

7. CONCLUSION: Towards Basque Political Innovation. Building a Strategic Roadmap.

Dr Igor Calzada
Professor, Research Fellow & Policy Adviser
Universidad of Oxford and University of Strathclyde

Abstract:

After analysing different academic and policymaking contributions gathered in the Political Innovation Summer School in the Basque Country, the author presents a strategic diagnosis of and vision for stakeholders (public institutions, private firms, academia, civil society, and entrepreneurs). This diagnosis and vision can be used to build politically “smart” and diverse discourses to better understand political positions relative to one another. Thus, Basque Political Innovation can be summarised as the ‘no veto’ paradigm, in which any political project that arises from the political spectrum of the Basque territories – the Basque Autonomy, the Navarra Statutory Autonomy, the French Pays Basque, and the Diaspore – can be democratically promoted and supported by collective decision-making processes; it can also guarantee the individual ‘right to decide’ one’s own political status. In pursuit of this topic, the author foresees ten potential strategic trends for Basque Country politics. These trends will help stakeholders in the Basque Country to ensure permanent and realistic benchmarking analyses with other European Union city-regions that are currently deploying paradiplomatic, translocal, independence- or devolution-driven, and multilevel governance projects, initiatives and practices.

Keywords:

Benchmarking, Devolution, Democracy, European Union, Multilevel Governance, Strategic Vision, Stakeholders, City-Regions, Paradiplomacy, Political Innovation, Post-independence, Smartness, Translocal.

Introduction

This ending chapter attempts to sum up the present book by showing an overall future scope on which to build. We began with a serious attempt to build a solid, wide and comprehensive bridge, and we have also been learning how to proceed with ‘bridging’ (Calzada, 2015) Basque political sensibilities, how political parties can respect each other, and how any political project (even the modifications of the legal *status quo* thus far) should be democratically accepted going forward.

As such, we commenced this book as a journey by building a bridge, nail by nail, and assembling rather diverse pieces of wood into a larger structure. Once upon a time, this bridge-build mission would not have been fruitful. However, now, the appropriate context exists for openly facing such a great challenge in the Basque Country, which has thus far been caught in a vicious circle.

Thus, we present this book as a source for active and applied discussion that encourages academics, politicians, journalists, youth and activists to continue developing initiatives and projects as the content of this roadmap. My preliminary interest concerns underlining the lack of platforms (as was suggested in the aforementioned Political Innovation Summer School^{*}) for open and coordinated debates (without causing an overlap of initiatives – a normalised practice in the small socio-political Basque ecosystem thus far). Hence, this chapter has a target audience: basically, pure citizens, all of us, the Basques. Nevertheless, despite its clear aim to contribute to the strategic and political discourse, the debate and especially, the social dynamics of the discussion, this conclusive chapter will draw a flexible, modular and *learning-by-doing* style for its strategic roadmap.

Once we have gathered the entire symbolic spectrum represented by diverse political positions in our country (although such a tremendous effort can never be sufficiently achieved), we may be ready to cross the bridge. However, are we ready? Where will we go? Following a strategic roadmap among different sensibilities to reach a common destination is complicated, particularly when we disagree about the final stop. The

^{*} www.politicalinnovation.net // www.innovacionpolitica.info // www.berrikuntzapolitikoia.eus

editors of this publication strongly believe that our political views can find a minimum expression of agreement that leads us to formulate and implement the ‘right to decide’.

Indeed, in the four decades since the end of Franco’s dictatorship, the democratic transition in the Spanish State with to the Basque Country remains unresolved. Even the ‘Gernika Statute’ was an achievement due to the partial consensus among Basques. We have to remind ourselves of the low level of support for the Spanish Constitution[†] in the Basque Autonomy (31,29%) and the Navarra Statutory Autonomy (50,38%): 34,94%. Currently, the debate is driven by two different positions: one the one hand, those who accept that the time has come for a constitutional change and, on the other hand, those who believe that such a change will be another recentralising, short-term solution delivered tactically by the Central Government that will deny the ‘right to decide’ via a referendum, as has occurred so far in Catalonia before and after the 27th September Regional Elections in 2015.

Thus, in this final chapter, the ‘right to decide’ (Barceló et al., 2015) is presented as a ‘container’ in which we can pour in some ‘content’. I am not taking the criticisms surrounding the ‘right to decide’ for granted; however, I absolutely argue for depicting the ‘right to decide’ as dynamic social process (Calzada & Herrschel, 2015), by which liberal democracies are attempting to re-scale nation-states (Calzada, 2015 & Brenner, 2009) by chasing some gradual or total modifications of the *status quo*.

The Basque Country is a complex and fragmented geo-political entity (Calzada 2011b & Herrschel 2009). The ongoing self-government review initiative[‡], run by the Basque Parliament since 2014, is helping analyse a current update and a future strategic pathway. However, to the best of our knowledge, involved stakeholders could establish an extensive dynamic to build a strategic pathway with ample diversity. The institutional and civilian articulation of the ‘right to decide’, as the right strategic ‘container’, using smart methodologies could be one way to proceed.

[†] Fernández, P. & Ruiz, C. (2003), *¿Aprobaron los vascos la Constitución?*, Revista de Estudios Políticos (Nueva Época). Núm. 122. Octubre-Diciembre 2003. Pp. 176.

[‡] Ponencia de Autogobierno del Parlamento Vasco.

http://www.parlamento.euskadi.net/c_ponencia_autogobierno.html



Figure 1 Towards Basque Political Innovation: Building a Strategic Roadmap on Four Axes.

Roadmap: Four Axes.

Currently, regions (Agnew, 2015) are neither static territorial entities nor isolated geographical areas within nation-states (Alonso, 2012). In fact, 2014 will be remembered as a year in which two nation-states unevenly faced major debate at a similar turning point in their relationships with some of their city-regional small nations. The United Kingdom and Spain faced similar watershed moments, but they experienced them in rather different ways. While the United Kingdom witnessed a referendum that was agreed upon by Prime Minister David Cameron and the former Scottish First Minister, Alex Salmond, the Spanish government continued to refuse any expression of self-determination, as demanded by a considerable proportion of the Catalanian population, by persistently highlighting the territorial unity[§] of the Spanish nation-state. Additionally, the political history of the last 40 years presents another feature of the Basque Country: the region has attempted to overcome the political violence that has dramatically dominated the political scene in these years. In this direction, a political awakening towards – or at least an interest in – making progress and leveraging self-government as a procedure in which the ‘right to decide’ could be implemented (Calzada, 2014)^{**}.

