

CHAPTER I WHY THE BORDER MATTERS

"The United States of America and the United Mexican States animated by a sincere desire to put an end to the calamities of the war which unhappily exists between the two Republics and to establish upon a solid basis relations of peace and friendship, which shall confer reciprocal benefits upon the citizens of both, and assure the concord, harmony, and mutual confidence wherein the two people should live, as good neighbors...."

---The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, concluded February 2, 1848, ratified by President, March 16, 1848, proclaimed July 4th, 1848.

The Changing Face of the Border Region

Robert Frost once noted that "good fences makes good neighbors"⁴ and it was in this vein that the United States and Mexico ratified the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848. As a result, the Mexican territory known as California was separated into two, and Upper and Lower California were born.

At the time of the treaty's signing, the San Diego-Baja California region was sparsely populated. In 1850 the entire County of San Diego had only 798 people among its non-Indian population, and the area defined as Tijuana had a population of less than 100 people.⁵ Those truly impacted by the treaty were the native people of the region –the Kumeyaay—who had been suddenly cast into two sections of their own ancestral land irrespective of their common language, history and cultural traditions.

Over the past century and a half, much has changed in the San Diego-Tijuana border region. Our combined population is now over 4.2 million (2.8 million in San Diego and 1.4 million in Tijuana), making it the largest binational metropolitan area in North America. With an annual population growth of 2.8% in San Diego and 4.9% in Tijuana, and an average age of 33 years in San Diego and 24.8 years in Tijuana, the region can expect tremendous growth through 2050.⁶

As the binational region has grown, so too has its volume of cross-border traffic. The San Diego-Tijuana region has become one of the busiest border crossings in the world with over 56.6 million people crossing in 2002, accounting for 17.2% (13.8% San Ysidro; 3.4% Otay Mesa) of all land crossings in the United States.⁷ An estimated 150,000 California residents and some 50,000 Mexican residents make

⁴ Frost, Robert, "Mending Wall", Louis Untermeyer, ed., Modern American Poetry. 1919

⁵ US Census Bureau, 1850. San Diego Historical Society

⁶ San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation, Regional Fact Sheet.

⁷ US Department of Homeland Security, 2003; Morris, Kenn, "Moving Towards Smart Borders," San Diego Dialogue/Forum Fronterizo, June 2003.

their way across the border each day, for jobs, school, housing, medical care, shopping, cultural enrichment, or to see family and friends. According to a survey by San Diego's South County Economic Development Council (SCEDC) 14% of South County employers responded that over 61% of their employees reside south of the border in Baja California.⁸

Over the years, Southern Californians have visited Baja California for a wide range of tourist diversions such as horse racing, boxing matches, Jai Alai, bullfights, off-track betting, off-road racing, camping and surfing, and other pastimes that have been, at one time or another, illegal in the United States (such as the consumption of alcoholic beverages during Prohibition or underage drinking today). Other Southern Californians have been drawn across the border for affordable medicine and prescription drugs that are cost-prohibitive in the United States. One study suggests that U.S. visitors to Tijuana made a total of \$812 million in retail expenditures in 2002.⁹

With the lack of affordable housing in Southern California, increasingly San Diegans are also looking southward to Tijuana to buy a piece of their "American dream." According to the U.S. Consulate-Tijuana, the number of U.S. citizens living in Baja California was 195,000 in 1999. A growing number of San Diego County's Latino communities are also turning to Baja California for more affordable and culturally competent health care that remains in short supply north of the international border.

California-based businesses have also profited from Baja California's proximity. Over 800 businesses have established maquiladora facilities over the past three decades and a significant number have been based in Southern California. Similarly, a growing number of U.S. energy concerns are now looking to service California's growing energy needs from liquefied natural gas plants and gas-powered electrical generation facilities located in Baja California. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) has expanded the number of Southern California-based businesses selling goods and services to customers in Baja California. According to the California Trade and Commerce Agency, in the first six years of NAFTA, California exports increased nearly 129%, or \$8.4 billion. In 2000, California's exports to Mexico directly or indirectly supported approximately 179,000 jobs, and the port of Otay Mesa accounted for over \$17.2 billion in two-way trade between Mexico and the United States, making it the third busiest commercial port of entry along the U.S-Mexico border after Laredo and El Paso.¹⁰

⁸ South County EDC/Cross Border Business Associates, "San Diego/Tijuana Border Values, 2002" 2003

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Ibid

In spite of NAFTA's reduced tariff rates on many US-made goods and services to Mexico, cross-border purchases remain important to most Baja Californians. Distribution channels in Mexico remain highly centralized, and Baja California residents pay higher prices for goods and services than Mexico's mainland residents. Thus, a growing number of Baja California residents go across the border to shop.

