

# NGO Transborder Organizations

## *San Diego-Tijuana and Vancouver-Seattle Regions*

Lawrence D. Taylor\*

### ABSTRACT

The article compares the character and role of non-governmental transborder organizations (NGO) in two specific binational corridor regions: San Diego-Tijuana and Vancouver-Seattle. In analyzing the principal organizations involved in transborder issues in each region, various differences and similarities in terms of their respective structures, interests, and goals become apparent. The article argues that the essentially different nature of the two border regions and the manner in which they have evolved over time have strongly influenced efforts to develop cross-border links in each case. The article also considers the impact of the events of 9/11 on the work of these institutions, as well as their goals of facilitating border-crossing and promoting regional integration.

*Keywords:* 1. transborder organizations, 2. non-governmental organizations (NGOs), 3. San Diego-Tijuana, 4. Vancouver-Seattle, 5. Cascadia.

### RESUMEN

En el artículo se examinan, por medio de un estudio comparativo, el carácter y papel de las organizaciones transfronterizas no gubernamentales (ONG) en dos regiones de corredores binacionales muy distintas: las de San Diego-Tijuana y de Vancouver-Seattle. Al analizar las organizaciones principales involucradas en los asuntos transfronterizos de cada región, se señalan las diferencias y semejanzas en términos de sus estructuras, intereses y metas respectivos. Se argumenta que la diferencia básica en el carácter de las dos regiones fronterizas y la manera en que han evolucionado a través del tiempo han influido fuertemente en los esfuerzos para desarrollar lazos transfronterizos en cada caso. También se considera el impacto de los acontecimientos del 9/11 sobre el trabajo de estas instituciones, así como sus metas para facilitar el cruce en las fronteras y promover la integración regional.

*Palabras clave:* 1. organizaciones transfronterizas, 2. organizaciones no gubernamentales (ONG), 3. San Diego-Tijuana, 4. Vancouver-Seattle, 5. Cascadia.

\*Professor-researcher, El Colegio de la Frontera Norte. E-mail: ltaylor@colef.mx.

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## *INTRODUCTION*

Transborder contacts can be made and carried on by both individuals and groups. They have much more political clout or influence when they are conducted by groups, associations or organizations of one kind or another. The so-called “non-governmental organizations” (NGO's) conduct a substantial part of the work of advocacy in favor of greater or more efficient cross-border interaction. The term is somewhat of a misnomer, since such organisms are often not free from political or governmental connections. Some have a mixture of private sector and political components. In addition, although NGOs are usually defined as nonprofit, some fit more in the category of business groups than NGOs strictly speaking.

The main purpose of this article is to analyze, by way of comparison, the nature and role of non-governmental transborder organizations in two specific bi-national corridor regions: that of San Diego-Tijuana and Vancouver-Seattle. Although the two areas have a long history of bi-national ties, both have experienced a notable increase in terms of cross-border interaction over the last few decades. It is argued that, although NGO organizations in the two border corridor areas are working towards the creation and strengthening of regional ties, there are significant differences in terms of their scope, organizational structure and orientation. There are, at the same time, ways in which their aims and concerns run somewhat parallel concerning certain issues. To some extent, these represent responses to the different geographical settings in which the two border corridor areas are located, as well as the way in which cross-border relationships have developed over time. It is also argued that the events of 9/11 and the so-called terrorist “threat” in general have had a powerful impact on the progress of the work of these institutions and their hopes for the future in that respect.

## *THE RESPECTIVE SETTINGS*

The factor of geographic proximity is particularly significant in the case of the San Diego-Tijuana corridor region, given that the two cities are much closer together than in the case of the Vancouver-Seattle border corridor. Although San Diego, unlike Tijuana, is not a border city in the strict sense of

the word, population and urban growth over the last half century have meant that the two cities share a large urban space that is divided by the international border. The San Ysidro and Otay Mesa international *garitas*, or border entry points, between Tijuana and San Diego County, constitute the largest international border crossing in the world in terms of volume of cross-border traffic (SDD, 1994b:3-5).

The San Diego-Tijuana corridor, moreover, is a border region with its own cultural distinctiveness. Like other Mexican border communities, Tijuana has developed binding economic, social and cultural ties with the neighboring communities of San Ysidro, Chula Vista, National City and San Diego across the border. San Diego County, for its part, has experienced in the last few decades a significant increase in the number of Mexicans and other Latin American immigrants to the region, especially in the eastern and southern areas of the county. The fact that many of the county's inhabitants –some 27 per cent– are of Hispanic descent, has served to further transborder linkages and contacts. Family visits are common, especially in the case of *tijuanenses*, among whom about a third of cross-border visits are made for this purpose. By the year 2020, the proportion of persons of Hispanic origin in San Diego County is expected to increase to about 33 per cent, or approximately one-third, of the total population (Sandag, 1997; SDD, 1998:1).

