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La Planeación Fronteriza en la Región San Diego–Tijuana: Planeación Local y Políticas Nacionales

Oscar Sosa

Resumen

Los procesos de globalización están cambiando el papel de las fronteras alrededor del mundo. Se entiende que con la globalización las regiones fronterizas ganan independencia con respecto a sus gobiernos nacionales a la vez se encuentran en mayor posibilidad de implementar acciones de planeación transfronteriza con sus vecinos. Sin embargo, en muchos casos las fronteras aún son usadas como vehículos para ejercer soberanía a la vez que restringen el flujo de personas, productos e información. De la misma manera, los gobiernos nacionales frecuentemente tienen intereses distintos a las metas de desarrollo económico y ambiental de las regiones fronterizas. Este ensayo analiza la frontera de las Californias y en específico la región de Tijuana-San Diego con el objetivo de ilustrar como la planeación urbana y regional es afectada por políticas de carácter nacional. Estas políticas pueden tomar forma de control migratorio, protección anti-terrorismo, tratados comerciales y legislación de recursos naturales. Este ensayo analiza tres dimensiones de la planeación urbana y regional en la frontera: desarrollo económico, protección ambiental y seguridad fronteriza, argumentando la importancia de capitalizar en los canales de colaboración y los lazos sociales existentes como una estrategia que facilite el balance entre las necesidades de los actores locales y los gobiernos nacionales.

Border Planning in the San Diego–Tijuana Region: Local Planning and National Policy

Oscar Sosa

Abstract

Globalization processes are changing the roles of borders around the world. It is considered that with globalization border regions gain independence from their national capitals and are in a position to develop cross border planning efforts with their neighbors. However, in many cases borders are still used as means to exercise sovereignty by limiting the flow of people, goods, and information. Moreover, national governments often have interests conflicting with the economic and environmental development goals of a border region. By looking at the Californias border and focusing on the San Diego–Tijuana region, the largest metropolitan area on the border, this essay aims to illustrate how local city and regional planning is affected by policies at the national level. These policies can take the form of immigration control, anti-terrorism security, trade agreements, or environmental regulation. By looking at three categories of planning issues along the border: economic development, environmental protection, and border security, this essay argues for the importance of capitalizing on existing formal cross-border collaboration channels and social ties is a plausible strategy to balance the needs of local agents and national governments.

The role of states in economic development and regional planning has changed in the last few decades as a result of globalization. The dominance of the nation-state is generally understood to have been replaced by the emergence of regionalism, continentalism, and international trade. As globalization processes throughout the world mature, border regions find their roles changed. It is in these border regions that the way of looking at borders as instruments to exercise sovereignty by prioritizing national interests is confronted with the challenges of a region-based approach to economic development and regional planning. With a set of seven twin city complexes and a little more than 11 million inhabitants, the U.S.–Mexico border region presents a particular set of challenges and opportunities for planners that can only be found in a region where the industrialized world clashes and blends with the developing world. Through a focus on the California border and the San Diego–Tijuana region, the largest metropolitan area on the U.S.–Mexico border, in particular, this essay aims to illustrate how local city and regional planning is affected by policies at the national level. These policies can take the form of immigration control, anti-terrorism security, trade agreements, or environmental regulation, to name a few examples. Moreover, planners in the region find that the traditional use of borders, which limit the reach and scope of institutions within a national territory, becomes an obstacle for cross-border collaboration. Through an analysis of three categories of planning issues along the border: economic development, environmental protection, and border security, it is argued that capitalizing on existing formal cross-border collaboration channels and social ties is a plausible strategy to balance the needs of local agents and national governments.

Contemporary Border Issues and Their Impact on Border Planning

In recent years, researchers have studied how the nature and roles of border regions have changed. A central theme of this research is that in the face of a globalized world, borders are no longer peripheral regions in relation to national centers, but are instead potential poles of economic growth (Anderson and O'Dowd 1999). Border regions thus gain some independence from their national capitals when it comes to policy, and become more likely to work with their neighbors across the border in developing economic, institutional, and public infrastructure. Supranational political and economic agreements such as the European Union and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) help consolidate these processes. These agreements also provide a national policy framework that can lead to policies that directly affect the planning arena of border regions. This dynamic of local trans-border and

regional/inter-regional cooperation facilitated by central governments can also be identified as part of the new regionalism (Joenniemi 1996). Furthermore, researchers have identified several dimensions of cross-border interactions that are helpful for understanding the potential of border-region cooperation: economic and environmental interactions; the issue of economic, demographic, cultural and linguistic symmetries and asymmetries between nations; the degrees of difference concerning social change; and the international context of conflict and cooperation (Scott et al. 1996).