During 2002, an estimated \$1.6 billion in goods and services were purchased by Baja California residents in San Diego County.¹¹ A similar study undertaken by the Banco de Mexico estimated total retail spending by Tijuaneños in San Diego as being \$950 million during that same year.¹² According to research undertaken by the South County Economic Development Council (SCEDC), 11% of all shoppers at South County malls are from Baja California.¹³

While Tijuana's economic impact to South San Diego County is indisputable, it is important to emphasize that cross-border trade still remains a small percentage of San Diego County's regional economy with its manufacturing and high-tech sectors operating separately from Baja California.¹⁴ Once an economy largely dependent on defense, service and tourism, San Diego has benefited from steady growth in both the biotechnology and telecommunications sectors. The San Diego regional economy has become one of the strongest in the United States with a gross regional product (GRP) of \$126.2 billion in 2002, an increase of 5.1% over the estimated \$120.1 billion in 2001.

According to the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the San Diego economy continues to outperform the nation and most metro areas.¹⁵ If San Diego were a country, San Diego's regional economy would be approximately the size of Greece's regional output, ranking #31 globally ahead of Thailand.¹⁶

While San Diego's economy has grown, the overwhelming majority of its regional workforce is still providing goods and services for a domestic market. A very limited number of local manufacturing and high-tech firms actually export or trade with Mexico.¹⁷ In fact, according to the Western Maquiladora Trade

¹¹ Morris, Kenn, "Moving Towards Smart Borders," San Diego Dialogue/Forum Fronterizo, June 2003.

¹² Banco de Mexico, 2002.

¹³ Morris, Kenn, op. cit.

¹⁴ James Curry, "San Diego/Tijuana Manufacturing in the Information Age," San Diego: San Diego Dialogue, 2000.

¹⁵ US Conference of Mayors, "The Role of Metro Areas in the U.S. Economy," July 17, 2003, page 64.

¹⁶ www.nationmaster.com, Top 100 Gross National Incomes

¹⁷ Feinberg, page.7

Association, San Diego companies with direct supply linkages to Tijuana accounted for a mere \$416 million in trade in 1997.¹⁸ Of those goods that do transit through San Diego-based customs brokers or warehouses in San Diego's Foreign Trade Zones for export to Baja California area maquiladoras, the majority are produced outside the County. In this sense, San Diego is still not taking full economic advantage of its proximity to Baja California.

Clearly, tremendous potential exists for expanded trade and commerce between San Diego and Baja California. While the state's maquiladora sector has experienced some downsizing due to the recent economic downturn in the United States and competitive pressures from China, the Baja California economy is still quite formidable. In 1999 Baja California had a GRP exceeding \$15.3 billion and one of the highest per capita incomes in the Republic of Mexico. If ranked globally, Baja California's GRP would be ranked #71st behind Costa Rica and ahead of Oman.¹⁹

In part, because Baja California-related trade, retail and tourism have a relatively small impact on the San Diego economy as a whole, binational issues are largely overlooked by San Diego area civic leaders and policymakers. Yet, in spite of San Diego's neglect of neighboring Tijuana, the San Diego-Tijuana metroplex remains a distinct geographic region. The trans-boundary issues collectively impacting San Diego-Tijuana are far-reaching and include:

- urban sprawl
- transportation
- housing affordability
- environmental quality
- public health
- public safety

Beyond these trans-boundary issues, San Diego and Tijuana are becoming more intertwined. The growing Latinization of San Diego's population, on one hand, and the increased levels of cultural exchange and family and inter-personal connections, on the other, are weaving a complex tapestry of a region that is increasingly becoming one.

According to the US Census, 26.7% of San Diego County's 2.8 million permanent residents (or nearly 751,000 people) are of Hispanic origin, and the majority is of Mexican descent. As Table 1 illustrates, the majority of San Diego's Hispanic community is located in the regions denominated as Central (City of San Diego); South County Suburban (Chula Vista, National City, Otay Mesa, Imperial

¹⁸ Feinberg, page 25

¹⁹ www.nationmaster.com

Beach, San Ysidro) and the Eastern portions of North County (Escondido, Vista, San Marcos, and Carlsbad).

Table 1: Hispanic Community in San Diego County

San Diego County Area	Total Pop	Hispanic Pop	Percent Hispanic
Central	619,133	223,670	36.1%
East County	21,104	3,913	18.5%
East Suburban	462,663	80,523	17.4%
North County East	380,430	131,422	34.5%
North County West	364,157	78,954	21.7%
North City	658,877	69,150	10.5%
South Suburban	307,469	163,333	53.1%
Total	2,813,833	750,965	26.7%

Source: US 2000 Census; SANDAG Data Warehouse

All told, 69% of all San Diego's Hispanic population lives in just ten communities in the County, with over 26% living in the South County (South Bay suburban including Chula Vista, National City and Sweetwater). In all of these communities with large concentration of Hispanics/Latinos, the percentage of Spanish speakers with little or no English skills exceeds 20%, except for Chula Vista. In the communities of Escondido and Vista in the North County, the Hispanic population with little or no English skills reaches almost 30% (see Table 2).

