

Consensus Building and Regional Governance: SANDAG and the San Diego-Tijuana Border Region

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Formulating public policy in metropolitan regions has become an increasingly difficult task, given the scope, scale, and complexity of decision making. The complexity of this task is magnified by the particularity of specific regions: the history of a region's urbanization patterns, economic development, and social demands and political responses affect the spatial arrangements of a region.

The task of regional governance is to make sense of how the region's economic, political, administrative, and cultural systems fit together with the everyday life of its workers, public officials, and residents. Policy formulation at the regional level often requires the joint efforts of local, state, and federal officials as well as other stakeholders who approach this task with multiple and conflicting agendas and interests.

This paper focuses on a regional agency's novel application of a tool of regional governance that has the potential to assist in the task of regional policy making and regional governance. The paper begins with a brief review of the conceptual issues that underpin "regional governance" as they currently are presented in the literature. Then, a brief overview of issues influencing governance in the region in question, the San Diego-Tijuana border area, is presented, followed by a description of the application of the Delphi technique.

The Delphi technique, a tool for group idea

building and consensus generation, was used to complement the policy formulation process of the regional planning agency and council of governments, the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) and its Border-Related Issues Task Force. The paper concludes by examining the results of the Delphi-driven policy formulation process.

Making Sense of "Region"

The importance of region as a focus for analysis, and its inclusion in various policy debates, seems to occur with regularity (Warren, Rosentraub, and Weschler, 1992; Walker, 1995; Swanstrom, 1996). Unlike earlier efforts, the present debate represents an important moment for the study of regions in that it brings a somewhat neglected concept—the region—to a broader audience of academics and practitioners, giving the "region" greater currency in policy discussions.

The body of recently published work, including Peirce, et al.'s *Citistates* (1993), Kemmis' *Community and the Politics of Place* (1990), Dodge's *Regional Excellence* (1996), Waste's *Independent Cities* (1998), Barnes and Ledebur's *The New Regional Economies* (1998), and Fulton's *Reluctant Metropolis* (1997) highlights the complexities associated with region—as an economic force, a political entity, or a social and cultural expression. What the contributors to this body of work have in common is the desire to think critically about the relationships between the

economy, politics, and everyday life in order to build the capacity to address the major stumbling blocks to our understanding of regional governance.

A major point behind the emerging regionalism in public policy is that growth and decline occur in regions, not in single jurisdictions. A consequence, according to Bradshaw (1993, pp.167-169), is that the functional geography of regions has developed faster than the civil geography. Because we tend to compartmentalize these different, but ultimately and often closely interrelated, arenas we often do not ask the appropriate questions when thinking about the political economy of regions.

One of the major challenges to making political sense of "region" is recognizing that it is not the product of planning, it is not hierarchical, yet its multiple jurisdictions are highly interdependent.

Barnes and Ledebur (1998; 1995), for example, avow that when economic and political boundaries are not congruent and cannot achieve congruence, regions should explore new approaches to policy making. They suggest ways to enhance regional policy making capacity:

- inventory regional governance arrangements, experience, and capacities;
- improve data availability;
- assess the spatial scope of factors in policy analysis;
- identify linkages to the broader economy;
- assess the impact of poverty on fiscal and economic conditions in the area;
- assess the feasibility of various intergovernmental mechanisms for collaboration;
- identify local, state, and federal barriers to regional policy making; and
- identify individuals to represent regional interests at higher levels of government (1998, 153).

This list, described as "not exhaustive, but...intended to stimulate further thought" also captures the dilemma highlighted by Dodge (1996). We are often stopped in our tracks trying to overcome the inertia generated from powerful myths about the difficulties inherent in regional governance, rather than focusing on enhancing our capacity to make decisions on a regional level.

Fulton (1997), writing about metropolitan Los Angeles, sees in the politics of urban growth a reluctant metropolis. Fulton's analysis highlights another aspect of the challenge to regional governance habit. The lack of desire—by residents, businesses, politicians of all stripes—to create a metropolitan/regional vision can be seen on many different levels. From gated communities to special taxing districts to the artificial Main Streets of Los Angeles' theme parks, the idea of "cocoon citizenship" represents a way of thinking about everyday life that is individualized, separated, and distant from the broader society. Residents move from cocoon to cocoon, not wanting to participate in society more than necessary. The resulting spatial practices, the representations of space, and representational spaces reinforce the abstractness of "region" (Lefebvre, 1994, pp. 239-45), complicating attempts to think through what regional governance needs are.