Other forces favoring interaction arise from the condition of economic interdependence between San Diego and Tijuana. There is a condition of marked asymmetry with regard to the two sides of the border. In 2004, for example, the Gross Regional Product (GRP) of San Diego totaled an estimated \$141.7 billion and was forecasted to reach \$160 billion by 2006. The GRP for Tijuana, in contrast, hovered around \$5 billion. In other words, San Diego's GRP is approximately 28 times that of Tijuana (San Diego Chamber of Commerce, 2005:2). Industrial and commercial links are also strong between the two cities. The maquiladora industry constitutes the most important segment of Tijuana's manufacturing sector and likewise forms one of its key economic links with San Diego County. Many of the maquiladoras, or in-bond industry plants, are affiliates of companies located in California. Several corporations have constructed factory plants in Tijuana, with the company offices and warehouses being located in San Diego. The maquiladoras have also been leaders in the drive to tap the skilled labor pools in Tijuana and San Diego (Taylor, 2001:46-47).

Cross-border shopping and visits of one kind or another also provide a strong economic bond between the two cities. Mexicans, the majority of them from Tijuana, who cross over to San Diego County to shop (43 percent of Mexican border crossings) or do business, principally in the South Bay area, or as tourists, also have a strong impact on the San Diegan economy. Such local border transactions total more than \$3.0 billion annually (San Diego Ad Club, 2005). In addition, over 40 000 northbound commuters cross the border daily from Tijuana for purposes of work, shopping or school attendance. Moreover, the income earned by Mexican cross-border workers constitutes an important part of the urban income for Tijuana as a whole (Kiy, 2004:9-10, 20). A proportionately smaller number of San Diegan residents—approximately 10 000—pass through the San Diego-Tijuana ports of entry to work in the Tijuana border region. This group consists mostly of foreign professional people and technicians, mainly U. S. and Japanese, who work in the maquiladora plants or at other tasks (Cox, 1998).

The Vancouver-Seattle corridor, for its part, lies within the heartland of the Pacific Northwest. Like San Diego, Vancouver and Seattle are not border cities; nevertheless, the coastal region in which they are located has experienced a similar explosive growth rate in terms of population and urban development over the past few decades. This factor has brought them not only closer together in a physical or spatial sense, but also in terms of cross-border contacts. The U. S. and Canadian areas of this particular zone, as in the case of the British Columbia-Washington border region in general, have enjoyed a relatively peaceful history, common geography and interlocking economies. This, in turn, has produced similar ways of life and values. While Canadians resist being culturally identified as Americans, it is likely that the struggle for identity in Western Canada is less intense than it is in regions of Eastern Canada, particularly in Ontario and Quebec. The Vancouver-Seattle border corridor region differs from that of San Diego-Tijuana in that it does not have a strong border culture (Evdenden and Turbeville III, 1992:52-53; Resnick, 2000:111-119).

As in the case of its San Diego-Tijuana counterpart, the Vancouver-Seattle corridor contains one of the heaviest border crossing points on the continent. The so-called *Cascadia Gateway* includes the third busiest passenger vehicle crossing along the U. S.-Canada border and the fourth busiest commercial crossing (the Peace Arch or Douglas Border Crossing between White Rock,

BC, and Blaine, U. S.) (Whatcom Council of Governments, 2005). There is a great deal of cross-border interaction between sister border communities on the BC-Washington border (such as Osoyoos, BC-Oroville, WA, and White Rock, BC-Blaine, WA) as a result of tourism. There is also a large influx of Canadian cross-border shoppers, motivated by higher taxes and cost of living in Canada. In many U. S. border communities, especially in Bellingham and the Whatcom County area in general, many Canadians have also bought property and homes. This tendency has also been a factor in the increase in cross-border commuters over the last three decades (Pynn, 1998:B-4).

The Vancouver-Seattle border corridor region really forms part of a much larger transborder or bi-national region in the Pacific Northwest. During the last 15 years or so, this region has come to be known as *Cascadia*, named for the waterfalls along the Columbia River. The defining physical characteristic of the entire Cascadia region is its mountainous nature (Quigley, 1990:3; Schell and Hamer, 1993:11-12; McCloskey, 1994). Within this much larger region, close regional ties between the United States and Canada have given rise to a number of emergent regionalisms. Although they are often collectively referred to as the Cascadia *movement* or *movements*, in reality these regional forces consist of several distinct groups and organizations that are dedicated to constructing a variety of different types of regional networks in the Pacific Northwest—economic, environmental, social and cultural—as well as fostering a sense of regional identity among its people (Henkel, 1993:113; Alper, 1996:2).

