10
Not a State, But More than a State of Mind: Cascading Cascadia's and the Geoeconomics of Cross-Border Regionalism*

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[Cascadia] is a shared notion, and one in active evolution. We’re still inventing ourselves as a regional culture. Cascadia is a recognition of emerging realities, a way to celebrate commonality with diversity, a way to make the whole more than the sum of its parts. Cascadia is not a State, but a state of mind. But a state of mind can have important practical consequences.

Hamer and Schell (1993: 12)

New-time-space and private-public practices may consolidate into a new form of geo-economic coordination, which can be termed time-space governance. This is defined as a mode of coordination that is mediated by a multilayered network of social relations that cuts across discourse-material, time-space, private-public, and global-regional-national-local dimensions of production and exchange.

Sum (1999: 132)

Cascadia is a concept cross-border region, an idealised transnational space on the Pacific coast of North America, bridging the 49th parallel and linking the Canadian province of British Columbia and the US states of Washington and Oregon. This clear-cut geographical description is best seen as cartographic still shot of a much more dynamic process of regional invention, a process which at its most grandiose extends to the whole of the Pacific Northwest Economic Region, including Alaska, Alberta, Montana and Idaho. Cascadia is thus, as its boosters claim, in 'active evolution'. Rather than being territorially fixed, static and statelike, Cascadia appears to its promoters first and foremost as a moving 'state of mind'. However, as a vision, an idea, a discourse, a dream image, a space-myth and a state of mind, to list only a few of the terms applied to Cascadia, this CBR project is actively sustained by Canadian and US think tanks, visionaries and policymakers. As well as being noted in many academic articles (for example, Swanson 1994; Courchène 1995; Edgington 1995; Alper 1996; Blatter 1996) and attracting the attention of mainstream policy-oriented think tanks like the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (Papademetriou and Meyers, 2000), it continues to surface in popular media outlets ranging from BC Business (Buchanan 1992) to The Economist (1994) through Atlantic Monthly (Kaplan 1998) and the Seattle Times (Agniew 1998) to the Christian Science Monitor (Porterfield 1999). Faced with this cascading discursivity around the concept, this chapter seeks to explain its continuing appeal. Why most particularly has this cross-border regional vision of Cascadia continued to be (re)constructed when all of its visionaries' main goals – a bullet train between Vancouver, Seattle and Portland, a bi-national Olympics, 'bull-dozing' border checkpoints on the 49th parallel, development of an integrated high-tech industrial region, and so on – have so far failed? What precisely are the 'important practical consequences' of this cascading state of mind that make it so meaningful to its economically minded promoters like Paul Schell (the mayor of Seattle) and John Hamer (a senior fellow of the Discovery Institute, a right-wing think tank in Seattle)? And why, despite the lack of any significant economic interdependence between Seattle, Portland and Vancouver, despite a dearth of any 'institutional thickness' transcending the border and an absence of any notable just-in-time economic agglomeration effects, why is Cascadia still touted as an example of an emerging transnational region-state?

To begin answering these questions we should note the origins of the regional idea in the ecotopian vision of Cascadia as an integrated bioregional polity within which the inhabitants would live in harmony with an integrated ecosystem. Initially evoked as the site of environmentalist resistance in Ernest Callenbach's book Ecotopia (1975), this vision was not transnational, but only linked northern California with Oregon and Washington. Later, Joel Garreau's The Nine Nations of North America (1981) depicted a less literary and less politicized ecotopia stretching across the border from Monterrey through

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Western Canada to Alaska. During the 1980s this sweeping transnational region was painstakingly redrawn by Seattle-based bioregionalist David McCloskey, who mapped a more ecologically grounded transnational region based on the watersheds of the Cascade mountains and their cascading rivers (McCloskey 1989). These relatively autonomous environmentalist imaginings of the region are far from dead. Bioregional mappings are still produced (for example, Schoonmaker, et al. 1997), plans are still discussed to create a North Cascades cross-border international park, and several environmentalist websites, such as Cascadia Planet, promote the bioregional vision and its ecocentric politics. However, as William Henkel notes in a canny critique of the more boosterish Cascadian constructions, the ecologies of these bioregional visions have been coopted into the economics of the Cascadia promulgated by such promotional organs as the New Pacific Magazine (a magazine that was itself radically rebranded in the early 1990s as a ‘magazine for leaders’, that is, business people, and is now, tellingly, defunct). ‘It is strange’, remarks Henkel with irony, ‘when fiscal conservatives start employing the language and labels once used by a dispersed group of radical bioregionalists, but if crossing the border is the goal, an evocative symbol like Cascadia may well be the ideal Trojan Horse’ (1993: 112–13). Nonetheless, building upon, paving over and even driving over earlier ecotopian imaginings of the region, the promoters of the economic vision of Cascadia introduced at the outset a fundamental disjunction into their CBR development project. Call it a cooption, a Trojan Horse, a rebranding or just a discursive innovation, the move from the ecologies of bioregionalism to the economics of strategic regionalism established a basal flux that has characterized all of the subsequent streams of Cascadian discourse.

