

European Regional activation towards Brussels: From the heart to the Ultra-periphery of Europe. Walloon and Canary strategies

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Abstract

Wallonia and the Canary Islands are both regions with legislative capacities within the European Union (EU). Both shared serious socio-economic deficits two decades ago. Then, Spain and the Archipelago became full members of the EU, while a new European Regional policy was designed. Nowadays, the Canary Islands are close to reaching the EU economic average, while Wallonia is still far away. How far this facts are linked with their regional activation towards Brussels? How different are both mobilisations? How is it possible to explain both Canary growth and Walloon delay, taking into account the Archipelago is so far away from the heart of Europe and Wallonia is within it?

The dissertation will be carried out through findings about the regional mechanisms developed to influence the European Institutions: the participation (direct and non direct) within the Council of Ministers, the Committee of the Regions, the regional interaction with the European Commission, the establishment of representative bodies in Brussels and the participation within the interregional associations. The research, based in the qualitative analysis method, will explain different regional performances. It will compare how the independent variables (Regional and National dimensions) support or obstruct our regions European mobilisation and will contrast how the most decisive control variables could influence both regional activations. Therefore, the interest of the political elites, its synergy with the administrative elites, the socio-economic factor, the national identity feelings, the path dependence, the distinctiveness, or its different distance (Ultra-periphery) to Brussels, will be dealt with.

1. Introduction

Forty years ago, Wallonia was one of the richest regions in Europe while the Canary Islands were an unknown, poor Spanish region in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. Two decades ago, Spain became full member in the EU and the Walloon economic decline was unquestionable. Nowadays, Canary economic figures tend to reach closer to the European average. They are higher than Walloon ones, which do not reach the average. What has happened? Obviously the European Regional Policy impact has affected differently the two regions. Why? Just a coincidence? Did Wallonia and the Canary Islands influence the European decision-making process in a similar way during the last twenty years? Were their respective regional

activation strategies towards Brussels that different? What factors have influenced and influence at present its European mobilisation?

This paper will include a compared dissertation about the political role that Wallonia and the Canaries play within the on-going Europeanization Process. It will analyse, through the different key mechanisms which these sub-state entities with legislatives capacities have developed, it influences chances within the European decision-making process. The guidelines of both *partner regions* involve strategies of mobilization towards Brussels, and participation in the ascending phase of the European integration process.

The dissertation will be carried out through the findings about the direct mechanisms developed to influence the European Institutions: the participation within the Council of Ministers, the Committee of the Regions, the regional interaction with the European Commission, the establishment of a regional office in Brussels and the participation within the interregional associations. It will also compare its regional participation in the European national position building process to deal with the European Affairs.

The research, based in the qualitative analysis method, will explain the different regional performance. It will also advance the independent and the control variables influence. It will compare how the independent variables (Regional and National dimensions) support or obstruct our regions European mobilisation and will also contrast how the most decisive control variables could influence both regional activations. Therefore, the interest of the political elites, their synergy with the administrative elites, the socio-economic factor, the national identity feelings, the path dependence, the distinctiveness, or its different distance (Ultra-periphery) to Brussels, will be dealt with.

2. Wallonia and the Canaries within the European regional European activation framework

The Regional European activation is a well known phenomenon within the politic literature since the 90s. Then, Liesbet Hooghe (1995) first used the “sub-national mobilisation” concept, which has been regularly adopted by many other academics¹. They looked to describe the sub-national entities performance within the European decision-making process. It was soon researched not only its descendant dimension as mere “arenas” of the European policies, but the ascendant perspective in order to become influent actors within the European process.

The “sub-national mobilisation” denomination implies a remarkable British accent. That lead continental academics (mainly from countries with sub-state entities with high legislative capacities like Belgium, Germany, Italy or Spain) to deal about “sub-state”, but not “sub-national” mobilisation. Furthermore, Leonardo Morlino² among others also contested the last sense. He does not consider it appropriate to talk about mobilisation due to the lack of a collective action mass which would involve the civil society, within the phenomenon.

Anyway, it will be described and analysed the initiatives, actions, elections and strategies that the administrative and political regional elites adopt to develop an active presence at the Community level to try to influence and interact within the European institutional decisions. At present, it is no more possible to deny that the Regions develop a vast European activation through different paths or mechanisms (Caciagli, 2006, p.220). The establishment of formal channels to involve the sub-state governments within the

¹ See: Hooghe, 1995; Hooghe, 1996; Hooghe y Marks, 1996; Marks, Scharpf, Schmitter y Streeck, 1996; Claeys, Gobin, Smets, y Winand, 1998; Negrier y Jouve, 1998; o Keating, 2004.

² Fargion, Morlino, and Profeti (ed) (2006).

European decision-making process; the interregional organizations cooperation activities within or outside the communitarian programmes; or the European regional offices settle down in Brussels, prove clearly the European regional activation. Those represent the regional response to the new possibilities given by the European framework, after the establishment of the Committee of the Regions (CDR), the regional opening of the Council of Ministers or the European Commission (EC).

