ability for upward mobility. In addition, this separation in all spheres of life cannot create a common denominator for Jews and Arabs alike, an identity both groups can relate to and feel attached to.

As a result of the difficulties with separation policy on the ground, in recent years we have seen two trends. First, the Arab minority wishes to integrate with the Israeli society and enjoy the fruits of economic progress. The growing Arab middle class contributes to that desire and to cultural trends that manifest in the adoption of different lifestyles—travel abroad, as well as more and different fields of education. At the same time, Israel, which wishes to join the OECD countries, has started making attempts to reduce socio-economic gaps and create more equality between different social groups. One of these attempts is Government Resolution 922: A Five-Year Economic Development Plan for Arab Society, which was granted 15 billion shekels for this purpose. Though the resolution doesn’t challenge the separation system per se, it wishes to equalize budget allocation in education, industry, infrastructure, and other areas, and to contribute to the well-being of the Arab minority and to its contribution to Israel’s national product.

It is worth mentioning that the education system in itself shouldn’t and can’t be held solely responsible for repairing society. Changes should be multi-systemic and holistic. The separate residences of the populations are the ones that determine the separation.

**Research limitations**

The present study has a several limitations that future studies should try to address.

First, the study sample includes 602 students from four types of schools. This is a reasonable but relatively small sample that should be increased in subsequent studies.

Second, the parents who were surveyed in the current study are not related to the children surveyed. Therefore the data presented is aggregated data, without direct links to the students, which might imply a weaker relation between children and parents attitudes, value, lifestyles, and identities. Future studies should attempt to survey the parents of the children surveyed, in order to further establish or refute this connection.

Third, since there are a small number of bilingual schools in the country, I tried as much as I could to sample both mixed and segregated schools in similar geographical and socio-economic areas to control this effect. However, some segregated schools were sampled not according to their location, but to the socio-economic status of their residence.

Finally, ethnographic methodologies that include observations within the school—in the classroom and during breaks, in addition to interviews with schoolteachers and parents—could have provided richer and interpretive information about the choices, pedagogy, curriculum, and social relations, and could provide further context for the quantitative data that was collected.