

# Post-national urbanity beyond (pluri)nation(al) states in the EU: Benchmarking Scotland, Catalonia, and the Basque Country

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## ABSTRACT

This article compares three small, stateless, city-regional nation cases: that of Scotland, Catalonia, and the Basque Country after September 2014. Since the referendum on Scottish independence, depending on its unique context, each case has engaged differently in democratic and deliberative experimentation on the 'right to decide' its future beyond its referential (pluri)nation(al) states in the UK and Spain. Most recently, the Brexit referendum has triggered a deeper debate on how the regional and political demands of these entities could rescale the static nature of these (pluri)nation(al) state structures, and even directly advocate for some sort of 'Europeanisation'. Based on a broader research programme comparing city-regional cases titled *Benchmarking City-Regions*, this paper argues that the differences in each of these three cases are noteworthy. Yet, even more substantial are their diverse means of accommodating smart devolutionary strategic pathways of self-determination through politically-innovative processes, which include pervasive metropolitanisation responses to a growing 'post-national urbanity' pattern emerging in the European Union. Thus, this article examines the following questions: (1) To what extent are the starting points for 'smart devolution' similar in each case? (2) What are the potential political scenarios for these entities as a result of the de- or recentralisation strategies of their referential (pluri)nation(al) states? (3) What are the most relevant distinct strategic political innovation processes in each case? Ultimately, this paper aims to benchmark how Scotland, Catalonia, and the Basque Country are strategically moving forward, beyond their corresponding (pluri)nation(al) states, in the context of the new so-called post-national urbanity European geopolitical pattern, by formulating devolution, and even independence, in unique metropolitan terms.

**Keywords:** right to decide, political innovation, small stateless city-regional nations, smart devolution, self-determination, democratic experimentation.

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## INTRODUCTION: CITY-REGIONS BEYOND (PLURI)NATION(AL) STATES

Nowadays, city-regions (Passi et al., 2017; Harrison, 2010) are neither static territorial entities nor isolated geographical areas inside European (pluri)nation(al) states such as the United Kingdom or Spain. Nation-states—which are responsible either actively or

passively, voluntarily or involuntarily, sceptically or acceptingly, alone or with others—end up playing a game of interdependence with them, and entering into agreements on common grounds. Therefore, in this era of politics beyond nation-state borders, and given the recently forged intimate relationships between these nation-states and city-regions (Calzada, 2015a), the

hegemonic idea that predominantly considers city-regions as sub-national entities nestled within singular nation-states (Agnew, 2015, p. 120) has been superseded in some small stateless city-regional nations such as Scotland, Catalonia (Colomb et al., 2014), and the Basque Country (Calzada et al., 2015). Indeed, it could be argued that this change was triggered by the development of a new political equilibrium regarding regional-identity confrontations, as an evolutionary step toward rescaling some specific nation-states. As such, two main hypotheses are presented in this article:

- (a) A new political pattern of regionalism characterised by ‘smart devolution’ (Calzada, 2017; Khanna, 2016; Politics in Spires, 2015; Goodwin et al., 2014) and self-determination claims (Guibernau, 2013), and expressed and embodied via geo-democratic practices such as the ‘right to decide’ (Barceló et al., 2015; Caglio and Conde et al., 2016), is emerging in these cases.
- (b) Factors driving the changes in these cases could stem from a ‘post-national urbanity’ insofar as these small, stateless nations are driven by metropolitan values and therefore advocate a new, socially-progressive political agenda based on ‘civic nationalism’ and appealing to universal values, such as freedom and equality, in contrast to ‘ethnic nationalism’ which is zero-sum, aggressive, and draws on race or history to set the nation apart (The Economist, 2016).

It is likely that 2014 will be remembered as the year in which two (pluri)nation(al) states (the UK and Spain) faced rather different debates but which would later result to be similar turning points in their relationships with their corresponding small, stateless, city-regional nations (Friend, 2012). While the UK witnessed a referendum agreed between Prime Minister David Cameron and Former Scottish First Minister Alex Salmond, Spain, whose permanent position is that the Spanish nation-state must remain territorially unified, refused any expression of self-determination (Guibernau, 2013), which eventually resulted in Catalonia’s considerable population demanding a referendum (Cramer, 2015). Moreover, the political history of Spain over the last

40 years (BBC Radio 4, 2015) has also given rise to the complex case of the Basque Country city-region, and its attempts to overcome and move past the political violence that dramatically dominated Spain’s political scene in the past. In this vein, there is an awakening towards, or at least an interest in, leveraging the Basque Country’s self-governance as a procedural model of how the ‘right to decide’ might be successfully implemented (Barceló et al., 2015; Calzada, 2014).