This chapter argues that the basal instability of contemporary Cascadian constructions has prompted an ongoing project of discursive and political crisis management. This project is never-ending. Its promoters repeatedly attempt to cover over the insecure foundations of one form of cross-border vision with another. Something more than just ‘a state of mind’ is involved in holding this whole unfinished Cascadian movement together. Something more systemic is at work too, something that powerfully and repeatedly connects envisioned economic benefits with the actual political energies poured into the border-crossing Cascadian constructions. Building on Sun’s suggestive formulation quoted at the opening of this Chapter, I argue that these more systemic, coordinating links comprise a kind of geo-economics. The cascading stream of Cascadian mappings and imaginings seems to fully exemplify mediation by, in her words, ‘a multilayered network of social relations that cuts across discursive-material, time-space, private-public, and global-regional-national-local dimensions of production and exchange’. More than this, Cascadia’s geo-economics also represents a signal reworking of traditional geopolitics, taking the traditional tools of statecraft – maps, boundary markings, territorial description and inscription (see Ó Tuathail 1996) – into the much messier, quotidian and yet potentially lucrative field of selling a region in globalized circuits of investment and consumption (see Sparke 1998). It thereby represents another North American example of the entrepreneurial governance typical of urban-regional growth machines and their hegemonic representational-cum-political coalition formations over last two decades (Swyngedouw 1992; Brenner 1999a; MacLeod and Goodwin). These regimes typically represent themselves as ‘world cities’ or ‘world class regions’ in order to compete in the world market for investment and consumption (Harvey 1985, 1989). Cascadia is similar but switches scales, shifting such promotional boosterism into cross-border transnational space. Indeed, by crossing the border and simultaneously projecting a new regionalised space on the Pacific Rim, Cascadia beautifully exemplifies ‘globalization’ (Agnew and Corbridge 1995; Swyngedouw 1997). As a vision, it embodies both the de- and reterritorializing dynamics associated with accelerated economic interdependency. And yet, without strong ties of actual economic interdependence between BC, Washington and Oregon, and without coherent transregional policy-making, Cascadia invites us to examine more closely how popularised versions of the ‘globalization’ narrative are actually being deployed to promote and entrench the hegemony of a neoliberal entrepreneurial governance.

It is what I call geo-economics that consolidates and mobilizes these spatialized forms of neoliberal strategizing and entrenchment. In developing this argument, I first suggest how the literatures concerned with geo-economics and governance can be combined to inform my analysis of the construction of the cross-border region. I then illustrate how the cascading stream of Cascadian visions is intelligible as a series of entrepreneurial governance initiatives coordinated by geo-economics. I point to three different moments in the entrepreneurial imagining of the region, highlighting how, in each case, a certain internal contradiction or external obstacle hampers a realization of the vision and hence why a different version is invoked to cover over the resulting crisis. Finally, having shown the promoters’ chronic failure to realize their main goals and the crisis-ridden nature of their visions, I
conclude by noting how, in the Cascadian case, the cart of cross-border entrepreneurial discourse has been placed ahead of the horse of political-economic change.

10.1 Geoconomics and entrepreneurial governance

The dominant notion of geoconomics recently advanced by the US security consultant Edward Luttwak (1990, 1993, 1999) is different, but not totally disconnected, from my use of the term. Luttwak still believes firmly in the logic of interstate rivalry that dominated the cold war but updates this state-centric argument by noting that the languages and logics of this rivalry are now routinely predicated on 'the grammar of commerce' (1990). A new vocabulary of geoconomics has replaced the old vocabulary of geopolitics. Thereby, he argues, the authority of state bureaucrats can be asserted anew, not in the names of strategy and security this time, but rather to protect ‘vital economic interests’ by geo-economic defenses, geo-economic offensives, geo-economic diplomacy, and geo-economic intelligence' (Luttwak 1993: 19).

Though Luttwak’s observations are largely uncritical, the rising significance of commercial struggles is indisputable. Moves towards global free trade and the end of the cold war have increasingly seen concerns with economic positionality in the global economy eclipse traditional geopolitical conflicts over borders and regions of dominance. He is also right that this new regime has become so naturalized that its political-economic production and its links with US dominance are ignored. But Luttwak's Hobbesian assumptions and assertions about the unchanging elemental feature of territorial states as ‘inherently adversarial’ (1999: 128) also stop him noticing how geoconomics is also coeval with the increasing eclipse of governments by new free trade regimes and, within them, public–private networks of governance. He ignores the rising dominance of both statelike regulative arenas that transcend traditional state lines (such as NAFTA) and the devolution of central state authority to below (to local governments and diverse public–private consortia). It is this combined transcendence and hollowing-out of the central authority once held by national governments during the heyday of Atlantic Fordism that defines the so-called ‘levelled playing-field’ in which governance is now negotiated. Existing national governments may well pursue many of the geoeconomic strategies of rivalry that Luttwak describes but it is the more generalized emergence of geoeconomic commonsense as a means for negotiating governance in various other venues that is the more hege-}


tomic and remarkable aspect of the contemporary order. From the World Bank and the World Trade Organization to private think tanks, city halls and local business clubs, geoeconomic assumptions about the need to improve positionality, networking and nodality in a borderless world are now basic.

The distinctiveness of geoconomics as a newly hegemonic mode of imagining space in the competition over global positionality can be clarified in terms of a number of binary oppositions that contrast it with geopolitics (see Table 10.1).

Table 10.1 is not intended to make a historical statement about a strict temporal passage from one era to another but rather to offer a heuristic survey of certain dominant tendencies in the geographical imagining and representation of political-economic space. Thus naming these tendencies is merely a prelude to forging a better understanding of their interaction in a context like Cascadia. Both Sum (1999) and Jessop (1997a) use geoconomics in a similarly critical, post-national way, applying it largely to the macro, continental-scale dynamics associated with the relations between the so-called ‘triad’ regions of the EU, NAFTA and the yen-bloc. But this tendency towards imagining territory in terms of the struggle over positionality in the global economy applies equally well to subnational and locally transnational regional developments. In itself, this is not a terribly novel argument. Popular globalists have been writing epitaphs of the nation-state and predicting the rise of region-states for many years (Ohmae 1995; Örstrom-Moller 1995; Petrella 1995). Their arguments amply illustrate how the competition over, imagining and scripting of economic positionality has taken off at the regional scale. But they neglect nonetheless the political structuring of these new struggles over nodality and position in the global economy (although Petrella 1995 does address divergent political outcome scenarios). In particular, they fail to theorize (or, in Ohmae’s case, simply celebrate) the entrenchment of neoliberal entrepreneurialism that the new geoeconomic meta-narratives support. To understand this failing, we can usefully turn to recent work on entrepreneurial governance.