Since the nineties, the European sub-state entities got conscious about the advantages given by the cultivation of the access channels to the European Institutions. Regions realised about the influence they would be able to reach within the community policies design. Therefore, Regions gradually have established direct formulas to deal with Brussels, while they also promoted non direct or mediated, through its own states, mechanisms. Within the described framework, we would like to underline two very remarkable European regional activation performances: the Walloon, only a few kilometres away from Brussels, and the Canary from the Ultra-periphery of Europe.

Wallonia has only been a constitutional actor of the Belgian federalism since its regional conformation in 1980. Then, it got the legal option to build its own regional parliament and government. However, it is impossible to understand Wallonia without taking into account its close relation with the French community in Belgium. Both of them match in the whole southern part of Belgium, but not in Brussels or in the east small German community area (De Witte, 2005, p.204). In spite of Belgium being formed by five different federate entities, Flanders and Wallonia are its two major counter parts. While Flanders embarked on a project of national construction (like some other European regions with nation consciousness as Bavaria, Catalonia, Scotland or the Basque Country); the Walloon approach to the Belgian federalism is more loyal and pragmatic. At present, Wallonia (like Flanders) appears as an exception in the international scene (Massart-Piérard, 2005, p.192). Articles 59 bis and 68.3 of the Belgian Constitution give powers to the federate entities in the international relations area. It allows Wallonia to conclude its own international agreements (within its federate competences) and to accede directly to the Council of Ministers of the European Union, a forum of tantamount importance within the EU. These make really specific the European Belgian sub-state interaction, compared with the rest European sub-state entities activation.

Canary Islands officially became a Spanish Autonomous Community in 1982. It received the legal option to build its own regional parliament and government, and its main regulation, the Regional Statute (*Estatuto de Canarias*). The Canary Islands reality is highly marked by its geographical situation in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, more than 3.000 kilometres away from the European capital, and 1.800 from Madrid. Therefore, the Canaries are the Autonomous Community with more singularities, but also one of the European regions which has been legally recognised more specifically. Indeed, it is not possible to approach the Canary reality without realizing the decisive influence which carries out its Ultra-peripheral condition (Tuñón, 2008a, p.79). It has been recognised by the EU since 1997, when a protocol and the article 299.2 of the Amsterdam Treaty firstly acknowledged the Ultra-periphery in a Primary Legal text³. In addition, the Spanish constitutional framework offers to the Canaries different alternatives to develop a legitimate external action. These are intermediated through the Spanish state, but also directly one carried out by the main actors of the autonomous institutional organisation (Navarro Méndez, 2003, p.270). In this context, the Autonomous Government has led to different practices to consolidate the European Canary action. Indeed, its sub-state direct activation towards Brussels, or its initiatives to establish permanent networking nets with

³ Azores and Madeira in Portugal; Guadalupe, Martinique, Guyana and Reunion in France, and the Canaries were recognised the necessity to fight within an European framework against its special circumstances due to: the distance, the fragmentation, its underdeveloped economic surroundings, and the generally adverse weather conditions.

the European institutions and the sub-state authorities from many other countries, are extensive and well developed.

3. The Walloon and the Canary European activations (General remarks)

A first approach to the Canary European activation would reveal a high an extensive mobilisation, which could be compared in terms of attitude, extension or intensity to the most developed strategies all over Europe (Catalan, Bavarian or Tuscan, among others). Within the Spanish framework, the Canary Islands have lead the autonomous communities (ACs) claims close to very involved regions in European affairs like Andalusia, Catalonia, Madrid or the Basque Country. The Canary leadership is due to it Ultra-peripheral circumstances. Furthermore, the Canary European activation could also be considered proactive in terms of attitude. The Canaries always showed an own specific initiative to deal about it singular claims within the national and the European framework. Mainly through non formalised channels, it has been interacting with the European institution before and deeper than many other European regions could even imagine. The Canary activation is also systematic in terms of intensity, due to the accumulative strategy chosen. The Canaries prefer to invest time and resources in every single mechanism in spite of some of them give back to the Archipelago a higher impact than others. However, the regional activation is remarkably pragmatic, but not political (see the table below). Until now, the Canary Islands have exclusively mobilised themselves to get different funds from the Regional European policies. The main reason which explains this approach is that the Canarian political elite is local, insular or regional, but not European. Therefore, the EU matters had always been dealt by it active and skilful administrative elite.

On the contrary, a general overview of the Walloon European activation would reveal some kind of interest about participation within the European matters, but with a very different extension, attitude or intensity to the Canary ones. First of all, Wallonia only shows a medium activation in terms of extension. Indeed, the Walloon strategy is much more a consequence of the possibilities offered by the Belgian federal system, than a regional well built scheme. Furthermore, the Walloon activation intensity is intermittent and not systematic as the Canary one. It is due to Wallonia decided to invest mainly in some of the mechanisms (essentially in the Council of Ministers, but also in the Belgian position formation, or in the CDR) but not in all of them. In addition, the Walloon European activation is not instinctive and proactive as the Canary one, because it obeys to other motivations. It is a reactive and mimetic activation to the Flemish and the rest of the most powerful European regions. Walloon activation is not due to a remarkable political interest, but a reaction to the Flemish attitude⁴. Wallonia can not forget to explore every single European mechanism used by Flanders, in order to try to revert it economic delay. As could be checked in the table, both Canary and Walloon activations only share their pragmatic approach to get benefits from the European regional policies. In spite of that, the Walloon adds (to this pragmatic approach), a technical and administrative remarkable dimension, as well.