Nevertheless, the cases in Scotland, Catalonia, and the Basque Country can be depicted in rather different ways. This is the point of departure for this article, which aims to address the trends and rapidly changing balances between small nations (Kay, 2009) and their referential (pluri)nation(al) states (Hennig et al., 2015). Thus, the political history of each small nation and the political statuses they were able to achieve by negotiating with their (pluri)nation(al) states will be explored. This helps to highlight the power relationships in play and establishes the preconditions for future negotiations of the devolution of power from the state level to the regional level. Although this article will focus solely on comparing these three cases, this section will show the eight cases that have been studied as part of the *Benchmarking City-Regions* research programme, funded by Ikerbasque (the Basque Foundation for Science) and the RSA (Regional Studies Association). Specifically, this comparative study consists of eight city-region cases<sup>1</sup> and makes reference to their nation-states, as follows: Catalonia (Spain), the Basque Country (Spain and France), Scotland (UK), Reykjavik (Iceland), Oresund (Sweden and Denmark), Dublin (Ireland), Portland (Oregon), and Liverpool and Manchester (UK; Calzada, 2015a).

Focussing on the crux of this paper, we must not only explicitly make new geopolitical readings of these nation-states (Park, 2017; Keating, 2017), but also provide analytical evidence for the interpretation of

<sup>1</sup> The summary and the outcomes of this study can be read in the following article: Calzada, I. (2015), *Benchmarking Future City-Regions beyond Nation-States*, RSR Regional Studies Regional Science, 2:1, 350-361, DOI: 10.1080/21681376.2015.1046908. Accessible at: [www.cityregions.org](http://www.cityregions.org), August 31, 2015

the somewhat confusing city-region term (Morgan, 2013) as a specific concept. As such, in this article, the notion of the plurinational state (Requejo, 2015) will be deconstructed from the perspective of city-regional and multi-level governance (Alcantara et al., 2015). Therefore, in order to define a suitable epistemological perspective so that city-regions can be suitably studied, we will focus on cases involving a considerable degree of regional autonomy. Thus, the analysis in this article will incorporate three perspectives: political geography, urban and regional studies, and social innovation studies. As an analytical tool, we will examine the processes of political innovation in the three aforementioned cases.

Nevertheless, the study of city-regions suggests a broader conceptual scope that could cover a range of politically and economically-driven city-regional dynamics (Scott, 2001; Harrison, 2010; Morgan, 2013). Hence, rather than merely defining a region as “an intermediate territorial level, between the state and the locality” (Keating, 1999, p. 9), we will specify the taxonomy of the city-regions we refer to in this article. City-regions can be defined thus: (1) through their tenuous power relationships with their counterpart (pluri)nation(al) states; (2) their potential for internal and autonomous management; (3) their ability to externally portray themselves as internationally self-sufficient actors driven by paradiplomacy (Moreno, 2016). Unlike the five cases in the *Benchmarking City-Regions* research programme (Calzada, 2017, in press) the three cases examined in this article all follow this aforementioned taxonomy as ‘small, stateless, city-regional nations’.

Therefore, within this preliminary framework, this paper attempts to increase the general understanding of the emergent nature of city-regions as new, dynamic, socio-territorial, networked entities in (pluri)nation(al) state contexts (Herschell, 2015; Harrison, 2010). A recent natural consequence of the post-2008 economic recession was the acceleration of some city-regions’ tendencies to highlight politically-driven nationalist devolution strategies in order to move beyond their nation-states (Scotland, Catalonia, the Basque Country,

and Iceland<sup>2</sup>), while others steadily continue to implement economically-driven strategies within their nation-states’ borders (Oresund, Liverpool/Manchester, Dublin, and Portland). Nevertheless, in both cases, city-regions are widely recognised as pivotal, societal, and political-economic formations that are key to national and international competitiveness and to rebalancing political restructuring processes within and, indeed, beyond nation-states (Ohmae, 1995; Scott, 2001). As Soja (Brenner, 2014, p. 282) recently pointed out:

[The city-region] represents a more fundamental change in the urbanisation process, arising from the regionalisation of the modern metropolis and involving a shift from the typically monocentric dualism of dense city [*sic*] and sprawling low-density suburbanisation to a polycentric network of urban agglomerations where relatively high densities are found throughout the urbanised region.

