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 Prospectus: Cascadia

Bioregionalism is a way of uniting people. Some groups are linked by their politics, ethnicities, or religion, but bioregionalism focuses on what every person in an area shares in common: place. Cascadia, the name of the possible country and current bioregion formed out of various states and provinces in America’s Pacific Northwest, is one such group. As a bioregion, Cascadia has a shared culture, ecology, and natural resources that make it a unique zone of possible nationhood. A growing grassroots movement that supports Cascadia’s independence from Canada and the United States has gained traction in the last fifteen years, but many activist groups no longer cite secession as a primary goal. Instead, most groups involved exist to support cooperation, environmentalism, and connection between states and provinces of the Cascadia region.

Despite some level of popular support, Cascadia as a proposed new country is unlikely to ever form. Why? The suite of factors preventing Cascadia’s independence spans disciplines. What similarities might the Cascadia movement have with other failed or successful independence movements of bioregions? Since nationhood for Cascadia is so improbable, what efforts for unity will be maintained by activist organizations? If Cascadia were to cede itself from Canada and the United States, what could be the social and economic consequences? The Cascadian independence also has a unique background with roots in natural resources and ecology, but also in social spheres. How did these roots grow, and how do they compare with other movements? What different groups exist within the movement? What is wrong with the United States and Canada that prompts Cascadia to seek secession, and what is right about Cascadia that supports this secession?

Although the concept of Cascadia as its own independent bioregion is not always treated seriously, the existence of a pro-unity community with overlapping values demonstrates that there is considerable common ground between the inhabitants of this bioregion. The current status of the Cascadia movement is largely restricted to grassroots organizations and online communities due to disorganization, conflicting ideals, and highly variable levels of dedication of its members. Another hindrance to the Cascadia bioregion is exploitation for capitalistic purposes and the use of the Cascadian infrastructure and symbolism? as a means for profit. My research will investigate the causes and concerns of the Cascadia movement and of its subgroups, why the movement is currently ineffective, and what Cascadia shares in common with past and present bioregions and bioregionalism in terms of its culture and its purpose.

I will be using one article from the *Chicago Review* and another from the *Journal of Borderlands Studies* as foundations for research on background and issues surrounding Cascadia and similar bioregionalist movements. In addition to these, much information on the present state of the movement can be found via primary sources: internet forums and similar online communities that have not yet been substantially investigated. The disorganization and diversity of Cascadia supporters is demonstrated by the discussions and statements of intent in this online presences. I hope to balance the use of sources in a way that avoids an excess of anecdotes from my primary sources, and answers my questions about Cascadia’s popular support and connection to similar bioregions.

Works Cited

Henkel, William B. “Cascadia: A State of (Various) Mind(s),” *Chicago Review 39* (1993):110-

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Alper, Donald K. "The Idea of Cascadia: Emergent Transborder Regionalisms in the Pacific

Northwest‐western Canada." Journal of Borderlands Studies. 11.2 (1996): 1-22. Print. 9 February 2015.

Solid proposal!

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|  | Outstanding | Strong | Good | Acceptable | Inadequate |
| The rhetorical choices you make are appropriate for your intended audience, which should scholars in a specific academic discipline | X |  |  |  |  |
| You do a good job of summarizing the research you’ve already read and include only information relevant to your project to prove that it is a worthwhile and rich issue to pursue. You use MLA citation and formatting correctly. | X |  |  |  |  |
| Your proposed topic is clear, complex, and specific as are your research questions, working thesis, and road map. | X |  |  |  |  |
| Your writing is concise and precise and it flows well from sentence to sentence, paragraph to paragraph. There are few mechanical or grammatical errors | X |  |  |  |  |