⁴ See thorough explanations in Tuñón, 2008a, pp.438-439.

Table 1. Regional European activation main characteristics.

	Attitude	Extension	Intensity	Kind of approach
<i>The Canaries</i>	Proactive	High	Systematic	Pragmatic
<i>Wallonia</i>	Mimetic	Medium	Intermittent	Pragmatic/technical

Source: Tuñón, 2008a, p.450.

A thorough examination of the Walloon activation reveals the factors which produce the described regional mobilisation. We will advance now some of the key ones. First of all, it has been shown a big difference in the consciousness about the European topics between the civil servants and the high administrative elite on the one hand, and the citizens and the politicians, on the other. As it also happened in the Canary Islands, the lack of interest of the Walloon politicians (far away the reception of European funds and with the exception of the former regional president, Jean Claude Van Cauwenberghe), lead the administrative and civil servants elite to design by themselves the whole Walloon European activation strategy.

Furthermore, in spite of the fact that Wallonia has shown some kind of interest in participating within the European affairs, it behaves in a very heterogeneous way while dealing with the different mechanism we took into account: the participation within the Council of Ministers, the Committee of the Regions, the regional interaction with the European Commission, the establishment of a regional office in Brussels, the participation within the interregional associations, and its regional participation in the European national position building process to deal with the European Affairs. As a consequence of the Belgian federal system, Wallonia decides practically to restrict its resource investments to the mechanism it sees more profitable. This attitude involves a well known lack of interest about its participation in the committees of the European Commission, in the interregional associations, or a limited strategy of regional representation in Brussels.

In addition, the current Walloon ascendant activation towards the EU institutions matches with the traditional regional approach to the European dynamics. Indeed, the weak Walloon socio-economic situation during the last thirty years has determined the regional pragmatic approach to the European phenomenon, focused to get funds in order to solve the economic deficit.

To conclude, the pragmatic approach matches with the explained lack of interest of the population and the regional top politicians about the European dynamics. Academics and civil servants confirm the Walloon lack of European sensitivity⁵, its passive approach and ridiculous mere economic interest. They think the regional attitude should change as soon as possible, and that Wallonia can not approach Europe in economic terms, but for the added value a strong position within the EU represents⁶. Only a regional small

⁵ Walloon academics like André Frogner, Benoît Rihoux or Michel Quévit (through Tuñón, 2008a) agree on this explanation.

⁶ Follow thorough explanations in Tuñón, 2008a, pp.437-438.

opening with a more European conscience, linked to the personality of the regional president, was evidenced while Van Cauwenberghe's presidency (2000-2005).

A thorough examination of the Canary activation shows the key factors which produced the described regional mobilisation. First of all, the Canaries have always exhibited, even before their total integration in the EU, a high interest to participate and influence in the European topics which affect itself. Therefore, the Archipelago has followed a cumulative strategy, and it never rejected to use any activation channel, either institutional or informal ones. In contrast with Wallonia, the Canaries showed an homogeneous utilisation of the different mobilisation mechanisms, in spite of being aware that not all of them are equally useful. Furthermore, its often publicised specificities and singularities allowed the Islands to use singular activation channels closed to other European regions. Therefore, that cumulative strategy is not determined by the constitutional Spanish model, but it is a consequence of its legal European recognition as Ultra-peripheral region (RUP). This main factor determines also its special and different (in comparison to the vast majority of the European regions) approach to the EU, and its preference to use the interregional associationism. In fact, the Canary Islands have successfully lead the RUP group, and developed a particular lobbying and interaction model with and within the European Commission⁷.

As described before, until today the Canary Islands have pragmatically mobilised itself to get different funds from the Regional European policies. Therefore, the key factor which has determined the absence of any other kind of activation has been the lack of personal interest exhibited by the governmental political elite. In fact, the former regional President (1987-1989), Fernando Fernández, confessed no one of the current regional politicians could become the Canarian Jordi Pujol⁸, dealing with the European matters (Tuñón, 2008a, p.165). As it happened in Wallonia, we could only underline a small exception. The former president Adan Martín (2003-2007), showed some sort of personal interest to modify the regional approach to the European dynamics. During his presidency, he pursued a more refined and less pragmatic approach to obtain a higher recognition and visibility in Europe. Far away of this moderate opening, the Canary political elite has been so local, insular or regional, but not European. Therefore, the EU matters had been always dealt by its active and skilful administrative elite. Always very close to the regional government, it considered the European matters its own challenge and became so often responsible of the political Canary success in Brussels.

