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## Benchmarking future city-regions beyond nation-states

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This paper argues that new city-regional configurations are emerging and establishing a regional order beyond nation-states, both as a consequence of certain nationalistic political devolution claims and due to the economic renewal and nation-state re-scaling trend advocated by the ‘new regionalism’. Based on the author’s findings, which elucidate the distinction between four nationalistic (Scotland, Catalonia, Basque Country and Iceland) and four non-nationalistic city-region cases (Oresund, Liverpool/Manchester, Dublin and Portland), this paper highlights that there is no single model for city-regions and emphasizes that this trend has become increasingly complex due to its wide range of causes: political devolution and nation-state rescaling processes (Scotland, Catalonia, Basque Country, Liverpool and Manchester), flow of commuters (Oresund), democratic regeneration (Iceland), and economic renewal (Dublin and Portland).

This paper benchmarks eight city-regions by systemically investigating their social innovation processes to understand better their dynamics beyond their respective nation-states.

**Keywords:** City-regions; nation-states; social innovation; devolution

### Introduction: the emergence of ‘city-regions’ beyond nation-states

At present, devolution is in the spotlight of the debate on the future of the UK and Scotland. The post-Independence Referendum momentum and, recently, the General Election 2015 are prompting new questions to be asked about independence and recentralization (Calzada, 2015) that reveal increasingly uncertain policy relations between city-regions and their nation-state counterparts, and supranational bodies such as the European Union. It is in this context that city-regions (Herschel, 2014) are emerging as significant political and economic constellations that have the potential in the UK to provoke constitutional change due to a new set of pressures and drivers of change in the territories that formed this union.

As city-regions extend into wider socio-territorial contexts, in Europe and the United States, European nation-states, in particular, are finding it difficult to manage their territories both politically and economically; hence, the notion of territory – in a new form understood as ‘city-region’ – has re-emerged as an important element of policy discussion. However, this new European regional order (Keating, 2009), characterized by the growing presence of ‘city-regions’ as key players beyond their referential nation-states, lacks clarity, pointing to a conceptual lacuna. This new order must, therefore, be taken seriously, with particularly close attention paid to its democratic dimension and to

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Figure 1. Benchmarking eight city-region case studies.<sup>1</sup>

the territorial and political consequences for the city-regions, their related nation-states and the European Union as a whole.

This paper aims to shed light on this conceptual lacuna by initiating a debate about its policy implications for both city-regions and nation-states by identifying the social innovation processes of eight cases (see Figure 1) in order to present a meaningful structured comparison of the key features exhibited in a range of prominent city-region profiles (Marvin, Harding, & Robson, 2006). To this end, it will apply the ‘5-System’ city-region analytical integrated framework designed by the author (Calzada, 2011a, 2013, 2015) in his PhD dissertation and recently updated to benchmark the eight cases. This taxonomy, presented in Table 1, will guide the paper methodologically and is limited to the previously researched cases categorized as either politically driven nationalistic or economically driven non-nationalistic.

The study’s methodological approach will be described briefly in terms of its 5-System integrated framework, as the tool used to identify social innovation processes in the eight cases. The key findings will then be presented with reference to the two alternative categories. Finally, conclusions will be drawn on the approach required to understand best the operative dynamics of nationalistic and non-nationalistic city-regions, respectively, beyond their nation-states.

### Literature review: towards a city-regional taxonomy

Within the broader global context, established nation-states face substantial changes (Ohmae, 1995) externally in terms of the global geostrategic game and internally in their relations with their constituent ‘city-regions’ (Harrison, 2012; Scott, Agnew, Soja, & Storper, 2001). In all cases (see the taxonomy in Table 1: Basque Country, Scotland and Catalonia as small nations, Iceland as a small state, Portland and Dublin as economic-political hubs, Oresund as a cross-border transnational region, and Liverpool/Manchester as separated city-regions), these ‘city-regions’ appear as networked territorial configurations embedded in their referential nation-states and driven by a wide range

Table 1. Selected eight city-region case studies.