In this context, to articulate the aim of the Political Innovation Summer School 2015, we proceeded with four axes that have also structured this book. However, how can these axes be articulated after gathering opinions, elaborations and contributions from the entire political spectrum?

It is interesting to observe how the Basque Country is viewed from the outside, for instance, in the United Kingdom. In October 2014, The Guardian^{††} portrayed the Basque Country as follows:

[§] It is worth mentioning the interesting radio programme entitled ‘The Invention of Spain’ that BBC Radio 4 has released recently. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01nk276>

^{**} Calzada, I. (2014), *The Right to Decide in Democracy between Recentralisation and Independence: Scotland, Catalonia and the Basque Country*. Regions, no 296, 2014 Issue 4, pp. 7-8. DOI: 10.1080/13673882.2014.11431613.

^{††} <http://www.the-report.net/basque-country/oct2014/1123-a-creative-people-a-hi-tech-future>

As the curtain opens on a new era of peace, the Basque Country is determined to keep industrialising its resilient economy and reinforce its status as a hotbed of innovation, education and culture.

I propose to explore political innovation options for the Basque Country by avoiding the narrow-minded, Spanish-centric perspective, in which only one geostrategic reason exists: the centre/Madrid vs the periphery (regardless of where this periphery is located). Few more shreds of evidence can be added to this debate. Many agree that open questions for nation-states that are pursuing rescaling inside and beyond their borders constitute a natural process (Brenner 2009, Keating 2014, Herrschel 2002); however, the driving forces in Spain refuse to allow such a debate. As such, I would like to argue that we have suggested a four-axes discussion for the Summer School to counteract an stubborn and out-dated mind-sets that are no longer valid in the current debate about ‘smart’ policies in some nation-states, with the exception of Spain (Calzada, 2015).^{‡‡}

Little can be foreseen about the future of the European Union’s unpredictable evolution (Benson, 2015) with regard to the new devolution claims of city-regional nation-states, such as Scotland, Catalonia, Flanders and the Basque Country (Hennig & Calzada 2014, Keating & Harvey 2014, Colomb et al., 2014, Guibernau, 2012). Likewise, uncertainty at the European Union level can be expected with regard to the quest for self-determination in stateless nations. Nevertheless, an ongoing geopolitical trend should be taken seriously by the supranational bodies and by nation-states, particularly those offering no resolution and dialogue regarding pending questions of self-determination. At the European Union level, Catalonia and Scotland (and eventually some others, such as the Basque Country, Flanders, and Bavaria) are actively exploring how they can internally develop an inclusive and smart city-regional strategy (Kull et al., 2015, Herrschel, 2015, Alcantara et al., 2015) and externally develop a paradiplomatic translocal strategy (Calzada, 2014 & 2015, Lecours et al., 2003, Moreno, 2015, Requejo et al., 2011). These policies aim to implement the so-called ‘right to decide’, a somewhat ambiguous term, within and beyond the nation-state’s borders.

^{‡‡} <http://blogs.elpais.com/seres-urbanos/2015/08/smart-state.html>

Moreover, for those unable (or uninterested) in shaping the real geography of the ‘right to decide’, I argue that the logic applied to the ‘right to the city’ might provide us with interesting insights as a means to reflecting on a democratic reality that stands out in a democratically imagined national community: the nation (Anderson, 2006). When Lefebvre, and more recently Harvey (2008), coined the term ‘right to decide’, they both argued in favour of a right that did not exist by law when it was suggested. With the changing nature of the relationship between nation-states and their city-regions flexibility and a generous political mind-set should prevail (Calzada, 2015). In this regard, the ‘right to decide’, understood as an dynamic concept (Requejo et al., 2011, Barceló et al. 2015, Guibernau, 2013, 2014 & 2015, Calzada, 2014) under construction, requires not only a substantial legal analysis but also a deeper understanding of the social innovation processes that shape this dynamic relationship (Calzada, 2015) and a strategic inclusive roadmap due to a diverse political position in favour of changing the *status quo*.

In the present endeavour, the previous chapters are not taken for granted; therefore, they all have been considered by analysing them one by one before elaborating this chapter. Accordingly, the chapter will comprehensively and holistically present what the author believes could be submitted as a strategic roadmap entitled ‘Towards Basque Political Innovation’. Therefore, we should be mindful that the contributing authors come from very diverse disciplines, orientations, political sensibilities and positioning. Their analyses of the Basque Country depict rather particular logic with regard to Spain and the European Union, and beyond, as the interplay among international actors (Herschel, 2015).

To sum up, as mentioned in the first chapter, ‘Introduction/Hitzazurea: Zubigintza (Bridging)’:

- In recent Basque history, political violence has provoked a moral unrest with clear consequences: unfair and uneven civilian tensions among citizens. Currently, there is a challenge in which ‘bridging’, understood to repair the moral and social fabric of Basque networks and communities, should be a priority. Notwithstanding, this requirement should absolutely be reiterated in dialectic gestures by the Spanish and

French governments, leaving the tensions behind to introduce a new peaceful scenario that some agents are fiercely promoting.

- The Basque Parliament has been holding some talks with key people to feed the debate regarding the self-government review initiative as an internal affairs issue. However, after analysing the review reports, I recommend that a broad methodological approach and socialisation/popularisation of this debate be tackled from institutions onwards.