In spite of what we will deal with in terms of impact later, it is necessary to recognize right now, that the Canary repercussion in Europe has been one of the highest among the European regions. In fact, the Canaries received, not only a prevalent position in the Primary European law as a RUP region, but have been the object of many specific secondary legal European regulations too⁹. To explain, not only the regional European impact, but the Canary activation too, we might refer some factors. The activation was obviously encouraged by: the socio-economic variable, the big difference twenty years ago (reduced nowadays), between the regional economic figures and the European ones; its political and geographic distance to the European decision centres which promoted its RUP strategy; and the above explained administrative top elite interest. However, the Canary European activation has also been discouraged by: the lack of European perspective of the regional political elite; and the lack of path dependence or continuity of the regional presidents the last fifteen years.

⁷ See more in Tuñón 2007, and Tuñón 2008.

⁸ Jordi Pujol was the former president of the Catalan autonomous community (1980-2003). He was very well known for his ambition to develop the Catalan external action and its participation and interaction within the EU.

⁹ Check the following compilation: Government of the Canary Islands, 2002.

4. The Walloon and the Canary European activation mechanisms

4.1. Council of Ministers

This is obviously the key mechanism within the Walloon strategy. The region has exhibited a particular attention to this channel due to its own importance and the access facilities given by the Belgian constitutional system. Its participation is periodic since the Treaty of Maastricht allowance in 1993. Due to a rotation system (where the other Belgian sub-state entities are also included), Wallonia participates around 25 times per year in the Council of Ministers of the EU, mainly in its Regional Policy and Industry formations. This regional participation has not only a symbolic value, but a practical one too. Therefore, the Walloon representative could accompany the federal one, or lead himself the Belgian formation, representing (by rotation) the whole Belgian position and not only the Walloon one.

On the contrary, this mechanism does not represent a clear priority for the Canaries, as it does for Wallonia or another Spanish Autonomous Communities (ACs) as Catalonia or the Basque Country. However, the Canaries enjoy (formally or informally) higher participation chances in the Council of Ministries than the rest of the ACs. A rotation system (as in Belgium) allows all of them to participate in the four formations opened to the regional presence since 2005. Due to the high number of ACs (17), the Canary Islands participate only an average of once per year in the Council of Ministers formations and its working groups. Nevertheless, the Canaries are the only AC which also enjoys another less well-known participation chance: it formally shows up half a dozen times per year within the Ultra-periphery group since 1997. Anyway, the Canary appearances in the Council of Ministries are less systematic and extensive than the Walloon ones.

4.2. European Commission

This is a mechanism characterised in Wallonia and the rest of Belgium by its lack of institutionalisation and its high informality. The Council of Ministers Walloon preference has provoked a second level interest about this channel. Nevertheless, it was able to contrast informal contacts with the European Commission officials and periodic attendance to some of its committees¹⁰.

On the contrary, the interaction within the European Commission is one of the priorities which produce more benefits for the Canaries. Within a much institutionalised channel in Spain, the ACs can nowadays attend to the 95 (out of 300) committees opened by the Spanish state, in representation of all of them. Opposite to the Council system, the ACs are able to attend to a different number of committees, following its own regional interest. The Canaries often attend to six or seven committees, which are less than many other ACs. The reason is not a lack of interest, but its singular options to exploit another channels. Indeed, the Archipelago enjoys a particular (almost formalised) presence inside the European Commission through the RUP unit within the Directorate-General for Regional Policy. Moreover, Canary Islands use profusely totally informal paths as the institutional lobbying towards the Commission officials (which involves around 25 Canary civil servants), and the private lobbying.

4.3. Regional Representation in Brussels

¹⁰ Fifty Walloon civil servants are involved in the whole process.

The Walloon one is not a formal traditional representation office in Brussels, but a part of the Permanent Representation of Belgium in the EU. The Wallonia-Brussels delegation (consequence of the 1998 Walloon Region and French Community merge) is the result of a different strategy due to the geographic proximity between Brussels and Wallonia. In spite of it two delegates have diplomatic status, it does not avoid the preponderance of the bureaucratic profile above the politic one.

The representation office of the Government of the Canaries in Brussels follows the traditional model of regional representation office in Brussels, but it only deals with administrative, technical and bureaucratic tasks. It is the third older ACs office in Brussels after the Catalan and the Basque one, and it enjoys a medium-high size (similar to the Walloon one) among the Spanish ones. Its most important handicaps are: the lack of political negotiation powers; and the fact that it reproduces some of the dysfunction latent in the regional administration¹¹.

4.4. Committee of the Regions

Definitely, it is not the main Walloon or Canary preference. However, Wallonia enjoys a large representation in the organ through its two representatives plus the other two French Community ones (eighty per cent of the French Community Belgian citizens are Walloons). Moreover, Wallonia focused more than expected (and more than many other European regions) in the Committee, due to internal Belgian politics and in opposition to the Flemish attitude. It arranged a generally qualified representation in the organ, which involved the regional president while Van Cauwenberghe's presidency (2000-2005).

At first glance, the Canaries enjoy a more restrictive participation in the Committee with one out of the 21 Spanish representatives. Moreover, it is the less privileged Canary activation formula, and the regional presidents (with the exception of the former president Adán Martín between 2003 and 2007) rarely have shown up there. However, Canary singularities also offer the Archipelago privileged opportunities to participate in the Committee through its Ultra-periphery commission. In spite of the lack of direct effectiveness of the mechanism, the Canaries value it as a complementary one, and very useful to develop their European visibility and networks.