City-Region	Basque	Portland	Dublin	Oresund	Iceland	Liverpool/ Manchester	Scotland	Catalonia
Nation-States	SP & FR (Europe)	OR & WA (USA)	IRE (Europe)	SE & DK (Europe)	IS (Europe)	UK (Europe)		SP (Europe)
Network of cities and their hinterland	Bilbao San Sebastian Vitoria Pamplona Bayonne	Portland Eugene Seattle	Dublin Dún Laoghaire Drogheda	Malmö Copenhagen Lund	Reykjavik Akureyri Kopavogur	Liverpool Manchester	Glasgow Edinburgh	Barcelona Tarragona Girona Lleida
Driver	Nation-state devolution processes	Socio-economic renewal		Global flows of migration and commuters	Internal democratic regeneration		Nation-state devolution processes	
Taxonomy	Small nation	Nation-state economic-political hub		Cross-border transnational region	Small state	Separated city- regions	Small nation	
Profile	Cross-border polycentrism	Sustainable monocentrism	Connected monocentrism	Cross-border regional hub	Smallness <i>global</i> resilience	Rivalry gateway	Rationalised Dialectic	Antagonistic Dialectic
Strategies	Politically driven nationalistic	Economically driven non-nationalistic			Politically driven nationalistic	Economically driven non- nationalistic	Politically driven nationalistic	
Research		Doctoral				Postdoctoral		
Fieldwork	2007<	2008	2009	2012	2013	2014		

of transformative promotional policies that result in very uncertain consequences for both the ‘city-regions’ and their nation-states.

Furthermore, Keating (2009) has argued that globalization and European integration have prompted a growth in post-nationalism, which also looks beyond nation-states. It is specifically in this context that ‘city-regions’ are making advances and, as noted by Morgan (2013), each does so in its own particular way. To put it simply, some ‘city-regions’ are promoted by economic renewal policies, while others, being determined mainly by their political histories, are driven by national identity demands.

Consequently, milestone transitions are now occurring in which city-regional promotions are becoming key issues for the implementation of regional policy-making beyond the natures of their nation-states. These city-regional promotions can be fuelled by a wide range of territorial strategies, such as devolution processes and independence referenda, cross-border cooperation, economic renewal, or simply democratic regeneration. As a result, clarification of these developments through suggested taxonomies and case studies is required, particularly since, as Scott et al. (2001) have noted, ‘city-region’ is a term that creates confusion.

Despite ambiguity around the term, city-regional processes, occurring in different European and global territorial locations (Herrschel, 2002, 2014), have become a hotly debated topic in urban and regional studies (Gonzalez, Tomaney, & Ward, 2006; Rodríguez-Pose, 2008; Tewdwr-Jones & McNeill, 2000). But there has been little comparison of diverse ‘city-region’ cases that transgress their nation-state boundaries, which has clear consequences for the reshaping of political and economic policies and spatial configurations of the nation-states themselves. Notwithstanding the centrality of ‘city-regions’ to modern day accounts of economic success (Scott et al., 2001, p. 289), the author argues that advocates of a new city-regionalism overlook how city-regions are constructed politically beyond nation-state borders (Keating & Harvey, 2014). Thus, the objective of this paper is to increase the understanding of four nationalistic and four non-nationalistic city-regionalism cases comparatively while avoiding the ecological fallacy that supposes that what is true for some ‘city-regions’ is true for all ‘city-regions’ (Morgan, 2013).

The eight cases produce a taxonomy of diverse profiles. The methodological approach adopted describes how each functions and, through qualitative action research, benchmarks them systemically according to how their social innovation (Moulaert, MacCallum, Mehmood, & Hamdouch, 2013) processes differ:

- The profiles in the two groups are categorized within the author’s research criteria as follows. The four nationalistic city-regions are: cross-border polycentrism (Basque Country), rationalized dialectic (Scotland), antagonistic dialectic (Catalonia) and smallness glocal resilience (Iceland). The four non-nationalistic city-regions are: sustainable monocentrism (Portland), connected monocentrism (Dublin), cross-border regional hub (Oresund) and rival gateway (Liverpool and Manchester).
- Four drivers are identified in the eight cases. The ‘nation-state devolution processes’ driver functions similarly for three nationalistic cases (Basque Country, Scotland and Catalonia) and one non-nationalistic case (Liverpool and Manchester). However, the driver, ‘socio-economic renewal’, applies mainly to two non-nationalistic cases (Portland and Dublin). The remaining cases of Oresund and Iceland are respectively explained as ‘global flows of migration and commuters’ and ‘internal democratic regeneration’.

