



Israel and its Diaspora: A Case-Study

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Executive Summary

The evolving partnership between Israel and its diaspora has yielded many mechanisms designed to create and strengthen a myriad of linkages for their mutual benefit. The lessons engendered from this partnership, in the realms of homeland development, communication, promotion of collective identity, institutional governance, negotiation of conflict, etc., may offer insights to other countries grappling with the homeland-diaspora interface. For our purposes, the diaspora referred to in this paper is chiefly the world Jewish diaspora. Also of some relevance to our inquiry are Israeli citizens who have left Israel and have settled abroad in many of the areas populated by diaspora Jews.

Diaspora Interface with Israel's Public Sector

The formal link diaspora communities and the Israeli government are handled through an Inter-Ministerial Diaspora Committee, generally chaired by the Prime Minister. On a ministerial level, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs features a unit entrusted with handling diaspora affairs and the deployment of Israel's consulates is determined, at least in part, by the presence of large Jewish communities. The Ministry of Tourism actively promotes tourism among diaspora communities. Similarly, the Ministry of Science, Culture and Sport coordinates cultural and sports exchanges with diaspora communities. Finally the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor targets the diaspora to promote trade and investment in Israel through its commercial attaches at key diplomatic missions. A degree of cooperation between diaspora communities and Israeli governmental agencies, particularly in the area of social service development, has been facilitated by another NGO, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC).

Diaspora Interface with Israeli Civil Society

The primary point of entry for contemporary Diaspora involvement in Israeli society is that of non-governmental institutions. This includes firstly the JAFI system, which over time has become increasingly autonomous from the Israeli government, as well as the myriad of nonprofits or NGOs that seek to impact Israeli society through service provision and/or advocacy. The two main avenues through which the diaspora has interfaced with Israeli civil society are philanthropic/family foundations, involved not only in the more traditional service provision (education, social welfare) but also in the more controversial realm of social change, and the many "friends of" organizations, established to support particular institutions in areas such as: health, education, and culture. Among the chief manifestations or contributions of the interface between Israel and the Jewish Diaspora at the level of civil society has been:

- Joint governance of institutions and organizations executing collaborative activity.
- Structured visits of diaspora members to Israel either as individuals or in groups (often termed "missions"), for purposes such as philanthropy and identity building. Increasingly this link is bi-directional, as Israelis are sent individually and in groups, to Diaspora communities.

Diaspora Interface with Israel's Business Sector

The private sector in Israel has not heretofore been a significant arena for the engagement of or collaboration with the Diaspora. Nonetheless, there are examples of private sector initiatives in Israel intended to engage Diaspora, such as for-profit publications (daily newspapers and weekly/monthly magazines) and websites which cater to various interest groups or constituencies

within the Jewish Diaspora. Attempts of Diaspora communities to assist Israel through private sector activity has primarily revolved around the establishment of local Chambers of Commerce, designed to stimulate trade with and investment in Israel and to market Israeli overseas.

Conclusion and Lessons for Other Diaspora-Homeland Contexts

Israel has traditionally viewed the Jewish Diaspora as a potential reservoir for human resources in the form of immigrants. Over time Israel has come to view its Diaspora more as a source of financial, political and morale support. In turn, the diaspora is linked to Israel through a combination of historical, cultural, religious and/or familial ties. This review of the evolution of the institutionalized cooperation between Israel and the Jewish Diaspora and the concomitant examples elucidated herein, ideally provide the basis of a discussion on how these may resonate for the experience of other diaspora-homeland contexts. A number of lessons learned, gleaned from Israel's experience with its diaspora, could be applicable to other instances of diaspora-homeland interfaces:

- Perhaps the main lesson is the need for an institutional framework to be established which strives not only to achieve policy coherence but also facilitates relations of reciprocity, thereby respecting the integrity and sensibilities of both sides.
- The Israel-Diaspora experience has demonstrated a patent need for a mechanism for the transfer of philanthropic funds from the diaspora to the homeland that is transparent and independent. This is seen as indispensable to a diaspora-homeland interface that is characterized by accountability and trust. It is also worth noting that such a (non-governmental) mechanism for the transfer of funds might enjoy tax benefits or incentives in certain host countries.
- Another conspicuous lesson emanating from the Israel-Diaspora experience is the need to engage the next generation (youth) in efforts toward homeland development (e.g. trips, educational programs, student exchanges, etc). The relatively strong appeal of programs of a cultural nature should also be factored into these efforts.
- It is worthwhile reiterating a point made earlier, namely the importance of fostering attempts at the joint diaspora-homeland governance of institutions and organizations executing collaborative activity. This is most effective when instituted at all levels of diaspora-homeland interaction, i.e. transnational, regional and local, as evinced in the examples of Project Renewal and Partnership 2000. It must be stressed that the utility of this kind of joint endeavor can be not only instrumental but also symbolic.

Israel and its Diaspora: A Case Study

I. Rationale

The evolving partnership between Israel and its diaspora has yielded many mechanisms designed to create and strengthen a myriad of linkages for their mutual benefit. A meaningful and synergistic relationship between the two requires recognizing the respective needs and interests of the diaspora and Israeli society, while at the same time, reaffirming their mutual affinity and inter-dependence. The lessons engendered from this partnership, in the realms of homeland development, communication, promotion of collective identity, institutional governance, negotiation of conflict, etc., may offer insights to other countries grappling with the homeland-diaspora interface.

The diaspora referred to in this paper is chiefly the world Jewish diaspora. Regarded by many as the quintessential or “archetypal” diaspora (Safran, 1991), the Jewish diaspora is characterized by a high degree of communal organization (Sheffer, 1986). The history of Jewish dispersion or exile from the land of Israel has led over the centuries to significant Jewish communities in six continents. While over 5.5 million currently reside in Israel, most, over 8 million, live in the diaspora. Of these, the overwhelming majority is located in North America. Also of relevance to our inquiry are Israeli citizens who have left Israel and have settled abroad in many of the areas populated by diaspora Jews. The degree to which they are integrated into diaspora Jewish communities in host countries varies considerably. Unless specified otherwise, our notion of diaspora here considers both Israelis living abroad and Jewish citizens of countries other than Israel. The focus of this analysis is the structural and programmatic aspects of Israel's relationship with its diaspora, which can be relevant to efforts to cultivate other homeland-diaspora partnerships for development.

II. Brief Historical Overview

Formative Era

Input from the diaspora during the years prior to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 primarily took the form of manpower (immigrants) and capital resources (donations) which in turn facilitated the political status of the Jewish community in Palestine as a state in the making. The period from 1948 to 1967, referred to by sociologists as the *formative* era in the development of Israeli society, witnessed a diaspora-homeland relationship that could be characterized as hegemonic. Accordingly, Israel affirmed its existential superiority vis a vis its diaspora in virtually every facet of its interaction with it – this despite the fact that it relied on diaspora financial largesse both prior to statehood and certainly during the early years thereafter. Israel's first Prime Minister David Ben Gurion sought early on to neutralize any unwanted interference from diaspora communities and imposed a division of labor, according to which the diaspora would raise funds for the imperatives of “nation-building” (i.e. immigrant absorption, rural settlement and forestation) and the sovereign government would determine its allocation. This lack of parity in relations between Israel its diaspora was compounded by the structural asymmetry inherent in the interfacing of a sovereign state with all its trappings and the voluntary organizations and institutions of a minority community in a different host country (Liebman, 1991).

After Israel's independence in 1948, the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI) served as the chief institution for facilitating the structural link between the state and the Jewish Diaspora. In one of the early pieces of legislation of Israel's Knesset, JAFI was mandated to assist in the task of "nation-building", thereby affording the Jewish Diaspora a legal and institutional portal through which to influence Israeli society. Prior to 1967, control over the allocation of funds raised rested with the JAFI executive, which was largely answerable to, and reflected the composition of, the Israeli government. Israeli government and JAFI officials, for their part, regarded diaspora donations as something of a "Jewish tax", almost indistinguishable qualitatively from other funds in the state coffers (Gidron et al, 2006).