Hence, city-regions (Herrschel, 2014) have become a hotly-debated topic in urban and regional political studies (Agnew, 2015) over the past decade. However, relatively few comparisons have been made between diverse city-region cases that trespass their nation-state boundaries, especially because these cases clearly have the potential to reshape the political and economic policies and spatial configurations of their corresponding nation-states. Despite the centrality of city-regions to modern accounts of economic success (Scott, 2001), critics argue that advocates of a new city-regionalism approach overlook the political construction of these entities (Harrison, 2010), beyond their understanding of plurinationalism and nation-state borders (Herschell, 2014). Therefore, the different forms of territorial politics which link city-regionalism with nation-states’ innovative visions (Jonas et al. 2016, p. 1) and the need to examine the processes involved in political innovation (as in Scotland, the Basque Country, and Catalonia), led to the identification of ‘smart devolution’ strategies in relational terms. Furthermore, as Keating (2001, p. 1) argues, “globalisation and European integration have

<sup>2</sup> The fact that Iceland is a former colony of Denmark plays an important role here.

encouraged the re-emergence of nationalism within established states”, a notion that connects directly with city-regions. Similarly, as Khanna (2016, p. 78) more recently noted, “The entire European Union is thus a reminder that local independence movements are not the antithesis of lofty post-national globalism but rather the essential path toward it”.

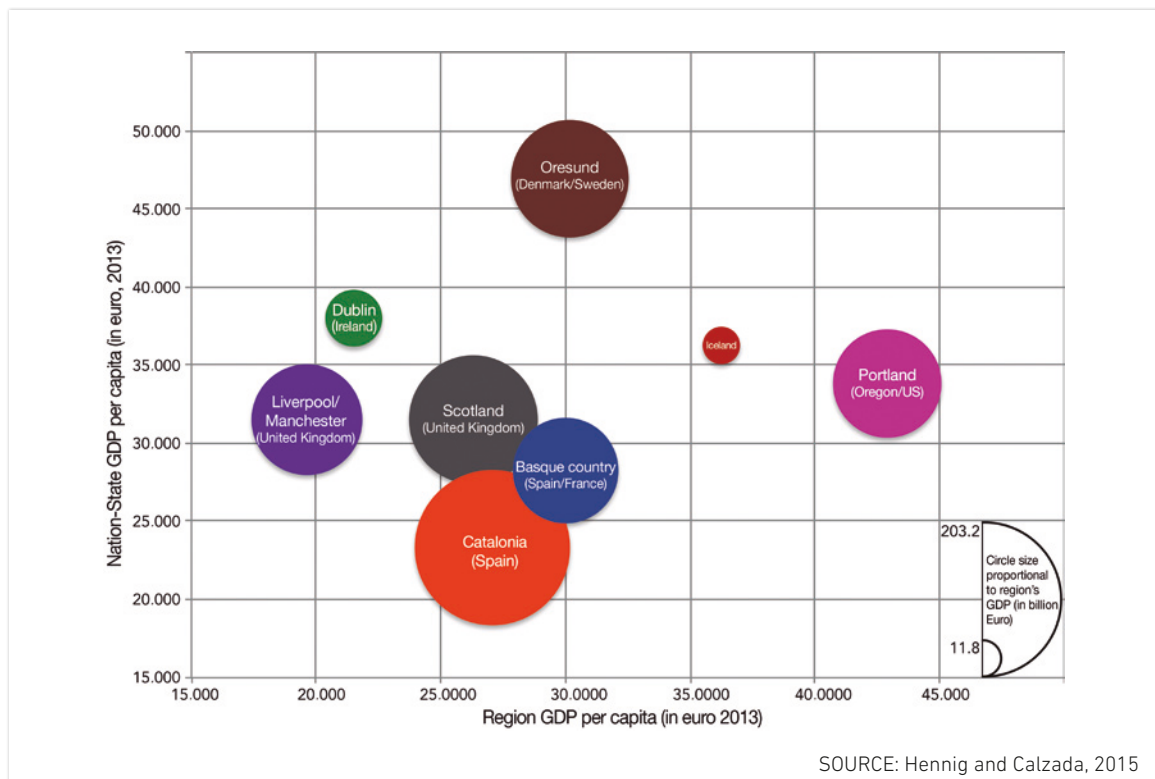
These claims sparked a flurry of research aimed at developing an understanding of nationalistic or non-nationalistic city-regionalism in order to avoid “the ecological fallacy [that] supposes that what is true of some city-regions is true of all city-regions” (Morgan, 2013, p. 1). However, recent work has explicitly focussed on non-nationalistic, state-centric led initiatives such as those in the UK, Germany, and the Netherlands, among other countries (Harrison, 2010, p. 17). Meanwhile, the current pervasive and changing geo-political European context fuelled by ‘devolutionist movements’—in other