4.5. Interregional associations

The Walloon participation in the interregional associationism has had a medium extension, and generally a passive attitude and low intensity. It has been focused in the biggest and the more general associations like the Group of Regions with Legislative Capacities (REG-LEG), the Conference of European Regional Legislative Assemblies (CALRE), or the Assembly of the Regions of Europe (ARE). The Walloon interest to participate in these forums was at the very beginning a mimetic reaction to the Flemish behaviour, to follow during the late eighties and first nineties its northern neighbour in the European integration. That primary Walloon interest has gradually declined once it has been proved the reduced general effectiveness of these regional associations in comparison with the other activation channels.

One of the major singularities (and differences with the Walloon and most of the European regions) of the Canary activation strategy is its bet for this mechanism. Indeed, it is (with the European Commission) its major priority. Once again, Canary specificities and its preference for the most discreet formulas, promoted this mechanism. Therefore, the region has decisively participated in the RUP group, an association the Canaries have created, lead and turned in their major political success. Indeed, the Archipelago managed to involve the national governments of France, Portugal and Spain, and received special recognition from the EU. The Canaries have also a relevant participation in the powerful Conference of Peripheral Maritime

¹¹ Follow thorough thorough explanations in Tuñón, 2008a, p. 167.

Regions (CRPM), from its permanent presence in its Islands Commission. The Canary Islands also participate, but without a similar leading attitude, in the important groups of REG-LEG or CALRE.

4.6. Participation through its own national states

Close to the importance of the first mechanism (direct presence in the Council of Ministries), the non direct Walloon participation within the European decision-making process is ruled by the Cooperation Agreement of 1994. It allows Wallonia to actively participate in the common Belgian position formation to defend its own interest in the European institutions. First of all, through the administrative scale (the P.11 directorate in the Foreign Affairs Federal Ministry), and just in case (only five per cent) the political one (the Foreign Affairs Inter-ministerial Conference, and, if necessary, the high level Concertation Committee). In spite of this system could dilute the Walloon position during the negotiations, it also promotes the compromise, due to the veto right and the need of lack of Belgian abstention. Being one out of five sub-state entities, but one out of two in a mainly bipolar system, the Walloon impact options offered by the mechanism are very important.

The non direct ACs participation through the Spanish state is at present ruled by the European Communities Affairs Conference Agreements (CARCE) of 2004. This legal framework allows the Canaries different kind of participation within the formation of the Spanish European position. First of all, the multilateral channel through the Multilateral Conferences and the other ACs. Secondly, through the bilateral formulas: since 2001 the formalised Bilateral Commission State-The Canaries; the semi-structured presence of the “hidden” Canary interests representative within the Spanish Permanent Representation in Brussels (REPER); or the mere informal and non-structured contacts, both in administrative and political scale, between the Spanish and the Canary Governments. As usual, the Canaries looked for to utilise the more effective bilateral channels, so often gaining from the discretion given by its low structuring and formality (Tuñón, 2007).

5. Variables and correlations which determine the Walloon and the Canary activation achievements

It is always a risk to deal about the output of the different regional European activations impact. To some extent, the sub-state action influences the EU institution decisions, but it is not possible to weight it exactly. Obviously, EU decisions benefit or damage regional interests, but most would be taken with or without European regional activation. Indeed, many factors influence the European decision-making process and not only the regional mobilisation. Usually is not easy a single region would be able to decisively influence an European policy.

*Table 2. Medium impact and satisfaction regional index through the European activation mechanisms (Results are qualitatively presented due to more than fifty qualified expert agent interviews *)*

	Council	Commission	Offices	C.Regions	Associations	Own State
<i>The Canaries</i>	Medium	High	High	Medium	High	High
<i>Wallonia</i>	High	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	High

* These are part of the results of the below mentioned research project.

Source: Tuñón, 2008a, p. 486.

Despite it not being possible to causally attribute certain European impact to any regional activation, we find it possible to establish some correlations between the EU outputs and the regional inputs. Regional activations can be described and the benefits or damages the European decisions cause to the sub-state entities, too. In spite of it can not be assured a causal relation among them, the qualitative method allows to talk about correlation impacts or impact satisfaction. Therefore, the Canary and the Walloon ones are resumed in a high-medium-low scale in the table 2.

First of all, our impact and satisfaction index about the regional activation in the Council of Ministers is high for Wallonia and medium for the Canaries. These results match with the importance both regions and its countries give to the regional representation within the Council of Ministers. This is the most developed, important and useful mechanism for the Belgian regions, but not for the Spanish ones. The extensive direct representation chances the Belgian system concedes to Wallonia, determines its higher investments in this participation. On the contrary, the Canaries (with fewer opportunities) prefer to focus its action in other more profitable mechanisms.

Specifically, the regional level promoted decisively the special Canary participation within the Ultra-periphery group, while the constitutional or national level links (also decisively) with the Walloon activation, and in a weaker way with the Canary one. In addition, Walloon approach to this mechanism is moderately influenced by the socio-economic variable, while the Canary one is also reasonably conditioned by the distinctiveness factor¹².

