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The Impact of Globalization on Naming Practices in Israel

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ABSTRACT

Changes in naming patterns within a specific society reflect socio-cultural shifts within that society. In the 21st century, globalization has become a fundamental aspect of life in both the Western world and Israel, thus significantly influencing the selection of personal names for newborns. This socioonomastic study employs a qualitative research method that involves analyzing discussions, articles, and interviews with parents. The findings indicate that the influence of globalization is evident throughout the name-selection process, especially in the psychological, linguistic, and sociological factors that inform the choice of a specific given name and its preference over other names. A significant trend that emerged from the research findings is the desire of parents in Israel to create a balance between two polarized identities—the local Israeli national identity versus a Western global identity. This results in a new integrative identity reflected in the creation of "bipolar" names that highlight the intention to bridge the two poles through various linguistic dimensions. These include an orthographic-phonetic dimension—Hebrew names that are easy to write and pronounce in English; an etymological dimension—global names that originate in Hebrew; a semantic dimension—foreign names that have meaning in Hebrew; and a lexical dimension—names that are similar or identical in form in both Hebrew and English. The significance of this research lies in its exploration of the relationship between enduring social processes and the naming decisions made by parents for their newborns, offering insights into the complex effects of globalization on Israeli culture.

Keywords: Given Name; Naming; Globalization; Identification

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1. Introduction

The choice of a particular given name over another can be driven by shifts in cultural values, while also reflecting those values. Analyzing the social aspects of name selection within a given society can provide insights into the cultural values prevalent in that society [1,2]. In Israel, the evolution of cultural values is reflected in the changing patterns of choosing names for newborns in three phases: (1) a shift from Jewish-diaspora identification to Zionist identification; (2) a shift from Jewish or Zionist identification to Israeli-collective identification; (3) a shift from native-collective identification to global identification, which also includes individualist identification [3–7]. The current study focuses on the third phase.

Onomasticians investigating namegiving have demonstrated that the process of selecting a child's name involves intricate and diverse reasoning. Understanding these processes is crucial for analyzing forenames, as treating a given name merely as an outcome, devoid of a selection process, can result in mistaken generalizations, inaccurately suggesting that identical given names warrant a uniform socioonomastic characterization [8,9]. Similarly, any reasoning may also serve to invalidate a particular name.

Globalization has been studied and defined through various lenses, including economic, political, technological-communicative, and socio-cultural perspectives. The definition I used in this research is multidisciplinary, characterizing globalization as a process that creates interdependence and similarity among nations, cultures, economies, and societies through trade, migration, and the exchange of knowledge. The global culture that characterizes this process is based on Western secular core values, the most central of which are freedom of choice, a free market, individualism, innovation, tolerance for a variety of opinions, and cultural unity [10–12]. According to the theory of transculturation, globalization is driven by center-periphery dynamics, characterized by asymmetric relationships that flow from the periphery (developing nations) to the mainstream, which is identified with Western countries [13,14].

Many scholars view the socio-cultural outcomes of globalization as a dichotomy between two opposing phenomena. On one hand, there is unprecedented cultural homogenization resulting from years of cross-cultural exchange (often called "McWorld"), while on the other, human societies are fragmenting into distinct identity groups preserving national cultures as a form of opposition to dominant Western culture (the "Jihad world") [15–20].

In contrast, some researchers acknowledge that the encounter between global and local cultures can lead to an integration of both, rather than resulting in two conflicting cultural identities [14,21]. Berry [22] proposes a multi-dimensional perspective that views the effects of globalization as existing along two sequences: one driven by local culture and the other by global culture. These two sequences intersect to produce four distinct responses to globalization, as illustrated in **Figure 1**: (1) Assimilation, characterized by complete acceptance of global culture; (2) Integration, characterized by the preservation of local culture while also embracing elements of global culture; (3) Separation, characterized by preservation of the local culture and rejection of global culture; (4) Marginalization, which refers to an absence of cultural affiliation. In essence, the first three responses reflect the impact of globalization, whether through total adoption of its values, partial adoption, or professed resistance to it. Openness to Western culture may be expressed in the choice of given names for newborns in Israel in various ways, which will be discussed in this article.

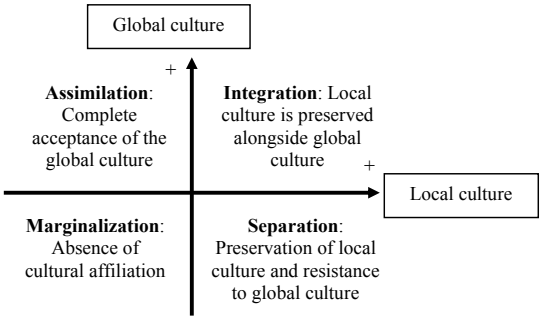


Figure 1. Possible responses to contact with global culture.