Table 2: San Diego County's Hispanic Community by Community

Rank	Area	Population	H Population	H	Percent Hispanic No or little English
1	South Bay (excluding Chula Visa, National City, Sweetwater)	124,020	73,885	59.6%	20%
2	Mid City-San Diego	168,125	62,538	37.2%	25%
3	Chula Vista	108,907	62,238	57.1%	16%
4	Southeastern San Diego	156,124	61,809	39.6%	21%
5	Central San Diego	155,827	58,223	37.4%	20%
6	Escondido	146,288	53,681	36.7%	28%
7	Oceanside	151,545	48,268	31.9%	22%
8	Vista	95,714	36,374	38.0%	27%
9	National City	53,859	32,171	59.7%	21%
10	Sweetwater	74,542	27,210	36.5%	25%

Source: U.S. 2000 Census; SANDAG Data Warehouse

In the combined San Diego-Tijuana border region alone, there are now over two million Hispanics and Latinos. This population shares many common challenges and needs that will increasingly require greater binational collaboration and partnership in the areas of health, human services and education, particularly in the provision of culturally competent care and assistance.

Do Good Borders Make Good Neighbors?

As much as San Diego and Tijuana have become more inter-dependent, the communities still remain divided by language, cultural misunderstandings, socio-economic and racial differences, and, more recently, tightened security and a triple border fence. These divisions have become more pronounced in recent years since the tragic events of 9/11.

As such, for a growing number of San Diego residents, Tijuana remains an enigma. A recent KPBS/Competitive Edge Research (CER) Poll²⁰ highlights San Diego's negative attitudes toward Tijuana: over 40% of English speaking San Diegans had a negative impression of Tijuana, while less than one-third of

²⁰ John Nienstedt, KPBS/Competitive Edge, "Cross Border Perceptions" Survey, January 12, 2003.

residents surveyed held a favorable impression of our neighbor to the south. The same poll found that just one in ten San Diegans visited Tijuana more than once or twice per year while 12% of San Diegans had never been to Tijuana. The KPBS/CER poll also found that over 46%, or almost half, of English-speaking San Diegans polled want the US to impose tighter restrictions on the border.

While the KPBS/Competitive Edge poll provides valuable insights into the perceptions of San Diegans, it is important to note that the sample was not representative of San Diego's current demographics. For example, among those polled by KPBS/Competitive Edge, only 10% were Hispanic/Latino and 73% were White, with 17% being of other ethnicities. This is in contrast to the data from the 2000 US Census for San Diego County, which shows that 26.7% of the population was of Hispanic/Latino origin, 55% was White (non Latino), and 18.3% was another ethnicity.

While it would appear that the KPBS/Competitive Edge poll was skewed geographically in favor of those communities located in San Diego's North City/North County (53% of those surveyed lived in this region of the County) the sample set was fairly representative of the geographic distribution of the county's population of this area (50%) based on census data. Of those polled, 27% were from the South City/South County, which roughly corresponds to 33% from the US Census.²¹

Nevertheless, the differences in perceptions between North, East and South County residents are worth noticing. Those residents living in East County and North County Coastal were more likely to have an unfavorable impression of Tijuana than those living in South County, South County Suburbs or North County Suburbs, all areas with growing Hispanic populations relative to the rest of the county (see Table 3).

Table 3: Impressions of Tijuana by Community

Opinion/Area	South City	South Burbs	North City	North Burbs	North Coastal	East Burbs	East County
Very Unfavorable	16%	12%	14%	11%	24%	15%	28%
Somewhat Unfavorable	16%	23%	23%	30%	20%	37%	16%
Total Unfavorable	32%	35%	37%	41%	44%	52%	44%
Neutral/Unsure	32%	33%	35%	23%	31%	28%	36%

²¹ Ibid

Somewhat Favorable	19%	21%	18%	32%	10%	10%	4%
Very Favorable	17%	12%	9%	5%	16%	10%	16%
Total Favorable	36%	33%	27%	37%	26%	20%	20%
Ethnic Breakdown by Area							
Hispanic/Latino	18%	26%	6%	7%	4%	7%	12%
White	60%	58%	75%	84%	82%	80%	64%
Other Ethnicity	22%	16%	19%	9%	14%	13%	24%
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: KPBS/Competitive Edge, January 2004.

Table 4: Impressions of Tijuana by Ethnicity

Opinion/Area		Hispanic/ Latin	Other Ethnicity
Somewhat Unfavorable	25%	17%	21%
Very Unfavorable	18%	7%	12%
Total Unfavorable	43%	24%	33%
Neutral/Unsure	29%	34%	43%
Somewhat Favorable	18%	20%	15%
Very Favorable	11%	22%	10%
Total Favorable	29%	42%	25%

Source: KPBS/Competitive Edge, January 2004.