Making sense of region, then, requires the blending of "region" as a space and "region" as an organizing unit. "Success" in regional governance, for example, tends to be characterized by local public officials working at the boundaries or seams of their governmental units, usually cooperating in program specific arenas, resulting in narrow, technocratic accomplishments, but is this governance? (Savitch and Vogel, 1998, pp. 295-298.)

Research has shown that making sense of region also requires the use of certain skills (Poirier, 1995; Andranovich, 1995a; Gage and Mandell, 1996; Wray, 1997; Walshok, 1997). Gage and Mandell, for example, identify four different roles for regional councils that are based on different skill sets: conflict management, catalyst, broker, and consensus builder. Their conclusions are based on the fact that the organizational structure of regional councils is not hierarchical, but rather a network; and the task environment is not based on participative management (one can either participate or withdraw), but on unbounded participation (all see ways to participate for their own reasons). Gage and Mandell suggest that leadership in this environment requires different skills. Poirier (1995), Andranovich (1995a), Wray (1997), and Walshok (1997) believe that the

skills are the most important component of regionalism. Each notes the importance of bringing together policy makers and other regional stakeholders because regional leadership is not necessarily the purview of a governmental organization.

The skills needed to foster collaboration are different from those needed to run an organization, whether through a partnership, by incorporating the views of citizens through discussion forums, or in cross-sectional groups of academics, community members, and media representatives under the auspices of a university. The development of these governance skills is not an incidental challenge.

Seeking Regional Governance

The Border Region

The U.S. and Mexico have a shared past, a history that the U.S. has dominated since 1848. The two nations have developed along different paths, and are separated by economic, political, and cultural gulfs. Although the San Diego-Tijuana metroplex is the largest and fastest growing urban region on the western coast of north America, the nature of this growth is uneven. There are stark contrasts between living in the two cities, and the differences complicate the management of transborder issues.

Tijuana, located in the state of Baja California Norte (capital Mexicali), is one of the fastest growing cities in Mexico and has been dubbed the "City of Permanent Growth." Tijuana's population has grown from 340,000 in the 1970 to almost 1.2 million today (official population estimates vary). By 2000, Tijuana will be the second largest city on the western coast of North America. Because of its explosive growth, Tijuana has become a magnet for migrants throughout Mexico (and central and south America). Many come to the region for jobs and to get a closer look at the opportunities afforded by a shared border with the US. Each day about 50,000 persons cross the border legally from Tijuana to San Diego for jobs, school, shopping, or business (SANDAG, 12-19-1989).

Tijuana has an unemployment rate of only 3 percent, but about 50 percent of the labor force is underemployed, mirroring the national average. The

rate of population growth translates into the need to create about 1 million new jobs a year in Tijuana. Currently, there are about 500 *maquiladoras*¹ in Tijuana employing about 50,000 persons; the *maquiladoras* result in a number of related services on both sides of the border such as accounting firms, attorneys, and others providing goods and services (see Grunwald, 1989; Lindquist, 1989). The San Diego Economic Development Corporation estimated that for every \$1 in wages paid in Tijuana, \$.40 comes to the US for goods and services; further, the *maquiladora* industry spends from \$70-90 million a year in the city of San Diego and the south bay area (SANDAG, 12-19-1989).

Long-standing ties between San Diego and Tijuana include agreements between the fire and police departments in emergency situations (SANDAG, 12-19-1989). More recently, elected officials have held two joint council meetings and a third is currently being planned. The outcomes of the first two meetings include new joint efforts by both cities' tourist bureaus and chambers of commerce. But the relationship between officials of the two cities has had its ups and downs; beginning with the 1988 election there has been renewed hope (see Cleeland, 1989) for open communication on some of the border's most pressing issues, including:

- water supply and sewerage;
- opening a third border crossing;
- trolley expansion into Tijuana;
- an international airport located on the border (this issue seems to resurface on a 10-year cycle);
- a local, binational powers arrangement;
- growth management; and
- hazardous waste management (Kjos, 1989).