2. Materials and Methods

This study is based on three assumptions: (1) choosing a particular given name and refraining from others reveals the identity of the parents–namegivers; (2) given names can reflect social and cultural changes, including globalization; (3) globalization impacts Israeli society and is reflected in the selection of given names. Consequently, the research question posed is: "How have globalization

processes been reflected in the selection of names for Jewish newborns in Israel since the early 2000s?"

The research presented here included five stages, which are described briefly below:

1. A pilot study including analysis of an article and conversations with parents regarding their motivations for choosing their children's names, from which criteria were developed to identify the influence of globalization.

2. Interviews were conducted with 44 secular Israeli parents, focusing on both the process of choosing a specific name and the reasons behind rejecting other names.

3. The narrative analysis followed Corbin and Strauss's [23] three coding stages. First, open coding identified repetitions in research data and key ideas in each sentence, coded using participants' language. Second, axial coding refined emerging topics, identified secondary criteria and connections, and removed irrelevant data. Third, selective coding constructed a theoretical explanation for the phenomenon by identifying meta-categories and developing a central narrative at the highest level of generalization and abstraction.

4. Blogs and posts explaining name choices were located through an online search and analyzed using the same method as the interviews.

5. A validation process mapped the categories across the whole research corpus.

3. Results and Discussion

Five framework categories emerged from the research corpus and literature review, which serve as the basis for the naming process.

- The "Times" category tracks key dates from initial name proposals through final selection and announcement of the name.
- The "Strategies" category refers to an active, deliberate approach to propose and narrow down name options until the final decision.
- The "Random Circumstances" category includes cases where a name is proposed, disqualified, or chosen randomly, rather than actively or deliberately.
- The "Reasons" category includes the motivations for selecting specific names over alternatives.
- The "Feedback" category involves retrospective evaluation of the naming process.

Globalization is primarily reflected in the fourth category, which addresses the reasons for choosing a name. Due to the limited scope of this article, the findings will be described and discussed for this category only. For the other four categories, globalization was reflected mainly in the use of communication technologies and social networks.

3.1. Reasons

The reasons parents cite in the naming process relate to selecting possibilities, eliminating certain options, and making the final decision. The reasons that emerge from the research corpus can be categorized into three main areas: psychological, linguistic, and sociological factors.

3.1.1. Psychological Reasons

The point of departure for the psychological reasons is the namegiver's emotions or personal aspirations concerning themselves or the newborn when considering, rejecting, or deciding on the newborn's name. The psychological reasons emerging from the literature review and the research corpus fall into two main categories: (secondary-normal) narcissism, as expressed in the parents' reasons for choosing the newborn's name, and the parents' emotions, as expressed in their choice of name.

Narcissistic Expression (Secondary-Normal)

According to psychoanalytic theory, there are two types of narcissism. Secondary narcissism is narcissism in the broader sense, and it includes both the parents' narcissistic challenges and deficiencies projected from their relationships with their parents, and normal narcissistic expressions like self-love, affection for those resembling us, desire for children as continuity, and pride in offspring. This is contrasted with primary narcissism, which is related to severe disorders manifesting in psychotic states. It is noteworthy that the names themselves are not narcissistic; rather, what is narcissistic is the way certain parents give their children names that express their unmet needs during their own development [7].

The research corpus reveals secondary narcissism

in naming choices in the following ways: (1) perpetuating the mother's maiden name in the child's given name; (2) using possessive words like "Ori" ("my light") or "Shelly" ("mine"); (3) finding a commonality between a parent's or parents' name and a child's name; (4) attempts to correct parent-child relationships, by giving names that reflect a desired relationship pattern different from the parents' own experiences. All these factors position the parents at the center of the naming process of the newborn, including their desires and needs. Centering the self reflects the influence of globalization, particularly its emphasis on individualism.

In the following interview, the mother explains her choice of her children's names as semantically expressing that they belong to her, as the father aptly described it: "She is marking ownership."

1. **Rona**: So Ben was important to me. He's just *Ben*—not short for *Benjamin*—and in Turkish, *Ben* means 'I.' [...] *Mia* is in Italian—I lived in Italy—and it means 'mine.' So *Ben* is I, and *Mia* is mine. It's a very egotisticalperception, what I'm telling you [...]

Interviewer: And why *Mia* and not *Maya*, for example?