In Table 4, it is worth highlighting that among those English-speaking Hispanics interviewed, less than 24% had an unfavorable impression of Tijuana while over 42% had a favorable impression. Hispanics/Latinos were also more likely to have visited Tijuana than Whites. Among those whom had never been to Tijuana a mere 9% were Latinos while 63% were White and 28% other ethnicities. In contrast, among English-speaking San Diegans, Whites were found to have traveled to Tijuana more frequently than Hispanics/Latinos, perhaps reflecting immigration status of some of the survey sample (see Table 5).

Table 5: Frequency of visits by Ethnicity

	White	Hispanic/Latino	Other Ethnicity	Total
Once or Twice per month or More	45%	36%	19%	100%
Once or Twice per year	70%	14%	15%	100%
Less Than once or twice per year	82%	3%	14%	100%
Never Visited	63%	9%	28%	100%

Source: KPBS/Competitive Edge, January 2004.

Our Findings

To complement the KPBS/Competitive Edge findings, ICF commissioned Cross Border Business Associates to undertake a binational survey of residents in San Diego and Tijuana to gauge their perception of the border and key issues impacting the region. In this survey, which was administered in both English and

in Spanish, there were some interesting findings.²² Among those San Diego residents asked “Do you think having the US-Mexico border nearby has a positive impact, a negative impact, or no impact on your community?” nearly 69% of respondents said they that the border had a positive impact on the region as a whole. Only 14.5% perceived the border as having a negative impact. This figure correlates closely to KPBS/Competitive Edge poll which identified 15% of San Diegans as having a strong negative perception of Tijuana. Of those Tijuana residents surveyed by Cross Border Business, over 11% of Tijuana residents believed that their proximity to San Diego had negative impacts to their community.

The Cross Border Business Associates poll found that over 91% of San Diego County residents surveyed had been to Tijuana at least once in their lifetime but less than 58% had been back across in the past year. Nearly 21% had not been back to Tijuana in over four years. By contrast, among those Tijuana residents legally able to visit United States (a total of 66%), well over 90% had been to San Diego at least once in the past year.

For all of the concerns about crossing the border, there is nevertheless a general sense among a collective sampling of English- and Spanish-speaking San Diegans that living at or along the border is a good thing. Among Tijuana residents, there were surprising similarities with respect to the net benefits of the border as illustrated by Table 6.

Table 6
Perception of San Diego-Tijuana Residents of the Impact of the Border

Impact of the Border?	Tijuana Perspective n=411	San Diego County Perspective n=614
Positive Impact	68.1%	68.7%
Negative Impact	11.2%	14.5%
No Impact	20.7%	16.8%

What is one to make of the San Diego-Tijuana border region and of the perceptions of its area residents? Do good “borders” make good neighbors? Local columnist Neil Morgan characterized it best when he observed that the region is “the most populous, innovative and schizophrenic metropolis along the U.S.-Mexico border, north or south.”²³

²² See Appendix for survey methodology and full questionnaire.

²³ Morgan, Neil, “Come for food, stay for the renaissance,” San Diego Union Tribune, September 28, 2003, page B2.

KPBS's survey results reveal this to be the case among English-only speaking residents of San Diego with the exception of the San Diego's fast-growing Hispanic community, which is embracing the border and making the most of its unique strategic advantages for culturally competent health care, education, as well as shopping, employment, family ties, and recreation.

Impacts of Human Migration

While the emphasis of this report is not human migration or immigration policy per se, it must be acknowledged that many of the socio-economic issues and challenges impacting the San Diego-Tijuana region today are the direct result of often contradictory and ineffective policies on human migration and immigration from both the U.S. and Mexican federal governments. On one hand, America's strong demand for cheap labor and the country's inconsistent policies on immigration, including ineffectual employer sanctions and limited enforcement beyond the immediate border, has led to a rise in migration, human suffering and, in a growing number of cases, death. On the other hand, the government of Mexico has encouraged, indirectly through its economic policies, the migration of thousands of its citizens away from their communities of origin and to the border region in search of jobs in the maquiladora program and beyond as a way to promote poverty alleviation.

In many respects the problem of extreme poverty in Mexico's migrant-sending regions such as Oaxaca, Guerrero and Chiapas has been beyond the control of the Mexican Government to effectively manage. Today there are over 50 million people living in extreme poverty in Mexico---close to 50% of the country's entire population. Also, there is an annual need to create an estimated one million new jobs. With Mexico having experienced one of the worst economic crises in its modern history in the mid 1990s, the Government of Mexico's challenge to create new jobs has not been easy.

Over the past 40 years, the San Diego-Tijuana region has experienced periodic increases in migration that corresponded to Mexican economic crises. However, the wave of human migration to our binational region during the 1990's was arguably of a different sort. Here, the key differentiators were the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), expanded trade liberalization, and Mexico's entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO) that, among other things, led to the elimination of government price supports for the country's agricultural sector.