Secondly, the impact and satisfaction index about the regional interaction with the European Commission is low for Wallonia and high for the Canaries. Since Wallonia has not a cumulative activation strategy, it invests mainly in the Council of Ministers and forgets some of the other mechanisms. There is no sense for the Walloons to hardly interact with the Commission while they enjoy a much more privileged (than many other European regions) direct presence in the Council of Ministers. However, the interaction with the Commission is one of the key points in the Canary strategy. There, the Canaries enjoy a privileged and quasi-permanent presence due to Ultra-peripheral condition. Furthermore, the Canaries bet about the value of a well developed network of contacts and lobbying practices.

Specifically, the regional dimension influences reasonably Canary activation towards the European Commission, while the national Belgian dimension discourages decisively the Walloon interaction with the European institution. Furthermore, the extensive Canary interest is promoted: decisively the synergy between the less interested political elite and the much more interested administrative elite; and moderately by the socio-economic factor in order to get specific funds to combat its Ultra-peripheral disadvantages. This socio-economic variable is the only factor which moderately encourages the Walloon performance within this mechanism.

Thirdly, the impact and satisfaction index about the performance of the regional representations in Brussels is high for the Canaries but medium for Wallonia. In spite of both delegations have a medium-big size compared to the rest of the regional offices in Brussels, also both of them share the weakness of its

¹² It is a regional government tradition in Spain (when national and regional Executives colours does not match) to look for solutions to their problems in Brussels better than in Madrid.

bureaucratic profile. This administrative profile is even more remarkable in the Canary one. The Walloon representation also has another decisive weakness due to the regional European strategy. It is not a formal and independent regional representation office, but a Walloon delegation in the Belgian permanent representation. This does not happen with the Canary one, which despite its low profile reached a high visibility and reliability among institutions officials and other regional representatives.

Specifically, the Walloon performance within this mechanism is decisively discouraged by the above mentioned national dimension, while it is only moderately promoted by its weak socio-economic circumstances. At present, the Canary office performance is decisively encouraged by the narrow synergies which exist between the political elites and the bureaucratic ones within the regional administration. Therefore, its performance is also moderately promoted by the path dependence or longevity of the same political party in the regional government, which made possible a very close relation with the administration and Brussels office top officials. Furthermore, its performance is also moderately encouraged by the distinctiveness with the national government and the socio-economic factor in order to fight against the Ultra-peripheral weaknesses.

Fourthly, the impact and satisfaction index about the regional participation in the Committee of the Regions is both medium for Wallonia and the Canaries. In spite of it is not an essential mechanism, none of them refuses to use it. Wallonia enjoys an extensive participation (two plus two members), while the more restricted Canary one is also privileged about its permanent presence in the Ultra-periphery Commission, which affords the Archipelago an extra visibility.

Specifically, both regional participations in the Committee of the Regions have been reasonably encouraged by the punctual personal interest of their political elites (presidents Van Cauwenberghe 2000-2005 and Martín 2003-2007). However, while the Canary has been moderately promoted by its regional specific dimension, the Walloon has been decisively encouraged by the national level, that allowed the region such an extensive presence in the Committee. Furthermore, the Walloon participation has also been positively promoted: reasonably by the path dependence which has allowed the former president Van Cauwenberghe to remain as one of the Walloons representatives in the organ; and decisively by the remarkable Walloon regional identity loyal to the Belgian state and opposite to the Flemish attitude, always more uncomfortable within this mechanism.

Fifthly, the impact and satisfaction index about the regional participation in the different interregional associations is medium for Wallonia and high for the Canaries. In spite of this is not a decisive bet for Wallonia, the region showed an extensive participation in some of the most general and powerful associations at the beginning of the phenomenon. At present, its interest has declined, and its participation is mainly passive, but still remarkable. On the contrary, the participation in the interregional associations is one of the key elements within the Canary strategy if not the most important and successful. Canary attitude towards Europe can not be explained without its participation and leadership in the RUP group, without any doubt (after its EU legal recognition) its major European success. In fact, it allowed its spectacular regional growing from 65% of the medium EU Gross Domestic Product (GPD) in 1986, to the 92% (GPD) twenty years later.

Specifically, the Walloon participation within the interregional associations has been promoted: decisively by the national level and its mimetic reaction to Flanders associations membership; and reasonably by its own socio-economic weakness. The Canary extensive and privileged participation has been encouraged by several factors. Decisively by: its regional Ultra-peripheral dimension; the deep and narrow synergy about this matter between the political and the administrative regional top elites; and by the socio-economic factor to reverse the natural regional weaknesses. But this participation has also been moderately encouraged by the distinctiveness, the path dependence or its specific archipelagic identity.

Finally, the impact and satisfaction index about the regional participation in the European matters through its own state, is both high for Wallonia and the Canaries. When Wallonia is not directly present in the Council meetings, its position is almost the half of the Belgian one. None of the rest of the legislative regions (except Flanders) enjoys such a big proportion in its country's European position formation. The Canaries traditionally reached an important and special influence within the Spanish position to deal with European matters. Its specificities and singularities opened bilateral (formal and informal) channels to include its regional demands within the national position. None of the other ACs developed and cared so extensively these formulas as the Canaries did.

