

ACCEPTING ULTRAPERIPHERY: THE ROLE OF THE CONFERENCE OF PERIPHERAL MARITIME REGIONS (CPMR) IN THE TERRITORIAL MOBILIZATION STRATEGY OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE AZORES WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION

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Abstract

The territorial mobilization strategy of the Regional Government of the Azores (GRAA) with the European Union (EU) is based on the use of all regionally based representation channels provided by the EU, including the Transregional European Associations (TEAs). Among these, we highlight the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) which GRAA presided during the 11th and 12th Governments, in the person of the president of GRAA Vasco Cordeiro. Based on this observation and given that the literature still does not offer any information on the purpose of using TEAs, this article aims to fill this gap by identifying the purpose of the GRAA's using the CPMR. Thus, using the conceptual framework offered by Callanan and Tatham (2014) and by conducting eight semi-structured interviews with political and technical personalities from the GRAA and the CPMR, it was possible to conclude that the GRAA uses the CPMR mainly for the purpose of regulatory mobilization. (4.9 out of 5) and residually for the purpose of financial mobilization (3.3 out of 5). More specifically, in terms of regulatory mobilization, the essential issue for the GRAA is the maintenance of a strong cohesion policy, although sporadic opportunities are probed in various policy areas that may result in more advantageous frameworks for the GRAA. In terms of financial mobilization, the use of the CPMR is mainly related to the formation of consortia that can be an end in itself or can constitute an opportunity to prove certain political points.

Keywords

Territorial mobilization; Regional Government of the Azores (GRAA); European Union; Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions.

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Introduction

The territorial mobilization strategy of the Regional Government of the Azores (GRAA) with the European Union (EU) is based on the use of all regionally based representation channels provided by the EU, including the Transregional European Associations (TEA). Among these, we highlight the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) which the GRAA presided over during the 11th and 12th Governments, in the person of the president of the GRAA Vasco Cordeiro between 2014 and 2020. The Europeanist vocation of the GRAA (Valente, 2017) and of the successive governments manifests itself in a strategy of strength in all channels of regional mobilization (Antunes and Magone, 2020). The Autonomous Region of the Azores (RAA) is not limited to trying to remedy a condition of apparent disadvantage, as is the case of the outermost regions. In fact, this potential is used as a strength and an opportunity by the region, as attested by Vasco Cordeiro, the President of the Regional Government of the 11th and 12th Governments of the Azores (from 2012 to 2020) (interview 2021h). In the same line of thought, for the assistant to the Regional Undersecretary of the Presidency for External Relations between 2012 and 2016 and Regional Director for European Affairs between 2016 and 2020: "*insularity is not fought, it is accepted*" (interview 2021b).

Therefore, it is in this particular context that the European political system emerges as a structure of political opportunity that allows regional entities to compensate for their peripheral position (Beyers and Kerremans, 2012). Participation in the European decision-making process, through the institutionalization of formal and informal channels, inside and outside European institutions, has allowed sub-national actors to influence key institutional actors at European level (Tatham, 2008). The objective is to influence the decision-making process in matters that may affect the interests of the Region, on the one hand, and to monitor funding opportunities that can enhance regional

¹ Article translated by Carolina Peralta.



development, on the other. The idea is to anticipate and sometimes override the action of central governments, in a proactive attitude that has earned the name of national bypassing (Keating et al, 2015).

The RAA's representation strategy with the EU as an Outermost Region (OR) does not differ from the strategies developed by other similar political regions. Similar to what happens with the German Landers or the Spanish Autonomous Communities, the GRAA participates in the dynamics of representation that arise within the framework of multilevel governance (MLG), seeking to promote the interests of the Azores Archipelago through the use of different channels - or access routes - provided by the EU itself. In this regard, Gary Marks (e.g. 1992 and 1993) was a pioneer in the operationalization of this new dynamic of European multilevel governance. Due to a context of power dispersion that operates upwards, for the European institutions, and downwards, for the sub-state entities, regional (and sometimes local) authorities feel legitimated to participate in decision-making at European level. This access is made through two routes, the national route provided by the Permanent Representation of Portugal to the European Union (REPER) and the Brussels route, although the latter is the most favoured given the freedom and autonomy of action it offers. It is in this last category that, along with the Regional Offices in Brussels (Rowe, 2011; Tatham, 2010), the participation in the TEA, such as the CPMR (Greenwood, 1997), stands.