Growth Is Key Issue

The key management issue in the 1990s is growth; all of the other issues in some way are exacerbated by the growth of the border region. But the management of growth is seen differently on both sides of the border. Because of the differences in the levels of economic development, issues of importance to the U.S. are not always the same as those for Mexico.

For example, environmental pollution has been a salient issue for 30 years in the U.S. It is a much newer topic in Mexico.

Another example, and one that is much more complex, is illegal immigration and crime in the border region (see Wolf, 1988). For the U.S., the linkage between crime and illegal immigration is often portrayed as U.S. citizens being victimized by Mexicans. As Wolf points out, illegal immigrants are more often the victims of border crime because of their in-between status and fear of contact with U.S. authorities. Light-up-the-border campaigns, pitched by former Mayor Roger Hedgecock on his radio talk show since 1990 (to bring media attention to the lawlessness of the border area) have been denounced by Tijuana officials as racist, and have contributed to the problems of bilateral cooperation (see Mathews, 1990).

From the Mexican perspective, the problems of managing growth have been providing housing, potable water and health care to the burgeoning population. In one of his first policy proposals, Baja California Governor Ruffo called for "popular developments" to address the need for 130,000 housing units, growing by 20,000 a year (*San Diego Union*, 1989). About 65 percent of the demand for new housing comes from poor families who have historically settled in open lands near the city of Tijuana.

Many of Tijuana's neighborhoods (*colonias*) were formed by such migrants and have no electricity, water or paved roads. In addition, some of the roads are so narrow and winding that it is a difficult and expensive proposition for the city to provide services. The new popular developments, although not fitted with water, sewer or electricity infrastructure, may eventually be fitted because of the straight streets and planned rights-of-way. In six years, these subdivisions could occupy more than 10,000 acres.

All of this contributes to the growth management agenda of Tijuana, placing housing and infrastructure at the top of the agenda. In terms of the relationship between San Diego and Tijuana, in a visit and meeting with San Diego county supervisors, Governor Ruffo discussed the need to address additional border crossings, air and water pollution,

water shortages, and illegal immigration (Cleeland, 1989).

The growth management agenda is made more complex by the lack of resources, especially funds, in Tijuana, and by the lack of understanding and resulting coordination difficulties between agencies within and across the border (see Herzog, 1985; Herzog, 1986, especially Commentary, 55-56 and 89-91 for perspectives from Mexican public officials; Rosenthal-Urey, 1986).

SANDAG, the regional planning agency and council of governments in San Diego, sponsored a Border-Related Issues Task Force that met twice monthly from July 1989 to February 1990. The purpose of the task force was to identify issues and problems related to the San Diego's proximity to the border and of concern to member entities; to recommend solutions to the problems identified by the task force; and to recommend the establishment of a clearinghouse on border issues and propose activities for the clearinghouse.

The task force was charged by the SANDAG Board to consider the impact of undocumented persons, government actions and public facilities, the establishment of a border issues clearinghouse, and other issues identified by the task force. The task force's 15 members represented federal, state, county, and city governmental and agency officials, the consul general of Mexico in San Diego, and representatives of nonprofit organizations.

In addition to the 15 regular members, state and national legislators' representatives attended, as did staff members of the city and county departments responsible for border affairs, as well as several academicians. All told, a total of about 35 persons regularly participated in the task force. The task force was chaired by council members from the cities of Imperial Beach in the South Bay and Encinitas in the North County.

Task force meetings generally followed a format that included a presentation on an issue or a facet of an issue affecting everyday life in the border region followed by a discussion and elaboration of issues. For example, presentations were made by outside guest speakers on:

- the water supply in the region;
- Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) detention and deportation activities;
- the Tijuana River Natural Estuarine Reserve and border crossings;
- activities to assist migrants by Catholic Charities in San Diego's north county;
- activities of the city and county offices of border affairs;
- economic and environmental issues; and
- crime and illegal immigration.

Most of the presentations focused on the substantive dimensions of the issue as well as the administrative. The task force went on two "field trips" to review migrant activities and problems in the north county and to the border at dusk to provide the members with first-hand knowledge and experience into the nature of the issues.