Specifically, both regional participations within the formation of the national European position have been encouraged by the national or constitutional dimension. While the promotion in the Walloon case has been until now decisive, it has been only moderate for the Canaries. Furthermore, the Canary participation has also been reasonably encouraged by the distinctiveness factor, when different political colour majorities lead the national and the regional executives.

Table 3. Research regional correlations contrasted in intensity and orientation. (Results are qualitatively presented due to more than fifty qualified expert agent interviews *)

		Council	Commission	Offices	C.Regions	Associations	Own State
The Canaries	Regional Level	Decisive (+)	Moderate (+)		Moderate (+)	Decisive (+)	
Wallonia							
The Canaries	National Level	Moderate (+)					Moderate (+)
Wallonia		Decisive (+)	Decisive (-)	Decisive (-)	Decisive (+)	Decisive (+)	Decisive (+)
The Canaries	Political Regional elites interest				Moderate (-)		
Wallonia					Moderate (+)		
The Canaries	Sinergy among political and administrative elites		Decisive (+)	Decisive (+)		Decisive (+)	
Wallonia							
The Canaries	Path dependence			Moderate (+)		Moderate (+)	
Wallonia					Moderate (+)		
The Canaries	Distinctiveness	Moderate (+)		Moderate (+)		Moderate (+)	Moderate (-)
Wallonia							
The Canaries	Socio-economic variable		Moderate (+)	Moderate (+)		Decisive (+)	
Wallonia		Moderate (+)	Decisive (-)	Moderate (+)		Moderate (+)	
The Canaries	Regional or National Identity					Moderate (+)	
Wallonia					Decisive (+)		

*
These are part of

the results of the below mentioned research project.

Source: Tuñón, 2008a, pp. 506-507.

6. Impact, results and conclusions

In spite of it not being possible to directly attach regional activation with European influence, both regional European impacts can not be denied. On one side, Wallonia deals within a contradictory environment. The Belgian federalisation and its institutional framework, allowed the region to enjoy higher European influence options than the major part of the European regions. Therefore, its recent regional activation impact on the different community policies is evident: “the regional deal in the agreement for the 2007-2013 structural funds programming period; the success in the transversal VII Research framework programme; the importance for the Charleroi airport of the State Aid dossier on Regional Airports; the decisive new European pollution environmental regulations; or the resistance and influences to modify the controversial Bolkenstein directive”¹³. However, Wallonia (as the Canary Islands) faces another reality. Despite its interest (which is not the highest among the European sub-state entities), the influence of a European region with a reduced population of 3,3 millions citizens, must be necessarily limited.

On the other side, the Canary European impact is even more obvious. As the former Spanish Justice Minister, the Canary academic and politician, Juan Fernando López Aguilar, remembers: it can not be denied that the Canary Islands “have been specifically included in the former project of European Constitution and in the recent Lisbon Reform Treaty; a beneficial new Economic and Fiscal System for the region was negotiated during 2006; more than 1.300 million Euros, from the programming period 2007-2013 of the European funds, will reach the Archipelago, due to the legally recognised Ultra-peripheral status, and despite the region exit of the European poorest group; the Islands also get an spectacular budget for the FRONTEX programme to avoid irregular immigration; or the benefits due to the new European Neighbourhood Policy”¹⁴.

However, it may be explained that the Archipelago enjoys a very singular context. None other European region (RUPs excluded) influences as much as the Canaries the European decision-making process. The Canary European impact is higher than other comparable size (population) regions, but also than another richer and more populated. Moreover, the Canary impact can be more easily quantified due to the large amount of general regulations about the RUP regions EU integration, but also specific legislation about the Canary system¹⁵. However, this high impact can not be only attached to the regional activation, but to its contemporary coincidence with a European institutional sensibility about Ultra-peripheral matters.

To conclude, it will be summed up the similarities and the differences between the Walloon and the Canary European activations. Among the similarities, both regional activations share its mainly pragmatic character, due to its original weak economic situation. While the Canaries made the most of it and almost reached the European average (92%), Wallonia is still far away (85-86%)¹⁶. Moreover, the Walloon and the Canary activations also share its development without the help of a deeply interested (in European matters)

¹³ Thierry Delaval, delegate of the Walloon delegation within the Belgian Permanent Representation, opinion through: Tuñón, 2008a, p.444.

¹⁴ Thorough Tuñón, 2008a, pp. 165-166. See anyway to study thorough: López Aguilar and Rodríguez Drincourt, 2006.

¹⁵ The mentioned RUP and Canary secondary European legislation deals mainly about: Customs Union, Commercial Policy, Taxation, Structural Funds, State Aids, Agriculture, Bananas, Fishing, Supplying Specific System, or Tobacco.