The spatial and perceptual boundaries or limits of the Cascadia region vary in accordance with the objectives and activities of these different groups and organizations. The core of the region, as well as the focus for cooperative bi-national activities, is the narrow coastal strip extending north-south from Vancouver to Eugene, Oregon, and east-west from the Pacific to the Cascade, Coast and Rocky Mountain ranges. This area, which some regionalists have referred to as the *Cascadia Corridor* or *Main Street Cascadia*, has a population of over six million, with the metropolitan centers of Vancouver, Seattle and Portland constituting its economic and demographic hub. A more ambitious conception of the region defines Cascadia as including the two western Canadian provinces of British Columbia and Alberta, parts of the Yukon and Northwest Territories, as well as the U. S. states of Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana. The inclusion of Oregon, which is not a border state, in

these conceptual “maps” means that Cascadia as a region is not limited to states or provinces contiguous to the international border (Alper, 1996:2-4; Artibise, 1996:2-4; Artibise, Condon and Gill, 1998:82).

Although Cascadia encompasses several political jurisdictions in two separate countries, it possesses a definite geographical and historical unity. Its exploration and settlement by British and U. S. colonists date back to the period of the former Oregon territory. The Treaty of Washington of 1846 subsequently divided this territory between British and U. S. control at the 49th parallel. Many of the writers on Cascadia have defined the region in terms of certain commonalities. Chief among these are the natural environment and its importance in the culture and mentality of its inhabitants, similar economic activities, trade and cultural ties with certain countries bordering the Pacific, as well as growing Asian communities. These perceptions of commonality have been reinforced by the traditional permeability of the border. Commonalities also exist in the political sense, as feelings of alienation and antipathy toward the national capitals exist in both western Canada and the northwestern U. S. (Evenden and Turbeville, 1992:53; Simpson, 1998).

The region's rapid economic growth over the last few decades has also been a driving force behind the idea of Cascadia. From being largely dependent on the exportation of raw materials up into the 1960's, the area is now one of the principal centers in North America in terms of software and high-tech industries. The volume and variety of interregional and international trade in products is growing, as are networks of traditional relationships and associations. North-south trade connections and ties in the more general sense have been greatly increased by NAFTA. This, in turn, has led to an increasing awareness among regional economic and political leaders of the region's potential in continental and global markets (Artibise, 1995:239; Alper, 1996:4; Artibise, Condon, and Gill, 1998:78, 83-84).

Thus, although the international border separates the two countries in a political sense, as well as their national identities, the residents of the Northwest feel that they have much in common. The notion of Cascadia, acting as a catalyst for regional interests, creates a favorable political environment for transborder cooperative efforts. In contrast, although the San Diego-Tijuana region possesses a high degree of cross-border interaction and linked concerns, as well as a border culture, a distinct regional identity has not yet evolved in this particular bi-national zone.

*CROSS-BORDER INTERACTION  
AND TRANSBORDER REGIONALISM*

In the case of the Tijuana-San Diego corridor, which is much smaller in comparison with Cascadia, efforts towards increasing cross-border ties are based essentially on the notion that the region forms a single cross-border community.

One of the most notable NGO transborder organizations in the San Diego-Tijuana region is the San Diego Dialogue (SDD), which developed out of a group of San Diego leaders representing different sectors of the community who had been brought together in 1991 by the Division of Extended Studies and Public Service of the University of California in order to study issues of concern to the San Diego region. The Dialogue is composed of an invited membership of more than 100 regional leaders from the areas of industry, government, the media, academic institutions and nonprofit organizations. It is self-funded, its research and programs being supported in part by grants from California and national foundations. It also receives funding through contracts, corporate underwriting, as well as corporate membership and affiliate programs (Christensen and Rongerude, 2004:4-13; SDD, "Mission statement").

The Dialogue's work covers three principal issue areas. One of these is dedicated to understanding and promoting integration in the San Diego-Baja California bi-national region. This region as defined is not limited to the two cities, but instead includes the whole of San Diego County as well as the northern part of Baja California. The second issue area considers the region's changing demographics, as well as the feasibility of implementing policies to further social equity in the region and enhance cultural diversity. It also deals with the increasing urbanization of the region and the question of sustainability. The third area explores the linkages between the region and the global economy, transnational investments and the region's role as an immigration gateway to the U. S. (Christensen and Rongerude, 2004:16-21).