Before detailing the content of this strategically orientated roadmap entitled ‘Towards a Basque Political Innovation’, six principles should be mentioned:

1. The argument for more devolution and the quest for independence are realities in the heart of the European Union, as shown in the Scottish^{§§} referendum on 18 September 2014, the Catalanian consultation on 9 November 2014, and, most recently, in the Catalanian regional elections on 27 September 2015^{***}.
2. However, there is little evidence of how the ‘right to decide’ can be implemented.
3. Given the legal system developed in the 1978 Constitution, and the self-government based on the Gernika Statute and the Economic Agreement, the new political status should be based on the mutual, loyal, and respectful sovereign relationship between the Spanish State and the Basque Autonomy. This fact is also applicable to the Navarra Statutory Autonomy.
4. It seems unlikely that any constitutional change will alter the course of the ‘right to decide’ in the Spanish State. Therefore, likely political innovation strategies should be implemented by including adequate representation of the political actors in the Basque Country.
5. As some authors have suggested (e.g., Vírgala, Arzoz and Requejo) after observing the recent events in Catalonia, the legitimacy of the quest for self-determination in the Spanish State requires modifications in the legal system. As such, the ‘right to decide’ might be a mechanism in which different political content (powers, policies and state structures) can be discussed, analysed and voted on in a referendum to determine the future of the Basque Country.

^{§§} <http://www.democraticaudit.com/?p=15610>

^{***} <http://centreonconstitutionalchange.ac.uk/blog/catalonia-and-spain-conflicting-majorities>

6. Finally, the external paradiplomatic activities and affairs are lacking in the Basque political debate. Because of years of political violence, the debate has been produced internally to escape the vicious circle. However, there is an urgent need to open up heterodox debates by inviting representatives from businesses, the public sector, academia, sport, culture, the media and younger generations, thus activating a debate that has been excluded thus far. If the European Union is far removed from the political reality of the Basque Country, European Union policies will eventually be crucial in implementing the boundaries and the opportunities for stateless nations such as the Basque Country (comprised of its different Basque geographies).

This book started building a bridge or bridges to walk on. However, before summarising the terms that we have gathered, thanks to the kind contributions of the authors, let me include a brief autobiographical memory that cannot be separated from this narrative. Although we use bridges as metaphors, in the final chapter of this book, I would like to return to Mr Martin Zabaleta. Do you remember who he was? Being five-years-old schoolboy at the time, I could not understand what was happening in my mum's kitchen after I arrived home from the Ikastola Zurriola in Donostia that afternoon. My mother was excited that the first Basque person had climbed the highest mountain on Earth.

The metaphor is still valid. The road ahead now resembles Mr Martin Zabaleta's long-term and high-profile achievement, whatever it may be: in this case, climbing an international mountain means bringing society together for a profound and visionary political debate and an open discussion that analyses the pros and cons, preparing our future from our daily lives, and achieving Basque democracy without any kind of interference.

On 14 May 1980, the photo stuck in the minds of all Basques (due to our enthusiastic and emotionally driven Basque mothers) did not actually depict Mr Zabaleta's face: with features unlike any Basque person, the symbolic figure holding the Basque flag (ikurriña) in his hand atop the highest peak in the world is Mr Pasang Temba. The man dressed in orange who was the first 'Basque' (in this case, also the first Spaniard) to achieve this outstanding goal was not actually Basque.



Figura 2 The Basque flag atop Mount Everest for the first time in 1980:

In the photo, Sherpa guide Mr Pasang Temba holds the Basque flag (Ikurriña).

Mr Martin Zabaleta on the front page of the daily newspaper Egin, which was closed on 14 July 1998 following an order from the Spanish government and Judge Mr Baltasar Garzón.

In the same year that Mr John Lennon was killed, the Basques conquered Mount Everest for the first time (this marked the first Spanish ascent as well). Thereafter, the generation referred to as ‘Generation X’ by some sociologists was born. I would argue that Generation X has not found any alternatives for ‘democratically’ building potentially strategic and international political projects that combine different sensibilities. Will it be possible for different sensibilities to agree on some minimum democratic preconditions in the post-political violence era? Will be the ‘Millennials’ generation be the one called to lead this hopeful political agenda? Two primary goals should be noted:

- 1.- External affairs: To enhance a heterodox ‘Basqueness’ through serious internationalisation efforts.
- 2.- Internal affairs: To suggest real operational projects to develop the country by respecting each location’s socio-political reality.

Before presenting the roadmap of 10 trends, the Figures 3.1 and 3.2 depict the terms associated with political innovation as discussed in the chapters of this book:

Roadmap: 10 Trends.