### Methodology: systemic analysis of each city-region using the integrated ‘5-System’ Framework

The eight cases were self-selected while carrying out fieldwork qualitative action research in each location during the author’s doctoral (2007–2009) and postdoctoral (2012–2014) investigations. The main research focus was selecting cases where city-regional policies were causes or consequences of relevant social innovation processes. For each case, the city-regional strategy was distinguished as either politically driven nationalistic or economically driven non-nationalistic after analysing data. The division of the eight cases into these two groups served to open up a timely debate about nationalistic and non-nationalistic city-regional devolution policies. Based on the city-region definition, as beyond the nation-state and consisting of regional networks of cities and their hinterlands (Table 1), the research aimed to identify drivers, taxonomies, profiles and strategies in eight cases to benchmark their inner devolution dynamics. To do this, it tracked the city-regional strategies of the four city-regions implementing politically driven nationalistic strategies and the four city-regions implementing economically driven non-nationalistic strategies.

A suggested working definition of social innovation processes is processes ‘which allow going beyond a containerized view of territory, by starting from the social dimension of territories, and by placing and considering innovation and networks in their spatial and historical context without losing sight of the material territoriality’ (Moulaert et al., 2013, p. 139). In this context, this paper will describe each case systemically and thus suggest a comparative basis between them. To achieve this, social innovation processes will be identified using the integrated 5-System Framework, which facilitates the diagnosis of each territory within five interrelated systems, as illustrated in Figure 2.

The 5-System Framework is an analytical mixed-method tool developed by the author initially by reviewing and merging relevant literature drawn primarily from the field of social innovation (Morgan, 2013; Moulaert et al., 2013) and city-regions (Gonzalez et al., 2006; Harding, 2007; Harrison, 2012; Herrschel, 2002; Scott et al., 2001). It was then applied via a qualitative triangulation action research methodology to identify social innovation processes in each city-region studied in the author’s project.

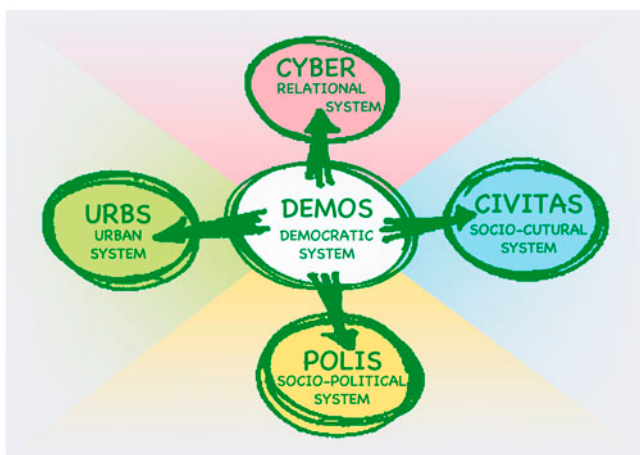


Figure 2. ‘5-System’ analytical integrated framework for city-regions.

The triangulation action research method was implemented through fieldwork interviews (ethnography), state-of-the-art analysis (policy papers) and direct participation (workshops).

This integrated framework functions as a social innovation process identifier. In keeping with Moulaert's (2013) suggestion of considering the broader social dimension of territories, the 5-System Framework aims to identify social innovation processes that occur uniquely in the studied city-region. Based on an analysis of the policy and academic literature on city-regions (Calzada, 2013), the author developed the systemic inventory framework to comprise five systems and 12 factors. Below is the summary of the framework.