Historically, the U.S.–Mexico border was considered an institution that expressed the formal sovereignty of the state (Dittgen 2000). The border was conceptualized as a political line dividing two autonomous nations or systems and as a barrier controlling flow of goods, services, and people. People and institutions along this borderland were considered peripheral within each nation and any solution to their particular problems was only available at a national, *paternalistic* level (Stoddard 1986). The globalization process began to directly affect this border region in the late 1960s in the forms of industrialization, increased international trade, and international migration. These changes brought problems and challenges to the region, but also increased opportunities for local governance and collaboration especially as border regions in general gained a new set of advantages under the globalization paradigm.

Globalization is the result of the consolidation of supraterritorial capitalism. This implies the emergence of a form of capitalism that relies on global means of production, business organizations that transcend national borders, global markets and their economies of scale, and extreme mobility of capital and global financing institutions. Moreover, these processes affect the role of states as we traditionally understand them. In a global society, the role of the state is diminished: supraterritorial capitalism forces states to relinquish sovereignty over monetary policy and tax collection, fosters the emergence of international constituencies, and requires multilateralism as a new standard for dealing with international relations, especially when it comes to guaranteeing the continuity of existing international market models (Scholte 1997).

Globalization has had two main effects along the U.S.–Mexico border. First, the dynamics of globalization allow border regions, traditionally relegated to the periphery of economic activity, to attract new industries and/or stimulate the expansion of existing ones, which lead to new forms of economic development in the region. The second effect is the conceptualization of a new planning paradigm, which creates more flexible states that can potentially allow the existence of a system of increased trans-border cooperation. The process of globalization has also generated rapid economic development for Mexican border cities that

now have higher living standards than much of the rest of the country, although these standards are still much lower than the towns on the U.S. side. Ironically, the cities on the U.S. side of the border have a lower standard of living than the rest of the country, with the exception of San Diego (Anderson and Gerber 2007).

The U.S.-Mexico border is not completely open and it can be considered an *interdependent* border. Borders in this category present a great level of economic, cultural, and social interdependence but also operate with a certain level of asymmetry, with one nation economically stronger than the other (Martinez 1994). These economic asymmetries are usually accompanied by structural and political differences, which impede the free flow of goods, people, and capital. This remains true on the U.S.-Mexico border even after a few decades of increased economic interdependence. Despite the implementation of NAFTA in 1994, the flow of people, goods, and resources are still heavily regulated. Moreover, the economic, political, and social differences between both countries still exist. Old resentments, mistrust, and cultural misunderstandings remain critical to understanding life in the border towns. Some argue that NAFTA has even made these differences more significant and question the effectiveness of this agreement as a means to achieve economic development for all three countries involved (Pipitone 2003). This is a region with three states, the United States, Mexico and Canada, and it is not in the hands of local authorities to change national policy. Paradoxically, many of the actual effects of national policies and international economic models are experienced with increased intensity among those living in border towns.

The economic interdependency and the historical evolution of a region with a long tradition of cultural exchange make this border region a good candidate for bi-national regional planning and economic development. However, bi-national regional planning has thus far resulted in a mix of semi-coordinated efforts at economic, environmental planning and emergency response. San Diego and Tijuana, like many other cities along the border, have not been able to fully overcome the structural and cultural differences between them. At the national level, the United States sees Mexico as an unreliable partner, with a dysfunctional government and cultural differences impossible to overcome. Similarly, Mexico finds the United States hard to trust as an ally; arrogant and devious (Ridding 1989). In addition to these predispositions, the difference and variety of government structures, as well as the disparity of resources and knowledge make bi-national planning efforts extremely difficult. National policy is also important; unlike the European Union, NAFTA seeks free flow of goods and resources but not of labor and population. This not only reflects that the United States does not consider its economic partners capable of achieving a comparable degree of development, but

also shows that borders are still an important instrument to exercise policy and sovereignty. The regulation of population movement, strict enforcement of migration, and militarization of the border are strong examples of how the border is still being utilized to exert sovereignty.