Four-Round Delphi Process

The varied jurisdictions represented by the participants resulted in contention over many issues. This led to the use of a novel technique to generate consensus recommendations. To generate its recommendations, the task force completed a four-round Delphi process to generate ideas and develop consensus. The Delphi technique was designed for noninteracting groups (see Andranovich, 1995b; Linstone and Turoff, 1975; Moore, 1987). Noninteracting groups can include groups whose members are geographically distant, groups whose members tend to clash, or groups in which status differences might affect decision making.

The essence of the Delphi technique is for each group member to make an independent and anonymous judgment (that is, to vote) on a predefined problem. The judgments (votes) are then averaged, with each judgment receiving equal weight. Group members are then given the distribution of the judgments and asked to vote again. The process is repeated as is necessary to reach or promote consensus.

The Delphi technique is labor intensive and time consuming. The monitor must assure quick turn around of summaries to maintain continuity and

interest. The process, particularly if mailed questionnaires are used, can take 45 days to administer over a 12 week period from decision-to-go to the final report (Moore, 1987, pp. 66-67).

As a result of the time delays imposed by use of the mail, the process is often administered in conjunction with other meetings (e.g., regularly scheduled task force meetings, advisory board meetings, PTA meetings), providing "homework" and preserving continuity between meetings. In addition, this format permits debriefing and summarizing to occur by the monitor team during the meeting as well as through written summaries. A key to success is to be brief and deal with the Delphi process at the end of the scheduled meeting, after regular business has been conducted. Questionnaires also can be handed out at this time.

SANDAG's Delphi Methodology

The Delphi process, facilitated by the task force co-chairs and monitored by a senior SANDAG planner, was used to permit continued learning and the development of consensus on the task force's recommendations. In the first round, all task force members and other attendees listed ideas for policy recommendations. The second round allowed participants to add new recommendations or rephrase existing ones, and required the ranking of the recommendations in importance. In the third round, the ranking of recommendations continued, leading toward general group consensus in the fourth round.

The nature of the recommendations and the sometimes contentious debates surrounding certain issues, particularly those related to legal and illegal immigration (e.g., access to housing and health services, crime) and questions of administrative jurisdiction, illustrate the challenge to achieving regional consensus. Indeed, oftentimes not only did officials from different levels of government disagree, but officials from the same level disagreed, resulting in several, similarly worded recommendations in contentious policy arenas (e.g., law and justice, immigration's impact and the region's response, and SANDAG's role relative to other, existing border units in the City of San Diego and the county).

As the participants ranked the recommendations, SANDAG's role in border related affairs became clearer. An examination of the top and bottom 10 recommendations (there were a total of 42 recommendations) not only shows the similarities and differences within the policy making community, but also identified those issues amenable to a regional solution and those that are best left for another time.

Delineating Consensus and Conflict

Although a variety of recommendations were suggested and ranked, the task force presented these as five broad recommendations addressing the SANDAG Board's charge (with supporting materials, including the rankings; see SANDAG, 1990). The structure of the Delphi process often results in several similar recommendations, which the iterative process refines toward consensus. Thus, the top-ranked recommendations reflect a consensus to pursue certain policy paths, and the lowest-ranked recommendations suggest areas of conflict. For analytical purposes in this article, the 10 top and bottom recommendations are classified into one of four categories, depending upon each recommendation's effect(s) in one of four areas:

- organizational outcomes;
- policy/political outcomes;
- programmatic outcomes; and
- community relations outcomes.

These four categories generally cover SANDAG's mission as a council of governments and its most important task, defining its own area of organizational interest and influence in the region.

Organizational outcomes. These emphasize SANDAG's role in formulating or managing public policy affecting the San Diego region. These are the most significant for SANDAG because of the possibility of increased staffing, budgetary, and information resources and the resulting increased administrative jurisdiction.

Policy/political outcomes. These indicate SANDAG's role in influencing policy affecting the San Diego region but made by other levels of government (i.e., city, state, national). Outcomes in this arena may be used by SANDAG to enhance its rela-

tive bargaining power in regional matters inside the San Diego region and relative to other regional entities in the state.