City-regions may or may not apply diverse policies that enable or inhibit social innovation processes. The framework considers those social innovation processes that have direct effects on:

- The physical infrastructures established and the resilient distribution of scarce material resources among citizens: the Urban System (URBS). This system is always the focus of city-region analysis and is both technical and geophysical. It contains three factors: human geography (socio-demographic factors); climate change, energy, sustainability and resilience (technical factors); and urban/rural or hub/spoke linkages (morphological and mobility factors).
- The level usage of these resources to satisfy the physical, digital and social connectivity demands of the citizens: the Relational System (CYBER). This system focuses on spaces and the flows between them. It contains three factors: physical connectivity (usage of the land/land–user relationship factors); digital connectivity (interaction enabling factors); and social connectivity (social capital factors).
- The active consideration of the diverse and complex civilian fabric and the mechanisms within it to regenerate a transition-based regional political economy: the Socio-Cultural System (CIVITAS). This system considers the citizenship configuration of the city-region. It contains three factors: in-migration (ethnic diversity and integration factors), entrepreneurship (socio-economic challenge factors); and local communitarian development (local grassroots factors).
- The role of politics, on global and local scales, in terms of stakeholders' complex participative interaction to reframe the governance model: the Socio-Political System (POLIS). This system analyses power relations and dynamics. It contains three factors: globalization (threat and opportunity factors), governance (factors enabling dialogue between stakeholders); and participation (precondition, mobilization and participation process factors).
- Incorporating the four systems above, the systemic sum as an intra-dependent and perpetual balance of the city-region as a whole: the Democratic System (DEMOS). Each case is summarized as a specific city-region profile (Table 1) and given a DEMOS label encapsulating its previous four systems (Tables 2 and 3). The DEMOS label is the outcome of applying the triangulation method through the 5-System Framework and provides a synthetic qualitative result for the whole investigation:

In terms of DEMOS, the Basque case is labelled 'complex diversity' insofar as the city-region has been affected by multiple territorial preconditions. Iceland is an 'ongoing re-examination' due to its continual democratic regeneration process that commenced after the 2008 crisis. Scotland is a 'eurobrit challenge', an issue extensively discussed in



Table 2. Social innovation processes of four nationalistic city-regions organized according to the '5-System' Framework.

CITY- REGIONS	Social innovation processes in nationalistic city-region cases benchmarked by the '5-System' Framework					DEMOS
	URBS	CYBER	CIVITAS	POLIS		
Basque (Spain & France) (Europe)	<p>Polinuclear system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Shows fragmentation yet a highly dynamic type of agglomeration.</li><li>Created a very stable URBS by applying regional policentrism.</li><li>Achieved appropriate cluster policies due to a revival of business and the economy in the 1990s.</li></ul>	<p>Social disconnectivity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Once a laggard system</li><li>Now requires continual transversal bridge-building processes.</li><li>But peace is on its way to reinforce social capital and fix the moral fabric of this post-violence society.</li></ul> <p>&gt;LAGGARD&lt;</p>	<p>Dispersed strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Unfortunately, the city-region has failed to share its strategy adequately with the relevant stakeholders.</li><li>Diverse CIVITAS management remains lacking.</li></ul>	<p>Peace but three separated administrative entities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>ETA's permanent ceasefire of 2011 has had a considerable influence on the normalising of the Basque case.</li><li>But few attempts to coordinate the governance model between its three separate administrative entities.</li></ul> <p>&lt;DRIVER&gt;</p>	COMPLEX DIVERSITY	