Rona: Because *Maya* is *Maya* and doesn't have the meaning I want, like Mia, which is 'mine.' The meaning mattered to me. *Ben* is me, and everything is mine.

Nir: She's marking ownership (Interview 13).

The name *Mia* functions as a possessive in Italian, meaning "mine," while *Ben* is the first-person pronoun "I" in Turkish. As the mother notes, both names reflect an egotistical approach, whereby the children are seen as extensions of herself—implying ownership. This egotism, i.e., prioritization of the self and the individual's interests, reflects the individualism of globalization, where the self lies at the center and self-interest drives behavior. Similarly, the desire to choose names that have semantic meaning in multiple languages also reflects the influence of globalization.

Parents' Emotions

The "Parents' Emotions" category includes both emotions directed toward a human subject—the newborn or another person—and emotions directed at the name itself as a signifier. Parents are often influenced—consciously or unconsciously—by the emotional connotations (positive or negative) of the names they are considering. Often, a name's connotation stems from the parents' acquaintance with someone who bears that name. Notably, this is not a stereotype associated with a specific name, but rather an association with a specific person and the impression left on the parent.

A parent's feelings about their name play a role in choosing their newborn's name. The research reveals that when parents are dissatisfied with their name—or an aspect of it—they select a contrasting name for their child. For example, the father cited below describes the trauma he experienced after immigrating to Israel with a name hard to pronounce in Hebrew. As a result, he wants to give his children names globally recognized as given names.

2. **Fabius**: So *Michaela* connects, it has all kinds of variations in all kinds of languages [...] it won't break their teeth. This may stem from a personal trauma of mine, because I don't have an Israeli name [...] and when I was, I always had to introduce myself, and people had difficulty with it. It sometimes caused ridicule at a young age or misunderstandings at an older age. It was important to prevent this, because the world is small today, and you don't know where people will end up, and [...] it's important to me that it be special [...] on the other hand, also not to be *Fabius*, not to mess up his life, like, mainstream, okay (Interview 7).

The father's statement "not to mess up his life" reflects the impact of his trauma and his desire to shield his children from a similar one. This case is related to globalization because one challenge the father seeks to shield his children from is having a name that is difficult to pronounce in foreign languages. His desire to choose a name that is user-friendly in Israel — but also has recognizable variations abroad—reflects an integration-oriented identity (**Figure 1**).

The research shows that psychological factors, such as narcissism. contribute to understanding globalization's influence on naming practices. This manifests through individualization—a characteristic of globalization—where personal benefit drives parental behavior, including the selection of children's names. The category of parents' emotions contributes to the research by revealing the influence of globalization on the reasons for choosing a name, including the desire to choose modern names, emulate

global cultural icons, and enable children to navigate the world easily.

3.1.2. Linguistic Reasons

The premise for linguistic reasons is that a given name is a signifier. Parents' naming rationales can be classified into five linguistic domains: orthographic, etymological, phonetic, morphological, and semantic. Only the reasons that reflect globalization are presented here.

Orthographic Reasons

Since the interviewees are unfamiliar with the linguistic terminology, they often confuse "letter" with "sound." To classify the reasons, a linguistic distinction is used: phonetic reasons focus on sound, while orthographic reasons focus on letters as graphic elements, addressing the writing and spelling of the name (as a signifier). Three categories emerged from these reasons: using multiple letters to strengthen names, avoiding certain letters, and using specific letters. Globalization was reflected only in the category of avoiding certain letters.

The following example involves a phonetic consideration mixed with an orthographic consideration – the mother wants to avoid consonants difficult to pronounce abroad (phonetic) while also considering English spelling (orthographic):

3. **Dana**: Although it was important for me, because of my surname, *Nahmani*, I got confused with the [letter] *het*, if it's *ch* or *h*. I always thought, let's give him a name that will roll off the tongue, my sister always teased me: as long as it's a name without a *het*, as long as it's a name without a *het*, all her life [...] she's right, she's right, *Nahmani* is a problematic name, they ask me abroad what is your surname, as if it's Nahamani (Interview 1).

The selection of names based on ease of pronunciation in foreign languages and English spelling is motivated by the need for effective communication abroad, reflecting the accelerated international tourism of our global era.