Jessop’s work, in particular, offers valuable reflections on the contemporary transformation of governance (see also the useful geographical overview of MacLeod and Goodwin 1999). According to Jessop, two major trends are discernible:

[On the one hand there is a tendential denationalization of the state system through the movement of state power upwards, downwards and sideways as attempts are made by state managers to
Table 10.1 Contrasting geopolitics with geo economics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geopolitics</th>
<th>Geo economics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>develops at the end of the 19th century;</td>
<td>develops at end of the 20th century;</td>
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<tr>
<td>origins in the end of empire;</td>
<td>origins in the end of the cold war;</td>
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<tr>
<td>develops at a time of declining free trade and increasing national autarchy;</td>
<td>develops at a time of increasing free trade and decreasing national autonomy;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reflects struggle between territorial states around hegemony over the world system;</td>
<td>reflects struggles for nodality within a global hegemonic system within which the US has imperious but not imperial dominance;</td>
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<tr>
<td>takes paradigmatic shape in territorialisation Fordist political economies where belonging is underwritten by:</td>
<td>takes paradigmatic shape in deterritorialisation post-Fordist political economies where belonging is underwritten by:</td>
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<tr>
<td>(a) the centralisation of governance</td>
<td>(a) the decentralisation of governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) commitments to welfare equalization</td>
<td>(b) socioeconomic polarization</td>
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<tr>
<td>(c) the management of competition</td>
<td>(c) the deregulation of competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>forged in a context where state and market are relatively distinguished from one another;</td>
<td>forged in a context where state and market are 'networked' together in a complex array of public-private partnerships;</td>
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<tr>
<td>ideologically preoccupied with alternatives to global capitalism;</td>
<td>ideologically preoccupied with the idea that there are no alternatives to global capitalism;</td>
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<tr>
<td>theoretically propounded by writers linked to the military; e.g.</td>
<td>theoretically propounded by writers linked to business; e.g. Edward Luttwak, Kenichi Ohmae</td>
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<tr>
<td>Halford Mackinder, Friedrich Ratzel</td>
<td>blurs the foreign/domestic distinction with a language of 'internestic' politics, perforated sovereignty, and joint ventures;</td>
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<tr>
<td>cemarcates the domestic and foreign with a language of sovereignty, allies and enemies;</td>
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regain operational autonomy and thereby enhance the state's own strategic capacities. On the other hand, there is a de-statization of politics (a shift from the primacy of top-down government towards more decentred governance mechanisms) as political capacities are seen to depend on the effective coordination of interdependent forces within and beyond the state. (Jessop 1997b: 96)

The tendency to destatization by no means creates a power vacuum, however; instead, it opens the possibility of new modes of governance that may actually construct new objects to govern. Examples of this include 'Porterian industrial clusters; flexible industrial districts; cross-border regions; and "negotiated economies"' (Jessop 1997b: 105). Even this brief list indicates that the new modes of governance are themselves heterogeneous, polycentric and emergent rather than deliberately and singularly planned. Indeed, as Markus Perkmann's work on cross-border regional governance in Europe illustrates, the emerging pattern of governance even in a single region 'has to be seen as a compounded effect rather than as the realization of deliberative strategies'
(Perkmann 1999: 665). This also means, as Jessop argues, that major stakes in these new modes of economic governance concern how ‘the boundaries of the economy are discursively constructed and materially instituted and the extent to which this “spatial imaginary” corresponds in some significant sense to real economic, juridico-political and social processes’ (Jessop 1997b: 115). These are very large stakes indeed, of course, and, as the Cascadia case shows, such a correspondence between the new spatial imaginaries and actual places and processes is far from preordained. However, this is precisely where the metanarratives of geoeconomics make a discursive difference. They keep the new entrepreneurial governance strategies afloat even as the problem of correspondence undermines the plausibility of the new spatial imaginaries. They thereby allow the strategists and promoters of new modes of governance to continue producing their visions – visions that are shot through with entrepreneurial ideas about how precisely to go about positioning the newly defined regions in global networks.

At the heart of the move towards entrepreneurial governance lies a basic policy-making question that city-regions have been facing since the late 1970s and the start of the widespread political attacks on demand-side, social-welfarist strategies of national Fordist governance. Back in 1985, Harvey summarized this question thus: ‘How could urban regions blessed largely with a demand-side heritage adapt to a supply-side world?’ (1985: 213). The hegemonic answer, he argued, was that urban regions must now compete for advantage in four spheres of global competition: the international division of labour; the global division of consumption; the location of key financial and governmental control functions; and the informal (for example, charities) and formal (for example, defence spending) redistribution of resources. All four forms of interregional, interurban competition clearly predate the 1980s. But the emerging entrepreneurial approach to city-region governance is now accompanied (and thereby strengthened and enabled to colonize so many different parts of decision-making) by broader political-economic and political-geographic shifts towards neoliberalism, decentralization and accelerated global economic interdependency. These broader processes are also significant for entrepreneurial governance. For, while they have certainly thrown cities and regions into a so-called ‘space of flows’ (Castells 1996), they have also generated intense new processes of remaking place. As Neil Smith explains:

Capital, the guardians of information flow, information corporations – ‘the power holding organizations’ – may entertain the fantasy of spacelessness and act accordingly, but in practice, every strategy to avoid and supercede ‘historically established mechanisms’ and territories of social control involves not the extinction of place per se but the reinvention of place at a different scale – a capital-centered jumping of scale. (Smith 1996: 72)

Thus entrepreneurial governance occurs in a global regime wherein old spaces can – indeed, must – be rescaled and refashioned for the sake of new rounds of inter-regional competition. Thus governance strategies quite literally ‘take’ place – colonize it, map it, mould it and market it – in a global space of flows that is also a space of places.