Iceland (Europe)	<p>Natural resources microeconomies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Natural legislation:</li><li>A laggard system since the 2008 crisis.</li><li>With the constitution almost rewritten, guided by a highly innovative, effective, participatory process, the democratic rehabilitation exercise was left unfinished.</li><li>Founded on a fishing-based and energy self-sufficient economy due to the territory's stable system.</li></ul> <p>&gt;LAGGARD&lt;</p>	<p>Liquid mythopoetic artifacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The CYBER was put at the service of the CIVITAS.</li><li>The city-region was thus capable of building a citizens' revolution based on liquid technological artefacts.</li></ul>	<p>Emotionally channelled activism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>So-called <i>Kitchenware Revolution</i>.</li><li>An unprecedented and highly avant-garde CIVITAS process from the social innovation perspective.</li></ul> <p>&lt;DRIVER&gt;</p>	<p>Dilemmas in transition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A clear transition is taking place.</li><li>But Iceland still finds itself in a state of continuous re-examination regarding the POLIS.</li></ul>	ONGOING REEXAMINATION	
Scotland (UK) (Europe)	<p>North Sea oil as the main natural resource:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>URBS based on the North Sea Oil.</li><li>The pro-European socio-economic welfare model has played a key role in the ongoing devolution and independence debate.</li></ul>	<p>6 hubs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Spatial planning/internal territorial connected dynamics were of central concern in the policies considered during the recent independence referendum.</li></ul>	<p>No clear decision yet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The independence campaign has shaken and regenerated the behaviour of the citizenship with regard to politics as a whole.</li><li>The ultimate outcome of the referendum remained unclear until the very end of the voting process.</li><li>A narrow majority of the Scottish people decided not to separate from the UK.</li><li>Devolution is the decision of Scotland in the immediate term, albeit in an uncertain form (whether federalism or independence).</li></ul> <p>&gt;LAGGARD&lt;</p>	<p>Good governance public perception:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The referendum has put the focus on the devolution debate, not only for Scotland but also for the rest of the UK.</li><li>City-region cannot be understood without consideration of the recent significant changes in the POLIS.</li><li>One main transition has been the highly positive rating that the YES campaign garnered from public opinion, though ultimately defeated with the support of 45% of the electorate.</li></ul> <p>&lt;DRIVER&gt;</p>	EUROBRIT CHALLENGE	
Catalonia (Spain) (Europe)	<p>Not a postcrisis political economic alternative yet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>No clear socio-economic proposal for those that claim independence.</li><li>Nor has a clear post-crisis alternative yet been suggested.</li></ul> <p>&gt;LAGGARD&lt;</p>	<p>Lack of bridging between Catalonia and Spain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>No bridge-building or establishment of social capital whatsoever between the Catalonia and Spain.</li></ul>	<p>Collective intelligence seeking regional real alternatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A case that should be understood in the context of the significant level of social support (70%) that has been gained for independence.</li><li>A collective intelligence is seeking a real regional alternative within its nation-state of Spain.</li></ul> <p>&lt;DRIVER&gt;</p>	<p>Failure of the Spanish federal political hypothesis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Spain and UK, different and distinctive dialectics with their city-regions.</li><li>While Scotland and the UK demonstrate a perfect exercise of a rational dialectic.</li><li>Catalonia and Spain display a dialectic of perpetual confrontation. It is arguable that, so far, the Spanish federal political hypothesis has failed.</li></ul>	UNCERTAIN PATH	