We are then looking at a region where two increasingly social and economically interdependent cities face planning issues within two dimensions: national policy and local/regional economic development. Over the last few years, authors have focused on different U.S.–Mexico border topics, focusing on a North American, national, and, to certain extent, border-region level. The literature usually deals with migration (Massey et. al. 2002; Cornelius 1981; Cornelius and Bustamante 1989), border security (Dunn 1995; Andreas 2000), NAFTA (Diaz Bautista et. al. 2003), and environmental protection (Herzog 1999). However, there is not much available in relation to actual trans-border planning theory specific to the United States and Mexico. One of the few efforts is by Tito Algeria (1989), who developed a framework to understand the differences between transnational and trans-border processes in this region. Morehouse (1995) also developed a framework that analyzes several dimensions of U.S.–Mexico border planning and cooperation in relation to the nature of the cultural, social, and political exchanges. Morehouse's framework understands that the border has diverse functions, which range from establishing a territorial identity, filtering goods and regulating movement of individuals to improving efficiency in managing an area. This framework allows for a great deal of dynamism, as it considers that border relations change with time. According to Morehouse, what used to be a delimiting function can become an opportunity for cooperation depending on the approach and the relationships between institutions. In more contemporary work, Glen Sparrow (2001) and Sergio Peña (2005) analyze the multiplicity of institutions and actors involved in cross-border planning, also accounting for the fact that the existence of different levels of government makes planning difficult.

This research is important because it allows us to see how border issues are rarely within the realm of only the regional or national sphere. Border planning, whether addressing issues on one side of the border or issues that happen in both countries simultaneously, is often relevant to crucial issues at the national level, such as international migration, environmental protection, and national security. At the same time border planning deals with local issues such as air quality, transportation, or urban development.

Planners on both sides of the border have to deal with the contradictory agendas of at least two levels of government. It is also difficult to determine which agency is most appropriate to deal with an issue when it involves collaboration between institutions across the border. For example, the

San Diego region has about 300 local government agencies that may have a say on a particular cross-border issue. An additional difficulty is the local governments' dependency on national governments, especially in fund allocation.

This essay looks at three categories of border planning issues: economic development, environmental protection, and border security. The examples discussed below illustrate the complex relationship between national policy and local planning issues in the region. These issues show the difficulty to separate the local planning sphere from the national policy sphere because they deal with actions affecting a wide array of institutions, governments, and citizens.

Economic Development: Maquiladoras, Urban Development, and Transportation

The *Maquiladora* industry began its expansion in Tijuana in the 1960s as foreign firms established operations in Mexico in order to take advantage of special tax zones, low labor costs, and other infrastructure and environmental franchises (Canales 1999). In the decades to come, this sector expanded in size and complexity, growing in areas contiguous to the international boundary line. Simultaneously, systems of intra-industry relations matured and grew, evolving into complex clusters on both sides of the international border (Fuentes Flores 2005). This important catalyst of economic growth has changed the urban landscape of San Diego and Tijuana, especially on the 60 square mile Otay plateau, called Otay Mesa in San Diego and Mesa de Otay in Tijuana. In 2002, Tijuana was home to 774 *maquiladoras* that employed about 180,000 workers, about 28 percent of its population (CDT 2002). Most of these firms are clustered in the Mesa de Otay industrial zone and nearby industrial parks. Business on the Otay Mesa side includes a cluster of firms related to operations in Tijuana, including offices and establishments dedicated to custom brokering, logistics, transportation, storage, and manufacturing.

In the 1960s Tijuana city officials contemplated the Otay plateau as an alternative location to decentralize the city's downtown by assigning land uses and providing housing, jobs, hospitals, and schools on this flat plateau (Herzog 1990). San Diego also began to look at this zone around the same time; however, for San Diego the zone was to be a peripheral housing and commercial development zone only, with some light manufacturing and a local airport. The different approaches to planning for a contiguous zone became evident during the process. One major issue was the implementation of transportation routes. It was not until 1985 that a system of access roads and a border crossing facility was

only opened, by that time the Tijuana side already had an international airport, universities, and substantial residential developments, while the San Diego side was still relatively undeveloped.