Programmatic outcomes. These outcomes refer to the studies and technical assistance provided by SANDAG to its member agencies and others in the region.

Community relations. These outcomes make reference to SANDAG's broadest public policy education objectives, enhancing public understanding of regional issues and regional identity.

Top-Ranked Recommendations

Of the 10 top recommendations, six were organizational outcomes, two were policy/political, and one each held programmatic and community relations outcomes (see Table 1).

Of the six organizational outcomes, five called for the establishment of a new organizational unit responsible for international planning affairs. The proposed responsibilities of this new unit included the establishment of working relations with planners in the State of Baja California Norte, Mexico, serving as a clearinghouse to assist member agencies in border related matters, publishing guides to demographic and economic changes in Baja California, coordinating national, state, and local activities that affect the border, and developing the institutional administrative capacity to implement these responsibilities (e.g., bilingual staff, U.S./metric conversion, negotiation/monitoring assistance, evaluation).

The other recommendation in this area suggested that the SANDAG Board invite the mayor of Tijuana to sit on the Board of Directors. These recommendations illustrate the fragmentation of policy making on the U.S. side of the border, the difficulty of obtaining information in a timely fashion, and the need to bring Mexican officials into the decision making process to help bridge the gulf between the two nations in the border region.

The two policy/political recommendations included the top-ranked recommendation—to work to fund a new sewerage treatment facility to treat sewerage from Tijuana—and “to work with legislators to obtain funding for social and health programs for

Table 1: Ten Top Recommendations

Recommendation	Outcome	Consensus
SANDAG should work with appropriate legislators to achieve full funding and maintenance of the treatment facility for sewage from Tijuana.	Policy/Political	21.77
SANDAG should establish an international planning affairs unit to conduct activities including establishing working relationships with planners in Baja California and Tijuana, including sharing planning data and relevant information on infrastructure.	Organizational	21.08
SANDAG should establish an international planning affairs unit to conduct activities including developing the capacity (e.g., bilingual staff, U.S./metric conversion, negotiation/monitoring assistance, evaluation) to assist its member agencies in all border-related matters.	Organizational	20.74
The SANDAG Board should encourage citizens to view the border area as one region which is interdependent and interrelated.	Community Relations	18.89
SANDAG should establish an international planning affairs unit to conduct activities including establishing a written information clearinghouse to assist member agencies in border-related affairs.	Organizational	18.84
SANDAG should establish an international planning affairs unit to conduct activities including directing publication of <i>The Bridge</i> , a guide to demographics of Baja California and to establishing a <i>maquiladora</i> guide.	Organizational	18.52
SANDAG should undertake activities concerning law and justice, including encouraging local educational agencies to conduct programs to instruct persons in the law and justice fields on issues related to the border, to promote better understanding of the issues from both the U.S. and Mexican perspectives.	Programmatic	18.10
The SANDAG Board should invite the mayor to Tijuana, or a designated councilmember, to sit on the SANDAG Board of Directors.	Organizational	17.40
SANDAG should work with appropriate legislators to obtain funding for social and health programs for legal aliens, to assist in their settlement.	Policy/Political	16.92
SANDAG should establish an international planning affairs unit to conduct activities including assisting in coordination of federal, state, and local activities occurring in the region that impact the border.	Organizational	16.82

Source: Adapted from SANDAG, 1990, Attachment B.

NOTE: Outcomes are categorized as Policy/Political, Organizational, Community Relations, or Programmatic. Consensus score shows the commitment obtained through the Delphi process.

legal aliens to assist in their settlement." Both recommendations require SANDAG to lobby and work with state and national officials to bring the San Diego region's needs to their attention.

The sole programmatic recommendation suggested that SANDAG undertake activities designed to make it easier for law enforcement to better understand the border and its particular problems. In the community relations area (ranked fourth overall), it was suggested that SANDAG encourage all citizens to view the border "as one region which is interdependent and interrelated."

While these 10 recommendations show the degree of consensus achieved in the group decision process, there was an undercurrent of political and administrative jockeying reflecting some of the barriers to regional governance, in this case barriers to the management of transborder issues on the part of U.S. agencies, independent of the larger issues of communicating and coordinating with Tijuana.