Pluralistic Era

For a variety of reasons - both endogenous and exogenous to the Jewish world - the link between Israel its diaspora underwent a gradual transformation that began in 1967. The perceived vulnerability of Israel on the one hand, coupled with a diaspora that had grown increasingly self-confident and autonomous, gave way to a relationship that was characterized less by hegemony and more by a sense of partnership. In Israel specifically, the public sector, which had initially been highly centralistic and imbued with a strong collectivist ethos, assumed a more open form, in which the heterogeneous character of Israeli society began finding its expression in the institutional framework (Gidron, 1997). This was accompanied by a reduced public confidence in state institutions following the war in 1973. This period then, marked the transition from the *formative* to the *pluralistic* era.

During this period, diaspora mobilization on behalf of Israel was increasingly channeled through a wide range of non-governmental institutions outside the purview of JAFI. This phenomenon was the natural outcome of the sharp disparity between the highly centralized nature of the Israeli polity on the one hand, and the multi-faceted, fundamentally voluntary nature of Jewish life in the diaspora, and in the US in particular. Diaspora communities, featuring religious, ethnic, cultural and nationalist dimensions, had gradually given rise to a highly institutionalized and differentiated network of philanthropic, religious, fraternal and political outlets (Elazar, 1986). Diaspora engagement with Israel that took place outside the JAFI structure assumed many forms to be discussed later. These served to gradually reduce the centrality of the JAFI system to Diaspora-Israel relations, resulting in a more pluralistic, decentralized web of linkages between various Diaspora and Israeli organizations.

Example: Project Renewal - Diaspora Mobilization for Homeland Community Development

In the late 1970s, at the behest of then Prime Minister Menachem Begin, diaspora communities were invited to become twinned with disadvantaged neighborhoods and geographically peripheral towns throughout Israel in a scheme for physical and social rehabilitation called Project Renewal (PR). The enlistment of diaspora communities in PR constituted a unique feature of this urban renewal program, which attracted the attention of researchers and practitioners the world over from a variety of disciplines. During the peak years of PR (mid 1980s), tools were developed to facilitate the ongoing cooperative relationship between the diaspora community and the neighborhood/town with which it was twinned. These included periodic reports, escorting visiting missions from the community through the neighborhood, brokering face-to-face consultations between representatives of the community and the

neighborhood, and formalizing methods for the approval of budgets (Schwartz, 1998). Other components that added to the intimacy and depth of the relationship were the appointment by some overseas communities of an Israel-based “community representative”, and volunteers dispatched from the diaspora to the neighborhood.

Pluralistic Era and Beyond

By the early 1990s, dramatic social and economic changes were underway in both Israel and its Diaspora. One far-reaching development was the massive influx of immigrants from the Soviet Union and other former communist countries (close to 1 million over a ten-year period). Other significant developments included the advent of the peace process with the Palestinians in 1993 and the dramatic economic growth experienced in its wake. These changes typified an Israeli society enjoying a newfound sense of physical, social and economic security. This image of a secure, vibrant and successful society seemed decidedly out of sync with its past role as repository of diaspora largesse. Concurrently, diaspora communities (particularly in the US) were undergoing significant changes as well. For the first time in contemporary Jewish history, there appeared to be no unifying crisis around which the diaspora could be mobilized. Among younger members of the diaspora, particularly those in the US, Israel is less of a galvanizing force than it had been previously. This new generation is also less inclined to contribute to Jewish philanthropies (Tobin, 1995). This has challenged the Israeli and diaspora institutions to find more ways to attract and engage communities and philanthropists to support Israel-based needs.

While the established mechanism for Israel-Diaspora cooperation (i.e. JAFI and its partners) sought to adapt itself to changing circumstances, the involvement of other institutional players – external to that system - became increasingly prominent. Private foundations in particular exerted an expanding influence on Israeli society by funding the myriad of nonprofits involved not only in the more traditional service provision (education, social welfare) but also in the realm of social change such as civil rights (including for the non-Jewish Arab minority), extra-parliamentary political and civic movements. All of these, to varying degrees, represent a challenge to the predominant social-political order in Israel and as such, mark the involvement of members of the diaspora in activity that departs from the established patterns of Diaspora-Israel relations, which had traditionally deferred to the will of Israel's political leadership.