Despite the lack of formal cross-border planning, the Otay plateau is today a bi-national industrial cluster. Facilities of large electronic companies like Pioneer, Panasonic, and Sony are located almost side-by-side on both sides of the border, the Otay Chamber of Commerce has members from both sides of the border, and advertising for open space in industrial parks in both Otays can be found along the road. On the San Diego side, the area is considered a Foreign Trade Zone under a program that offers duty free warehousing and distribution services for importers, exporters, and manufacturers. The economic makeup of the plateau confirms the economic importance of this cluster on both sides of the border and the fact that city governments on both sides are committed to promoting its growth.

Urban Development

Planning techniques are dissimilar between San Diego and Tijuana governments. Development in San Diego must be part of a master plan, subject to environmental regulation and other standardized regulations. The Mexican approach to planning oftentimes gives the government the functions of a private developer, owning the land and developing without any adherence to greater regulation. This model is authoritarian and leaves little room for community input (Herzog 1990). In addition, Mexican city officials usually deal with a historical incapacity to cope with the speed of urban growth that has resulted in great numbers of informal settlements that still lack basic services. Lastly, another basic difference between both countries is the lack of professionalization and tenure continuity found in the Mexican planning field (Sparrow 2001).

The Puerta Mexico–San Ysidro redevelopment plan is a contemporary example of urban planning along the border. Puerta Mexico–San Ysidro is the main gateway between the two cities with approximately 15 million vehicle crossings and 41 million person crossings per year. Even though the border gate is always open with 24 northbound lanes, traffic congestion and bottlenecks are common. The border gate is surrounded by urban development of different densities on each side of the border. On the San Ysidro side, land use consists mostly of vacant spaces and parking lots, a factory outlet center, commercial facilities, multifamily housing, a school, a park, and a trolley station. On the Mexican side, development is dense and the land uses include residential, commercial, and public services. Development on the Tijuana side of the border is not well integrated into the border crossing. Vehicular traffic is confusing and pedestrian routes

are not adequate; in addition, public facilities are almost non-existent (Institute for Regional Studies of the Californias 2000).

Recognizing the importance of this zone, both Tijuana and San Diego are considering redevelopment measures which take into account the bi-national dynamic of the area. Governments are reconfiguring the layout of the zone to make traffic more efficient. On the U.S. side, widening of Interstate 5 is planned, as well as increasing the number of High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) and Secure Electronic Network for Travelers Rapid Inspection (SENTRI)¹ lanes (California Department of Transportation 2004). On the Tijuana side, the regional plan for the next few years includes acquiring *El Chaparral*, a federal-owned zone along the border and developing it as a commercial zone, improvements on pedestrian and vehicle traffic ways, as well as adding more parking lots and traffic lanes to facilitate border crossing (Comite de Desarrollo Economico de Tijuana 2002). Another major project proposed for the future is the construction of a light-rail system in Tijuana that will connect with the existing trolley station in San Ysidro.

Both city governments understand the bi-national scope and advantage of these projects but the current paradigm for the execution of plans is one that does not accommodate for trans-border coordination. The expansion of the border gate will certainly be a good opportunity to take collaboration to a new level and utilize information and institutions in a more collaborative fashion.

Transportation

The growth of the population living in border cities and the social and economic integration across the border has put a lot of stress on local transportation infrastructure. Long border waits are common for both commercial transport and passenger traffic. The situation worsens at peak seasons; for example, at harvest time in the San Quintin Valley south of Ensenada, Baja California, trucks with fresh produce waiting to pass border inspection backup and form long lines of idling motors. Holiday shopping also brings longer lines as people from Tijuana cross the border to buy goods in San Diego.

¹ Secure Electronic Network for Travelers Rapid Inspection (SENTRI) provides expedited U.S. Customs and Border Protection processing of pre-approved travelers, considered low-risk. Applicants must undergo a background check against criminal, law enforcement, customs, immigration, and terrorist databases; a 10-fingerprint law enforcement check; and a personal interview with a border patrol officer. Once the applicant is approved, they are issued a Radio Frequency Identification card identifying their status in the database when arriving at U.S. ports of entry. A decal is also issued for the applicant's vehicle. SENTRI users have access to dedicated lanes into the United States

Economic loss derived from congestion should also be considered alongside the environmental consequences of idling vehicles. Companies employing *just-in-time* inventory management strategies risk stopping production, business owners lose money waiting for goods, and consumers may think twice before going to the neighboring country for shopping or recreation. The situation is complicated by the need of the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol to search for illegal drugs, illegal imports, and people. This process is timeconsuming and in some cases involves secondary inspections, X-ray, radiation detectors, and unloading of vehicles (United States General Accounting Office 1999).