The exact characteristics and scales of implementation of the new entrepreneurial governance are by no means structurally predetermined by the wider neoliberal and revolutionary tendencies. Instead, it is precisely the appropriate scalar fix of governance that has been destabilized by the current round of transformations (Swyngedouw 1992; Smith 1996; Brenner 1999a). While the national scale of governance has certainly been weakened, no other single scale has emerged as the privileged scale where entrepreneurial strategies can be reformulated. Instead, urban-regions (a term necessarily broad and vague here) are now embedded in so many diverse processes that cohere and consolidate in so many differently sized terrains of planning, investment, competition and action that there are many and varied new scales to consider (see Katz et al., forthcoming). Different scales are heralded as relevant for different areas of decision-making. Just as entrepreneurial governance proliferates in different institutional venues, it is also now occurring within (as well as coproducing) diverse and divergently scaled spaces (see also Sparke, 2000). This suggests in turn why, as with Cascadia, actual attempts at entrepreneurially ‘taking place’ and rebranding it appear so faltering. As Neil Brenner argues, the destabilization of scale and the faithful emergence of new patterns of governance are directly related:

Because urban regions occupy the highly contradictory interface between the world economy and the territorial state, they are embedded within a multiplicity of social, economic and political processes organised upon superimposed spatial scales. The resultant politics of scale within the political-regulatory institutions of major urban regions can be construed as a sequence of groping, trial and error strategies to manage these intensely conflictual forces through the continual construction, deconstruction and reconstruction of
relatively stabilised configurations of territorial organization. (Brenner 1999b)

10.2 Cascadian visions

Cascadia is also influenced, of course, by the sources of instability and contradiction rooted in its position at the interface between two sovereign states as well as between the world economy and the region. It is hardly surprising that the resulting stream of cross-border regional constructions exemplifies par excellence the pattern Brenner describes, namely ‘a sequence of groping, trial and error strategies’. What unifies this sequence in the Cascadian case is the repeated appeals to geoeconomic metanarratives: Cascadia has a special destiny in a Pacific century of borderless flows and so on. I now turn to the precise nature of these appeals to some sort of territorial Zeitgeist and to the diverse ways they connect to particular entrepreneurial projects for imagining and marketing Cascadia.

10.2.1 Cascadia 1: the geoeconomics of embodying globalization

The lines imposed over 100 years ago have simply been transcended by contemporary cultural and economic realities ... Cascadia is organizing itself around what will be the new realities of the next century – open borders, free trade, regional cooperation, and the instant transfer of information, money and technology. The nineteenth- and twentieth-century realities of the nation-state, with guarded borders and nationalistic traditions, are giving way. (Schell and Hamer 1995: 141)

In their celebration of Cascadia published a year after NAFTA was implemented (and some six years after Canada-US free trade began), Schell and Hamer suggest that it is organized around and embodies the new borderless realities of globalization. Transcending the border, benefiting from free trade, exemplifying regional cooperation among key nodes of the new knowledge economy, Cascadia is the very embodiment of the new world order. Four years later in 1999 (but with the anti-WTO protests still ahead of him as mayor of Seattle), Schell still claimed that Cascadia crystallized fin de siècle times. ‘I think the 21st century is about cities and regions cooperating together in the marketplace,’ he said in an interview on Cascadia. ‘It’s a borderless world in terms of cash and commerce. It’s an evolution in thinking, a changing mindset’ (quoted in Porterfield 1999: 3). Such a Zeitgeist logic and its attendant arguments that the boons of borderless business are Cascadia’s destiny were common features of the region’s promotion throughout the 1990s.

With the Canada-USA Free Trade Agreement (CUFTA) already creating intensified north–south ties and the anticipatory excitement in 1994 over NAFTA, many local leaders argued that increased Canada-US trade would accelerate Cascadian integration. Overcoming an anachronistic border would somehow release hitherto untapped economic potentialities, and Cascadia would thus become one of the booming gateway region-states celebrated by the likes of Ohmae – although the latter included only the US Pacific Northwest in his own list of examples of region-states (Ohmae 1995: 143). John Miller, a former Republican Congressman, put it like this for the Vancouver Sun in an article entitled ‘Riding the Cascadia Express’:

As the 21st century approaches we are entering the era of the region. This is not to say that nations with all their political, security, monetary and cultural concerns will not remain prominent – they will. But when it comes to economic and environmental concerns, global currents are already lifting the region into prominence. As Japanese economist Kenichi Ohmae has pointed out, sometimes the region involves part of a country – northern Italy; sometimes parts of several countries – the Asian city triangle on the Malacca strait of Medan, Penang and Phuket; or sometimes parts of two countries – Hong Kong and southern Guandong province in China. But always the same phenomena are present: a geographically coherent market where millions of people have common economic and environmental interests, as well as large ports which provide links with the global economy. That’s Cascadia or at least the main street of Cascadia from Vancouver to Eugene, Oregon. We are an internal market of seven million people all living between the Cascade and Pacific Coast mountains, all sharing an interest in trade and the environment far exceeding our eastern and southern neighbors. (Miller 1994)