Over the past decade or so, the trends which commenced during the pluralistic era, have resulted in a significant realignment of the institutionalized Diaspora-Israel partnership. Diaspora communities (individual cities) have gained greater authority at the expense of the nationally constituted centralized bodies within diaspora communities that interface with the JAFI system, resulting in a much more decentralized diaspora. One scholar of diasporas argues that the relationship between Israel and the diaspora in recent years has lost its vestiges of uniqueness and has gradually normalized due to a variety of factors such as: “declining anti-Semitism; disappointment in Israel’s cultural attainments; and its failure to follow through on its promise to avoid intervention and meddling in diaspora affairs” (Sheffer, 2002). In this sense it has come to resemble the relationship between other state-linked diasporas and their homelands.

Example: Partnership 2000 - A Move towards Greater Reciprocal Relations

The attitudinal and behavioral changes exhibited by diaspora communities suggested a disenchantment with the traditional ethos of donating to Israel, replete with its paternalistic overtones. They appeared more inclined to respond positively to non-traditional, more participatory/interactive arrangements. This gave rise to a new initiative in 1994 called Partnership 2000 (P2K). Similar in structure to PR, P2K twins diaspora communities with peripheral regions in Israel for the express purpose of linking Israelis and diaspora communities in various collaborative efforts. It is intended to address the material and spiritual concerns of the residents of the region and of the diaspora communities through a process of joint governance and allocation of development funds. P2K has been heralded by many as representing a new model for Diaspora-Israel relations citing its emphasis on reciprocity and the pursuit of mutual self-interest. The type of programming that has become synonymous with P2K is "people-to-people" programming, connoting the bi-directional flow of individuals from the community and the region as participants in the many (exchange) programs embarked upon by the partnership. The basic unit of governance of the partnership is the joint steering committee composed of roughly an equal number of representatives from the region and the diaspora community.

III. Loci of Institutionalized Diaspora-Israel Cooperation and Respective Outcomes

Generally speaking, when a diaspora mobilizes financially/philanthropically on behalf of its homeland state, the resulting input is typically funneled via three main conduits: institutions of the state; political parties and their institutions; and civil society organizations (Shain and Sherman, 2001). In the Israeli case, the primary avenue of input during the *formative* era was the quasi-governmental instrumentality of JAFI, i.e. neither purely government nor purely civil society. During the subsequent *pluralistic* era, Israel's 3rd sector or civil society became the main locus of diaspora involvement.

A. Diaspora Interface with Israel's Public Sector

As the preceding sections suggest, much of the responsibility for negotiating the relationship of the Israeli polity with the diaspora rests with JAFI, historically a quasi-governmental agency. Hence, the role of successive Israeli governments therein has been somewhat more limited. Unlike the governments of some countries with significant diaspora communities that feature entire ministries for "Diaspora Management" or "Diaspora Affairs", the formal link between diaspora communities and the Israeli government is handled through an Inter-Ministerial Diaspora Committee, generally chaired by the Prime Minister, which coordinates all ministries' activities that relate to the diaspora. (Currently the Minister of Social Affairs has been entrusted with this responsibility.) Similarly, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs features a unit entrusted with handling diaspora affairs. The deployment of Israel's consulates is determined, at least in part, by the presence of large diaspora communities.

Some of the activities of government bodies interfacing with diaspora specifically target Israelis living abroad – a "diaspora within a diaspora" as it were. Examples of this include an "Israel House", a forum in which cultural and social events are conducted for this population sub-group. Through partnership with the Ministry of Immigrant Absorption, this program also seeks to facilitate the eventual return and integration of Israeli nationals abroad. As part of its overarching

mandate to promote tourism to Israel, the Ministry of Tourism actively promotes tourism among diaspora communities. Similarly, the Ministry of Science, Culture and Sport coordinates cultural and sports exchanges with diaspora communities. Finally the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor targets the diaspora to promote trade and investment in Israel through its commercial attaches at key diplomatic missions. One of the very well publicized ways for Jews abroad to invest in Israel is by purchasing the legendary "Israel Bond". The sale and redemption of Israel bonds falls under the purview of the Ministry of Finance and while it is, strictly speaking, a financial investment, it has come to symbolize the enduring link between Israel and its diaspora the world over.