Governments on both sides of the border have instituted several mechanisms to coordinate transportation. At the national level, the *United States–Mexico Bi-national Group on Brigades and Border Crossings* facilitates agreements on bridges and gates of entry. The *Joint Working Committee (JWC)* works on bi-national transportation planning at a local level. The San Diego–Tijuana border region has a particular unusual example of this multi-institution collaboration: the *Transportation Infrastructure and Traffic Management Analysis of Cross Border Bottlenecks Study*, prepared by the California Department of Transportation (2004).

This study came to existence within the context of the Smart Border Action Plan released by the White House (White House 2007) and with approval from the JWC. The *Bottleneck* study has four main objectives:

- Develop a methodology capable of identifying low cost/ high result recommendations for improvements to the transportation infrastructure and traffic management to and from the United States/ Mexico
- Use the San Diego–Tijuana gateway as a test bed for the developed methodology
- Provide JWC member agencies with documentation of the study's findings and an archive of the obstacles and recommendations
- Create a common border-wide framework for substantiating funding requests for bottleneck relief at the U.S.–Mexico international boundary

Studies such as the *Bottleneck* study can contribute to building a necessary database for any future international bi-national transportation planning efforts. Comprehensive data on both sides of the border could be used by agencies such as the San Diego Association of Regional Governments (SANDAG) and Tijuana's *Instituto Municipal de Planeación* future planning efforts.

Environmental Protection

The protection of the environment is usually considered a national policy priority. Though the effects of environmental problems are felt locally, the complexity of policies dealing with natural resources limit the scope of most local efforts. Perhaps this is why environmental protection has seen the most comprehensive cross-border and cross government collaboration efforts, referred to by Guillén and Sparrow (2000) as *boundary spanning*. The 1983 La Paz Agreement between the United States and Mexico set the framework for cooperation in environmental quality along the border, encompassing an area 62 miles into the territory of both countries. Since then, collaborative efforts have become more common. Entities like Environmental Protection Agency's *United States–Mexico Border 2012* program and its Mexican counterpart SEMARNAT collaborate at different levels to develop environmental and health protection plans and to take action when needed.

One example of infrastructure collaboration is the *South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant Project*. Since the 1930s, raw sewage flowing into the ocean waters of United States from those of Mexico has posed a serious threat to public health and the environment in the South Bay communities of San Diego. This problem escalated over the years due to the substantial growth of Tijuana's population and industrial sector. In July 1990, the United States and Mexico agreed to build an International Wastewater Treatment Plant (IWTP) on the U.S. side of the border as part of a regional solution. This facility is now treating sewage flows that exceed the capacity of the existing Tijuana sewage treatment system. In doing so, it plays a key role in restoring the environmental quality of the Tijuana River Valley and safeguarding the health of its residents (EPA 1999).

A different example of cross-border environmental action is the case of the *Metales y Derivados* company in Tijuana. *Metales y Derivados* recycled car and boat batteries at their Tijuana plant for 12 years, generating more than 6,000 tons of waste, including lead slag and other toxic materials. At the beginning of its operation the company sent its toxic slag to Europe for further processing. But when new European environmental laws took effect in the 1980s, *Metales y Derivados* began dumping the toxic waste onsite. Mexican environmental inspectors first sued *Metales y Derivados* over the waste removal in 1987, but the company did not comply. Six years later, *Metales y Derivados* was finally fined \$10,000 for environmental violations and authorities issued a 14-point cleanup order. However, that cleanup never happened and Mexican authorities closed *Metales y Derivados* in 1994. *Metales y Derivados* was owned by the U. S. parent company New Frontier Trading and is seen as an example of the increasing occurrence

of companies using offshoring to escape enforcement efforts (Treat 2002). An interesting twist to the story is that in 2004 the EPA provided USD \$85,000 for cleanup organized by SEMARNAT. This cross-border action was possible only after the Environmental Health Coalition, a San Diego nonprofit organization, organized the community via its affiliate in Tijuana, *Colectivo Chilpancingo Pro Justicia Ambiental* (EHC 2004). This case is considered a victory for local public health and illustrates the strong social ties that can fund trans-border government collaborations.