Although the Dialogue does not deal exclusively with cross-border issues, the latter constitute a major focus of its work. Due to the heavy traffic, border wait times are fairly long in general. One of the first of the Dialogue's studies on the border was the project *Who Crosses the Border?*, a statistical survey of border crossing in the San Diego-Tijuana region as well as motives for crossing. The study provided, for the first time on the basis of empirical data, valuable insights concerning the magnitude and nature of the cross-

border movement of people between the two cities. It was found, for example, that 96 per cent of border crossings involved frequent crossers (persons who crossed the border more than once a week), proving that movement across the border in the corridor area was more a matter of commerce than immigration (SDD, 1994b:i-ii). Partly on the basis of this study, the Bi-national Advisory Council was established to bring together federal, state and local governments on both sides of the border, as well as members from the private sector, to discuss matters pertaining to San Diego-Tijuana land ports. The data also helped to convince the U. S. federal government to create a SENTRI or dedicated commuter lane at the Otay Mesa border crossing in the mid-1990's. The Dialogue has recommended to the federal government the expansion of the SENTRI program (the opening of additional lanes and at other land ports), the creation of additional border crossing points (such as the proposed third cross-over port of entry to the east of Otay), as well as technological aids to speed up border inspection. Partly as a result of the Dialogue's efforts, in September 2000 SENTRI lanes were also opened at the San Ysidro border crossing. In August 2004, a special SENTRI line for pedestrian crossers was also established on a trial basis (Fasano, 2005:8). Another notable Dialogue publication—*Demographic Atlas San Diego-Tijuana/Atlas demográfico San Diego-Tijuana*—, with its series of maps and charts detailing population, employment, education, income and housing by census tract, revealed the progressive stages in the integration of the two cities. The Dialogue was also associated early on with the various proposals for the building of a *bi-national* airport on the border (SDD, “Actividades y logros”; SDD, 1994a:3-6).

In some of the meetings sponsored by the Dialogue with the participation of community college representatives and civic leaders from San Diego County and Tijuana to identify the concerns of their respective areas and certain common interests they might share, Tijuana participants revealed themselves to be much more concerned with local issues, such as public safety and the connection between economic and social development, than the city's role in a cross-border context. In 1998, a Mexican offshoot organization of the Dialogue was established, which eventually became known as *Tijuana Trabaja*. Like the Dialogue, *Tijuana Trabaja* is a self-funded membership-based civic organization. Its agenda also resembles that of the Dialogue, except that it focuses more exclusively on issues of benefit to Tijuana. Should the issues also be of relevance to San Diego, the *Tijuana Trabaja* members may also partic-



ipate in projects with the Dialogue, Sandag, the San Diego Chamber of Commerce and other San Diego organizations. In the Dialogue meetings, it was also noted that San Diego North (North County) had less of a sense of regional identity than the southern and eastern portions of the county. Continuing efforts are being made to remedy the lack of interest and awareness of the important bearing that border issues and Baja California have on the development of San Diego County as a whole (Christensen and Rongerude, 2004:21).

Another notable transborder organization in the region is the Greater San Diego Chamber of Commerce. Like the Dialogue, the San Diego Chamber of Commerce concerns itself with many of the issues dealt with by the former, such as the facilitation of border-crossing, the promotion of tourism and the improvement of regional infrastructure, particularly in the area of transport. Its work is matched by efforts in the same direction on the part of its Tijuana counterpart, the *Cámara Nacional de Comercio, Servicios y Turismo*. Other chambers of commerce in the region also help to promote regional integration in more specific ways. For example, owing to the importance of Tijuana's maquiladora industry for the region, the Otay Mesa Chamber of Commerce has worked towards the improvement of truck transport arteries leading north from the border. It also waged a campaign to convince U. S. federal authorities to rescind restrictions which prevented Mexican trucks from going beyond the 15-30 mile commercial zone limits stipulated by law, which also created a bottleneck in the Otay region due to the obligation of having to transfer goods to U. S. carriers. In June 2004, the Supreme Court ruled that the Bush government could lift the moratorium on Mexican trucks decreed by the previous Clinton administration without having to carry out a lengthy environmental assessment (EA) study beforehand; at the same time, work has continued on the installation of advanced pollution control devices on Mexican rigs, as well as the development of better grade diesel fuels for Mexican trucks and busses (Green, 2005:C-1; Lee, 2006:B-1).

The San Diego County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the largest on the U. S. West Coast, also plays an important role in furthering regional economic integration. Mexican chambers of commerce, including Tijuana's, attend the annual U. S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce convention. Such collaboration not only enhances awareness of the dynamism of Hispanic business communities in the U. S., but also helps to promote ties between these groups and Mexican markets and suppliers. A similar type of specialized cross-border

organizations are those having to do with the maquiladora business. One such specialized organization is that of the Western Maquiladora Trade Association, whose head offices are located in San Diego. The WMTA's chief aim is to maintain an information network among maquiladora and related businesses in the region concerning economic, political and regulatory matters that affect the industry. A Mexican counterpart in Tijuana is the Asociación de la Industria Maquiladora Zona Costa de Baja California, which also works to maintain and upgrade network relationships, improve operating procedures and maintain links with U. S. customs offices (Lindquist, 1999:C-1, 2, 3).