In the realm of communications, the Israel Broadcasting Authority provided the Voice of Israel service for many years, broadcasting news and other features through short wave transmission in various languages. Indeed, these shortwave radio broadcasts, in the pre-internet era, represented an important source of information about Israel for those in the diaspora. Interestingly, on March 31 of this year, after some 60 years, shortwave broadcasts were roundly discontinued - except for those in Farsi to Iran. All other Voice of Israel broadcasts may now be accessed via the internet.

Another very visible (albeit not very sustained) manifestation of the link between the Israeli body politic and the diaspora is a series of high-profile gatherings convened by successive Israeli Presidents. Although the presidency in Israel is largely a ceremonial post, it is nevertheless imbued with significant symbolic importance, domestically and with respect to the diaspora. On a number of occasions, diaspora leaders, along with very prominent Jews from all walks of life not formally affiliated with the organized communal structure, were invited for deliberations about a variety of issues of concern to the Jewish people worldwide under the auspices of Israel's President. This too marked an important example of diaspora-homeland interface at the governmental level.

B. Diaspora Interface with Israeli Civil Society

As outlined previously, the primary point of entry for contemporary diaspora involvement in Israeli society is that of non-governmental institutions. This includes firstly the JAFI system, which over time has become increasingly autonomous from the Israeli government, thereby reinforcing its non-governmental character. It also includes the myriad of nonprofits or NGOs that seek to impact Israeli society through service provision and/or advocacy.

There are two primary avenues through which individuals and communities in the diaspora have interfaced with Israeli civil society, typically through partnering with Israeli nonprofits. One is the myriad of "friends of" organizations, established to support particular institutions in areas such as: health (hospitals, medical research, paramedical/emergency care): education (universities, special needs populations, think-tanks); culture (museums, dance companies, theatres), etc. The other is the philanthropic/family foundation, established and operating outside the purview the organized Jewish communal structure. These organizational forms in the diaspora have dramatically impacted civil society in Israel, contributing to the development of organizations engaged in both service provision (health, education and welfare) as well as social change. Not surprisingly, these forms of diaspora mobilization became more prominent during the *pluralistic* era.

Example: The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) - A Diaspora NGO

Inspired by certain leading US foundations, JDC viewed its role in Israel as a catalyst for innovation in the provision of public services, particularly in the field of welfare (Gidron et al., 2003). The JDC, as a model for institutionalized Diaspora-Israel cooperation, was significant in that it is governed solely by its American board members and, as such, is unfettered by the vagaries of Israeli politics. JDC has traditionally worked very closely with both the Israeli government and civil society, primarily in the development of social services for vulnerable Israelis, including abused children, troubled teens, Israelis with special needs, the elderly and immigrants. Its independence from Israeli politics and its distinctly professional orientation, sharply distinguish it from the heretofore politicized JAFI model of institutionalized cooperation.

C. Diaspora Interface with Israel's Business Sector

The private sector in Israel has not heretofore been a significant arena for the engagement of or collaboration with the diaspora. A partial explanation for this is no doubt rooted in the view of Israel among many in the diaspora as a spiritual source and a target for philanthropic activity. As many have wryly observed, "Jews abroad see Israel as a land of prophets and not of profits". If there is any validity to such a notion, it is not difficult to understand why private sector collaborative activity between Israel and diaspora Jews has been rather limited. Even the "Israel Bond", mentioned previously, is viewed much more as a donation than a bonafide financial investment.

Nonetheless, there are examples of private sector initiatives in Israel intended to engage diaspora. Among these are for-profit publications, such as daily newspapers and weekly/monthly magazines that target diaspora communities abroad. Needless to say, as in the example of radio broadcasts, these too have been forced to adapt to the tendency of many internationally to consume news on line. Many websites have proliferated in recent years, supported by advertisements and/or subscriptions, which cater to various interest groups or constituencies within the diaspora. A number of private tour companies/agencies cater to diaspora communities and, in a few instances, tailor their group tour itineraries inside Israel to compete with those offered by nonprofit institutions.