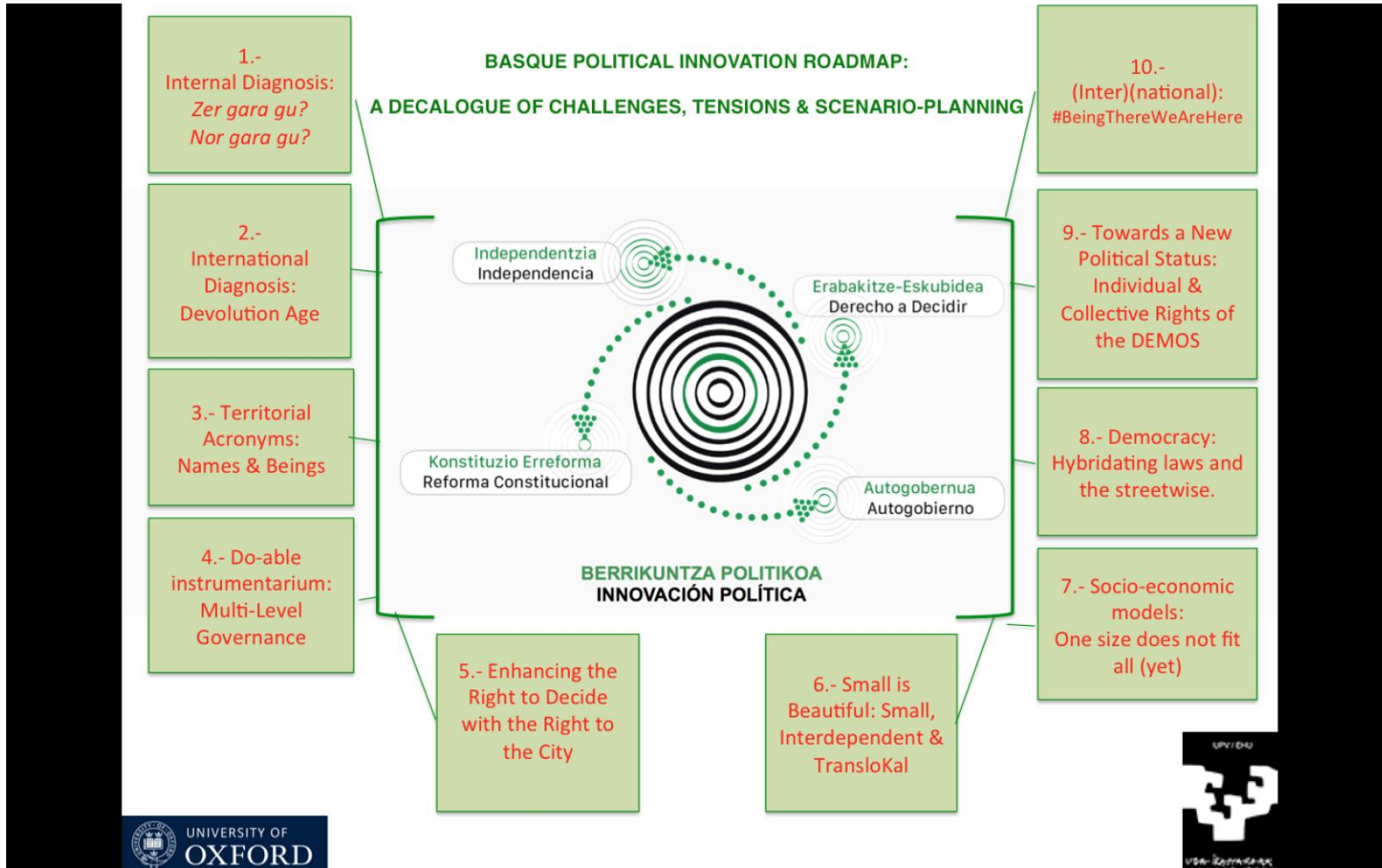


Figura 4 Roadmap: Terms Gathered along Four Axes. (Final)

1. Internal Diagnosis: *Zer Gara Gu? Nor Gara Gu?*

- There is little doubt that the present time marks a turning point. However, each political sensibility has short-term tactics that conflict with those of other sensibilities. As previously mentioned, there is a lack of common internal diagnoses when identifying and detecting internal institutional overlap and when exploring alternative governance models.
- The Economic Agreement (Concierto Económico and Convenio Económico) accounts for the fiscal devolution of the Basque Autonomy and the Statutory Autonomy of Navarra. Indeed, the fixed relationship based on these legal agreements present a starting point for developing the Basque Country with reference to the Spanish State. What is less clear at the policy level is which alternatives can actually change the *status quo*, bearing in mind the persistent defaults and shortcomings that the Spanish Central Government tends to incur.
- In this respect, even the left independentism has admitted in its strategy that the Basque territory shows an asymmetric territorialisation process due to the uneven regional development in the Basque Autonomy, the Statutory Autonomy of Navarra and the French Pays Basque.
- There is a gap between the political demands of nationalism and real daily lives of the socio-economic actors. A permanent tension exists in the defense of the institution that each party controls, but there is clearly a lack of long-term interinstitutional strategies. These institutional policies have not necessarily resulted in an increased perception of the distance between citizens and institutions; thus, there is little understanding about how macro-politics can affect micro-politics, and vice-versa. Intensive efforts should be made to reduce this gap.
- To sum up, a new political status would require a bottom-up decision-making process in each autonomy, province and local authority to practically define our political and institutional settings. A shared diagnosis between institutions will

thus clarify the understanding of each socio-economic actor and the opportunities that could help strategically develop the Basque ‘polis’ by linking its fragmented geographies.

- [A Basque song asks, ‘*What are we? Who are we?*’^{†††} This question should be answered by considering each location’s particularities from a general perspective.]

2. International Diagnosis: The Devolution Age^{†††}.

- Changing the *status quo* is not an easy task when the nation-state system prevails with its usual inertia. Nevertheless, as Biela et al. (2014), Bollens (2008), Calzada (2015), Guibernau (2013), and Keating (1996 & 1999), among others, have underlined, devolution, globalisation and European integration, have encouraged the re-emergence of nationalism within established states.
- In addition, perhaps the most important fact concerning this trend is that, in fact, devolution occurs as an urban-driven phenomenon (Calzada, 2015). Far from criticising state-nationalisms, they have been arguing for the extraordinary nature of the secessionist nationalisms. Devolution has become necessary in many regional hubs that want to deploy particularised policy and strategies.
- In the case of Scotland, where Glasgow and Edinburgh are leading a network of cities,^{§§§} new policy in the field of renewal energy, immigration, big data, transport and mobility and the oil industry has been promoted.
- As the former Prime Minister, Mr Alex Salmond, declared^{****} recently, there are many reasons to believe that the independentist tension will remain: the fake commitment after Cameron’s promise (vow/agreement), the unpopular austerity policy in Scotland, the lack of support for the nuclear weapon operation in

^{†††} ‘*Zer Gara Gu, Nor Gara Gu? Euskotarrak Gara Gu.*’ Egin Kontu by Ruper Ordorika.

^{†††} This is an editorial digital project entitled ‘Politics in Spires’, which is coordinated by the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge, Politics and International Relation. I curated this project, aiming to disseminate different articles in the field of devolution in Europe.

<http://www.igorcalzada.com/2015/01/curator-of-the-politics-in-spires-special-series-between-independence-re-centralisation-political-innovation-in-an-age-of-devolution/> and

<http://www.politicsinspires.org>

^{§§§} <http://www.scottishcities.org>

^{****} http://www.naiz.eus/eu/hemeroteca/gara/editions/2015-10-04/hemeroteca_articles/perseguirlo-esperar-tu-momento-y-aprovecharlo-no-hay-otro-camino

Scotland, the ‘Euro Brit’ Scottish future paradox in the United Kingdom, and the unlikely change portrayed by Mr Corbyn in the Westminster Government.