words, the continuing struggle by (pluri)nation(al) states with new emergent centres of political identity and agency and their resultant quests for consideration of their own specific interests and agendas—is absolutely ignored.

### POST-NATIONAL URBANITY: METROPOLITANISATION BEYOND (PLURI)NATION(AL) STATES

The key idea underlying this article is that the three nationalist city-regions analysed here present unique political-innovation processes as challenging and timely research tasks with regard to the recent ‘devolution’ claims in the UK and Spain. Nevertheless, generally speaking, city-regions could be seen as emergent networked socio-territorial entities heading in either one strategic direction or another. Consequently, some city-regions are embracing recentralisation within their nation-states,

**Figure 1: Pluri(nation)al state and city-region GDP per capita (Euro, 2013)**



while others are vigorously calling for devolution or even independence (i.e., secession, in purely political terms, from their respective nation-states). In this context, factors such as institutional self-sufficiency and economic opportunity are driving city-regions in specific directions by fundamentally transforming their relationship with, and even the nature of, their established nation-states. However, before focusing on our three specific case examples, it is useful to first assess some preliminary general comparative city-region data (Hennig and Calzada, 2015). Thus, figure 1 shows the relationship between nation-state GDP per capita and city-region GDP per capita.

In a nutshell, by investigating the GDP and population contributions of the city-region cases in relation to their plurinational states, we concluded that ‘regional political tensions’ can be explained when city-regional entities pointedly stand out through some ‘alternative’ economic, political, or social dynamics that differ significantly from their plurinational states. These regional political tensions should be understood as consequences of natural rescaling processes in their transition into plurinational and nation-states (Brenner, 2009), insofar as they are merely an outcome of a diverse range of political and economic factors that lead city-regions towards new regional equilibrium and order. Thus, this issue can be

understood in a context where the city-regions produce a higher GDP and its population contributes more to its corresponding plurinational state. This situation also has many consequences in terms of the tensions surrounding political and economic sovereignty, whether in favour of, or in opposition to, recentralisation or devolution/independence.

Focussing only on the three small city-regional nations presented in this article, the percentage of each city-region’s population and its GDP contribution is disproportionate to that of its referential nation-state on both counts. This is the case in Scotland, which constitutes 8% of the UK population and 9% of the UK’s GDP. In Catalonia, one of the main arguments for increased devolution of power is its large contribution to Spain both in terms of population and GDP (16% and 19%, respectively). Similarly, the Basque Country constitutes 6 % of Spain’s GDP but 5.5 % of its population (see Table 1), although it does benefit from a self-governing tax agreement (the *Concierto Económico*; Uriarte, 2015) with the Spanish central government.

Notwithstanding this geo-economical evidence-based analysis, we can also argue that within the scope of the European context, these complex dynamics occur through political-innovation processes and

**Table 1: Small, stateless, city-regional nation populations and GDP contributions to their referential (pluri)nation(al) states**

| CITY-REGIONAL SMALL NATIONS | POPULATION IN MILLIONS (NATION-STATE %) | GDP CONTRIBUTION RELATED TO NATION-STATE (%) |
|-----------------------------|---|--|
| Scotland                    | 5.3 (8)                                 | 9  |
| Catalonia                   | 7.5 (16)                                | 19   |
| Basque Country <sup>1</sup> | 2.2 (5.5)                               | 6  |

<sup>1</sup> This data relates to the Basque Country side in Spain. The french side is not represented in these figures.

smart-devolution strategies, and that these both require further pervasive and qualitative analyses to explain the sources and potential scenarios of this new city-regional order. This so-called post-national urbanity is characterised by a profound rescaling process (Brenner, 2009), in which (pluri)nation(al) states are under huge pressure because of their internal and external structural shifts. ‘Post-national’ (Sassen, 2002) ‘urbanity’ (Corijn, 2009) refers to the current pervasive metropolitanisation phenomenon (Katz et al., 2013), which is increasingly shaping the political regional claims in small stateless European nations for the right to decide their own futures and to the potential rescaling processes in some (pluri) nation(al) states such as the UK and Spain.