In the case of the Vancouver-Seattle corridor and the Cascadia region, factors such as space and distance are of prime consideration for transborder organizations in these areas. The need for the several Cascadian entities to pull together to achieve common goals through cooperation is the overriding concern of transborder organizations in the Northwest. Such spatial considerations can be seen when considering the relative importance of the international border, or even the zone in which border communities lie, as opposed to the hinterland. In the case of the San Diego-Tijuana corridor, the border acts as an important focus and magnet of attraction for many things. With regard to the Vancouver-Seattle corridor, on the other hand, the border is not the principal focus for the region. Although border crossing issues are of concern for transborder organizations in the Cascadia region, they do not constitute the focal point concerning regional interaction to the same extent as in the San Diego-Tijuana area.

This difference has its roots in the historical evolution of the international border in the two regions. Following the Mexican-American War (1846-1848), the small pioneer community of San Diego became interested in Baja California as a result of a succession of mining discoveries in that region beginning in the early 1850's. The extension of the railway system to San Diego in 1885 and the subsequent real estate boom in Southern California brought San Diego and Tijuana even closer together. The boom resulted in the extension of branch railway lines to the border and the establishment of new communities in the border region itself, including the incorporation of Tijuana as a town in 1889. During Prohibition, Tijuana also experienced considerable growth and expansion. Other development spurts occurred during the Second World War, when Tijuana and other border cities became important as service and entertainment centers, and in the early 1960's with the development of the maqui-

ladora industry. This gradual drawing together of San Diego and Tijuana in terms of their respective growth and relations meant that the border increasingly became a focal point for the region of which they formed a part (Taylor, 2004:4-20).

In the case of the Pacific northwest, a reverse trend occurred. During the 1830's and early 1840's, U. S. settlers in the region were initially concentrated in the Willamette Valley of Oregon, counterpoised to Fort Vancouver, the British Hudson's Bay Company post on the lower Columbia River. In 1843, the Hudson's Bay Company established a new base of operations at Fort Victoria, constructed at the southern tip of Vancouver Island, which, in 1850, was proclaimed a Crown Colony. In 1858, as a result of the Fraser River gold rush beginning in that year in the mainland's interior, the Crown Colony of British Columbia was established, consisting of a garrison and settlement (New Westminster) at the mouth of the Fraser River. The mainland settlement eventually developed into the port city of Vancouver. In 1868, one year after the Confederation of the British North American colonies, the capital of the united colonies of the mainland and Vancouver Island (together with their dependencies in the Stikine and Queen Charlotte islands territorial districts) was transferred to Victoria, where it remained. As Vancouver and Seattle developed as ports and became linked by rail with their respective countries' hinterlands in the 1880's, the focus for the region drew away from the border and gradually became centered in the major metropolitan centers that exist in the region today (Johansen and Gates, 1957:147-149, 246-267, 381-399; MacDonald, 1987:8-43). The problem of distance and the fact that the major cities and capitals of the region are relatively distant from the border act as impediments to the fostering of cross-border interaction or even cross-border interregional contacts in Cascadia. Even the major population centers along the corridor route in the Cascadia corridor zone—Portland, Seattle and Vancouver—are relatively distant from one another. These centers are not interdependent in the same way that San Diego and Tijuana are.

The most wide-ranging of the Cascadia transborder organizations, not only in terms of the area which it covers but also to a certain extent in terms of the interests and issues it deals with, is the Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER), established in 1991. PNWER, based in Seattle, is comprised of a mixture of both private sector and political components. It has a two-part representative council: a Delegate Council (public sector) and, as of 1994, a Private

Sector Council. Its major function is that of acting as a bi-national public-private partnership which serves to promote and advocate on behalf of the region's economic and business interests. PNWER is dedicated to fostering collaboration between government and business in order to increase the region's domestic and international competitiveness. Productive work is carried out by a series of Working Groups, which vary from time to time in number as well as the issues dealt with. Currently there are fourteen working groups: Energy, Trade, Transportation, Tourism, Forestry, Environment, Sustainable Development, Healthcare, Agriculture, Border Issues, High Tech, Homeland Security, Water Policy, and Workforce Development (Bluechel, 1993:27-29; PNWER, "Background and History", "Governance Structure", "Leadership", "Working Groups").

In the case of San Diego and Tijuana, the fact that their economies differ in many ways acts as a spur towards the fostering of cross-border ties. San Diego has a growing high-tech and biotech economy, whereas that of Tijuana is heavily dependent on the maquila industry and services. Their economies complement each other to a certain extent, as in the case of the maquila industry and in terms of consumer markets (Clement, 1994:58, 63n.4; Taylor, 2001:43-44, 46-47). The U. S. states of the Pacific and British Columbia, on the other hand, are economic competitors in many areas, in terms of the similarity of products produced as well as competition between ports, airports and railways as gateways for traffic. Although this would seem to impede the formation of cooperative transborder links, the Cascadia proponents stress the importance of the region in the modern economy and argue that regional cooperation and urban networking are necessary to resolve difficulties that hinder the area's competitive position in world markets (Artibise, 1996:13-14).