- In Catalonia, the gap between its enormous export rate and its public debt to the Spanish State presents an unavoidable permanent shortcoming in the quest for devolving powers to gain self-government capabilities. After the 27 September regional elections in Catalonia and given the general elections on 20 December in Spain, the political innovation strategies account even more for further uncertain^{††††} scenarios in the future. The quest for independence^{‡‡‡‡}, therefore, is already presenting itself as a complex combination of pervasive strategic actions of patience, perseverance and the ability to be in the right place at the right time.
- The strategic conclusion is that there is likely to be an increasing trend towards comparing international case-studies with regard to devolution^{§§§§} (Calzada, 2015). This current devolution age is not *just* about *nationalistic matters* (as many obstinately stress); it goes beyond national borders. For instance, Oresund, Iceland, Dublin, Portland and Liverpool/Manchester, among many others, reveal core interests in both city-regions, either following or not following nationalistic strategies, and nation-states that aim to permanently update the support for their constituents’ geographic will.
- As shown in the following figure (Hennig & Calzada, 2015)^{*****}, the tension between city-regions and their respective nations-states could be explained by the GDP contributions that should provide a balanced relationships between the two. However, for the nationalistic cases such as the Basque Country, Catalonia and Scotland, material/economic ‘opportunism’ is not the only important factor in the quest for the ‘right to decide’. In the case of the Basque Country, due to its positive socio-economic evolution as one of the wealthiest and most equalitarian societies, the issue is how to internally articulate a democratic ‘right to decide’ more than claiming for any kind of economic rearrangement, simply because that was the case years ago as a source of the self-government.

†††† <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/euoppblog/2015/10/02/rethinking-secession-why-spain-and-catalonia-should-not-take-stability-for-granted/>

‡‡‡‡ <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/euoppblog/independence-movements/>

§§§§ Calzada, I. (2015), *Benchmarking Future City-Regions beyond Nation-States*, *RSRS Regional Studies Regional Science*, 2:1, 350-361, DOI: 10.1080/21681376.2015.1046908.

***** Hennig, B. D. & Calzada, I. (2015), *In Focus: Regions between Recentralisation and Independence*. *Political Insight*. Volume 6, Issue 1, pages 20-21. April 2015. DOI: 10.1111/2041-9066.12083.

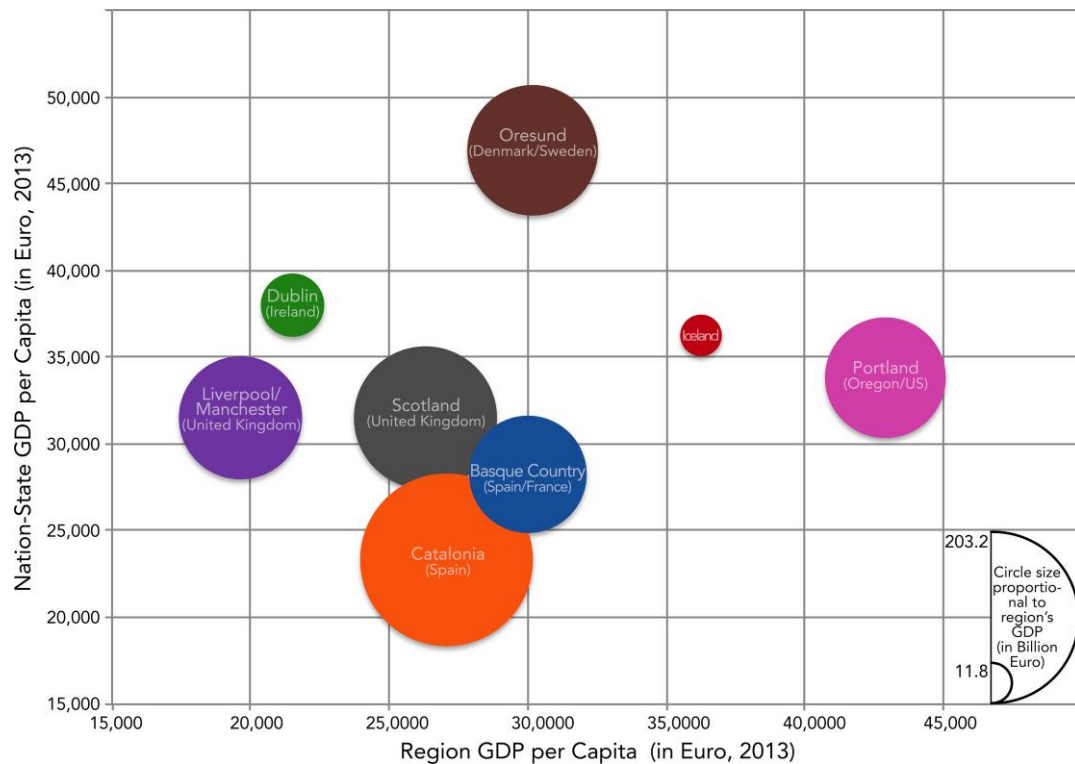


Figure 5: Nation-state and city-region GDP per Capita (Euro, 2013) (Hennig & Calzada 2015).

- In the argumentation of this strategic roadmap, we can come to the following conclusion by investigating the GDP and population contributions of the city-region cases in relation to their nation-states: the ‘regional political tensions’ can be explained when city-regional entities critically stand out because some ‘alternative’ dynamics (economic, political and cultural) differ significantly from their nation-states. These ‘regional political tensions’ should be understood as a consequence of natural re-scaling processes within nation-states (Brenner, 2009) insofar as they are merely an outcome of a wide and diverse range of political and economic factors that lead city-regions towards a new regional equilibrium and order. An increase in the GDP and population contributions of a city-region to its nation-state shows an obvious way of approaching this issue. Additionally, it sparks a flurry of consequences involving tensions around political and economic sovereignty, whether in favour of or in opposition to recentralisation or devolution/independence.
- If we focus our attention on the three city-regional small nations that constitute the most recent political innovation devolution cases, the following correlation is notable between the percentage in which the population and the GDP contribution in the respective GDP occurs. Scotland contributes 8% and 9% of

its GDP to the UK population. In Catalonia, one of the primary arguments is the large contributions that the regions makes to Spain, in terms of population but mainly in terms of GDP: 16% and 19%, respectively. Finally, the Basque Country, being benefiting from a self-government tax agreement (Concierto Económico) with the Spanish Central Government, contributes 6% to Spain's GDP and 5.5% to its population (See Figure 6).