Though NAFTA and trade liberalization has had economic benefits to the United States and Mexico, the same cannot be said for the thousands of rural farmers from Mexico's heartland who have found it virtually impossible to compete with the larger, more cost-competitive and productive U.S. agricultural sector. Mexico's lack of competitiveness in agriculture is best illustrated by the fact that

today 20% of the Mexican workforce is in agriculture yet this sector produces only 5.5% percent of the country's GDP. In the United States, in turn, the agricultural sector employs 2.6% to the total workforce while producing 1.4% of GDP.²⁴ The net effect has been that Mexico is now a net importer of many basic commodities from the United States, including corn, powdered milk, milk substitutes and meat that it once could fully supply without imports.²⁵

In the case of Mexico, a number of its agricultural jobs are not coming back. Like the steel towns of America's Northeast, villages and towns across Central and Southern Mexico are becoming ghost towns with a growing number of their residents now living in Mexico's northern border or in the United States. In this sense, for many migrant workers, the rules of the game have changed. Their roots and family ties may remain in places like Oaxaca, Jalisco and Guerrero but today these regions provide little economic hope.

Understandably, the result has been increased legal and illegal migration to the United States. According to the 2000 US Census, California has over 9.1 million foreign-born residents, with 4 million, or 43.9%, being of Mexican origin. Of these foreign-born residents of Mexican origin, the U.S. INS estimates that approximately 1,536,000 now living in California are undocumented.^{26,27} Based on these estimates, the number of undocumented residents in San Diego would be approximately 183,500 or 63% of the Mexican foreign-born population in the County.^{28,29} This amounts to over 6.5% of San Diego County's total population being classified as having unauthorized immigration status. A segment of the population this size would not remain in San Diego if it did not have gainful employment.

²⁴ Michael D. Layton, "NAFTA: Threat or Opportunity for Mexican Agriculture?" El Universal (Mexico D.F., Mexico), February 10, 2003

²⁵ Cornelius, Wayne, A. "Impacts of NAFTA on Mexico-to-US Migration," NAFTA in the New Millenium (Edited by Edward J. Chambers and Peter H. Smith), La Jolla: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, University of California, San Diego, p. 294.

²⁶ According the US INS estimates, the estimated unauthorized resident U.S. population from Mexico increased from about 2 million to 1990 to 4.8 million in January 2000 with California accounting for 32% of the national total.

²⁷ The term "undocumented worker" is used throughout this report to describe those Mexican nationals working and residing in the United States without valid a visa or work authorization even though it must be acknowledged that a significant number of these workers have, in fact, secured "documentation" to work yet the authenticity or validity of such bona fides (valid social security number, driver's license, border crossing card) may be subject to question.

²⁸ Office of Policy Planning and Evaluation, U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, "Estimates of the Unauthorized Immigration Population Residing in the United States: 1990 to 2000," January 31, 2003.

²⁹ Total foreign born residents in San Diego equal 658,437 or 23.4% of the County's population. Total foreign born Mexicans equaled 289,059 based on U.S. Census 2000 data.

The co-dependence that the regional San Diego economy and its employers have on undocumented Mexican workers is evident across the county, particularly in the sectors of agriculture, construction, service, the tourism and hospitality industry, and domestic employment.

The importance of migrant workers to the agricultural sector cannot be overstated. San Diego's agricultural sector had an estimated output of \$1.29 billion in 2001.³⁰ If San Diego were a state, it would rank between South Carolina (#34) and Utah (#35) from cash receipts in agriculture.³¹ San Diego also ranks as the #1 county in the nation for value of its floricultural, nursery, greenhouse and sod products.³² San Diego's importance in the agricultural sector owes much to the presence of Mexican migrant farm labor. All told, San Diego's 5,925 farms employ over 23,500 employees³³ with over 50% of these workers ---or 11,750--being undocumented.³⁴

Though the border has become riskier and more costly to cross since Operation Gatekeeper, it has not necessarily deterred new migrants. Instead, more undocumented Mexican migrants are staying in the United States while others have simply changed their migration patterns.³⁵ In fact, according to the Mexican government's National Population Council, the migration of Mexican nationals to the U.S. is expected to increase to between 381,000 to 412,000 annually in 2005; and 390,000 to 439,000 in 2010 based on varying estimates of Mexican GDP growth, unemployment, the US-Mexico wage ratio, and migrant remittances.³⁶

Absent major overhauls in U.S. immigration policy or a significant improvement in the Mexican economy, it is very likely that San Diego County will continue to receive a proportionate share of migrants from Mexico. It should be noted, however, that of those Mexican migrants arriving to cross the border into the United States between 1993 and 2001, a mere 1.6% indicated that their final destination was San Diego. Among those migrants interviewed in Tijuana, over 22.5% indicated that they were proceeding on to other destinations in California, and the remainder, well over 76.1%, was seeking to proceed on to other states in the United States. In this sense, the challenges of migration facing

³⁰ San Diego County Agricultural Commission of Weights and Measures, 2003

³¹ US Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Statistics Survey, Cash Receipts 1999.