In fact, globalisation restructures the flow of spaces (Castells, 1996), repositioning cities and regions on a wider scale than just their national environments. At present, Europe’s changing refoundational momentum, shaped by small, stateless nations’ claims and fuelled by metropolitan dynamics, is both part of, and a reaction to, these pressures. The EU currently regulates at least half of the daily lives of the citizens in 27 of its 28 member states; simultaneously, significant devolution processes are occurring in (pluri)nation(al) states in terms of the transfer of socioeconomic regulatory power in competitive environments to smaller units. As Khanna (2016, p. 63) argues, “Devolution is the perpetual fragmentation of territory into ever more (and smaller) units of authority, from empires to nations, nations to provinces and provinces to cities. Devolution is the ultimate expression of local desire to control one’s geography, which is exactly why it drives us toward a connected destiny”.

According to Barber (2013), this ‘connected destiny’ is already happening in cities and regions, rather than between (pluri)nation(al) states. Thus, plurinationalism itself is a term that is at stake between decentralised positions, such as federalism, devolution, secessionism, and recentralisation of state imperatives. Looking at cities and the global-local nexus in the European context, immediately introduces the question of urbanity as a pre- and post-national formation, and therefore as a para-national domain: cities are not just

parts of countries. In the current post-national context, urbanity—made up of city-regions in certain state configurations—is trespassing upon plurinationality in internal geopolitical terms while establishing an uncertain and unpredictable scenario (in external geostrategic metropolitan terms) between small, stateless, city-regional nations, their referential states, and the supranational European Union.

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### THE TAXONOMY AND BENCHMARKING OF SMALL, STATELESS, CITY-REGIONAL NATIONS: POLITICAL INNOVATION PROCESSES AND SMART DEVOLUTION STRATEGIES

For the purpose of this article, it is difficult to analyse political innovation processes and smart devolution strategies based solely on politically-constructed subjective categories such as nations. According to Benedict Anderson, nations are ‘imagined communities’, which could be interpreted ethnographically in many different plurinational and cross-border national territories (Moncusí, 2016). Yet, Guibernau (2013, p. 368) provides a wider definition when she defines nations as “a human group conscious of forming a community, sharing a common culture, attached to a clearly demarcated territory, having a common past and a common project for the future, and claiming the right to rule itself”. It is, therefore, a subjective construction that could be applied to any nationalistic political idea. Paradoxically, nation-states are the entities which are the most reluctant to accept that they were also built on the basis of ‘invention’. In this vein, a BBC Radio 4 programme called *The Invention of Spain* was recently aired, which aimed to provide objective information regarding the controversial debate on the Catalan self-determination strategy, fulfilled in the plebiscitary election of September 27, 2015 (Basta, 2015).

Regarding Catalonia, the Basque Country, and Scotland, the political-innovation processes occurring in such changing contexts reveal that there are separatist challengers to nation-states, even beyond Europe. These make their cases for greater autonomy based not only on identity-based arguments, but also on considerations



of a fair distribution of resources within their nation-states. These three entities have long histories of making claims for increased regional autonomy and have been characterised by already achieving significant degrees of devolution over the past two decades (Colomb, 2014): they each have their own parliaments, governments, and executive leaders. Therefore, by measuring devolution, we mean that power is shared between tiers of government, and the power exercised by the lower tiers—such as regions and provinces—varies across and within (pluri)nation(al) states. In the context of this article, we will use a working definition of political innovations as processes “which allow [it to] going [*sic*] beyond the containerised view of territory, by starting from the political dimension of territories, and by placing and considering innovation and networks in their spatial and historical context without losing sight of the material territoriality” (Calzada, 2015a, p. 354). Despite the fact that the three cases present the same drivers of devolution, not only are their political innovation processes grounded in diverse factors, but their smart devolution claims proceed with different strategies and cover varying dimensions (See Table 2).