Table 3. Social innovation processes of the four non-nationalistic city-regions organized according to the ‘5-System’ Framework.

CITY- REGIONS	Social innovation processes in non-nationalistic city-region cases benchmarked by the ‘5-System’ Framework				
	URBS	CYBER	CIVITAS	POLIS	DEMOS
<b>Portland</b> (Oregon & Washington) (USA)	<p>Exemplary Urban Boundary Model (UGBM):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· <i>Urban Growth Boundary</i> (UGB) in 1973: Oregon experienced an ecological-economic URBS transition.</li><li>· Has become a sustainable paradigm in which climate and energy forecasts are aligned with human needs. &lt;DRIVER&gt;</li></ul>	<p>Monocentric commuting network:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· Portland has been in a position to build an effective CYBER.</li><li>· TriMet: intermodal network which, along with its transport platform logistics policies, is both appropriate to the region and very well constructed.</li></ul>	<p>Lack of business and ethnic inclusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· Portland-Oregon case is well-known for the implementation of its participatory citizen processes.</li><li>· Yet we can detect a dysfunction underlying this citizenship.</li><li>· The urban group, which appears so ideal, has ethnic sub-groups that seem not to have been properly integrated.</li><li>· While the population is predominantly white, there is still room for improvement in multicultural integration and in business entrepreneurship for urban planning. &gt;LAGGARD&lt;</li></ul>	<p>Multi-layered institutional coordination:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· The POLIS skeleton functions as a monocentric network.</li><li>· Provides highly efficient multi-layered institutional coordination.</li></ul>	<p>WEIRD ECOCITIZENSHIP</p>
<b>Dublin</b> (Ireland) (Europe)	<p>North-South corridor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· During the ‘Celtic Tiger’ era, jobs were created, quality of life appeared to improve and a number of different micro-urban developments emerged (Temple Bar, Ballymun, Smithfield, Docklands and Digital Hub).</li><li>· In addition, the Good Friday Agreement was negotiated.</li><li>· Belfast and Dublin had always been distant entities but, gradually, contact between them increased to achieve coordination of several common policies, creating the North-South corridor.</li></ul>	<p>Digital entrepreneurial city:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· In certain deprived urban areas, entrepreneurial and digital city initiatives were instigated. &lt;DRIVER&gt;</li></ul>	<p>Poverty-driven urban regeneration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· Underwent a positive transformation around construction and other services.</li><li>· Despite issues of uncontrolled growth, some good micro-urbanism cases emerged related to transnational entrepreneurship.</li></ul>	<p>Uncontrolled growth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· The ‘Celtic Tiger’ made a previously impoverished population wealthy.</li><li>· As the unemployment rate began to fall, the POLIS enjoyed a period of uninterrupted growth.</li><li>· However, with a new rush to invest in property post-crisis, did Ireland learn anything from the 2008 crisis? &gt;LAGGARD&lt;</li></ul>	<p>DEEP LEARNING</p>
<b>Oresund</b> (Sweden & Denmark) (Europe)	<p>Copenhagen-Malmö-centrism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· Core: Construction of a bridge linking Skane (Sweden) and Zealand (Denmark) was the primary engine of the Oresund city-region.</li><li>· However, city-regional spatial deployment has not expanded evenly.</li><li>· Periphery: City-centrism has meant that hinterlands such as the Helsingør-Helsingborg connection have been forgotten.</li></ul>	<p>Bridge as the engine/icon/brand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· 2000: The modern and pragmatic beginning of the Oresund city-region occurred with the construction of the bridge between Malmö and Copenhagen, creating a cross-border city-region comprising 3.8 million people.</li><li>· Oresund, is thus a <i>Copenhagen-Malmö-centric</i> city-region.</li><li>· The bridge performs three roles: as engine, icon and brand.</li><li>· This physical connectivity created a path for physical connectivity to be converted into social connectivity. &lt;DRIVER&gt;</li></ul>	<p>Rigid &amp; bureaucratic normative system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· The city-region promotes many collaboration activities among universities, industry and civil society.</li><li>· But there is a lack of flexibility in its public administration.</li></ul>	<p>Administrative hindrances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· Despite administrative challenges, the city-region has prioritised efficiency in building the most connected, shared cross-border territory that may be created artificially.</li><li>· It seems, though, that cross-border collaboration has now reached its limit due to administrative hindrances. &gt;LAGGARD&lt;</li></ul>	<p>PRAGMATIC SIMPLICITY</p>
<b>Liverpool/ Manchester</b> (UK) (Europe)	<p>Atlantic Gateway:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· Is in the shadow of the UK and, more specifically, of London.</li><li>· But the two city-regions are not connected realities in respect of CYBER. &gt;LAGGARD&lt;</li></ul>	<p>Physical Connectivity?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· It is arguable that Manchester and Liverpool should be regarded as a single unit as one city-region.</li><li>· Yet, currently, tension and rivalry between the two are stronger than the wish to collaborate and share.</li></ul>	<p>European Cultural City 2008:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· Exceptional collaboration in Liverpool’s role as European Capital of Culture.</li><li>· For this event, the two city-regions were colleagues, but it is unanimously acknowledged to be the only example of unity between them. &lt;DRIVER&gt;</li></ul>	<p>Devolution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· In recent years, there has been a devolution trend in the UK in which the city-region dynamics of regional governments have had to accommodate greater autonomy in management.</li></ul>	<p>RIVAL TENSION</p>

the Independence Referendum. Catalonia is an ‘uncertain path’ due to Spain’s reluctance to open a debate on re-scaling the centralistic nation-state model. Portland is a ‘weird ecocitizenship’ due to its unique community-based identity and civic community. Dublin is labelled ‘deep learning’ in overcoming the consequences of the financial bubble. Oresund is a ‘pragmatic simplicity’, implemented to achieve a highly collaborative cross-border region. Finally, Manchester and Liverpool are a ‘rival tension’, referring to the perpetual conflict between them.