Thus, by integrating the CPMR, the RAA fulfils the imperative signalled by Bomberg and Peterson (1998: 229): any subnational authority that wants to influence decision-making processes in the EU must position itself in coalitions within and between TEA. Thus, it can influence institutions, listing, as a bargaining chip for access to political decision-makers, the triad of information, experience and legitimacy (Beyers et al. 2008).

Whereas, on the one hand, the EU is understood as a structure of political opportunity by subnational territorial authorities (regional and local), on the other hand, European institutions need information from the domestic (including subnational) level, from technical advice to potential compliance issues (Beyers and Karremans, 2007). In addition, subnational entities, which actively participate in the download of European guidelines, must also be involved in the upload process (Bursens, 2010: 163-164). Thus, the territory is consolidated not as a neutral component, but as an interactive system in which specific conditions, resources, ties and capabilities coexist.

However, the literature on RAA mobilization in the EU is quite scarce. The existing literature essentially focuses on the mobilization of the Portuguese Autonomous Regions in favour of the definition and consolidation of the Ultraperipheral Region (UR) (Valente, 2013, 2016a, 2016b and 2017). More recently, Callanan and Tatham (2014), as well as Antunes and Magone (2020), contributed to the identification of the mobilization rationales underlying the activity of regional and local representative offices. Still, the dynamics of regionally based territorial mobilization via the TEA continue to be little studied. Even so, the salience of the TEAs, namely the CPMR, is confirmed by the aforementioned authors, as well as by the systematic mention in other studies of territorial mobilization strategies (Bomberg and Peterson, 1998; Hooghe, 2007; Tatham, 2008; Rowe, 2011).



This article aims to fill this gap by identifying the purpose of the GRAA's use of the CPMR through the concepts of regulatory mobilization and financial mobilization (Callanan and Tatham, 2014). With this purpose in mind, this article will be organized into five parts. At first, it will identify the regionally based representation channels made available by the EU, among which the CPMR stands out. Then, it will present the conceptual framework of analysis and explain its methodological choices before presenting and discussing the data. Finally, in the conclusion, it will make some general considerations and identify new research paths.

1. Regionally based representation channels in the European Union: the case of the CPMR

The EU offers multiple opportunities for regionally based territorial mobilization. This process, through which interest groups move between access points, is called 'venue shopping', a term coined by Baumgartner and Jones (1993), which can be applied to European dynamics. This concept refers to the search for the access point to the EU that offers the best opportunities to achieve the actor's specific objectives. In the case of the EU, the literature distinguishes between the national route and the European routes (Loughlin, 1997; Hooghe, 1995; Greenwood, 1997). Within the latter, we identify formal channels and informal channels (Beyers and Bursens, 2006: 1075).

According to Greenwood (1997), the national route refers to the mediation provided by the national governments themselves through the Permanent Representation of Portugal to the EU (REPER). The use of the national route depends on the role of the central government in different stages of the European political process, including decision-making in the Council and its implementation, i.e. it depends on the extent to which the central state provides a familiar and convenient route of access to regional interests. Greenwood (ibid.) describes centralization as conducive to successful use of the national route. This is due to centralization providing better governmental coordination in terms of European affairs. In contrast, for more decentralized states, coordination is more difficult.