Dana's words reflect the tension between local identity and global considerations in choosing a given name. The struggle she describes with the sound of the letter *het*—a guttural sound that does not exist in English and is not easily pronounced by speakers of many languages—indicates and awareness of questions related to pronunciation and the representation of sounds in writing. The name "Nahmani," which is perceived in Hebrew as normative and common, becomes in various countries around the world a "problematic" name, as she puts it, due to the difficulty foreign speakers have in pronouncing it correctly. Dana recounts that her sister used to say to her, "as long as it's a name without a *het*," thereby revealing an intra-family social mechanism of internalizing global norms—to avoid sounds that are "non-exportable" to the English language. This consideration reflects not only linguistic awareness but also cultural and identity awareness—in a global society, names become a product for international use. Choosing a name that's easy to pronounce and write in English stems from the understanding that a person might transition between languages, countries, and cultures, and should be able to carry their name with them easily. Dana's words highlight the tension between a name that serve as a marker of local cultural identity and the demand that names align with codes of mobility and globalization. The choice of a "non-problematic" name (such as those that do not include the guttural letter *het*) embodies a certain compromise on the unique features of Hebrew, in favor of intercultural accessibility. It is worth noting that today, the vast majority of Hebrew speakers in Israel do not pronounce the consonants *ayin* and *het* as pharyngeal consonants. The only ones to preserve this ancient pronunciation are a small number of Jews who came to Israel from Arab countries, especially Yemenite Jews.

Etymological Reasons

Etymology studies word origins and development from a scientific-linguistic perspective, unlike folk etymology, which involves semantic transfer based on similarities between signifiers, due to speaker associations. Etymological reasons for choosing names relate to the name's origin, whether scientifically accurate or associatively linked (as folk etymology) to the name's etymology.

Names are sometimes chosen because they originate from foreign languages. The research corpus shows that parents predominantly prefer names derived from English, and in specific cases, Italian, French, and Turkish as well. Cases are presented here where parents explicitly declared their desire to choose a name for their child because it

comes from a foreign language. In the following example, it was important to the mother that her daughter's name come from English, and the father suggested names he believed met this requirement:

4. **Yuval**: [...] For example, the name *Gondolin*, a very beautiful name of some city in some book [The Lord of the Rings]. So Marina says: listen, it's a very beautiful name, but you can't call her that [...] Now *Shelly* is also a foreign name, although in Israel it's not so recognized as such, it's less common. It's also a name that is pretty and pleasant, in my opinion...

Interviewer: Is it important to you that it's also foreign?

Yuval: Not to me, but to her it is. Simply in the beginning when we brought up this name, Marina said what is this name anyway? How is it in English at all? So I showed her that there is such a name in English too (Interview 5).

The excerpt from the interview with Yuval reveals an interesting dimension in the name selection process—not only the pronunciation, sound, or meaning of the name are under discussion here, but its actual linguistic origin. In this case, the parents are deliberating between foreign names, "Gondolin" and "Shelly," as they weigh the cultural and linguistic legitimacy of each name in the eyes of Israeli society and their own. The father, Yuval, recalls that he suggested the name "Gondolin," which appears in the fantasy trilogy *The Lord of the Rings,* and which he describes as a "very beautiful name." The mother, Marina, however, rejects this option, claiming that it is an impossible name to read in Hebrew, meaning it is too foreign and unfamiliar. Her opposition to the name reveals latent cultural boundaries that still exist even among parents who are open to giving their children foreign names: a "foreign" name must be easy to accept in the Israeli context, even if it originates in the global discourse.

The choice of the name "Shelly" raises another case: a name that is perceived in Israel as a common Hebrew name, but which also has a parallel existence in the English language. Yuval notes that he finds the name "Shelly" pretty and pleasant, and points to its cultural and linguistic ambiguity. On the one hand, it is a name that can be interpreted as Hebrew, and on the other hand, it is also foreign, meaning that it functions in two distinct cultural arenas simultaneously.

What is particularly interesting is the couple's dynamics around the question of the linguistic origin of the name: Marina wants a name that is explicitly English, while Yuval, although this reasoning is less important to him, enlists to provide proof that the name he suggested indeed exists in English. In other words, the very fact that a name belongs to the English language serves here as a criterion for legitimacy in choosing the name.

In another case, the mother justified her choice of her children's names based on their being global names from different languages.

5. **Rona**: So *Ben* was important to me. He's just *Ben* – not short for *Benjamin* – and in Turkish, it's also 'I.' [...]

Interviewer: And *Ben*, *Dean*, Eli – what do they have in common, why specifically them, apart from being short.

Rona: To me it's important that they be international names (Interview 13).

Parents sometimes justify the choice of names because they originate from a specific textual source, such as the Bible, Mishnah, or a particular literary work. When a parent cites a particular literary source, sociological considerations may underlie their reasoning because some texts carry significant cultural and moral importance.

In other cases, parents consider it important that the name appears in the Bible, but explain that this is not the sole reason.

