

THINK TANK

Process of deliberation on new political culture: Working Document No. 5

AXES FOR EXPERIMENTATION WITH THE NEW POLITICAL CULTURE IN ACTION

(18 November 2020)

In the first four working documents, the group working on the new political culture at Etorikizuna Eraikiz Think Tank, considered a number of themes related to the crisis in liberal democracies, the challenges associated with this crisis and some basic definitions. This fifth document sets out the agreed axes for experimenting on the work group's reflections in action.

Behind these axes lies the relationship that the action-research method proposes between reflection and action, which is reflected in the concept of praxis. Praxis is a specific relationship between theory and practice, in which the theory is tested out in practice rather than just being compared with other theories or discussed. And so, in the Think Tank, the knowledge in question is not only discussed by the participants and external experts; it is also put into practice. This exercise will help us to gain awareness of, understand, analyse and diagnose different ways of working and, when the time comes, to change them.

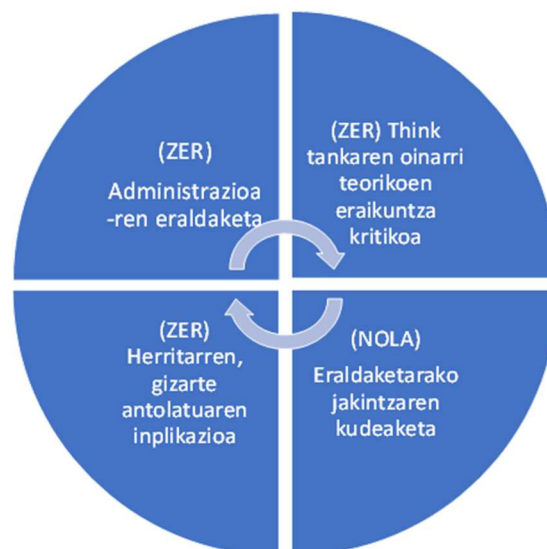
As well as being valuable in itself, the action also marks another step in the process of generating new knowledge. In other words, the lessons learnt in action will be brought back to the Think Tank's deliberation process and used as one of the items for collective lesson-learning. However, in order to develop this form of knowledge co-creation, it is necessary to agree on feasible spaces and procedures for reflection. Between October and November 2020, therefore, the group worked on developing these spaces and procedures. The members of the group have grouped the experimentation processes into four axes:

- a) The processes of transforming the administration.
- b) Involvement of the citizenry and organised civic society

- c) Critical construction of the Think Tank's theoretical bases
- d) Managing knowledge for transformation

Different participants will meet up around each of these axes. On some occasions they will each work on a separate project; on others they will engage in shared projects. Most of these axes help understand what the new political culture is and what needs to be done to develop it. However, the aim of one of the axes is to provide a methodological contribution on how to work on the new political culture. One of the strengths of the Think Tank is the combination of these different types of knowledge. This is illustrated in the following figure.

Figure No. 1. Axes for cogenerating knowledge on the new political culture in action.



At the same time, each participant has chosen a particular degree of intensity with which they can participate. Each degree of intensity requires different tasks:

- a) *Individual reflection.* Participants will use both the contributions made by the experts at the workshops and those discussed with the group to make an individual reflection on their practical work, which they will write out and share with the group.
- b) *Group reflection.* As well as their individual reflection, the participants will also discuss the theme with another work group that shares the project on which they are working. The aim of this work will be to narrow the gap between the Think Tank's deliberations and practice, increasing the group's level of awareness and improving the quality of the analyses and diagnoses.

- c) *Experimental transformation.* Participants who commit to this degree of dedication, as well as undertaking the two exercises above, will try to make decisions and transform something together with the work team.

Finally, the main problem the participants had in addressing the above axes, with the different levels of intensity, was seen to be a lack of time. This is not anecdotal; it is a structural problem that is found in most processes for transforming the new political culture. To help with this problem, facilitators have been appointed in some of the groups. Their work is to create the right conditions for participants to reflect, make decisions and move to action. *Inter alia*, their functions include creating and convening spaces for reflection, preparing documents to help in reflection and decision-making processes and reporting all the work carried out in new documents.