Attempts of diaspora communities to assist Israel through private sector activity has primarily revolved around the establishment of local Chambers of Commerce, designed to stimulate trade with and investment in Israel and to market Israeli overseas. By and large, these have met with limited success. Interestingly, the most significant commercial activity in the diaspora on behalf of Israel seems to have been the domain of individual business people – with varying degrees of success. Perhaps it is the very nature of profit-motivated private initiative that defies the otherwise well-intentioned promotional efforts of governmental and non-governmental actors.

IV. Tools for Diaspora-Homeland Interfacing

Joint Governance

Among the chief manifestations or contributions of the interface between Israel and its Diaspora at the level of civil society has been the experiment at joint governance of institutions and organizations executing collaborative activity. These typically feature organizational structures featuring representation from both sides, whether on governing boards or professional

committees consulting on program development and implementation. This allows for the voice and influence of both sides in key areas such as identifying and prioritizing needs, resource allocation, etc. The governance of JAFI is an example of this with its guiding Assembly and Board of Governors incorporating delegates from both Israel and the diaspora. As outlined previously, P2K is also a prime example of this, albeit on a more local level.

Certain individual diaspora communities operating within the JAFI system have also sought to forge independent institutional relationships and agendas in Israel that extend beyond the JAFI purview. The first example of this was the establishment by the San Francisco Jewish community of a board composed of Israelis to work alongside their own board in pursuing jointly agreed upon goals. While the declared goals of these institutions/projects jointly governed by Israel and diaspora representatives are systemic in nature, interpersonal relations formed in the process play a role that is often critical to the success of such efforts.

An additional expression of joint governance has taken the form of elections to one of the established bodies through which Israel interfaces with its diaspora, namely the World Zionist Organization (WZO), linked organically to JAFI. Every four years, elections are conducted throughout the diaspora to elect representatives to the main governing body of the WZO. To some extent, these elections resemble in both substance and style the general elections for Israel's Knesset (parliament). As such, this represents, at least symbolically, a proxy form of "out of country voting" for members of Israel's diaspora. In certain instances, when Israel's Knesset sought to legislate around issues of concern to Jews the world over (such as what constitutes Jewish identity for the purposes of immigration - termed the "Who is a Jew affair"), the diaspora would make its voice heard through a variety of channels including the WZO and its elective mechanism.

Organized Visits

One of the most influential and ubiquitous manifestations of the Diaspora-Israel partnership has been the highly structured visits of diaspora members to Israel either as individuals or in groups (often termed "missions"). The nature and goals of these visits vary. They include: donors or community officials who observe and review projects they have supported philanthropically, as well as professional exchanges intended to foster some kind of joint output. Other visits may be less targeted, but simply provide an opportunity for members of the diaspora to visit Israel and better understand Israel's needs through personal direct experience. This can serve to educate them about the socio-economic needs, encourage philanthropic or professional ties, or simply to cultivate a sense of identification with Israel. It has been reported by many diaspora community members that the community mission to Israel actually served as a vehicle to instill a profound, substantial identification with that same local community. One striking example of this mode of Diaspora-Israel interface is a program initiated some 8 years ago called *Birthright*. Representing a tri-partite collaboration between American Jewish communities (linked to the JAFI system), the Israeli government and a few key individual (American Jewish) philanthropists, Birthright provides free educational trips to Israel for young diaspora adults aged 18 to 26. Since its inception, 145,000 diaspora youth from 52 countries have participated in the program.

With the advent of P2K, another form of structured visits has been undertaken – but in the opposite direction. Increasingly, Israelis are sent individually and in groups, to diaspora

communities (often to those with which their own communities in Israel are twinned). These include professionals from various backgrounds (educators, health professionals, social workers, political officials), children attending Jewish summer camps in the diaspora, thereby helping to create an "Israeli" atmosphere, and various forms of reciprocal visits. One interesting example of this is a project called *Israel Project*, which has initiated sending young Israeli activists to communities throughout the world in order to strengthen Israeli identity abroad. This type of program could be of particular salience for diaspora-homeland relationships in which the homeland country is mired in controversy or has experienced a crisis of legitimacy.