Phonetic Reasons

Phonetic reasons are described by parents simply, with their reasons related to the sound of the name, the consonants composing it, its syllable, structure or its pronunciation as a sound sequence. Globalization was reflected in two categories: names containing certain consonants and names having a global sound.

The phonetic sequence created by a name may serve as a reason for parents' choice. Sometimes parents avoid certain consonants due to global motives – specifically, the desire to choose names easily pronounced in global languages, as shown in the following case:

6. **Rona**: [...] I like catchy names that don't have all the *het* and *khaf* that are harder to pronounce abroad.

Interviewer: Where is it important to you that the

name be pronounced?

Rona: In Israel first of all, that's the country we live in (Interview 13).

Rona's words illustrate the significant role of the sound, that is, the phonological sequence of the name, in the process of choosing a name for a child. The preference for "catchy" names that lack guttural pharyngeal consonants suggests an awareness of the pronunciation limitations of other languages, particularly English as a global lingua franca. These consonants, which characterize Hebrew, are absent in English and thus cause difficulty for speakers unfamiliar with them. This can result in mispronunciation, confusion, or even embarrassment.

However, unlike parents who prefer foreign names or names that are easily pronounced in a foreign language from the outset, Dana articulates a more nuanced perspective: she emphasizes the importance of the name being pronounceable in Israel, specifically in Hebrew, stating, "that is the country we live in." Her remarks embody a balanced stance that I characterize as "integrative identity," which considers both local and global contexts simultaneously.

It is noteworthy that, in the Hebrew spoken in Israel today, the distinction between the pronunciation traditions of Mizrahi Jews and those of Ashkenazi Jews has become increasingly blurred over the years, partly due to sociolinguistic integration processes. As a result, Ashkenazi pronunciation has emerged as the dominant and most prevalent form. This is particularly evident in the guttural consonants, which have lost their original pronunciation, so that the letter *ayin*, for example, is no longer pronounced as a pharyngeal consonant, and the letter *het* no longer distinguishes between a *khaf* and a deep guttural *het* [24,25]. This change reflects not only a phonetic shift but also a sociocultural process in which Western pronunciation is regarded as more prestigious, at the expense of the Mizrahi pronunciation, which has been shunted to the margins.

In the following case, the father emphasized in his reasoning that the name be pronounceable in different languages, meaning a name with a global sound:

7. **Fabius**: So *Michaela* connects, it has all kinds of variations in all kinds of languages. It can be *Michelle*, *Mikhaela* in Russian, or *Miki* or *Mikka*. In other words, it won't break their teeth [...] and *Yonatan* is *Johnny*, Jonathan (Interview 7)

Fabius' remarks illustrate the global perspective that informs the choice of names: he highlights the phonological adaptability of the name Michaela, which can take on many variations in different languages—"Michelle," "Mikhaela," "Miki," "Mikka"—thus rendering it accessible and international. The name "Yonatan" was similarly chosen because of its easy translation to "Jonathan" or "Johnny." These assertions are rooted in a desire to facilitate children's future integration into multilingual settings, whether through employment, relocation, or international relationships. The selection of names having a "global sound" is an identity strategy: it reflects an integrative identity, merging local belonging with a receptiveness to international culture and communication. The names are selected not only for their inherent beauty or meaning but also for their practicality in the global marketplace of identities and languages.

Semantic Reasons

From a semantic perspective, proper nouns have no conceptual meaning, but some parents base their choices on the conceptual meaning of the common noun. Globalization is reflected when parents reference a name's meaning in foreign languages as part of their reasons. In the following case, parents justified their daughter's name choice based on its meaning in English:

8. **Interviewer**: Well, let's move on to *Rain*, tell me how you chose the name?

Lisa: I suggested the name *Rain*, because I wanted one of the children to have this name [...] because we are very connected to, I am very connected to water, and rain – here especially, it's important. And it's good to give girls strong and special names, and it's also calm (Interview 8).

Lisa's remarks reveal that the name "Rain" was chosen due to a combination of the conceptual meaning of the general noun and its connotative meaning. On the one hand, the name refers directly to the word "rain," which has a positive connotation for Lisa, related to her affinity to nature and water. On the other hand, Lisa also highlights the emotional resonance of the name: "It's also calm," suggesting that the name evokes a sense of serenity, softness, and harmony.

The fact that "rain" is an English term is not explic-

itly stated as a primary consideration, but it is present in the background. The precise meaning of the name in a foreign language (in this case, English) contributes to its universality and international accessibility. Thus, the choice of the name "Rain" illustrates a naming trend in which the lexical meaning of a foreign word influences the selection of names, leading either to the rejection or acceptance of names based on their associations and meanings in other languages.