In the case of the Basque Country, after suffering from political violence (BBC, 1955), there is remarkable evidence that this era is now being left behind. Evidence-based qualitative data in support of this statement is the fact that an unprecedented summer school event titled *Political Innovation: Constitutional Change, Self-Government, The Right to Decide and Independence* took place in San Sebastián (Calzada et al., 2015). The event showed that political parties were pursuing a normalised context in which to express projects without the threat of political unrest and violence. Thus, there has been intense and committed effort from institutions and civic society to cure the wounds of political violence. Indeed, devolution claims may not be radicalised but, the self-government status rooted within the population itself has deliberately engaged in further city-regional devolution. In line with the citizens’ willingness, the Basque autonomy and Navarra Statutory Community have full fiscal powers as a consequence of the economic agreement (the *Concierto Económico*) with the nation-state, the source of the Basque Country’s historic self-government system. Similarly, it can

be argued that after this political devolution, the Basque Country has presented remarkable public policy (in terms of education and health, among other issues) insofar as the regional political parties determine strategic discourse. Due to the increasing presence of Basque institutions stemming from institutional bolstering instruments, in place for the past 36 years, since the implementation of the Guernica autonomy Statute, institutions have been the principal leaders of this autonomist strategy. In regard to the political innovation processes currently driving Basque society, we could summarise the current situation as post-violence political momentum. Thus, the devolution agenda may have some ‘smart’ modifications as a consequence of the acceleration of these processes.

Scotland is recognised as a constituent nation of the UK, an issue that contrasts with the “indivisibility [*sic*] unity of the Spanish nation” that is the principal source of conflict in the case of Catalonia. Scottish autonomy is newly developed; it was established by the Scotland Act implemented by the New Labour Government of 1998 and which led to the election of the first Scottish Parliament in May 1999 and the formation of a new, devolved Scottish Government in charge of a wide range of policy fields, including health care, education, and energy. Thus, Scotland has slowly been gaining more political and policy devolution, fuelled by the new Scottish Government. This is the same Government that held the 2014 independence referendum (Geoghegan, 2015) and obtained 56 out of 59 Scottish MPs in the 2015 UK general election. However, the Scottish public’s appetite for increased independence will ultimately be derived from achieving greater levels of trust in Holyrood than in Westminster, even beyond claims for further fiscal devolution. Furthermore, even though independentists were defeated by a very short margin (45% in favour of independence versus 55% opposed to it), the rationalised way in which the independence debate was run featured intelligent discourse and constructive identification of the pros and cons (BBC News, 2014). Hence, we could argue that, based on many other assessments (Hazell, 2015), the September 2014 referendum and the recently confirmed Brexit vote established a turning point, not only in Scotland and the UK, but also for devolutionist processes elsewhere.

Finally, the pro-independence parties in Catalonia framed the 2015 Catalan regional election, held on 27 September, as a proxy for an independence referendum (Martí et al., 2015). Since then, the new Catalan Government aims to declare independence within 18 months by unplugging Catalonia's institutional structures from Spain. In 2006, a new Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia was approved by the Spanish Parliament, the Catalan Parliament, and a popular referendum in Catalonia, but it was immediately challenged in the Spanish Constitutional Court by the right-wing, unionist *Partido Popular*. In 2010, the Constitutional Court published its sentence on the Statute of Autonomy, having culled significant parts of the text. This led to massive demonstrations in Catalonia. The 'Catalanist' feeling, though not directly secessionist, became one of independentism, even though the Catalan political profile could have been described as federalist up to this point (Serrano, 2013). The so-called right to decide (Cagiao and Conde, 2016; Requejo, 2015; Calzada, 2014) became the key motto of the secessionist and federalist demonstrators, increasing tensions between the Catalan city-regional nation and the Spanish (pluri)nation(al) state<sup>3</sup>. It should be noted that the lack of respect for the fiscal devolution claim led federalists/Catalanists/secessionists to the organisation of anticipated regional elections in November 2012, leading, in turn, to political parties supporting the right to decide and the self-determination of Catalonia, which now represents nearly two-thirds of the Catalan Parliament. Catalonia's strategy is focused not only on obtaining policy, political, and fiscal devolution, but also on creating its own state that will be 'directly' integrated with the EU member states' structure (Politico, 2017).

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3 The use of the term *(pluri)nation(al) states* attempts to highlight, especially in this sentence, but also throughout the article, the lack of a plural and diverse understanding of the state territory. As such, the post-national urbanity pattern pervasively depicts the centralistic resistance of the Spanish nation-state by being reluctant to articulate a federal configuration in the 21st century, as authors such as Moreno argue.