Quite how the realization of the region would happen was rarely specified. Geoeconomics à la Ohmae already answered the question tautologically: ‘[region-states] make such effective ports of entry into the global economy because the very characteristics that define them are shaped by the demands of that economy’ (Ohmae 1995: 7). Created as a borderless market in the very image of free trade, region-states like Cascadia would
have a privileged future precisely because of their capacity to internalize the liberalized logic of the global market-place. Doing so would allegedly enable them to become key nodes and portals in the new global networks. Such, at any rate, was the geoecomic script of embodying globalization; and Cascadia's promoters read from it repeatedly. Charles Kelly, the Canadian publisher of *The New Pacific*, for example, typified this approach in noting the 'obvious' benefits of greater regional cooperation and harmonization. Indeed, in the vernacular of geoecomic common sense, he claimed that this amounted to a 'New Regional Order':

People in the greater Northwest are moving to establish some semblance of a regional order. Movement on the political scene represents a public realization that business is more and more looking to cross border opportunities. The shift, from business transactions to policy formation, makes official what many in industry and small business have known for some time - there must be greater cooperation if the region is to both compete in international markets and harmonize the area's sometimes conflictiong and counter productive policies and regulations. The benefits in the long term are obvious. In all probability, the New Regional Order will have more staying power than the much hyped New World Order. (Kelly 1994: 6)

Kelly also initiated another telling geoecomic development in his capacity as publisher of *The New Pacific*: a $2000 prize for the winning design of a Cascadian flag. However, this flag was not put to typical nationalist uses: it was not meant to fly above government buildings or be included in an official seal. Instead it was used for commercial promotion. Kelly also insisted on the region's non-national, indeed non-statelike character: 'We're not talking about political union here,' he told one reporter. 'We both have capitals 3000 miles away that don't consider our interests a priority' (quoted in Gilbert 1992: A9). Such statements serve partly as safeguards for Cascadia's economically oriented promoters against accusations of breaking up Canada and/or making colonializing incursions into it. Yet the main reason for insisting on its non-statelike character is to affirm that Cascadia somehow embodies the political spirit of globalization - especially the neoliberal dogma of smaller, less interventionist government. As a corollary, then, to the economic assumption that Cascadia's eclipse of the 49th parallel enables it to capitalize on the benefits of free trade, this argument asserts that, because British Columbia, Canada's westernmost province, and Washington and Oregon states share similar experiences of historical alienation from distant federal capitals, they are all also inclined
to distrust big government. Bruce Agnew, for example, the director of the Cascadia Project at the Discovery Institute, argued: 'We are finding borders and national government policies increasingly irrelevant and even crippling' (quoted in Schodolski 1994: 1). Likewise, David Johnson, US Consul to Vancouver and a participant in the some of the early 1990s meetings on Cascadian cooperation, claimed '[t]his area is unified by a common hatred of their central governments' (Francis 1992). No wonder, then, that the new flag is not intended to fly above a new Cascadian state house. Nor that the other most significant promotional use of the Cascadia name and concept has not been to launch a movement for more meaningful regional democracy but to brand a regional stock fund, the Cascadia Equity Fund, managed by the Aquila investment firm. At least the manager of the Aquila mutual fund could offer a regional vision to the reporter:

> Some folks may just see trees, rugged mountain ranges, and a few famous companies like Boeing and Microsoft. But when Lacy Herrmann looks at the Pacific Northwest, he sees 'Cascadia,' a mythical but geographically linked land region stretching from Nevada to Alaska. (Halverson 1996)

However, taken to its most extreme, the notion of capitalizing on Cascadia as an embodiment of globalization ultimately and tellingly becomes *aspatial*. Here for example is an almost spiritual evocation of the region from *BC Business* Magazine:

> Cascadia is neither a place nor a feeling. It's a rite of passage, a sign of maturity. To seek this braver, newer world, a British Columbian would look not on a map, not in his shrivelled or competitive heart, but in his bank account - economic man's most sacred place. (Buchanan 1992: 37)

This placeless, accounting logic is telling for more reasons than just its virile, brave-new-world heroism. For it collapses the regional maps and feelings about place into the quotidian question of profit-making and thereby reveals a pattern of annihilating space with time, a pattern that in turn alludes to the absence of a coherent economic region spanning the border. Indeed, despite all the appeals to the impact of borderless free trade, Cascadia's promoters cannot actually point to any widespread regionalizing impact of the rives of
passage that were the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement and NAFTA. Certainly, truck crossings of the border on the Cascadia corridor have increased dramatically since the first impacts of free trade were felt in the early 1990s. But these increases in north-south flows do not indicate the rise of regionalizing tendencies in supply networks that cross the border and actually integrate Cascadia economically. Instead, the trucks cross the border and then drive on to destinations well beyond the supposed region. The main BC exporters export to the whole of the US, not just Washington and Oregon, and US companies like Microsoft and Boeing based in Seattle deal more with Ontario and places like Winnipeg than with BC. There are none of the densely intermeshed input-output networks that have comprised the much-studied agglomerative effects in regions like Silicon Valley, Baden-Württemburg, and the Third Italy, the other regions highlighted by Ohmae and studied by the new economic and regional geographers (see Storper 1995). In other words, while the promoters can add up the GDP figures for all the component parts of Cascadia and wax lyrical about its economic size and clout, they cannot point to an integrated economy or even a set of economic complementarities. Apart from the logging industry, which is felling the very forests that allegedly give Cascadia its ecological integrity (and in which Weyerhaeuser, a Washington-based wood and paper company, just bought-out BC’s MacMillan Bloedel), there is only disarticulation. Indeed, the disconnect is especially marked in the post-industrial, knowledge-based sectors most frequently touted by Cascadia’s boosters. BC’s growing film industry (dubbed ‘Bollywood’ because of the rain and its connection to Hollywood) has almost no connection with Washington and Oregon, while Microsoft, Adobe, Amazon.com and other Seattle based high-tech firms, not to mention Boeing, have few if any links with BC.