³² San Diego County Farm Bureau, 2003

³³ San Diego County Agricultural Commission of Weights and Measures, 2003

³⁴ Phillip Martin, University of California, Davis, "Farm Labor in California: Then and Now," La Jolla, CA: UCSD The Center for Comparative Immigration Studies, University of California, San Diego, Working Paper, No. 37, April 2001, page 7.

³⁵ Cornelius, p. 291

³⁶ Cornelius, Wayne, P. 293

San Diego and Tijuana are shared among communities across the heartland of America.³⁷

It should be emphasized that the impacts of human migration are binational. After all, over 43% of migrants that arrive in Tijuana ultimately settle there, making it one of the fastest-growing municipalities in the Republic of Mexico. According to studies by the Colegio de la Frontera Norte and Mexico's 2000 Census, a mere 39.7% of Tijuana's population are natives of the region as compared to Mexicali where over 60% originate from that community. The majority of Tijuana's residents are migrants from other parts of Mexico and a small percentage is from third countries. In fact, Baja California's net migration was the highest of any state in the Republic of Mexico with a growth rate of over 8.47% of the past decade.³⁸

The number of fatalities has been growing among those attempting to cross. Between 1993 and 1997 a total of 294 undocumented migrant workers died trying to cross the border between San Diego County and Baja California. This represents over 28% of the total migrant deaths during that time period, or 1034 fatalities³⁹. Over the past ten years, over 2,600 undocumented migrants have perished along the entire U.S.-Mexico border. The U.S. INS's tightened border enforcement attributed to Operation Gatekeeper has reduced the number of migrant-related fatalities in San Diego County, but it has not eliminated the problem of migrant deaths. In fact, this problem has worsened. Sadly, the problem has also been shifted to less patrolled but more dangerous regions of the border in the deserts of Imperial Valley and Southern Arizona. According to Wayne Cornelius of UCSD's Center for Comparative Immigration Studies, "As we have 'squeezed the balloon' in the urbanized San Diego County and El Paso areas, the border has bulged in central Arizona and southern Texas."⁴⁰ Until steps are taken to reduce the levels of extreme poverty in the migrant-sending regions of Mexico and Central America, or steps are taken to reform U.S. immigration policy, the death toll can be expected to rise.

In this sense, the issue of human migration is a challenge that is equally shared by both San Diego and Tijuana. If the San Diego-Tijuana region hopes to promote an improved quality of life for its residents to maintain their competitive

³⁷ Alarcon, Rafael, Anguiano, Maria Eugenia, "Migration Flows and the Labor Market in Tijuana: Impacts on San Diego County," Colegio de la Frontera Norte. Presented at the workshop, "Ties that Bind Us: Mexican Migrant Community in San Diego," at the University of California, San Diego, Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, November 14, 2003,

³⁸ INEGI, 2000, State of Baja California statistical indices.

³⁹ Karl Eshbach, "Death at the Border," International Migration Review, Vol.. 33, No. 2, Summer 1999.

⁴⁰ Dr. Wayne Cornelius, "Evaluating U.S. Immigration Control Strategies, 1993-2003," Lecture delivered at the Trans-Border Institute, University of San Diego, October 16, 2003, page 4.

edge, addressing the pressing needs of its growing Mexican migrant community (documented and undocumented), particularly in the areas of education and health, will be absolutely critical.

Impacts of 9/11 on the San Diego-Tijuana Region

The tragic events of September 11th and the heightened sense of threat of international terrorism are having profound impacts in the San Diego-Tijuana border region. While border control and security have always been important issues of concern, since 9/11 protecting North America and securing its borders has become a major national priority, with a focus on counter-terrorism and combating organized crime, drug and human trafficking, and the cross-border flow of contraband.⁴¹ Toward this end, the current Administration has proposed establishing a North American Security Perimeter. There have also been calls by some in Congress to harmonize US, Canadian, and Mexican customs and immigration policies.⁴²

Due to increased security measures at the San Ysidro and Otay Mesa ports of entry, delays in border crossings have occurred for both people and goods. On a weekday, the average border wait is 50 minutes at San Ysidro and 30 minutes at Otay Mesa, with over an hour and sometimes an hour-and-a-half wait during the rush hour commute across the San Ysidro border.⁴³

The increased expansion of the SENTRI program (Secure Electronic Network for Travelers Rapid Inspection) has expedited inspections for pre-cleared frequent commuters, and this has been instrumental in reducing delays for an estimated 7-8,000 average daily crossers.⁴⁴ However, border delays remain a cause of concern for businesses on both sides of the border that depend on the daily flow of people and goods between San Diego and Tijuana.