## FINAL REMARKS: TOWARDS AN AGE OF SMART DEVOLUTION IN THE EU?

This article benchmarks a taxonomy for three 'small, stateless, city-regional nation' cases (Scotland, Catalonia, and the Basque Country) within a growing metropolitan European context (OECD, 2015), which encompasses the politically-innovative processes they used in attaining smart devolution strategies from their constitutive (pluri)nation(al) states—the UK and Spain. This article sets out some interpretations of self-determination and democratic experimentation for all three cases, using the EU as a supranational and geopolitical frame of reference. In this direction, as Connolly (2013) and Avery (2014) argue, independentism or secessionism is a living issue in today's Europe, and is the consequence of two main factors. First, the effects of the post-2008 recession brought about broader processes of territorial transformation and re-scaling in the context of welfare-state reforms. Second, the 'denaturalisation' of nation-state space is a process that reveals that stakeholders may still share a space but that they have no common interests as to how to order that space, in the broader sense of the term.

Regarding the European metropolitan dimension, authors such as Bourne (2014), Muro et al. (2016), and Moreno (2015) have investigated the role of the future EU memberships of these three cases, as potential new states, in debates on the advantages and disadvantages of devolution, secession, or even independence. However, paradoxically, the EU's structure may stimulate support for an independent state while discouraging acts of secession. In fact, insofar that the EU could provide a complex web of opportunities and constraints for approximately 20 significant pro- and anti-independence or devolution movements, it is likely to remain implicated in secession processes (Bourne, 2014, p. 95). These can be considered as

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4 <http://www.politico.eu/article/president-of-catalonia-vows-to-go-ahead-with-independence-vote-referendum-spain>

5 The grassroots movements in favour of the 'right to decide' in the Basque Country is called *Gure Esku Dago*, which means 'In Our Hands'. [www.gureeskudago.eus](http://www.gureeskudago.eus)



**Table 2: The taxonomy and benchmarking of small, stateless, city-regional nations**

| TAXONOMY AND BENCHMARKING OF SMALL, STATELESS, CITY-REGIONAL NATIONS   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
|  | BASQUE COUNTRY  | SCOTLAND  | CATALONIA   |
| (A) POST-NATIONAL URBANITY = METROPOLITANISATION   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Network of cities: Bilbao, San Sebastián, Vitoria, Pamplona, and Bayonne.</li> <li>• Established fiscal, irregular policy, and political asymmetric devolution in three administrative entities (Basque autonomy, the Statutory Community of Navarre, and the Basque Country).</li> <li>• Fixed by institutions</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Network of cities: Glasgow, Edinburgh, Inverness, Aberdeen, and Dundee.</li> <li>• Gradual policy and limited political devolution.</li> <li>• Fuelled by governments.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Network of cities <sup>6</sup>: Barcelona, Tarragona, Girona, and Lleida.</li> <li>• Constrained political devolution and banned fiscal devolution.</li> <li>• Driven by civic society.</li> </ul>   |
| (B) POLITICAL INNOVATION PROCESSES   | Post-Violence Politics  | Rationalised Dialectic: Bilateralism  | Antagonistic Dialectic: Unilateralism   |
| (C) SMART DEVOLUTION STRATEGIES  |   |   |   |
| Q1:<br>To what extent is the starting point of each city-regional small nation's devolution similar in terms of governance, history, and policies?                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1979: Guernica Statute of Autonomy with fiscal, political, and policy devolution.</li> <li>• 2016: A new political status update requires the articulation of the right to decide beyond legal instruments, after the regional elections on September 25.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2014: The independence referendum held on September 18 was a turning point in the fiscal devolution within the UK.</li> <li>• The EU referendum led Scotland to implement a second independence referendum.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2010: the Spanish Constitutional Court invalidated the democratically-achieved 2006 Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia.</li> <li>• November 9, 2014: A non-binding self-determination referendum was organised.</li> <li>• September 27, 2015: A plebiscitary election with a unity list in favour of yes was announced.</li> </ul>  |
| Q2:<br>What are the potential political scenarios for each city-regional nation as a result of the de/recentralisation attitude of its referential (pluri) nation(al) state? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General elections determined the Basque Nationalist Party (<i>Partido Nacionalista Vasco</i>; PNV) and <i>Euskal Herria Bildu</i> political party strategies to suggest the content of an application for the 'right to decide' and whether or not to link itself to constitutional changes.</li> <li>• Regional elections become immune to potential changes in the political status of the Basque city-region in terms of its relationship with the Spanish nation-state.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2015: The Election of 56 Scottish National Party MPs in Westminster represented a powerful force for renegotiating further devolution beyond the Smith powers; 50 amendments were also recently presented in the House of Commons before Art. 50 was implemented to trigger Brexit.</li> <li>• Implementation of a second independence referendum is dependent on the UK's membership of the EU (as the opportunity for legitimate secession by the Scottish National Party).</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• September 27, 2015: Elections were uncertain, but the yes vote gathered international focus.</li> <li>• Regardless of the outcome, the key issue remains pending; as long as yes wins, what will be the role of Catalonia within the EU? (see next section: Final remarks).</li> </ul>   |
| Q3:<br>What are the most relevant strategic political innovation processes occurring in each case?   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Without a doubt, the leading politically-innovative process was the achievement of peace. Regardless of the cause, a pluralistic approach to Basque society should be required to articulate a bottom-up and top-down 'right to decide'.</li> <li>• The following questions are pending binding consultation or a referendum: <i>Which pending power correlations would implement a popular vote on this question? and How will be the Basque Country organise a deliberative experimental consultation as the highest democratic level that guarantees the coexistence of a range of political projects?</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is noteworthy that even after the independence referendum, a large majority of the public expressed opinions that the referendum implied a new turning point in Scottish politics. The positive influence of the debate among the citizens has increased trust in politics and the importance of devolution in its citizen's daily lives.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The most striking point in the Catalan devolution dynamic is the way the yes campaigners are dealing with their differences. A diverse range of important stakeholders including politicians, activists, academics, business people, entrepreneurs, public managers, public figures, and others, are portraying themselves as a collective plural leadership.</li> </ul> |