The absence of economic integration in Cascadia is further evidenced in interprovince and province-state trade data. Thus, while US-Canadian trade volumes continue to exceed those between any other two countries in the world, Federal Reserve Bank economist Howard Wall (1999: 1) notes that all this trade ‘is still small when compared with the level of trade between states or provinces within [either of the] countries’. To demonstrate this, Wall lists BC’s trade with various states and provinces as a percentage of their gross product (see Table 10.2). This information also provides further proof of the absence of north–south integration in Cascadia. For, given their economic size and distance from BC, the east-west links with Alberta and other Canadian provinces are clearly far more significant. These findings are confirmed in a detailed study by Vancouver-based economist John Helliwell, who demonstrates a significant ‘border effect’ in the interprovince and interstate trade data (1998). Helliwell concludes that, while the border effect diminished between 1989 and 1996 and while US-Canadian trade increased dramatically over the same period, interprovincial trade flows within Canada were still far larger in value even in 1996 than the cross-border provincial state flows, controlling for the effects of distance and economic size:

That is, even after accounting for the expansion of trade between the United States and Canada in the wake of the Free Trade Agreement interprovincial trade linkages are still twelve times tighter than those between provinces and states. (Helliwell 1998: 4)

Without Cascadian regional integration effects, one might expect the collapse of the Cascadia project. However, it is precisely in the face of such obstacles to the region’s becoming a site of entrepreneurial governance that the very flexibility and force of geoeconomics shows itself. While the region may not precisely exemplify the embodiment of globalization argument, while the reterritorializing region-state dynamics may not be materializing, and while regional governments like the left-leaning New Democratic Party of BC may not have toed the neoliberal party line, the promotional project barely misses a beat. Instead, other geoeconomic arguments are launched that link the ambitions of entrepreneurial governance to other, less grandiose but more practical projects of marketing Cascadia as a site for sustainable business expansion.
10.2.2 Cascadia 2: the geoecnomics of cooperating regionally to compete globally

'Cooperating regionally in order to compete globally' is a commonplace of entrepreneurial planning and illustrates the geoecnomic common sense behind regional governance strategies on both sides of the Atlantic. However, in the Cascadian case, it has been repeated with peculiar force and with very particular entrepreneurial visions of cooperation in mind (for example, Chapman 1996). Part of the forcefulness stems, like the ecotopian idea of Cascadia itself, from an instrumental naturalism: a kind of postmodern, post-Enlightenment return to the notion of living in nature but with an utterly utilitarian and derealized approach that ultimately just uses the notion of nature to metaphorise the capitalist market and thereby provide a geoeconomic rationale for living in it (that is, profiting and growing in it) sustainably. Thus it is said to be natural for the separate parts of Cascadia to cooperate locally and build a regional alliance in the context of global interdependencies. For example, according to Artibise:

As nations have responded to the restructuring of the global economy, natural regional alliances have been stimulated. In a North American context, for example, the Pacific Northwest/Alaska is a small player. If that regional market is expanded to include British Columbia and Alberta, however, it then ranks as one of the largest in North America. On an international scale the same principle applies. The two nations and the two regions can bring complimentary strengths to the international marketplace. (Artibise 1994: 4)

Part of the naturalism of this appeal for cooperation apparently is rooted in a geoecnomic version of social Darwinism. The global economy is a harsh wilderness, this script seems to read; but, by hanging together like some binational regional wolfpack, Cascadia can beat off competitors and win a larger slice of planetary resources. This larger social-Darwinist geoecnomics supports two main rhetorics of entrepreneurial governance. One is a rhetoric about developing so-called 'critical mass' in international competition, the other a rhetoric about advertising the region's natural advantages, its ecological niche, as it were, on the global economic landscape. Both rhetorics are combined in some of the practical development projects to attract investment dollars and consumption dollars into the region.

The notion of critical mass occurs frequently in promotional writings:

Border disputes, custom duties, punitive tariffs and inter-city rivalry will pale into significance in the cold, competitive light of the new world order. Cooperation will enable the Pacific Northwest to reach critical mass and be taken seriously in a world where trade will often amount to war by another means. (New Pacific Editorial 1992: 7)

Articulated here with geoecnomic sensitivity to the notion of the marketplace as battlefield, the argument also underlines the wolfpack idea of abandoning regional rivalry in order to take on the giants of the global economy. Even when worried about the practicability of marketing the region, skeptics nevertheless agree on the need for 'critical mass'. Glen Pascall, for example, another booster from the Discovery Institute, claims that Cascadia's promoters too quickly forget that it is products not regions that sell. He then continues:

Yet, there is something to the boosters' claim that making the region aware of its own critical mass in fields such as bio-technology and environmental systems can lead to cooperative joint ventures and more effective marketing. (Pascall 1992: 20)

The attraction of the critical mass rhetoric is due partly to its easy connection to another concept from physics displaced to the market-place, namely 'leverage'. Their articulation is illustrated in a Cascadia Planning Group call to forge a Cascadia Corridor Corporation. 'Cooperation in a corridor context has numerous, clear advantages,' the document notes under the heading of 'cooperating regionally to compete globally':

- It is an effective way to add leverage to investment strategies. The rationalization of functions corridor-wide and corridor-long can eliminate redundant activities and site them in the most cost-efficient, least disruptive locations.
- Corridor coalitions on border, trade and environmental issues can raise the Cascadia Region's profile as a competitor for funding and can achieve collateral benefits such as improvements that serve local users as well as through traffic, and border and gateway (port and airport) staffing that encourages commodity flow through congested areas.
- A Corridor context can also create an idea sharing forum that offers leverage in innovative, comprehensive use of non-capital solutions: intelligent transportation systems, telecommuting, regulatory harmonization, work rules and hours of operation at key facilities.
• Corridor cooperation can create a larger, more secure financial base that allows access to funding under the most favorable conditions. The benefits include stronger credit ratings, use of the full-range of current and evolving financial mechanisms and public–private partnerships, and the possibility of a distinctive Cascadia Corridor Corporation as a focal point for organizing the financial resources that support major investments. The result of corridor cooperation can make Cascadia one of the world’s premier, cross-border regions, and define new economic, social and environmental realities for the 21st Century. (Cascadia Planning Group 1999: 3–4)