The Brussels route, also known as the European route, consists of the use of formal and informal channels that involve direct representation in the European institutions (Antunes and Magone, 2020). In fact, it is mainly on the Brussels route that we can speak through formal and informal channels. In order to be characterized as formal, channels must simultaneously fulfil two conditions (Kovzridze, 2002: 129): first, relationships must be regulated by the constitution or any other document with legal status, such as laws or intergovernmental agreements between levels of government; second, the relationship between the structures (sub-state, national and supranational authorities) must be ensured by inter-institutional coordination mechanisms, exercised on a regular basis. Informal relationships are defined in opposition to the former, which is why they take place without legally foreseen institutional mechanisms.

Within the framework of the Brussels route, the main formal channel of specifically regional representation is the Committee of the Regions (CoR). There are other formal channels, namely the European Commission, the European Council and the European Parliament, which, although they are formal channels of representation, are nationally



and not regionally based. Informal channels of regional mobilization are based on practices that are not required by law, but which are capable of eclipsing formal rules (Kovziridze, 2002; Beyers and Bursens, 2006; Hogenauer, 2014) and becoming highly institutionalized, used on a regular basis and relevant to regional mobilization strategies. The main informal channels are essentially two: The Regional Representative Offices, widely covered in the literature on territorial mobilization in the EU (Hooghe, 1995; Marks et.al, 2002; Tatham, 2008; Rowe, 2011) and the TEAs, the "poor relative" of regional offices given the little attention it has received from the literature.

Despite this lack of attention, the TEAs are important thanks to the characteristics of the European decision-making process. This is the tendency to reward aggregate interests, for reasons of legitimacy and efficiency, given the competition for time, naturally limited, between interests (Bomberg and Peterson, 1998: 229). Also noteworthy is the more explicit recognition of the need to involve regional and local government associations in the EU policy process at European and national level with initiatives. Examples include as the White Paper on European Governance, the "structured dialogue" with associations of regional and local authorities and the provisions on local and regional authorities of the Treaty of Lisbon (Callanan, 2012: 756).

The CPMR is a TEA that is part of the informal channels of the Brussels route, similar to the Regional Representative Offices. Created in 1973 (CPMR, 1973) in Brittany, France, by 23 regions from eight-member states, the CPMR is a TEA that aims to promote the development of European territory, with special emphasis on the development of maritime and peripheral regions. The CPMR functions as a strategic office (think tank) and as a regional lobby, and is made up of around 114 regions. Its members come from regions of 24 member and non-member states of the European Union, representing approximately 200 million people. These regions are subdivided in the institutional structure into Geographical Commissions² (GC) which, since 1980 with the emergence of the first GC, of the Islands, correspond to the maritime basins of the European continent. As an example of its dynamism, we can mention that the CPMR was very useful in co-organizing conferences with the EC on issues where the latter felt that more consultation was needed (Tatham, 2010), mainly due to its ability to mobilize maritime regions. In fact, the CPMR is important, as attested by its mention in several works (Bomberg and Peterson, 1998; Tatham, 2008; Rowe, 2011; Callanan and Tatham, 2014; Antunes and Magone, 2020), with authors naming it among peers able to exert a significant presence regarding EU mobilization.

Regarding the participation of the RAA in the CPMR, the RAA has been part of the organization and has participated in its activities since 1979, even before Portugal joined the then EEC. There are no records of the Azores having served as president or vice president of the Conference before 2014, the year when Vasco Cordeiro was elected as president of the CPMR, at the General Assembly in Umeå (Sweden). The election of Vasco Cordeiro was repeated in 2016 in Ponta Delgada and in 2018 in Funchal, considering that the terms of office are for two years. Even so, there is an effort on the part of the governments of Carlos César, president of the Government of the Azores between 1996 and 2012, who also presided over the GC of the Islands for at least one term (interview

² For additional information, check the CPMR website here: <https://cpmr.org/who-we-are/geographical-commissions/> accessed on 10 December 2021.