SOURCE: Adapted from Calzada, 2015b

<sup>6</sup> The inclusion of Valencia, the Balearic Islands, and some parts of Aragon, Roussillon in France, the Principality of Andorra, and the city of Alghero in Sardinia (Italy) should also be considered, in order to fully establish the nationalistic vision of the '*Paisos Catalans*'.

arguments about ‘Europeanisation’ or the ways in which European integration affects politics, policies, and institutions within interdependencies between current European (pluri)nation(al) states and small, stateless, city-regional nations.

Highlighting this timely issue<sup>4</sup>, Herrschell (2015) suggests that the European Union’s regional policy and multi-level arrangements of governance have provided an important instrumentarium for such politically-innovative activities, on the basis of growing metropolitan consciousness regarding places that ‘matter’, and that are willing to take their decisions and their political futures “in[to] their hands”<sup>5</sup>. Similarly, these dialectics may vary in nature depending on the respective power and influence of the relevant players. The outcome is a complex, multi-level, continuously re-negotiated, composite political identity that can express itself through local, regional, or ‘national’ narratives and implement the so-called right to decide through remarkably diverse, deliberative experimentation exercises.

However, the current context requires the EU’s adoption of an anticipative and active role within its policies and programmes so as to reinstate what we could call ‘smart devolution’. This refoundational momentum of the EU should deal with the tensions between the small, stateless, city-regional nations (such as those in Scotland, Catalonia, and the Basque Country) and their corresponding (pluri)nation(al) states. As we have seen, such states depict different

democratic articulations in order to accommodate territorial diversity, and as Connolly (2013, p. 12) points out, the EU will play a leading role in determining the outcomes of Scottish, Catalan, and Basque nationalist claims. However, he also adds that devolution, and the rights to secession and self-determination, as currently understood in international law, provide little in the way of guidance for addressing separatist claims in Europe’s stateless nations or, for that matter, other parts of the world. He continues on to say that in Europe, self-determination claims will increasingly be dealt with through the institutions of the EU as a part of the ongoing push and pull among EU member states and city-regions. Whether this results in ‘Independence in Europe’, or some form of accommodation that stops short of secession, remains to be seen. In the same vein, reinforcing Connolly’s suggestion, Khanna (2016, pp. 67-68) reflects and concludes on the nature of self-determination thus:

Self-determination should be seen as ‘pre-legal’ in the sense that it reflects the will of peoples rather than the international law’s bias toward existing states. [...] Self-determination is a sign not of backward tribalism but of mature evolution. We should not despair that secessionism is a moral failure, even if it recognises innate tribal tendencies. A devolved world of local democracies is preferable to a world of large pseudo-democracies. Let the tribes win.

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