The following example clearly expresses this:

9. **Yuval**: In any case, you know that you have to keep away from names that in English or in all kinds of other languages might sound problematic.

Interviewer: Is it important to you that it sound good in all languages?

Yuval: I don't care if it sounds bad in ancient Portuguese, but yes in basic languages in the world.

Interviewer: Which for you are...?

Yuval: English, French, Spanish, the Anglo-Saxon languages and Russian, because from Marina's side that's the whole family, that it shouldn't be something... For example, the name *Gondolin*, a very beautiful name of some city in some book. So Marina says: listen, it's a very beautiful name, but you can't call her that.

Marina: In Russian *gandon* is like a condom.

Yuval: Not exactly, but it's too close (Interview 5).

Yuval and Marina's comments illustrate how semantic considerations—that is, the meaning or associations of a name in different languages—directly influence parents' decisions to choose or reject a name. In this instance, the name "Gondolin" was rejected not because of its original meaning (a mythical city from fantasy literature), but due to its phonetic similarity to a vulgar word in Russian ("gandon," meaning condom). The concern regarding negative associations in foreign languages indicates cross-linguistic semantic awareness and a cultural-identity consideration that extends parents' considerations beyond the confines of the Hebrew language. Yuval even explicitly mentions the languages in which it is "important" for the name to sound good—English, French, Spanish, and Russian—reflecting a pragmatic global perspective in the context of the child's life, family, and future connections.

This can be seen as an example of cross-linguistic connotation assessment as part of parental identity in the contemporary global landscape—that is, that a name is chosen not only for its aesthetic appeal or dictionary definition in the native language but also about its possible meanings in other languages. The desire to avoid a problematic name in Russian, the mother's family language, also reflects a desire to maintain intergenerational and familial connections.

It is evident that the semantic explanations focus on the meaning of the common noun (when the proper noun comes from the lexicon of general nouns), or the name's other connotations. When parents justify choices using foreign language meanings, one should distinguish between internal-family considerations (a parent's native language) and global considerations (reflecting the parents' global or integrative identity).

3.1.3. Sociological Reasons

A core assumption of this study is that the reasons for choosing a particular given name reflect the parents'—the namegivers'—identities. Consequently, their attitudes and identification with specific religious, ideological, national, or global social groups often motivate the choice of the newborn's name. Six identities of namegivers emerged from the research corpus: religious-Jewish, including diasporic and Jewish-traditional; combined Jewish-Israeli; separate Israeli national; integrated national-global; and global (assimilative). Globalization was expressed in the (separate) Israeli national identity by way of contrast, and positively, in the integrated national-global identity. No cases of purely assimilative global identity, without local national integration, were found in the corpus.

Israeli National Identity (Separation)

The research corpus reveals a common theme in parents' National-Israeli identity, the desire to choose an Israeli and Hebrew name, while avoiding names perceived as global. This is illustrated in the following case:

10. **Interviewer**: Do you see anything common to all these names? *Yair*, *Asaf*, *Yuval*, *Amit*?

Sagit: No, they're Israeli names.

Interviewer: Is it important to you that it be an Israeli name?

Sagit: Yes. Hebrew, as I see it, I'm aware that today

there's this trend to international, I'm not in favor, I don't like it. I'm not critical, I understand the motives (Interview 14).

Sagit's remarks clearly reflect her stance on Israeli national identity in choosing names for her children. She emphasizes her preference for "Israeli" and "Hebrew" names. The choice of names such as Yair, Asaf, Yuval, and Amit carries a significant connotation related to place, language, and national heritage.

Sagit also makes a direct reference to the broader sociolinguistic landscape, noting the global trend she observes in the adoption of international names, yet her words express implicit resistance to the dilution of local identity in favor of adapting to a global world. Unlike other cases in the corpus where the name is evaluated through an international lens (whether it sounds appealing in English or is easy to pronounce), here the consideration is just the opposite – deliberately steering clear of names with a global appeal out of a strong desire to preserve a distinctive Israeli national identity.

In the following case, as in other cases found in the research corpus, the various identities or opposition to them are implied from the parents' remarks by presenting stereotypical given names:

11. **Dana**: We wanted *Roee* with *Noam*, but we decided not to,

Eldad: Also *Roee* with *Amit*, it's the same names we repeated. Names like Dean and Sean are not for us. On the other hand, *Yossi* and *David*, probably not either, so we looked for the Hebrew Israeli names (Interview 1).