V. Conclusion and Lessons for Other Diaspora-Homeland Contexts

When considering to what extent the experience of Israel and its diaspora may offer lessons to other Diaspora-Homeland contexts, it is first necessary to consider the factors that are presumed to impact the nature and scope of diaspora mobilization on behalf of its homeland. These would include:

- a. Capabilities of diasporas (internal organization, duration of their residence in host country, legal status within host countries, degree of acculturation to and geographical dispersal within host countries)
- b. Specific objectives of diaspora mobilization
- c. Sources of mobilization and activation of diasporas by home governments
- d. Attitudes of the host societies toward the influence of diasporas
- e. Activities of diasporas which affect international politics such as the collection of funds, political pressure, etc. (Sheffer, 1986).

Others cite the importance of the material, cultural and organizational resources available to diasporas, the opportunity structures in the host country; and their motivation and capability to maintain cohesion and exert group influence (Esman, 1986). Ethnic cohesion, according to Shain, increases the more ethnic group members interact frequently and non-conflictually in structural spheres (1999).

It is no coincidence then, that the diaspora communities that feature most prominently in the sustained link between diaspora and Israel are those that possess a high degree of communal organization as well as significant material, cultural and organizational resources. Moreover, the relative openness/tolerance of the host country has also played an important role in shaping the relative propensity of a diaspora community to mobilize on behalf of Israel. Conversely, communities residing in intolerant or even hostile host societies with sever constraints limiting internal communal organization have been more inclined historically to immigrate to Israel. These and a variety of other factors must be considered when seeking to fashion the strategy for a more meaningful and sustained diaspora-homeland interface.

Israel has traditionally viewed the diaspora as a potential reservoir for human resources in the form of immigrants and over time has come to view it more a source of financial, political and morale support. In turn, the diaspora is linked to Israel through a combination of historical, cultural, religious and/or familial ties. The review of the evolution of the institutionalized cooperation between Israel and its diaspora and the concomitant examples elucidated herein, ideally provide the basis of a discussion on how these may resonate for the experience of other diaspora-homeland contexts.

A number of recommendations, gleaned from Israel's experience with its diaspora, could be applicable to other instances of diaspora-homeland interfaces:

- One of the main lessons emerging from this analysis is the need for an institutional framework to be established. This serves several purposes, including a) provides a formal channel between diaspora communities and the country of origin, thereby facilitating a structured process of communication, needs identification, prioritization, and two-way communication between them; b) helps to achieve policy coherence; c) facilitates reciprocal relations which respect the integrity and sensibilities of both sides.
- Formal institutions for Diaspora-Homeland collaboration need to be augmented by initiatives from civil society. The complex myriad of NGOs within Israel's diaspora communities, illustrates the power of civil society to nurture a sense of identification with the homeland and to initiate and raise funding for homeland development projects. The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee serves as a key example of how a diaspora NGO serves as an independent channel for the transfer of diaspora funds to the homeland for social development programming.
- Furthermore it underscores the importance of fostering attempts at joint diaspora-homeland governance of institutions and organizations executing collaborative activity. The examples of mechanisms of joint governance provided here illustrate ways in which this can be implemented. This is most effective when instituted at all levels of diaspora-homeland interaction, i.e. transnational, regional and local, as evinced in the examples of Project Renewal and Partnership 2000. It must be stressed that the utility of this kind of joint endeavor can be not only instrumental but also symbolic.
- The Israel-Diaspora experience has demonstrated a patent need for a mechanism for the transfer of philanthropic funds from the diaspora to the homeland that is transparent and independent. This is seen as indispensable to a diaspora-homeland interface that is characterized by accountability and trust. It is also worth noting that such a (non-governmental) mechanism for the transfer of funds might enjoy tax benefits or incentives in certain host countries.
- Another conspicuous lesson emanating from the Israel-Diaspora experience is the need to engage the next generation (youth) in efforts toward homeland development (e.g. trips, educational programs, student exchanges, etc). The relatively strong appeal of programs of a cultural nature should also be factored into these efforts.

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