¹⁶ See datas afforded by the European Commission through: European Union 2004a, 2004b, 2006a, 2006b.

political elite. Traditionally, both sub-state top executive politicians have been much more interested in local and regional matters than involved in the European integration. Therefore, the European regional strategies have been (also in both cases) lead by a very qualified and involved administrative elite. It designed the regional approach, and its success became its own challenge.

However, the Walloon and the Canary activations have also several differences, which determine its different impacts. First of all, the Walloon European activation enjoys maybe the most (with Flanders) extensive direct participation in the decisive Council of Ministers mechanism. Due to the prerogatives conceded by the Federalism, the Belgian regions show up in the Council much more than any other European region. In spite of the specific participation possibilities the Canaries also enjoys within this channel, those remain much more reduced than the Walloon ones.

Secondly, both regional activations also differ about the resource quantities invested. In spite of Wallonia and the Canaries come from a similar weak economic situation, the Archipelago bet always for the European challenge much more than the Belgian region. The convulse Canary regional politic always (and maybe only) agreed about the necessity to approach and to invest towards the EU. Therefore, the Canary lobby has always been one of the better financed and equipped in Brussels. It has not been possible to find in Wallonia a similar common agreement about the regional dependence and activation to Europe.

Thirdly and linked to the above mentioned factor, both strategies differ about its extension. While the Walloon focuses in a few number of mechanisms (mainly the Council of Ministers), the canarians bet for a cumulative activation strategy, and split its large amount of resources among all of them (sometimes looking for visibility and networking and not for direct efficiency). The difference explanation is linked to the psychological feeling of distance and proximity to the heart of Europe. While the Canaries are so far away and its citizens feel that their interests are so different from the Europeans, Wallonia is just in the centre of the EU. Therefore, while the Archipelago feels the necessity to bring its demands to Brussels using every single channel, Wallonia feels its demands are so obvious and close to Brussels, it does not need to desperately take advantage of every single mechanism (as example, it has not got its proper regional office in Brussels because it thinks it is not necessary being so close to Brussels).

Fourthly, both regional activations differ about the Canary Ultra-peripheral legal recognition. This is not only a geographic very important factor, obviously not shared with Wallonia. After the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997) legal European recognition, the whole Canary activation strategy revolved about it. Canary Islands have used its major political success to get a singular and differentiated presence within almost the whole range of mechanisms analysed. Therefore, the region enjoys until now a privileged presence in: the Ultra-periphery group of the Council of Ministers, the RUP unit in the European Commission Directorate-General for Regional Policy, the Ultra-periphery commission within the Committee of the Regions; the successful RUP group the region leads, the Islands commission within the CRPM, or the Canaries-State bilateral commission. All these facilities lead the Canaries to develop a strategy focused in: networking, lobbying practices and informal approaches towards the European institutions, but also to many other European regions and the own Spanish state. In fact, this Ultra-peripheral variable is the key element which distinguishes, not only Canary and Walloon activations, but Canary and every European region (except the other six RUP ones) mobilisations.

Once main similarities and differences about Walloon and Canary activations have been exposed, it may be discussed which one has until now been more successful. The objective data show that (between 1986 and 2006) while the Canaries grew from the 65% to the 92% of the European average, Wallonia only grew a few points between the 82% and the 85-86%. Moreover, the quantity of specific legal European

Ultra-peripheral regulations¹⁷, also prove the extraordinary Canary impact within EU framework. Therefore and in spite of the more often Walloon direct presence in the crucial Council of Ministers, at current the Canary impact is higher than the Walloon. These results agree with Jeffery theories, who always defended that it is more important to influence the European national position than the symbolic fact of being directly present in the sessions defending that agreed common position (Jeffery, 2000). Our research also proves that it is not always so crucial to enjoy a direct participation in the Council of Ministries. Specific and informal channels due to the Ultra-peripheral European recognition revealed a major usefulness.

However, it must also be revealed some weakness about the Canary growth. Indeed, it is not homogeneous at all. Macro-economic data reveal an important growth, but European funds have not been properly shared out. In fact, the Canaries still offer very high relative distribution poverty index, its educational, social and health system are still underdeveloped, and the first necessity product prices are the highest all over Spain¹⁸. Moreover, despite its permanent handicaps the EU can not ensure to the Archipelago, permanent or life allowances from the European funds, which until nowadays determined the Canary growth. 2004 and 2007 EU enlargements would make useless the Canary, but also the Walloon, pragmatic approach towards the European institutions. In spite of their permanent handicaps (more than well exploited until now), how could the Canaries (92% of the European GDP) explain the EU, it deserve more than new East member state regions (some of them around half of the European GDP) the European funds? Mainly the Canaries, but also Wallonia, may adapt themselves, its growth and its European integration to the new reality. None of them (2 and 3,3 million citizens), will enjoy higher influence in the European decision-making process, and more EU outputs, than they already got. Therefore, Wallonia and the Canaries may renew its activation strategies to lose only progressively its influence quotas in the new enlarged, 27 states and 480 million citizens, European Union.

¹⁷ Cheek the following compilation: Government of the Canary Islands, 2002.

¹⁸ Teresa González de la Fé and Pedro Carballo, among other canarian academics, coincide about the mentioned situation. Through Tuñón, 2008a.

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