Dana and Eldad's remarks show how the choice of a given name can reflect an Israeli national identity by differentiating among various naming options in Israel. The couple describes a decision-making process where they deliberately steer clear of names perceived as global, such as "Dean" and "Sean," which are typically associated with a global identity. At the same time, they also avoid names such as "Yossi" and "David," which represent Jewish (perhaps diasporic) identity and were common in the previous generation.

Their choice of names, such as "Ro'ee," "Noam," and "Amit," reflects an Israeli national identity rooted in the Hebrew language, rather than being tied to religious tradition or a global context. It is evident that the considerations surrounding such names arise not solely from the name's origins or catchiness but from the social-semantic weight it carries—what the name represents in the collective heart and mind. The choice is not merely functional, but it expresses an identity that, in this case, navigates between two extremes (global and traditional) and intentionally positions itself in the middle, within the Hebrew-Israeli identity.

In the following case, too, the parents looked for Hebrew names, with their words implying opposition to giving global names to children living in Israel:

12. **Ofer**: A Hebrew name, I like short, to the point.

Interviewer: Is it important to you that it be an Israeli name?

Ofer: Yes, what, do I live abroad?

Interviewer: *Mikka* [the name chosen for his daughter] Do you consider that a Hebrew name?

Ofer: Yes [...] not in terms of meaning, but because there are Israeli children with that name (Interview 10).

Ofer's remarks highlight the importance he ascribes to a Hebrew name, but interestingly, not necessarily in terms of etymology or semantics (i.e., the name's origin or meaning in Hebrew), but rather through its cultural affiliation. When he asks, "What, do I live abroad?" he is clearly disapproving of giving a child born and raised in Israel a name perceived as foreign, thus asserting a distinct Israeli national identity.

Ofer regards the name "Mikka," which is often classified as an international name with equivalents in other languages, as an Israeli name, not because of its meaning, but because of its widespread use as a given name for girls in Israel. Here, an important distinction arises between linguistic-etymological belonging and socio-cultural belonging—that is, a name may be deemed "Hebrew" not because it originates in the Hebrew language but because it is rooted in the Israeli social context and sounds "like a name Israeli children would have."

Hence, caution is warranted when classifying names based solely on form or language. It is evident that the same name can have different meanings and classifications depending on the cultural context and the parents' perception. In this case, the name "Mikka" is global in form but local in usage, and consequently Hebrew in the parents' view.

National-Global Identity (Integration)

Cases were found in the research corpus where parents' point of departure when considering the name was both national and global identities. Five name groups emerged from the research corpus that illustrate these identities:

- A Hebrew name that is easy to write and read in English (orthographic-phonetic perspective:

13. **Dana**: Although it was important for me, because of my surname, *Nahmani*, I got confused with the [letter] *het*, if it's *ch* or *h*. I always thought, let's give him a name that will roll off the tongue

[...]

Eldad: We were looking for Hebrew Israeli names.

Interviewer: Is an Israeli name important to you? Do you feel connected to Israel?

Dana: Yes, I'm very connected to Israel (Interview 1).

Evident in this category is the integrative identity, whereby parents' reasons for selecting Hebrew names indicate their national identity. In contrast, their desire for names that can be easily written and read in English reflects their global identity.

- A global name that originates in Hebrew (etymological perspective):

In the following case, the mother justifies her choice of the global name *Michelle* by equating it to the Hebrew name *Michal*:

14. **Marina**: For example, Michal is a name I really like, and Michelle is actually Michal. It's the same name just in different languages (Interview 5).

- A global name that can be pronounced in Israel or vice versa (phonetic perspective):

15. **Fabius**: I don't know if you check criteria, but, or if there are such graphs of what's more important and that, but it was like important to me that yes, an Israeli name [...] also a bit international is important to me.

Interviewer: What do you mean a bit international?

Fabius: A bit international is that like if someone lands abroad, so if their name is Aminadav for example, so that's a bit problematic in France or in England [...] but a name that like is also known in the world is, so it's easier for a person to manage [...] a Western name that is also received okay from a Western perspective (Interview 7).

- A global name that has meaning in Hebrew (semantic perspective):

15. **Libby**: Regarding universal names, it's not that universal names are out. For instance, I also thought with Gur about *Ben*, which is indeed universal, but also has a meaning – a son (Interview 6).

This category expresses the integrative identity of the parents' name-givers through the choice of a given name that is also universal and a general noun with a meaning in Hebrew.

- Bilingual Hebrew-English name (Lexical perspective):

17. Now Shelly is also a foreign name, although in Israel it's not so recognized as such, it's less common. It's also a name that is pretty and pleasant, in my opinion...

Interviewer: Is it important to you that it's also foreign?