2021b; RTP-Açores, 2010). The TEAs, like the CPMR, have a role in promoting specific regional interests when they overlap with those of other regions and can be instrumentalized by some regions to advance their agenda (Tatham, 2008: 508). Still, limited attention has been paid in the literature on regional mobilization to the TEAs (Beyers and Donas, 2012). In contrast, the importance of networking in gaining influence in EU policymaking processes has been repeatedly highlighted (Bomberg and Peterson, 1998; Tatham, 2008; Beyers and Donas, 2014).

Therefore, the strategy of mobilizing the RAA through the CPMR proves to be a case study capable of filling the gap in the literature in terms of the study of the TEAs. Whereas the prominence of the CPMR in the context of regional mobilization is proven by being mentioned in several works (Bomberg and Peterson, 1998; Tatham, 2008; Rowe, 2011; Callanan and Tatham, 2014; Antunes and Magone, 2020), the importance that the RAA attributed to it is confirmed by the successive presidencies of Vasco Cordeiro. Taking into account the conceptualization of the informal channels of the Brussels route, this research seeks to ascertain whether the concepts widely used in the study of Regional Representation Offices can be equally used in the study of a TEA.

2. The objectives of territorial mobilization: regulatory and financial mobilization

This research is based on a conceptual reflection already developed (Callanan and Tatham, 2014) on the types of mobilization that constitute the main rationales of regional actors in Brussels: financial mobilization, which arises with the centrality of the issue of cohesion policy in the study of subnational mobilization; and regulatory mobilization, less explored and seen as arising from the EU regulatory bias (Majone, 1994).

By financial mobilization, we refer to monitoring and collecting information with a view to accessing European funds for specific regions or areas. This mobilization is characterized as a more reactive process, with an emphasis on obtaining rewards or designing support for individual territories based on European funding schemes (Callanan and Tatham, 2014: 191-192). By regulatory mobilization, we mean a proactive and dynamic process in which regional and local governments seek to influence EU policies and legislative outcomes. Emphasis is placed on activities designed to influence the EU legislative process, where legislation has an administrative or financial impact on subnational governments (ibid: 194).

Although Callanan and Tatham have used these notions to explain the mobilization purposes associated with regional representation offices, we believe that this conceptual framework can be equally useful to understand the mobilization logics underlying the use of the TEAs, taking the CPMR as a particular case. In doing so, we intend to identify the purpose(s) for which the GRAA uses the CPMR for the purposes of representing its interests in the EU.

Finally, and similarly to what Callanan and Tatham argue, we believe that the GRAA, as an Autonomous Region with substantial political competences, will privilege territorial mobilization for lobbying purposes, that is, for the purposes of regulatory mobilization, as follows: GRAA uses the CPMR mainly for regulatory mobilization purposes and



residually for financial mobilization purposes. This hypothesis, while expecting a greater prominence of regulatory mobilization, does not, however, exclude financial mobilization.

3. Research method and design

This paper consists of a case study (Yin, 2018: 49) that can be understood as an empirical method that examines a contemporary phenomenon (the case) in depth and within its context in the real world, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident. A case study addresses a situation where there are many variables of interest and, therefore, benefits from the further development of propositions to guide design, information collection, and analysis.

Also according to Yin (ibid: 50), we can highlight three distinct applications of this study method. Case studies can aim at mere *description*, *explanation* or *exploration*. Thus, we speak of descriptive case studies when the purpose is to describe and identify the nature of a phenomenon. Alternatively, we speak of explanatory case studies when the purpose is mainly to explain the occurrence of a certain phenomenon. Finally, we speak of exploratory case studies when the purpose is above all to explore phenomena never studied before, thus treading new paths of intellection. The case study in question can be described as descriptive insofar as it seeks to identify the reasons for territorial mobilization that guide the action of the GRAA with the EU, in the use of the CPMR as a channel of informal mediation.

For the purposes of data collection, we favoured the use of primary sources through interviews with eight politicians and technicians relevant in the relationship between the GRAA and the CPMR. This sample is made up of almost all politicians at the highest level of the 11th and 12th Azores Governments who worked daily on European affairs and agreed to be interviewed. The initials of the interviewees resulted from a research in the official sources of the GRAA, but also from the contribution of the interviewees, namely at the level of the most relevant contacts in the CPMR.