This list of advantages not only illustrates the practical connections made by the visionaries between their visions and such matters as credit ratings and easing congestion at the border. It is also pervaded with telling appeals to the neoliberal language of entrepreneurial governance. Thus eliminating redundancy, increasing cost efficiency, regulatory harmonization and public–private partnerships are all there, as is the still more basic neoliberal inclination towards seeing all global life as one giant struggle for the survival of the fittest. Ironically – especially given the tendency to trace Cascadia’s neoliberal credentials back to alienation from distant capitals – much of this strategic cooperation argument is aimed precisely at these same suspect federal governments. For example, the Cascadia Planning Group believes that applying as a binational region will lend credibility to its proposals for road improvements and a high-speed rail development between Vancouver, Seattle and Portland. Yet such appeals for federal resources from DC and Ottawa are not envisioned in terms of promoting national democratic governance but in terms of enhancing the larger decentralized landscape of the neoliberal struggle for competitiveness. It is in this social-Darwinian landscape that the concept of Cascadia’s special position or niche comes most actively into play. Artibise and his colleagues, for example, note that

Cascadia is strategically positioned on the Pacific Rim and, in fact, is geographically closer to major Asian markets than any other metropolitan region in North America. We’re also in an ideal spot to broker international business between Asians, North Americans and Europeans. Cascadia is at the epicentre of the global economy, equidistant between Pacific Asia and the European Community. (Artibise et al. 1997: 149)

This reference to trade across the Pacific Rim is a particular favourite of the promoters as they anxiously look south, comparing Cascadia’s competitive position with California’s (especially in terms of container and bulk-cargo shipping days to East Asia).

This argument is reinforced with a geoeconomic appeal to the potential role of local Asian Americans and Asian Canadians in acting as ‘go-betweens’ and ‘middlemen’ in setting up Cascadia’s special trans-Pacific linkages. No matter that Japanese immigrants in both BC and Washington were imprisoned in internment camps in World War II and that the Chinese have experienced terrible racism in both societies. They can now be touted as part of the special ‘diversity’ that gives Cascadia its unique niche in a Pacific Rim future. As Gordon Price, a Vancouver City Council member sympathetic to the Cascadian idea, told Robert Kaplan:

Vancouver is attracting the young of the world’s most dynamic middlemen minorities ... Look at these Asian kids – many of them are sent here to study by their families. For them, Vancouver must be like Paris in the twenties – an earlier, modern capitalist culture, compared with the overnight glitz of the rest of the Pacific Rim. (Kaplan 1998: 54)

Apart from the historical amnesia involved in turning once marginalized minorities into advertisements of diversity, and apart from the contradiction of applying for federal monies while opining about regional alienation, the larger difficulty overshadowing all of the Cascadian cooperation strategies is the actual character of local capitalism and the high-stakes competition it engenders on both sides of the border. In sector after sector where the economies of BC, Washington and Oregon have most in common, competition is at its fiercest. The ports of Vancouver and Seattle–Tacoma vie for each other’s container and luxury liner trade; and, while one of Vancouver’s grain terminals has been run by a company called Cascadia, it is in a sector facing strong competition from other ports in Oregon and Washington. Likewise, the airports of Vancouver and Seattle, the very ‘gateways’ to the promoters’ Two Nation Vacation, are locked in competition. This would be heightened if the two cities were connected by a high-speed rail link, thereby widening the choice of entry point to the region as a whole. It is not as if the visionaries of Cascadia do not know this. Indeed, for some promoters of cross-border integration, the point of building a ‘mainstreet Cascadia’ is precisely to increase interregional
competition. Roger Bull, the former director of PNWER in Seattle, illustrated this point by noting that enhanced competition pursuant to a high-speed rail line would make it easier to overcome local opposition to new developments such as the third runway planned for Seattle airport (interview with the author, April 1998). Faced with losing business to Vancouver, argued Bull, such resistance could easily be overcome. However, in other sectors of the regional economy where there is significant intra-Cascadian rivalry, this unabashed entrepreneurialism does not carry the same potential for neoliberal harmony. This is well illustrated in the Pacific salmon fishery, the most energetically border-transcending element of the Cascadian ecosystem. No other icon of the region is more frequently used to market the Cascadian landscape; yet no other aspect of the actual Cascadian landscape is more threatened by the increased investment and growth that are the goals of entrepreneurial governance. A new Salmon Treaty was concluded in 2000 but it is fragile and illustrates the real problems of transcending rivalry. Regional cooperation and coordinated policymaking are thus overshadowed by competition and discordant national policy – generating a crisis that other entrepreneurial imaginings of regional identity have often helped to gloss over.