These concerns have been exacerbated by plans by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to facilitate entry and exit tracking at each of the country's port of entries through the introduction of the United States Visitor and Immigrant Status Indicator Technology (US VISIT) program, which was approved by the U.S. Congress under the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act. US VISIT requires that DHS use biometrics and other new

⁴¹ Jorge Ramos, Colegio de la Frontera Norte, Department of Public Administration Studies, "Managing :Public and National Security in the U.S.-Mexico Border: San Diego-Tijuana Border Region" "Binational Collaboration in Law Enforcement and Public Security," Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, University of California, San Diego (UCSD), October 23, 2002.

⁴² "US Seeks Mutual North American Security Perimeter", Washington Times, November 26, 2001.

⁴³ Derived from US Customs website information on border delay, available at www.uscustoms.gov, and Nathanson and Lampell (2001), p. 2.

⁴⁴ US Department of Homeland Security; Cross Border Business Associates, January 2004

technologies to confirm individuals' identities. The task that DHS has under US VISIT is a daunting one, namely to track the entry and exit of foreign nationals to the country to protect against terrorist attacks, illegal immigration and drug trafficking without disrupting the flow of people or trade goods across U.S. borders. According to DHS's timetable, US VISIT will be implemented at both the San Ysidro and Otay Mesa ports of entry by January 1, 2005, even though there is still some uncertainty about the costs and manpower requirements of implementing such a system at the busiest border crossing in the world. Local business concerns have been echoed by the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) which issued a study in October 2003 that was highly critical of DHS's implementation plan for US VISIT, 'red flagging' that the program's huge size and complexity, aggressive schedule, unresolved governance structures, and potentially high cost make it "a very risky endeavor."⁴⁵

Concerns over potential bioterrorism threats have also led the U.S. Congress to enact the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002 ("the Bioterrorism Act" or PL107-188) intended to enhance the security of the United States food supply. Under the provisions of this act, foreign food producers and manufacturers, including all Mexican exporters of agricultural and food products, into the United States must pre-register with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as well as providing prior notice of intended food shipments including the description of the article, the manufacturer and shipper, the grower (if known), the country of origin, the country from which the article is shipped, and the anticipated port of entry.⁴⁶

At the state level, Governor Schwarzenegger rescinded the previously approved law to issue driver's licenses to undocumented immigrants, citing national security concerns. Under California state law all driver's license applicants are required to provide a valid Social Security number and proof of legal presence to obtain a California Driver's License. The rescinded law would have eliminated that requirement. Bill sponsors argued that up to two million undocumented immigrants are already driving without proper licenses and the legislation would have improved public safety by helping to ensure that all drivers pass a driving exam and have insurance.

The convergence of new homeland security measures, coupled with heightened public concern over potential increased international terrorist threats at the border, has significantly changed U.S.-Mexico relations. For the

⁴⁵ "Homeland Security: Risks Facing Key Border and Transportation Security Programs Need to Be Addressed: Report to Congressional Committees" Washington, D.C: General Accounting Office (GAO), Report # GAO-03-1083, September 2003; Patience Wait, "GAO Sees Rising Risks in US VISITS," Washington Technology, October 13, 2003, Volume 13, No. 14. page 1.

⁴⁶ US Food and Drug Administration (US FDA), "Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002 (PL107-188)" July 17, 2002.

growing number of undocumented immigrants in San Diego County, the impacts of September 11th have been profound. Increased security at the border has dramatically reduced circular migration back to Mexico for many migrants. This has resulted in more undocumented migrants permanently settling in San Diego County and, in many cases, an increased incidence of poverty in both rural and urban areas of the region. According to a health service worker in North County, recent Border Patrol patrolling of bus and trolley line stops has also resulted in a growing incidence of migrants limiting their travel, resulting in increased loneliness and isolation, which contributes to an increased incidence of undue stress and mental illness.⁴⁷ Given the dependence that so many Southern California residents have on the automobile, this sense of isolation was further cemented by the reversal of the planned issuance of driver licenses to undocumented residents.

The Purpose of This Report

Over the past decade, there have been several studies and reports about the San Diego-Tijuana region highlighting its importance to trade and commerce as well as the impact of border delays on the region. Most noteworthy has been research efforts by the San Diego Dialogue such as April 1994 study entitled “Who Crosses the Border?” and its Global Engagement of San Diego/Baja California initiative, which produced numerous studies and culminated in the November 2000 report entitled “The Global Engagement of San Diego/Baja California.” There have also been some very thoughtful reports highlighting the historical changes in the region.⁴⁸

Blurred Borders seeks to expand on these studies with a critical look at the relative strength and weaknesses of civil society in the San Diego-Tijuana region, as well as its ability to respond to emerging trans-border challenges. The report seeks to further explore the role that Baja California non-profits can play in responding to the growing needs of San Diego’s Mexican migrant community as the region’s Hispanic population increases.

In this sense, ICF sees Blurred Borders as a call to action. Through this report, it is hoped that civic and political leaders on both sides of the border will better appreciate that the border issues really do matter to their daily lives. The report is also intended to catalyze greater trans-border fertilization (north-south as well as south-north) of knowledge sharing, collaboration, and partnership among non-governmental organizations to build a stronger and more vibrant binational civil society in the San Diego-Imperial/Baja California region. Through this report, ICF intends to promote:

⁴⁷ Interview with North County health service worker, October 2003.