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[i]	2.2 (5.5)	6

[i] Data relate to the Basque Country side in Spain. The French side is not represented in these figures.

Figure 6: City-Regional Small Nations' Population and GDP Contributions to Their Respective Nation-States (Calzada 2014⁺⁺⁺⁺).

- Notwithstanding the economic and demographic evidence-based fundamental analysis, we can argue that, in the scope of the European context, these complex dynamics occur through political innovation processes and require further pervasive and qualitative analyses to explain the sources and the potential scenarios of this new city-regional order.
- Devolution is at the core of supranational entities, such as the OECD, the World Bank and UN, among others. However, the lack of implications shown by the 'neutral' position of the European Commission will not last forever, insofar as the European configuration will be embodied by city-regional entities that deserve to have their voices in the upcoming European federal system.
- Nevertheless, although Scotland and Catalonia have been investing time and resources in paradiplomatic activities, the Basque Country remains inactive in this endeavour.

⁺⁺⁺⁺ Calzada, I. (2014), *The Right to Decide in Democracy between Recentralisation and Independence: Scotland, Catalonia and the Basque Country*. Regions, no 296, 2014 Issue 4, pp. 7-8. DOI: 10.1080/13673882.2014.11431613

- A comparative and permanent international diagnosis will assist the Basque Country, considering its current starting point, in locating itself in the European (and worldwide) debate concerning devolution. Due to its fiscal devolution, the Basque Country occupies as ‘stateless state’ position compared with Scotland and Catalonia.

3. Territorial Acronyms: Names and Beings.

- In this strategic roadmap, a trend that should be considered is the asymmetric reality of the Basque geographies. If a new political scenario should be foreseen, the territorial names and beings should be clarified. As we all know, depending on who is speaking, the Basque context is very diverse. Those referring to the ‘official’ Basque context will just mention the ‘Basque Autonomy’, whereas some others will include the ‘Navarra Statutory Autonomy’ and the ‘French Pays Basque’. Regardless of our political position, I argue that names should assist in actions and operational activities.
- Considering the Basque territory a city-regional configuration with hubs and peripheries is unavoidable (Calzada, 2011b). Thus, even further than defending names and identities, the strategic actions in all Basque geographies will require a focus on networks produced by these collaborating territories.
- Actually, beyond a static understanding and definition of city-regional small nations such as the Basque Country, this territory should be considered a region comprised of cities (Calzada, 2015 & Herrschel, 2015). The question here might concern to what extent the Basque Country is functioning as a city-region. In addition, if the functional city-regional configuration does not have shared infrastructure, mobility, transport, and economic policies, being called the ‘Basque Country’ merely serves as a euphemism or proclamation rather than being a fact.
- Political innovation is required because nationhood, as a pure concept, should stem from daily and operational city-regional policy and strategies in the hands of socio-economic actors. Basque history is taught in schools, but the future will be determined by how efficient or passive we are in developing territorial strategies by considering the asymmetric realities of Basque geographies. Rather

than naming a territory, we should focus on providing a diverse but coordinated approach to all complex parts of ‘being Basque’.

4. A Doable Instrumentarium^{**}: Multi-level Governance.**

- The European Union thus far functions as an amalgamation of nation-states. Nevertheless, the institutional instrumentarium (or apparatus) will eventually have to face and tackle devolutionist issues between some nation-states and their constitutive city-regions, which could apply in cases such as the UK, Spain, Belgium and perhaps even Italy.
- The cases of the *Länder* in Germany and the autonomies in Spain differ in their conceptualisation of federalism. Sometimes a misunderstanding arises from the false assumption that the source of sovereignty by the nation-states’ central governments is meant to be provided by ‘giving some privileges’ instead of by creating a respectful and equal relationship between them.
- Going forward, the Basque Country should use the entire institutional instrumentarium provided by the European Union to proactively collaborate with active regions/nations.
- There are projects, such as Eurocity and Euroregion, that have yet to receive much support. Therefore, the Basque Country must develop an intensive multilevel governance strategy by coordinating projects derived from the Committee of Regions, H2020, Interreg, Urbact, among many others.
- Sometimes it seems that the doable apparatus provided by the European Union is not even used. There is a lack of positioning in these European Union institutional networks, requires much more intensive and proactive roles from the representatives.

**** = Apparatus.

5. Enhancing the ‘Right to Decide’ with the Right to the City:

- There are many different avenues to pursue in preparing for the future. Seemingly, the ‘right to decide’ is merely considered a nationalistic claim. The 1st Additional Disposition and the 4th Transitory Disposition are the only two available legal mechanisms to proceed with any alteration to the Spanish Constitution of 1978.
- However, as we have observed, democratically requested and peacefully articulated rights have gained traction in Scotland and Catalonia. Finding a time for the ‘right to decide’ (as a work-in-progress right) to come together with the conquered (and almost achieved) ‘right to the city’ term (Lefebvre and Harvey, 2008) is a challenging task.
- In this regard, in the Basque Country, the Gure Esku Dago (‘In Our Hands’, in Basque) social movement has been popularised via outdoor outreach activities, and its primary motto is: ‘In Our Hands’. In the early stages, its aim is to arrange a consultation or a referendum to decide the political future of the Basque Country.
- The ‘right to decide’ is being accepted in the Anglo-Saxon liberal democracies more than in centralistic continental liberal democracies. Therefore, instead of just proclaiming the right, methodologically speaking, there is an urgent need for politically innovative techniques to reach and unite very diverse targeted groups in society.
- Gure Esku Dago has been assumed to be ‘purely nationalistic’ by non-nationalistic parties. In this context, to gain credibility and to offer an opportunity to understand why the ‘right to decide’ is a democratic principle rather than a particular political strategy, I encourage Gure Esku Dago to enhance the scope of action and the symbology (marketing) used thus far.
- The ‘right to decide’, rather than being a milestone or an event, is a process. It should not be driven by those interested in a ‘Yes’ vote. Hence, the primary focus is on the ‘content’ to be critically discussed. The ‘right to decide’ functions as a ‘container’^{§§§§§}. Finally, it stems from a dynamic definition of democracy rather than from a static one (Guibernau, 2015).