Regarding the actual interviews, we prepared a semi-structured guide (Creswell, 2009), with open and closed questions (Appendix I). According to Mathews and Ross (2010), the semi-structured interview, with open and closed questions, follows a common set of topics or questions for each interview. It introduces the topics or questions in different ways or orders appropriate for each situation and allows the participants to respond to the questions or discuss the topic in their own words. Semi-structured interviews can be used for exploration, explanation and evaluation purposes. In this case, we use the first two: exploratory research to understand what participants think is important about the research topic and understand how they talk about it; and explanatory research to gather information that will help explain people's experience and the social phenomenon in a particular and profound way. For triangulation purposes, secondary sources were also used, such as official documents, mainly from the CPMR.

Data collection refers to the time frame 2012-2020. This period starts in 2012 with the election of the president of GRAA, Vasco Cordeiro, and ends in 2020 with the end of his term. In 2014, Vasco Cordeiro was elected for the first time as president of the CPMR. In 2016 and 2018, Vasco Cordeiro was re-elected for the second and third time,



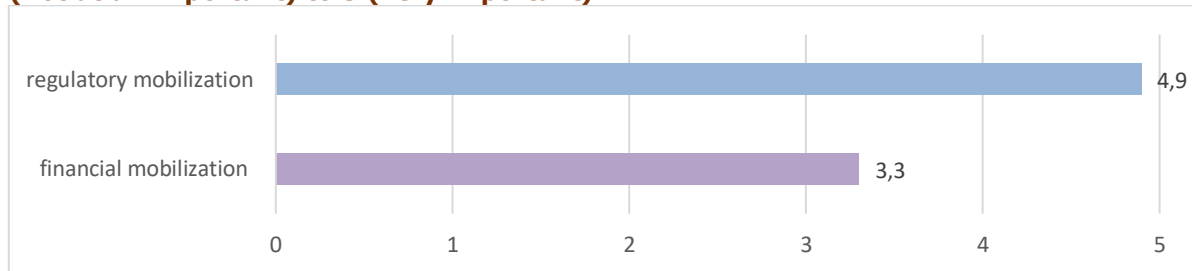
respectively. The year 2020 thus puts an end to the continuity of Vasco Cordeiro's term as president of GRAA and the CPMR.

4. Presentation and discussion of data

In the interviews with the eight individuals, they were asked to assign a value from 1 to 5 to each of the CPMR's mobilization objectives, with 1 being not at all important and 5 being very important. The global results are shown in graph 1, showing the average of the responses for each of the mobilizations.

Thus, regulatory mobilization is the most predominant, reaching an average of 4.9 out of 5, while financial mobilization reaches an average value of 3.3 out of 5. Nevertheless, the assistant to the Regional Undersecretary of the Presidency for External Relations between 2012 and 2016 and the Regional Director for European Affairs between 2016 and 2020 (interview 2021b) admits the strong link that exists between both objectives, as we will see later.

Graph 1 – Importance of each mobilization for the CPMR. The scale used ranges from 1 (not at all important) to 5 (very important)



Source: Authors' own

Looking in more detail at the results obtained in Graph 2 below, with regard to regulatory mobilization, and similarly to what is mentioned in the literature (Callanan and Tatham, 2014), the preponderance of cohesion policy is obvious (7.5/8), maritime affairs (7.2/8), after the energy continuum (6.5/8), environment (6.3/8), and climate change (5.2/8). Accessibility also plays an important role in terms of mobilization opportunities (4.8/8). Of the 'official' areas of the CPMR, the one that seems least important to the GRAA is, in fact, the global agenda, especially related to migration. In the opinion of the Assistant Regional Undersecretary of the Presidency for External Relations between 2012 and 2016 and Regional Director for European Affairs between 2016 and 2020 (interview 2021b) and the Regional Undersecretary of the Presidency for External Relations between 2012 and 2016 (interview 2021g), although many ORs and other members of the CPMR receive a significant flow of migrants, this is not an issue that poses a problem for the Azores, which are positioned in terms of reception experiences (c.f. The Regions for Migrants and Refugees Integration – REGIN, Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions, 2021).

