

Toward the Utilization of Binational Border Indicators: A Cautionary Tale

Glen Sparrow & Colin Griswold,
SCERP, San Diego State University

What Is An Indicator?

- ▶ Multiple definitions exist
- ▶ Concepts common to most definitions:
 - Information
 - Time
 - Simplification
 - Prioritization

Bias: What It Is Not

- ▶ Does not mean “prejudice”
- ▶ Is not advertent
- ▶ Not always obvious or observable
- ▶ Not necessarily “bad”

Bias: What It Is

- ▶ Subtle
- ▶ An inclination of temperament or outlook
- ▶ Inability to shed cultural, educational, or personal skin
- ▶ Affects preferences
- ▶ Results even from a genuine desire to inform
- ▶ Difficult, but possible to control

Three Important Types of Bias

▶ Bias of exclusion

- Exclusion of important stakeholder group(s), especially the public

▶ Bias of consensus

- Overly consensual, lack of conflict

▶ National bias

- Nationalistic influences, pre-judgments, pre-conceptions and agendas

The Relativity of Indicators

- ▶ Bias results from aggregation

Two types of relativity:

- ▶ Geographic
- ▶ Time

Geographic Relativity

- ▶ Local touch is important
- ▶ Solution: careful selection of local indicators and/or local data collection

Time Relativity

- ▶ Indicators are time-sensitive
- ▶ Solution: selection of proper indicators and/or allowing for multiple project iterations

Conclusion: How Should Indicators Be Used

1. Goals
2. Expectations
3. Normally two types or a combo.
4. Direction
5. Inference
6. Measurable
7. Properly selected
8. Understandable
9. Inform
10. Transparent
11. Track changes
12. Focus on the present and future
13. Unbiased
14. Observed in a structured manner
15. Acknowledged
16. Illuminate

Comments & Suggestions

▶ Glen Sparrow

sparrow@sdsu.edu

▶ Colin Griswold

colingriswold@hotmail.com