Yuval: Not to me, but to her it is. Simply, in the beginning when we brought up this name, Marina said what is this name anyway? How is it in English at all? So I showed her that there is such a name in English, too, that it exists (Interview 5).

The attribution of the name Shelly as a Hebrew name emerges from the father's recognition that it is a first-person possessive pronoun in Hebrew, while also stating, "It's also a foreign name," thus justifying the choice of the name based on the fact that it is part of the English lexicon of names.

In all the above cases, the choice of a child's given name is driven by a desire to combine Israeli national identity with openness to global language and culture. The parents aim to both maintain their belonging to the local sphere and achieve accessibility or compatibility with the international sphere.

The integration between identities may appear in parents' reasoning in several ways: (1) two parallel identities (Israeli and global) emerge in the reasons for a certain name; (2) one identity emerges from the reasons for choosing the name of one child and a second identity from the reasons for the name of another child; (3) father and mother expressing different identities in their naming rationales; and (4) one identity emerges from the parents' reasons and another from the surroundings (family and acquaintances).

4. Conclusions

Globalization is reflected in the categories that emerged from the parents' explanations, both directly and through the parents' identities. Globalization's influence is reflected in multiple areas:

The **socio-cultural area** includes contact between cultures through films, music, and consumer products, alongside increased migration between countries, which exposes people to foreign cultures. This area was expressed in the parents' reasons for choosing the newborn's name in several categories, such as in the "Parents' Emotions" category. Cases are presented in which parents who immigrated to Israel chose names for their children that "will be received well" in Israel and abroad, based on an understanding that future migration might figure in their children's lives.

The **economic area** includes the formation of multinational businesses and the development of global cities, as reflected in parents' reasons for choosing names that indicate a global or integrative identity, based on factors such as their work with businesses abroad, temporary job relocation abroad, and other considerations.

The **communications-technological area** includes increased mobility between countries due to cheaper transportation, information technologies that create a computerized global village and a global virtual society, and mass communication media and social networks that expose people everywhere to shared content. This is reflected in the corpus through the influence of global cultural icons on parents' name choices, as they wish to emulate them.

The **linguistic domain** concerns the English language as a global language and its widespread dissemination throughout the world through globalization. The corpus revealed that English plays a role in name selection in various ways, such as avoiding letters or consonants that are difficult to pronounce or write in English, drawing on English as a source, or a desire to select from existing English names. To these are added names that indicate the influence of global identity integrated with, rather than replacing, local culture.

From a broader sociolinguistic perspective, it appears that alongside outward openness, to the Western world and the process of globalization ("the McWorld"), naming trends also reflect inward reflection and a desire to preserve Israeli national identity. This is sometimes manifested as a counter-reaction that fosters differentiation and resistance to globalization ("the Jihad world"), while at other times it reflects a desire to enjoy both worlds simultaneously through the choice of "bipolar" names.

The pursuit of balance through the selection of "bipolar" given names reflects a forward-looking, transnational worldview on the part of parents, even if the notion of living abroad remains hypothetical. The study's findings highlight the complexity of naming practices in contemporary Israel. They involve balancing the preservation of local Israeli national identity with adaptation to a global world in which every sound, letter, or name may also be scrutinized beyond Israel's borders. This "bipolarity" aims to both preserve local identity and the Hebrew language, while also taking into account international linguistic codes.

Four different modes of expressing this bipolarity emerge in the corpus:

Orthographic-phonetic dimension – Hebrew names that are easy to write and pronounce in English (such as opting for names that do not include the letter *het*). The avoidance of the guttural *ḥet* and *khaf* sounds reflects the internalization of English phonological norms as a relevant factor in the selection of a child's name. Even when there is no explicit preference for English, the avoidance of sounds that are difficult for European languages to pronounce clearly demonstrates the impact of the global language on local identity.

Etymological dimension – Global names of biblical Hebrew origin, such as "Adam" and "Yonatan," that facilitate an international identity while maintaining a connection to authentic Hebrew sources.

Semantic dimension – Names that have a meaning in Hebrew but are also universally recognized, where the universal name is chosen along with a desire for a name that has meaning in the Hebrew language (e.g., "Ben" or "Guy").

Lexical dimension – Names that are similar or identical in form in Hebrew and other (predominantly Western) languages, facilitating a natural and effortless dual identity – exemplified by the various forms of the name "Michaela."

It is important to exercise caution when categorizing names based solely on morphological or linguistic factors. It is evident that the same name can possess different

meanings and classifications depending on the cultural context, the parents' perceptions, and their reasons for choosing a particular name for their newborn.

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Institutional Review Board Statement

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Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement

Data is unavailable due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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