Bottom-Ranked Recommendations

The bottom 10 recommendations illustrate some of the differences between the task force participants that may undermine SANDAG's future efforts in managing transborder issues. Key among these are the problems inherent in councils of governments jurisdictional issues—localism versus regionalism, limitations in authority, and the inability of most councils of governments to manage social issues. But there were also significant differences in perspective that divided local officials; key among these was the difference between legal and illegal immigration in the region (this foreshadowed the Proposition 187 debate that raged statewide in California six years later). Also of importance was the role of local governments in resolving what is often described as a "national problem." These differences were clearly evident in the bottom 10 recommendations (see Table 2).

Of the bottom-ranked recommendations, one was organizational; seven were policy/political; and two were programmatic. The consensus development process did not accommodate value differences as successfully as it did organizational issues.

The one organizational outcomes recommendation suggested that the proposed international planning affairs unit coordinate with the City Office of Binational Affairs and the County Office of Transborder Affairs. This recommendation, while similar to several in the top 10, may have received its low ranking because it explicitly connected the jurisdictions, resources, and programs of agencies operating at three different levels of government—the city, the county, and the region.

The two programmatic recommendations—conducting studies in two areas: "misdemeanor crime caused by aliens" and "the costs of providing short term housing to meet the needs of North County"—did not receive consensus because it could not be determined whether the information required to do such studies was available or whether regional interests would be served.

The seven policy/political recommendations (which included in the category the three with the lowest consensus overall) reflected problems over jurisdiction between the INS and local elected officials and the need for a regional policy approach to the border.

The two policy/political recommendations obtaining the very lowest consensus ranking of the 42 recommendations happen to be illustrative of disputes over jurisdictional authority. In the instance of bureaucratic politics, "SANDAG should undertake activities concerning law and justice, including local police should not enforce immigration laws. Each city should adopt a policy of noncooperation with the INS." The response, "SANDAG should undertake activities concerning law and justice, including to support funds being withheld from cities that do not cooperate with the INS." Fortunately for the continuance of regional cooperation, the majority of participants in the Delphi process rejected this type of activity. These two recommendations were the two lowest ranked (consensus ranking) of the 42.

Three other policy/political recommendations were narrowly focused. One of these narrowly-focused recommendations also addressed the INS, this time recommending SANDAG support legislation to quickly deport Mexican citizens "who are accused of

Table 2: Ten Bottom Recommendations

Recommendation	Outcome	Consensus
SANDAG should undertake activities concerning law and justice, including support for legislation to allow Mexican officials to seek and quickly deport from the U.S. any Mexican citizens who are accused of major crimes.	Programmatic	8.61
SANDAG should establish an international planning affairs unit to conduct activities including helping the small cities with transborder issues and coordinating with the County's Department of Transborder Affairs and the City of San Diego's Office of Binational Affairs.	Organizational	8.00
SANDAG should work with appropriate legislators to obtain state eligibility for foster/institutional care funds for all dependent children, regardless of citizenship.	Policy/Political	6.60
The SANDAG Board should take the following action. The City of San Diego's Binational Affairs Office and the County's Department of Transborder Affairs are the best spokesmen on local problems and issues requiring government action. SANDAG should avoid duplication of these ongoing efforts.	Policy/Political	6.53
SANDAG should have no involvement in border issues.	Policy/Political	6.34
SANDAG should conduct a complete local study of misdemeanor crime caused by aliens in order to obtain the true impact of alien crime.	Programmatic	6.27
SANDAG should conduct studies determining the costs of providing short-term housing to meet the needs of the North County.	Programmatic	6.27
The SANDAG Board should recommend that the San Diego County Medical Society develop billing procedures enabling medical providers to obtain payment.	Policy/Political	3.96
SANDAG should undertake activities concerning law and justice, including, for example, local police should not enforce immigration laws. Each city should adopt a policy of noncooperation with the INS.	Policy/Political	3.95
SANDAG should undertake activities concerning law and justice, including to support funds being withheld from cities that do not cooperate with the INS.	Policy/Political	3.63

Source: Adapted from SANDAG, 1990, Attachment B.