**Case study and key findings: benchmarking eight city-regions**

Following the outlining of the methodology, this section presents a comparative summary of the benchmarking of the eight cases through their 5-System categorizations, published in *Postindependence* (Calzada, 2015). Figure 3 and Table 2 refer to nationalistic city-regions, while Figure 4 and Table 3 refer to non-nationalistic city-regions. In this

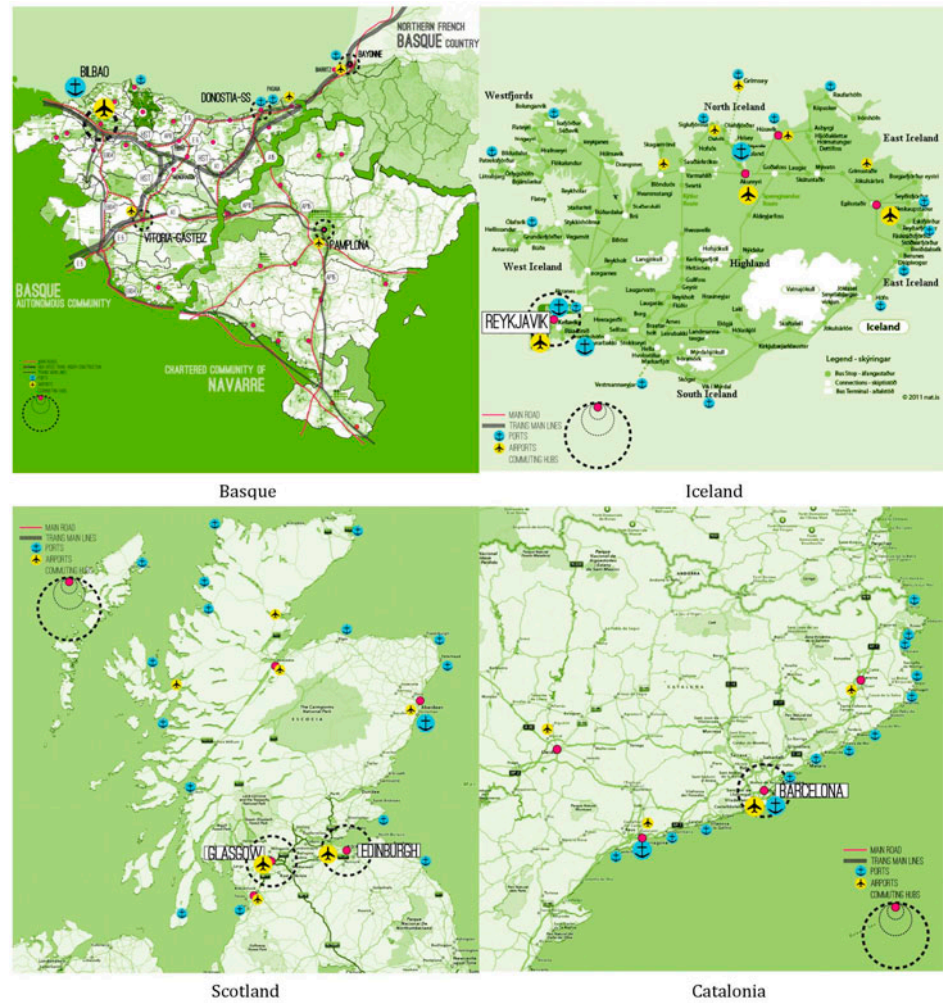


Figure 3. Nationalistic city-region case maps.