Another major transborder organization is the Pacific Corridor Enterprise Council (PACE). Established in 1989 in response to the Canada-U. S. Free Trade Agreement signed the previous year, PACE is a nonprofit private sector organization consisting of more than 200 owners and managers of small and medium-size businesses in the Cascadia region. Its principal goal consists in stimulating cooperation among businesses in the region to promote economic prosperity and increase its competitive stance in the global economy. Believing that cross-border interaction can be best be furthered by private enterprise and the private sector, PACE seeks to promote public policy which will improve the free flow of goods, services, people and capital across international

borders. Working in close collaboration with boards of trade and chambers of commerce throughout Cascadia, it holds seminars and conducts trade missions that bring together business leaders and government officials to discuss aspects of international trade.

The Vancouver and Seattle Chambers of Commerce also play a role in promoting transborder trade and commerce in the region. The Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce maintains a Canada Committee, which exists for the benefit of its members who are interested in improving business relations between Washington State and BC. Unlike the case of San Diego and Tijuana, the role of the two chambers of commerce in the promotion of trade contacts is less critical in the sense that there already exists a substantial amount of cross-border trade between BC and the State of Washington. Secondly, although both chambers of commerce have contacts with PNWER and PACE and other similar transborder initiatives, they would also be competing with such organizations if they undertook the types of projects that the latter are already developing (PACE, Promotional pamphlet).

Another major initiative for promoting transborder and regional development consists in the Cascadia Project, established in Seattle in 1993 in order to exploit the potential behind the previously mentioned *Cascadia Corridor* concept. The Cascadia Project's aim was to bring together, by means of a Cascadia Task Force set up for that purpose, a coalition or alliance of federal, state and local government officials, business leaders and policy specialists to promote regional cooperation in trade, transportation, tourism and technology, as well as to enhance the region's competitiveness in the global marketplace. It would also tackle the problem of maintaining sustainable development throughout the region. The Cascadia Project is managed by the Discovery Institute, a Seattle public policy think-tank founded in 1990. The Discovery Institute works on the project in conjunction with PNWER, as well as the Cascadia Institute and the International Centre for Sustainable Cities, located in Vancouver (Discovery Institute, "Mission Statement", "What Is the Cascadia Project?").

The quest to conquer distance is a goal which helps to define regionalism in the Cascadia area and which distinguishes the aims of its transborder organizations from their counterparts in the San Diego-Tijuana corridor area. The Discovery Institute's project initiative "Connecting the Gateways and Trade Corridors", begun in 1997, recommends the creation of a multi-nodal, north-

south corridor system, extending from Vancouver to the Willamette Valley region in southern Oregon, which would also connect with east-west trade corridors. The Discovery Institute is also working together with PNWER and the BC-Washington Corridor Task Force (created in the summer of 1999) on an Inland Trade Corridors Project. This eastern corridor project, which would involve the expansion and improvement of Highways 395, 97 and 95, would reduce pressure on I-5, the other federally-designated NAFTA corridor in the region, and I-15, extending south from Alberta along the Rocky Mountains. It would also link the eastern portions of Cascadia with the western coastal regions (Agnew, Pascall and Chapman, 1999:9-23; PNWER, "PNWER-Cascadia Inland Trade Corridors Project").

The Discovery Institute believes that the eventual development of high-speed rail systems—possibly using Maglev technology—, in conjunction with a number of other intercity rail lines, such as the Amtrak Cascades service to Vancouver, will constitute a viable transport alternative to the regional highways and airlines. The Cascadia Task Force has also recommended that the U. S. and Canadian governments adopt the use of pre-clearances and expedited procedures to clear commercial cargo through customs more efficiently. Its planners believe that transportation improvements, once realized, will also facilitate collaboration in other areas (Agnew, Pascall and Chapman, 1999:4, 18-22, 26-28, 38-41; Nagle, 1999:A-14).