NOTE: Outcomes are categorized as Policy/Political, Organizational, Community Relations, or Programmatic. Consensus score shows the commitment obtained through the Delphi process.

major crimes." Low consensus (this was the best of the bottom 10) may have resulted from the choice of words, as three other similar recommendations—having police check for illegal activities leaving the U.S. (ranked 21st overall); supporting legislation to fund health services for "aliens injured during apprehension (ranked 26th overall);" and "support for Mexican nationals sentenced for crimes in the U.S. to serve their time in Mexican prisons (ranked 28th overall)"—did manage to obtain somewhat greater consensus. The other two narrowly-focused recommendations in this category addressed foster care of all dependent children "regardless of citizenship" and a recommendation that the county "develop billing procedures enabling medical providers to obtain payment" for treatment of aliens.

Finally, two of the policy/political recommendations were point blank. "SANDAG should have no involvement in border issues" and "...The City of San Diego's Binational Affairs Office and the County's Department of Transborder Affairs are the best spokesmen on local problems and issues requiring government action. SANDAG should avoid duplication of these ongoing efforts." These two recommendations suggest that at least a few of the policy makers on the task force do not believe that there is a need for a regional approach to border policy management.

Regional Consensus and Governance

While national governments have jurisdiction over their respective country's borders, Washington, D.C. and Mexico City are a long way from San Diego and Tijuana and border problems. In San Diego, even though the border is under the jurisdiction of the national government, local government activities, commerce, and social relations reflect a long and sometimes contentious history of cross-border involvement.

Making regional policy in this setting presents policy making challenges. The Delphi technique is unique among the decision making tools used by SANDAG, which include board actions, community advisory committees, technical advisory committees, stakeholder and community surveys, and public pre-

sentations along with requesting comments on reports and other typical activities.

The Delphi technique, a tool for group idea building and consensus generation, was used to complement the regional policy formulation process of SANDAG. The Delphi technique proved valuable. It identified a broad consensus for moving ahead with establishing political ties with local level Mexican officials, developing an inventory of border related planning activities, and conducting public policy public education, but also showed an undercurrent of jurisdictional jockeying for turf and a considerable cultural divergence in values regarding issues of social justice.

While they might seem like "softer" approaches, this model of regional governance is precisely what the current literature on regionalism suggests is a necessary first step to achieving regional governance (e.g., Warren, Rosentraub, and Weschler, 1992; Walker, 1995; Swanstrom, 1996). Indeed, the SANDAG Board adopted the task force's recommendations and the task force was disbanded in 1990. Six years later, the SANDAG Board decided to revisit its border policy, and in 1996 established a Committee on Binational Regional Opportunities.

These softer approaches remain in place. Unlike the task force, the Committee on Binational Regional Opportunities is ongoing, meets five times a year, and holds an annual conference on the border. Both the City of San Diego and the county have reorganized their border activities under their professional managers rather than directly under elected officials. In addition, the passage of NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) has made the border region a busier place. Numerous federal, state, local, and Mexican government agencies are now involved in a variety of policy arenas, from transportation, water quality, immigration and customs, to education and culture.

The Delphi technique provided task force participants and regional policy makers an opportunity to explore policy alternatives without contention. In today's computerized world, the Delphi method could be more easily administered via e-mail and tabulated by vote counting programs. The Delphi

process, while not a panacea for the problems of regional governance, is a useful tool for clarifying what steps should be taken and where potential problems exist.

The Delphi technique helps reduce the level of contention by providing everyone with voice and ownership, yet concurrently can surface and articulate radical recommendations. For the former inclusiveness result, observe this San Diego-Tijuana recommendation: "...encourage citizens to view the border area as one region which is interdependent and interrelated." Place it beside the bolder suggestion to "invite the mayor of Tijuana, or a designate Council member, to sit on the SANDAG Board of Directors." What you see is the Delphi Technique in action, a modest voluntary regional policy model with the ability to fuel regional governance discussions. ■

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NOTE

1. The term "maquiladoras" refers generically to corporations that assemble components in Mexico, then export these to a tandem U. S. counterpart for completion and reexportation for sale abroad. The components move to the U. S. without tariffs or duties.

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