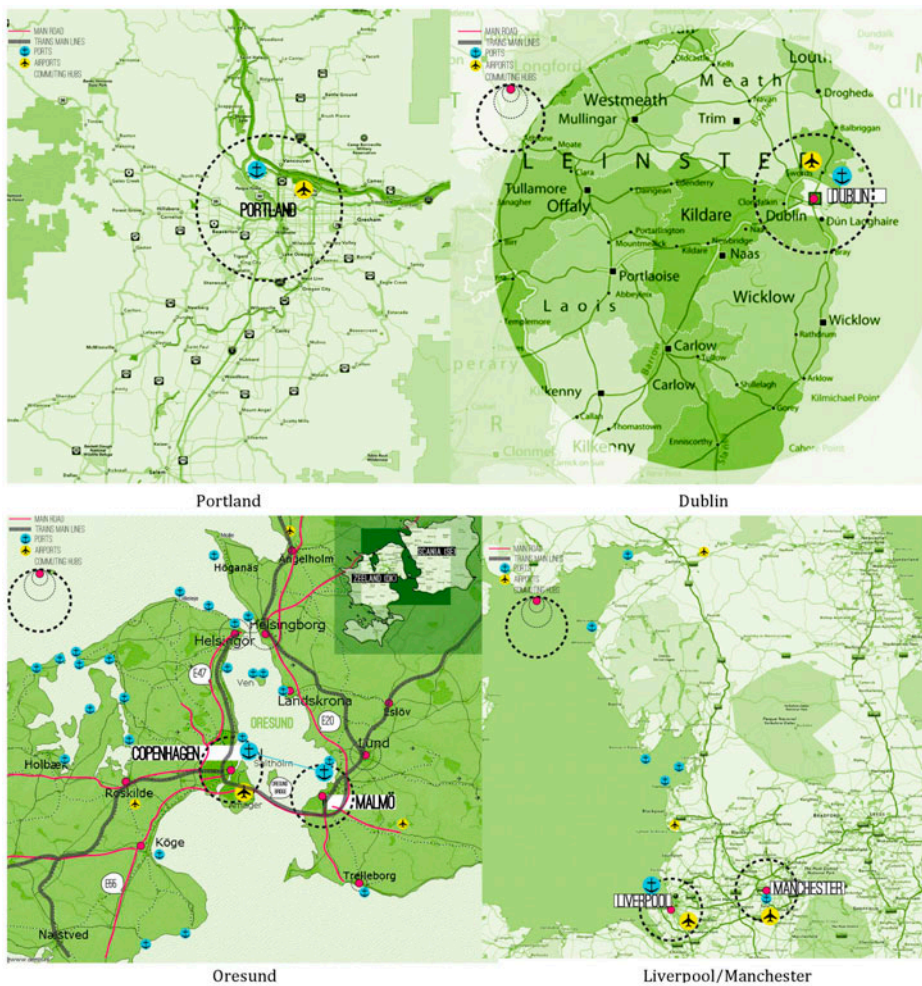


Figure 4. Non-nationalistic city-region case maps.

analysis, the driver and laggard systems for each case are identified. A driver system is understood as a system that generates expansive and positive socially innovative dynamics in the city-region. In contrast, a laggard system refers to an obstructive system that creates restrictive and disadvantageous cycles for the city-region.

**Conclusions: future city-regions beyond nation-states**

Of the eight city-region cases investigated, this paper has clearly distinguished four cases as nationalistic and four as non-nationalistic. From this analysis, the following indications may be highlighted:

- City-regions are clearly now dominating the political debate and provoking a discussion around re-scaling the nation-state (Brenner, 2004; Herrschel, 2014; Keating & Harvey, 2014; Morgan, 2013).

- However, the dynamics detected in the nationalistic and non-nationalistic case studies here differ significantly. This is primarily because the economically driven city-regions seeking devolution are not founded on any underpinning national communitarian principle (Oresund, Liverpool/Manchester, Dublin and Portland), whereas nationalistic city-regions (Calzada, 2014) are very focused on emotional, historic and, sometimes, egalitarian ideological sources related to independentist demands (Scotland, Catalonia, Basque Country and Iceland). Having said that, the non-nationalistic cases investigated, as established metropolitan political-economic hub regions of their nation-states (Dublin and Portland), separated city-regions (Liverpool/Manchester) and cross-border transnational regions (Oresund), also demonstrate certain tensions that go beyond the notion of the centralistic nation-state that has hitherto been the norm.
- From the social innovation (Moulaert et al., 2013) perspective, it is suggested that the trend towards devolving powers from nation-states to city-regions will continue.
- Therefore, while acknowledging the clear differences between community-based politically and competitiveness-based economically driven city-region strategies, nation-states can no longer be the sole international actors in the broader context.
- Ultimately, there is a clear requirement for political flexibility and the capacity to listen to claims by channelling them democratically, regardless of the uncertain consequences for both city-regions and nation-states (Keating, 2014) between recentralization and independence (Calzada & Bennis, 2015).

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### Note

1. [www.cityregions.org](http://www.cityregions.org).

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