In the case of the San Diego-Tijuana corridor, owing to the relative proximity of the two cities, transportation as an issue does not have the same importance for transborder organizations. During the past fifteen years or so, however, a number of projects have been undertaken to improve both transportation in the immediate cross-border area as well as in southern California and northern Baja California. The California government's High-Speed Rail Authority board, for example, has developed plans for a Maglev rail system linking Sacramento, San Francisco, Los Angeles and San Diego (Goldsborough, 1999:B-7; Jenkins, 2004:B-2, 2005:B-2). For over a decade, various proposals were also advanced for rehabilitating the San Diego and Arizona Railway, which runs through Mexico for some 70 km. on its route to Yuma and whose eastern portion was closed in 1983. In 1996, the Carrizo Gorge Railway (CZRY), of Lakeside, California, began work on the job of restoring the line to operating capacity, which finally became a reality in late December 2003. The state agency Admicarga has worked in conjunction with the San

Diego Metropolitan Transit Development Board (MTDB) and CZRY for the continued operation of the tourist runs between Campo and Tecate, as well as the transport of agricultural and other projects along the portion of the route in Mexican territory (Vía Corta Tijuana-Tecate/Tecate-Tijuana Short Line). The operation is also designed to fit in with a much larger plan to develop a freight line from Punta Colnett (Colonet), south of Ensenada, to the border at Tecate in order to connect from there to U. S. rail lines. There are, however, as yet no projects for the establishment of a truly bi-national rail network linking San Diego with Tijuana or other communities in Baja California or a transpeninsular rail line extending south either to La Paz or Los Cabos (San Diego, MTDB, 2001:3; Lindquist, 2004:B-1; CZRY, 2006). For more than a decade, there have also been several proposals for the construction of a light rail system in Tijuana which would complement the San Diego Trolley line extending from downtown San Diego to the San Ysidro border crossing. As yet, however, none of the proposals have gone beyond the planning stage. The current municipal administration under Mayor Jorge Hank Rhon is once more exploring possibilities for its construction (Grimm, 2002, 2003; Villegas, 2005).

Over the last three decades, there have also been discussions concerning the possibility of establishing a cross-border airport in the boundary line area or of at least providing direct cross-border access for San Diegan passengers using Tijuana's Abelardo L. Rodríguez international airport. One major obstacle, from the viewpoint of both federal governments, is the substantial increase in border security that such a project would seemingly entail; another problem has been that of obtaining the necessary funding. Although the various proposals for a bi-national airport have not been successful, they continue to constitute an option for the region (Erie, 1999:3, 15, 19-21, 32; Lindquist, 2006:B-1).

In recent years, the main thrust in cross-border transport in the San Diego-Tijuana corridor has been directed towards the need for enlarging the *garitas* and creating additional ones, such as the proposed third border crossing east of the Otay port of entry. Considerable efforts have also been made to improve older, secondary highways leading north from the border, such as Highway 905 running west from Otay Mesa to connect with Interstates 805 and 5 to handle the increasingly greater volumes of truck traffic. Nevertheless, the existing lack of highway infrastructure, especially in Mexico, remains one of the principal drawbacks to realizing NAFTA's full potential (Prentice and Ojah, 2002:338-339; "Economic Bottleneck", 2006:B-12).

Like their counterparts in the San Diego-Tijuana area, PNWER, PACE and the Cascadia Task Force also have, as one of their major goals, that of minimizing the effect of the international border in order to facilitate the movement of people and goods within their region. From 1991-1995, PNWER represented western interests in the U. S. and Canada to the U. S. and Canadian governments in the bilateral negotiations on unrestricted air routes between the two countries, which resulted in the Joint Border or "Open Skies" agreement of June 1995. In February of that year (1995), the U. S. and Canadian governments signed the "Accord on Our Shared Border". Following the March 1994 Cascadia Transportation and Trade Task Force Conference in Vancouver, the Cascadia Project formed a Cascadia Border Working Group, co-chaired by the mayors of Blaine and Surrey. The Cascadia Border Working Group has campaigned for government funding to provide for the improvement of approaches to the border crossings, the construction of new commercial facilities and the adoption of technology for the pre-clearance of trucks with passes which can be read electronically (Artibise, 1996:18-19).

In conjunction with PNWER and PACE, the Border Working Group also recommended expanding the Peace Arch Crossing Entry (PACE) program, inaugurated by the U. S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) in 1992. Like the SENTRI program, PACE allowed frequent cross-border auto travelers to pass through the White Rock-Blaine border crossing on a pre-approved basis on a lane designated for that purpose. As a result of the Shared Border accord, the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA) also developed the Canpass Highway Program which also allowed frequent crossers to enter the country without being detained by customs inspectors. Canpass was later extended to include other Canadian ports of entry on the BC-Washington border as well as Vancouver International Airport and Marine Port. As a result of 9/11, however, both the PACE and Canpass programs were closed. In June, 2002, they were replaced by the joint U. S.-Canadian Nexus programs. Like its predecessors, the Nexus Highway program, together with its sister programs Nexus Marine and Nexus Air, were designed to simplify border crossings for pre-approved, low-risk travelers (Canada Border Services Agency, 1999; Whatcom Council of Governments, 2006).