§§§§§ <http://www.euskonews.com/0688zkb/gaia68803es.html>

- In the Basque Parliament's self-government review initiative^{*****}, some key authors have contributed to the attempt to provide some initial insights. However, a broader methodology should be sought through the participation of a more diverse group of contributors.

6. Small is Beautiful:

- As Keating et al. (2014) have argued, a recent shift has introduced powerful and flexible strategies regarding nations, formerly imagined as states of a significant size, on a small scale.
- Coming from the social innovation field (by NESTA^{†††††} and TEDxMontevideo^{†††††}), there is an increasing assumption that the European Union and some other supranational bodies will evolve and embrace the light, flexible and dynamic economies that can function better than large countries. Thus, in a global world, the strategic trend has shifted towards how the Basque Country will become a small translocal player.
- However, the challenge involves how to maintain this small size, which is economically dynamic but also part a bunch of selected global networks that act in the interest of the nation. Furthermore, despite remaining 'isolated' as an independent nation, how can these entities evolve to accommodate an interdependent worldwide strategy? Is it possible?
- Finally, when we refer to translocal strategy, what do we really mean in real? Translocality would enable us to coordinate paradiplomatic strategic networks in different sectors that are relevant to the nation: trade, industry, business, diplomacy, culture, science and technology, academia, and sport,...
- 'Small is beautiful' will stem from a coordinated strategy that seeks to achieve a small, interdependent and translocal nation.

***** http://www.parlamento.euskadi.net/c_ponencia_autogobierno.html

††††† <http://www.nesta.org.uk/publications/when-small-beautiful-lessons-highly-innovative-smaller-countries>

††††† <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z2a6Dmt2MYs>

7. Socio-economic models: One size does not fit all (yet).

- Devolution and the ‘right to decide’ reflect the political and institutional crisis of nation-states as entities. In addition to these crises, after the 2008 recession, the nation-state has been hit equally hard by the economic and financial crisis (Calzada et al. 2015), which involved serious downsizing due to the accumulative logic of the neoclassical economic orthodoxy.
- Thus, the devolution age responds to two main crises (among others): political and economic crises.
- Missing from the debate is that the Basque socio-economic model, even if it presents some extremist (neoliberals and Marxist-Leninists) interpretations and positions, it is grounded in the socially egalitarian historical model.
- In contrast to some class division conflicts, the Basque political scenario could achieve (if it is researched in depth) a quite unique and valuable socio-economic model based on the past decades’ policy designs and new approaches that will include an update of networked-based entrepreneurial co-operatives (Calzada, 2013).
- To sum up, the political status of the Basque Country has unconsciously advanced a socio-economic model that is paradigmatic in linking social cohesion and economic development. A deeper extrapolation of this paradigm should be beneficial for the entire political system.

8. Democracy: Hybrid laws and streetwise politics.

- Conquering the streetwise level is very significant in Basque society. Furthermore, Basque politics cannot be understood without the role played by demonstrations and relevant events in its history.
- Nevertheless, the political crisis should provoke a reflection regarding how to link institutional and grassroots-level political action. Indeed, little by little, leftist and rightist parties have equally considered the power of streetwise politics.
- Thus, I recommend that political action should innovate by hybridising the formal and informal, the online and offline and the legal and social playgrounds.

We can only set up a renaissance of Basque politics in strategic terms in this way. Implicitly, I am conscious of the different political cultures, and they should learn from one another. Some parties excel in one area but lack expertise in another area. There is very fertile ground for implementing civilian pedagogy with hybrid political action.

9. Towards a new political status: Individual and Collective Rights of the Demos.

- The new political status will be an outcome derived from both individual and collective rights.
- Unlike the decision made in 1978-1979, the new political status should now seek to unite all political Basque parties.
- By learning from the Ibarretxe Plan procedure, this new political status will be a process that should be carried out via institutional action and direct democracy. One without the other would spell failure in this process.
- Therefore, based on the historical rights of the Basque geographies with their particularities, the new political status should guarantee the individual and the collective rights of the Basque ‘demos’.
- Given the timeliness of the topic, I present an analytical table (see Figure 7) entitled ‘Devolution Dimensions/Strategies and Political Innovation Processes’. In this table, I compare the devolution dimensions and strategies as well as the political innovation processes that are occurring:

City-Region	Basque	Scotland	Catalonia
Nation-States	SP & FR	UK	SP
Network of cities and their hinterland	Bilbao San Sebastian Vitoria Pamplona Bayonne	Glasgow Edinburgh Inverness Aberdeen Dundee	Barcelona Tarragona Girona Lleida
Driver	Nation-state devolution processes		
Taxonomy	Small nations		
Devolution dimensions	Fiscal, Policy and Political Devolution	Policy and Political Devolution	Political Devolution
Devolution strategies	Fixed by institutions	Fuelled by the government	Driven by the civil society
Political innovation processes	Post-political violence	Rationalised Dialectic	Antagonistic Dialectic
Strategies	Politically driven, nationalistic		

Figure 7: Devolution Dimensions/Strategies and Political Innovation Processes (Calzada 2015).

- Additionally, in the following analytical table (see Figure 8), here I present the ‘Benchmarking of the Political Innovation Processes’ at the time of publication.
- To sum up, the complex strategic project of defining the new political status requires ample comparative studies to analyse how and realities are changing.
- Regardless of the proposal(s) for a new political status, analysis, methodology and deliberation are required in this endeavour.
- The reality is changeable, especially, the political reality.
- If we do not prepare through collaborative efforts, the future is not going to be created by us; others will do so on our behalf.