Border Security

The main border security and law enforcement challenges in the region are undocumented migration, arms trafficking, sexual exploitation, human trafficking, and cross-border crime (Shirk 2003). Since these issues relate more to international affairs and national policy, local authorities have very little to say when it comes to making decisions. However, it is still very important to consider their effect on urban planning practice in the region. Long border waits affect traffic flow, reduce urban efficiency, and adversely impact air quality. Increased enforcement of undocumented migration brings public and health services problems to the region when vulnerable populations change their migration patterns, in some cases risking their lives to try new routes to cross the border, and in other cases not being able to reach their destinations on either side of the border (Kiy and Woodroff 2005).

Ironically, migration control and the protection of human rights along the border are some of the issues that are more widely discussed outside of this region. The high profile character of Operation Gatekeeper and the activism of anti-immigrant groups such as the Minuteman stimulate discussions that often polarize opinions. This is especially true whenever U.S. politicians mention the topic of immigration reform. Also important is the growing drug-trafficking-related violence in several northern Mexico cities, Tijuana included. For many, this problem is tied to the escalation of efforts targeting the main drug cartels by both the US and Mexican governments. (The Economist 2008)

The national relevance of security along the border makes it very hard for local authorities to make decisions without the approval of their respective national governments. Unfortunately for local planners, border control seems to be going the way of increased restrictions. Issues like border wait times are a good example of how the national use of borders as tools to exercise sovereignty clashes with the needs of the local authorities and general population. This is evident in the frustration of local business owners on both sides of the border who believe that the

very long border wait times affect trans-border trade and bring multi-million dollar losses to the region. These business owners have expressed their frustration to public officials but their response has been minimal, or, as in one occasion, the answer has been cynical, "We know its silly but we can't do anything about it because in Washington they want everyone in the country to see that we are securing our borders".²

Conclusion

The examples mentioned above show the strong social and economic relationships between San Diego and Tijuana as neighboring border cities. They show that national policies impact borders in several ways and also illustrate the added complications in a region where the border separates two nations with such different structures. Federal governments can develop international policies such as militarized immigration control or develop trade agreements such as NAFTA in their respective national capitals, but it is the face of a border town and the lives of its citizens that ultimately experience most of the repercussions. As parts of a border region, San Diego and Tijuana are constantly dealing with the effect of such policies, more often in a responsive fashion than in an organized and planned effort. The fact that some problems fall within the realm of national policy, where local authorities have little say can be frustrating. The San Diego-Tijuana region faces several challenges: not only does it have to deal with the problems inherent to big cities, but it is also dependent on national-level government decisions as far as cross-border commerce, immigration, and environmental issues. Globalization and the increased importance and independence of regions brings new opportunities for these cities in theory, however, there is still much to be done to capitalize on these opportunities. For example, NAFTA lays out an economic model that is based on cheap labor and extended markets for goods, but at the same time, since the treaty's inception, the United States has closed its borders more and more, especially in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

San Diego and Tijuana approach city planning from very different angles and economic, structural, and political differences make cross-border planning collaborations difficult. However, as the examples illustrate, there is great potential for improvement and strengthening of trans-border planning mechanisms. Examples of boundary spanning such as the La Paz agreement, the *South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant Project*, or the *Bottleneck Study* show that effective collaboration is

² This was the response of a San Diego area Congress representative when addressing representatives of the San Diego County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

possible even at a bi-national and multi-government level. The work of environmental activists and local business owners also shows that planning can benefit from the social ties already in place in the region. Additionally, local governments and institutions are implementing initiatives and already achieving results: SANDAG has a committee devoted to border issues. The San Diego Dialogue, a think tank out of the University of California, San Diego, has produced studies on cross border economic development and social welfare.

It is necessary for local planners to share and apply knowledge and resources as well as overcome stereotypes for this region to strengthen its internal ties. It is only through this kind of collaboration that border cities can be better prepared to deal with the challenges brought about by the current economic and political situation of the region. Border planning efforts need to capitalize on the promise of dynamic organizations and institutions that are able to bridge the gap between national policy and local needs. National security and immigration control are issues that tend toward polarization, while increased trade and environmental protection are more likely to stimulate collaboration and integration. The creation of a number of formal organizations that facilitate collaboration between multiple agencies and governments should provide a much needed platform to address the obstacles posed by national level policies without putting at risk the environmental, economic, and physical security of the citizens of this region.

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