⁴⁸ See, for example, Rey, et.al. (1998); Ganster and Sanchez (1999); Ganster (2000, 2002).

- Greater public advocacy and political leadership for border-related issues of trade and commerce, as well as education, health, the environment, community development, and culture and the arts.
- Increased sensitivity to the impacts of human migration in the San Diego-Tijuana region and the plight of migrant workers and their families.
- Increased charitable giving and volunteerism for border-related causes throughout San Diego County as well as along the Baja California border.
- Expanded binational collaboration, dialogue and knowledge sharing among civic leaders, non-profits and state and local agencies on common issues of concern.
- Increased civic commitment to think more openly about the importance of the border and the growing inter-dependence that exists in the San Diego-Tijuana region.

On so many fronts the lines of the border are becoming blurred. Increasingly, border impacts (positive and negative) are being defined not just by those that cross the border physically, but also by those that do not. After all, air and water quality, infectious disease, security/terrorism risks, crime, drug trafficking, problems of substance abuse, spousal abuse and youth neglect transcend political boundaries. This report highlights common issues of interests facing the people, institutions, agencies and non-profit organizations that have made the border region their home.

Among the principal aims of this report is to help promote a broader appreciation in both San Diego and Tijuana of the growing inter-dependencies that exist among both communities. Neither San Diego nor Tijuana can afford to go it alone.

As important as inter-regional collaboration is, so too is the need for expanded collaboration and partnerships among non-profits. In particular, Baja California area non-profit organizations can help San Diego better address emerging issues with its growing Latino population. Also highlighted are the Mexican non-profits that are involved in innovative, cutting edge work in the San Diego-Tijuana region.

By providing these examples of successful binational collaborations, ICF seeks to increase the awareness within the local and regional philanthropic community of the common interests that unite the San Diego/Tijuana border region, and point to opportunities to strengthen the services that sustain the lives of children and families living on both sides of the border.

Why Do We Need to Re-think the Border Now?

San Diego-Tijuana region is in the midst of significant demographic and socio-economic changes that will require coordinated action by civic and political

leaders if our binational region is to prosper and stay competitive in the future. Yet, as previously mentioned, today concerns about terrorism and homeland security dominate the binational agenda, while a growing number of critical issues affecting both communities remain unresolved:

- In spite of regional prosperity, concentrated urban poverty is on the rise in San Diego and Tijuana and the economic disparities between the affluent and the poor is being exacerbated by urban sprawl, racial and socio-economic segregation.
- Deficiencies in public education threaten the region's economic competitiveness. The region's high cost of living and doing business is causing a growing number of companies on both sides of the border to relocate. Workers also struggle to make a living wage.
- Housing grows more unaffordable on both sides of the border and increasingly out of reach of residents on both sides, threatening the region's ability to attract and retain a quality work force.
- Traffic congestion and increased border waits are decreasing productivity, increasing the level of water and air pollution, and negatively impacting the region's quality of life.
- Natural resources are becoming scarcer, requiring innovative binational solutions to address the region's long-term water supply and energy needs and the protection of critical habitats.
- San Diego's Latino population is growing and by 2040 will represent a majority of the County's total population. Yet, there are economic disparities among the county's Latino and the rest of its residents. Also, Latinos are increasingly requiring linguistically and culturally competent health and social service providers to address problems such as diabetes, TB, obesity, teen pregnancy, substance abuse, depression, mental illness, sexually transmitted diseases, and child neglect and abuse.
- Increased migration puts additional strains on the region's social services network with 'unfunded' mandates, particularly in the areas of health and education.
- Emerging threats require increased levels of binational collaboration, including the West Nile virus, HIV/AIDS, seasonal wildfires, and the threat of terrorism. Similarly, the cross-border transportation of hazardous materials needs to be addressed binationally, given its potential environmental and safety ramifications.
- Border-related security issues (organized crime, drug-trafficking, arms-trafficking, human-trafficking, drug use, sex tourism) need greater public attention and civic action as these factors negatively impact public safety and undermine commerce, trade and tourism.

How the region collectively responds to its inherent strengths and weaknesses will be largely predicated on how effective its civic and political leaders are in

making the conceptual leap to work and think across borders.

Without question, given the San Diego-Tijuana region's geographic uniqueness and socio-economic contrasts, much can be learned about how residents in this binational region jointly respond to the emerging challenges that we face. As William K. Reilly, the former Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, noted, "around the world today some of the most dynamic and innovative changes are occurring in 'edge' or 'fringe' cities such as San Diego and Tijuana."⁴⁹ In this context, the lessons learned in San Diego/Tijuana may well have important reverberations on communities across North America.

⁴⁹ William K. Reilly, remarks at the ICF Gala, San Diego, Ca. May 2, 2003.