10.2.3 Cascadia 3: the geoeconomics of post-industrial enviro-determinism

Across the Pacific Northwest, from Burnaby to Boise, from Corvallis to Calgary, high-tech companies have sprouted up like mushrooms in a rain forest, emerging from the lush soils of the region and attracting an inflow of technical talent from across the continent. Cascadia is not yet the heart of the technology world. But as the glow in Silicon Valley fades, it's right where the high-tech sun is rising. And it has what many regions wish they could replicate: a natural environment where entrepreneurs thrive and techies long to live. (Yang 1992)

The last, and perhaps most superficial, of the modes of imagining Cascadia as a site for entrepreneurial governance is evident in a geoeconomic form of environmental determinism. Like the environmentally deterministic arguments that underpinned early twentieth-century geopolitical concepts, these imaginings also seek to naturalize a political-economic project. However, unlike Mackinder's ‘Heartland' concept, for example, with its links to imperialism and ideas about resource-extractive industry and war-making potential, the geoeconomics of Cascadian enviro-determinism is conceived in post-industrial terms. But it remains firmly capitalist, identifying another set of entrepreneurial possibilities rooted in the soil. Thus Cascadia is presented as the perfect place from which to build hi-tech industry: not just because of the region's position or its pool of Pacific Rim go-betweens but also because it provides a post-industrial ludic landscape, filled with the environmental amenities that will enable the new masters of the hi-tech universe to thrive. This is an economic rather than militaristic project but, as a form of geoeconomics, it is still essentially strategic.

An interesting feature of this strategic vision is its exclusivism. Consider what one commentator describes as the business 'pilgrims' to Cascadia:

[Cascadians] have seen idealistic, if feckless, communism fall, sensible but uncaring capitalism triumph, and the dawning Information Revolution threaten to wreak as much social havoc in the twenty-first century as the Industrial Revolution did in the nineteenth. They know where they want to spend the next few decades of change, and it's the same sort of place that a lot of other smart people are starting to crave: a pleasantly isolated region rich with food, water and plenty of natural resources, where they can find a good job and a nice life. That's why, although compromises will be made and growing cities will sprawl alarmedly, the dominant ethic of this region will continue to revolve around environmentalism. The New Ecotopians have seen the rest of the world. In fact they help run it. And now they've moved to the suburbs – Cascadia, that is – they'll do whatever has to be done to keep its troubles away from their neighborhood. (Sutherland 1996)

It would be hard to find a better example of geoeconomics as I have used the term above. Classic geopolitical and strategic concerns are all repeated here and yet they are all also vectored through the language of the post-industrial marketplace. Thus Cascadia becomes a suburban gated community writ large as a cross-border landscape with hi-tech business campuses, golf courses, shopping malls and nicely manicured gardens. As the coffee-table book in which Sutherland's comments appeared made clear, Cascadia makes for an appealing environmentally diverse set of photo-opportunities (Beebe 1996). The book contains page after page of glossy photos of the region, from the cities to the wilder-
ness areas, each time highlighting the similarities north and south of the border. The resulting landscape of post-industrial similitude may well therefore comprise an ecological concept, but it is an environment under control and made material for sustainable business development.

Clearly this sort of geographical imagination is very flexible. It can tolerate the absence of actual cross-border economic integration and even policy-making differences on either side of the border. But it ultimately rests on a massive contradiction, namely, that, throughout the imaginings of cross-border development, ‘sustainability’ is repeatedly reduced – as in much of the discourse of entrepreneurial governance elsewhere in the world – to the project of sustaining private business development using public monies. Geoconomics offers no way out of such contradictions but it does offer a way of keeping them in play in a cross-border region such as Cascadia, enabling the promoters to repeatedly backstep and sidestep in order to restart the project once again.

10.3 The end of the stream

More than just a state of mind, Cascadia is at the very least a complex congeries of many states of mind and vision. These also have clear practical consequences. They may not reflect what is actually happening to the regional economy, they may depoliticise and transmute the ecologies of the region into imagined economies of cross-border re-development, and they may face numerous discordant policy-making obstacles on both sides of the border. However, repeated in different geoeconomic registers, they have survived throughout the 1990s. They also look set to provide local policy-makers with a set of initiatives and ideas predicated on entrepreneurial governance that will be hard to ignore in the future. This, it seems, is the ultimate end of the stream of cascading Cascadian constructions: a reservoir of images and ideas that will serve to advance and legitimate a whole panoply of neoliberal initiatives well into the coming decade. Perhaps Cascadia really will eventually become the integrated cross-border economy that its promoters envision but, if so, it will increase the competitive pressures on regional cooperation and thereby further threaten, with ‘harmonization’, ‘efficiency’ and ‘rationalization’, the actual ecosystems and lifeways that once underpinned a dream of ecocentric governance.

Regarding governance, Cascadia does not signal the end of the nation-state. It simply represents a set of articulated strategies that further serve to entrench at the subnational level the kinds of policy-making shifts towards neoliberalism that free trade regimes have intro-
duced from the supranational level. Political-economic theorist Richard Tardanico expresses this well:

Globalization, regionalization, and market-boosting reforms are not truly undercutting government authority as many observers claim. Rather, depending on the world-area and country, the trends are rebalancing the weight of government from an agenda of more or less inclusionary social policies and inward-oriented accumulation, to one of more regressive or mass-marginalizing and exclusionary social policies along with transnationalized accumulation. (1997: 276)

This also seems the most realistic way of considering the likely localized impacts of geoeconomic discourse. Sum notes that ‘the geo-economic identity of ... trans-border space [can be] intercepted by global-regional hegemons’ (1999: 144) and my own research suggests that this interception can be highly diffused and mediated. It need not be deliberate and planned; nor, as in Asia, need it involve showcasing a region ‘as a geopolitical hub for “democracy” and/or a nationalist powerhouse’ (Sum 1999: 144). In the Cascadian case, the process seems to involve a local recreation of the level-playing field for business that NAFTA created at the continental level. But it does involve another kind of showcasing whereby Cascadia’s constructed natural history is used to brand and market it in the global circuits of consumption and investment. Ultimately the result is no less hegemonic than the cases Sum describes. Not a state, but more than a state of mind, it helps to naturalize and entrench a future for neoliberalism in local cross-border space.

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