Benchmarking Political Innovation Strategies	Basque Country	Scotland	Catalonia
Q1: To what extent is the starting point of the devolution for each city-regional small nation similar according to its governance, history, and policies?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 1979: Gernika Statute of Autonomy with fiscal, political, and policy devolution. · 2015: A new political status update requires the articulation of the ‘right to decide’ beyond law instrumentarium/apparatus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 2014: Independence referendum held on 18 September has provoked a turning point in the fiscal devolution with the UK. · European Union and Second Independence Referenda will be either crucial or uncertain. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 2010: the Spanish Constitutional Court invalidated the 2006 democratically achieved Statute of Autonomy. · 9 November 2014: A non-bidding self-determination referendum was organised. · 27 September 2015: The regional election was won by the ‘Yes’ vote obtaining most of the seats in the Parliament. Now, the configuration of the Parliament and a commitment to continue the secession are in place.
Q2: What are the potential political scenarios for each city-regional small nation because of the de/recentralisation attitude of its respective nation-states?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · General elections will determine the PNV and EHBildu strategies to suggest whether a content application of the ‘right to decide’ should be linked to the constitutional change. · Regional elections in May 2016 will be ‘bulletproof’. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 56 MPs in Westminster could renegotiate further devolution beyond Smith powers. · The second independence referendum could be determined by the European Union membership of the UK (as the opportunity to legitimate a secession from the side of the SNP). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 27 September 2015: The ‘Yes’ vote has an international focus. · What next? What will be the reply and the procedure of the European Union?
Q3: What are the most relevant strategic political innovation processes occurring in each case?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Without a doubt, the leading socially innovative process has been achieving peace. Regardless of the cause, the pluralistic approach to Basque society should be required to articulate a bottom-up and top-down ‘right to decide’ consultation with a wide range of content: Which of the pending powers will be included? How can a consultation be organised at the highest democratic level that guarantees the coexistence of the entire range of political projects? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · It is noteworthy that even after the independence referendum, a large majority of the public opinion expressed that the referendum implies a new turning point in Scottish politics. The positive influence of the debate among the citizens has increased the trust in politics and the importance of the devolution in the daily lives of citizens. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The most striking point in the Catalonian devolution dynamic is certainly in the way in which the ‘Yes’ campaigners have dealt with their differences. A wide range of remarkable stakeholders, such as politicians, activists, academics, businesspeople, entrepreneurs, public managers, and public characters, is portraying itself as a collective plural leadership. · However, the economic model has not been discussed publicly.

Figure 8: Benchmarking Political Innovation Strategies in the Three City-Regional Small Nations: the Basque Country, Scotland and Catalonia (Calzada 2015).

10. (Inter)(national): #BeingThereWeAreHere

- Finally, the last trend means that the ‘continent’ of the ‘right to decide’ should be connected with international actions.
- Now, any political project that aims to create well-being, social cohesion and economic development based on local democracy needs to think on an international scale.
- Whether articulating a constitutional change, updating self-government, implementing the ‘right to decide’ (in either way) or proclaiming the independence, inter-dependency should be tackled in all of these efforts.
- At the end of the day, everything boils down to #BeingThereWeAreHere.

Roadmap: Four Challenges.

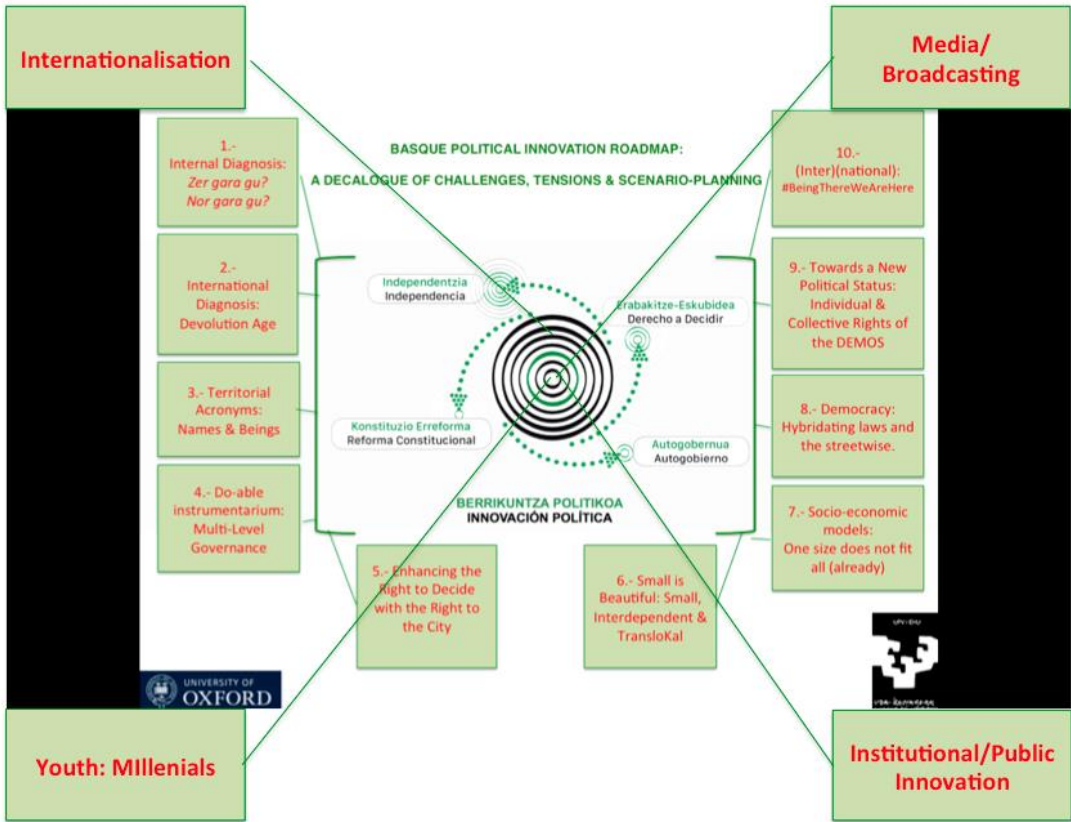


Figura 9 Roadmap: Four Challenges.

To leave some strategic transversal of short-term challenges ahead to develop Basque Political Innovation, we can identify four strategic challenges here:

1. **Paradiplomatic Networks: Internationalisation.**
 2. **Talented Translocal Networks: Youth and Millennials.**
 3. **Transmedia Citizen Networks: Media and Broadcasting.**
 4. **Institutional Networks: Institutional/Public Innovation.**
-

Keep the dream alive:

To live in peace, to develop a country/region/nation, to ensure social justice, to make our decisions freely, to maintain our well-being, to reinforce local democracy, to own our state,...

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