A third major thrust of the Cascadia transborder organizations (PNWER PACE and the Cascadia Task Force) is tourism, an important segment of the economies of both B. C. and the state of Washington. One key promotional cam-



paign involves the Two-nation Vacation Package or Cross-border Circle Tours. One of these involves a trip of two to three days with visits to Seattle, Vancouver and Victoria. Other promotional campaigns involve regional rail tours, certain specialized tours (such as visits to Indian tribal groups) and an inter-modal transportation pass. The Cascadia Task Force has also attempted—although so far without success—to convince the U. S. federal government of the need to repeal or modify the antiquated Passenger Services Act of 1886, which allows only ships built in the U. S. or sailing under a U. S. flag to carry passengers between two U. S. ports (Buck and Solomon, 1996; PNWER, “History of Accomplishments”).

Due to the fact that tourism is a significant component of the San Diego-Tijuana corridor, the promotion of this industry is likewise a major aim of the transborder organizations in this region. Because of the relative proximity of the two cities and the long-standing tourist ties between them, tourism continues to be a major component of cross-border interaction in the region. It also plays a major role in helping to extend San Diego's attention southward, not only towards Tijuana but also the Baja California peninsula in general (Taylor, 2004:17-18, 21).

The impact of the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the heightened border and inland security that followed in their wake have had a profoundly adverse effect on the border-crossing aspect of the work of the NGO organizations. One strong after effect of 9/11 has been the decision by the U. S. government to demand that all persons entering or reentering the U. S. present passports to border inspectors or—as a possible alternative—an official identity card issued by the U. S. government. As far as cross-border commerce and tourism are concerned, this particular change could be devastating for the economies of the three countries in question. The bomb plot uncovered by the RCMP in Toronto on June 3, 2006, will also have a substantial impact on the perceived need to strengthen border surveillance (De Palma, 2006).

In the case of the U. S.-Mexico border, in addition to added surveillance due to the war on terror, there has also been significant input in this regard as a result of the immigration debate and the revision of the status of illegal immigrants in the U. S. The deployment of 6 000 National Guard troops to reinforce the Border Patrol, together with proposals to build a stronger fence along certain sections of the border, have stirred up tensions and ill feelings among people in both countries. These factors have contributed to making

the border considerably less permeable than it was a decade ago. The difficulties created by this situation have presented new challenges for the transborder organizations and their ongoing work to make their respective regions more functional for the purposes of living and working in these areas (Nathanson and Lampell, 2001:3-4, 10-14).

### *CONCLUSIONS*

In the case of the San Diego-Tijuana border corridor, the role of NGO transborder organizations is essentially cross-border in nature. One of the principal notions guiding their efforts to stimulate cross-border interaction is that the two cities really form part of one single community or metropolitan area. Although they have tried to promote regionalist ideas and goals over a much larger area, there has not yet emerged in the region the same sort of sense of belonging to a much greater transborder region and of having common interests as there is in the case of Cascadia. Although much of the initiative and impetus behind the idea of Cascadia has originated in the state of Washington and is based or centered in Seattle, the sense of regionalism and regional identity is also strongly felt in British Columbia and other regions on both sides of the border. The Cascadia transborder organizations have attempted to promote this feeling of regional unity through their various projects and activities. Both space and distance are conditioning factors in the case of Cascadia. The objectives of the principal Cascadia transborder organizations consist of promoting integration and cooperation among the regions and major urban centers of the various political entities of the Northwest rather than merely cross-border interaction. Transportation ranks as the highest in priorities for the Cascadia region, due to the need to conquer distance as well as the conviction on the part of the Cascadia Corridor planners that it holds the key to solving many of the problems and difficulties in achieving integration in the Northwest. The main thrust in transportation in the San Diego-Tijuana corridor is towards relieving the traffic glut “funnels” at the border crossings and expanding highway approaches to the border in order to handle increasingly large amounts of truck transport.

In the case of San Diego and Tijuana, the international border acts as an important focal point or magnet of attraction for many things. For Seattle and

Vancouver, on the other hand, it is not the principal focus for the region. Even so, the border and the need to overcome border barriers is an important issue area for transborder organizations in both Cascadia and the San Diego-Tijuana region.

Transborder organizations in the two corridor regions believe in the possibility of realizing many of their goals through advocacy. They perceive their role to be that of identifying certain joint objectives, as well as providing a means of fulfilling them through existing institutions and mechanisms on both sides of the border. The Cascadia private sector transborder organizations, due to their greater political involvement (particularly in the case of PNWER), as well as differences in terms of their geographical extent of operations, possess certain advantages in this sense over similar institutional efforts in the San Diego-Tijuana corridor.

However, there is a sense in both corridor regions that, regardless of whatever concrete achievements come about through their efforts, the role of informing the public concerning issues and bringing people together to discuss them is an important mission in itself.

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