In this context, cohesion policy is the key component of the CPMR, especially for the Azores, an OR considered a less developed region, with a GDP per capita below 75% of the EU average (Antunes and Magone, 2020: 8). Part of the CPMR's work includes



advocating a strong cohesion policy that strengthens territorial cohesion in Europe. In this context, regulatory recognition of the specific characteristics of the outermost regions, safeguarded by Article 355 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU), and of other territories that face permanent deficits, such as islands, mountain regions and regions of low population density is particularly important (CPMR, 2013).

According to the Assistant to the Regional Undersecretary of the Presidency for External Relations between 2012 and 2016 and Regional Director for European Affairs between 2016 and 2020 (interview 2021b), the question of balance of interests is also present here, because, if the outermost regions defend a private disposition for themselves, the other territories are also entitled to do so. This opinion is corroborated by the president of the 11th and 12th Governments of the Azores (interview 2021h) when he states that the CPMR is not oriented – and was not even thought of – to defend only the interests of specific regions or even typologies of regions such as the ORs, but rather of all its members

Graph 2 – Averages of areas of regulatory mobilization ordered by GRAA interviewees. The scale used is from 8 (most important) to 1 (least important).



Note: In blue, the conventional areas of activity of the CPMR. In green, the additional areas suggested by respondents.

Source: Authors' own

In the context of cohesion policy, the CPMR regretted the proposed decrease in the EC budget, as well as the reduction in co-financing of regions with structural deficits, namely the ORs (European Commission, 2018a: 106-107), and the maintenance of the statutes concerned, in the Final Declaration of the 46th General Assembly of the CPMR (CPMR, 2018: 3-4). The CPMR played an important role in the crystallization of cohesion policy. "In 2017, the European Commission launched a public consultation on what is expected of cohesion. It is curious that any reference to 'cohesion policy' was almost absent from that consultation, there was talk of cohesion, but 'cohesion policy' was something that was falling into disuse" (interview with the President of the Regional Government between 2012 and 2020, 2021h).

This trend is also demonstrated by the CPMR report, 'The Impact of the CPMR 2015-2020' (CPMR, 2021), whose action had at least two important moments. In the first, the



CPMR was able to underline, at the highest level, the importance of Cohesion Policy in the post-2020 period. In the second, after several indications at a formal (European Commission, 2018a, pp. 106-107) and informal (interview 2021e) level of drastic cuts in Cohesion Policy, President Juncker expressed his support for this policy (European Commission, 2018b). In terms of the Azores, the most emblematic recent example will be exactly the negotiation process of the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027.

Overall, all respondents point to the dynamic posture of the organization that contributed to the EU maintaining a co-financing rate of 85% for the ORs (Official Journal of the European Union, 2013: 396). Although the CPMR was not the only channel in which the Azores acted, it is described by the GRAA interviewees as fundamental to the results obtained. According to the assistant to the Regional Undersecretary of the Presidency for External Relations between 2012 and 2016 and Regional Director for European Affairs between 2016 and 2020 and the advisor for External Relations of the President of the Regional Government of the Azores between 2012 and 2020 (interviews 2021a and 2021c), the EC's initial proposal envisaged a reduction in funds for the Azores, 70% of the funding would be provided by European funds, the remaining 30% would be provided by the region, which represented a decrease of 15 percentage points in relation to the European funding of the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 (Official Journal of the European Union, 2020: 468). This was effectively a success that added to the maintenance of the OR envelope in the previous Multiannual Financial Framework.

The pandemic has also played an important role, but there was a two-year work of contacts and conversation with the EC and the EP, which resulted in a fundamental change in the EU's stance towards the substantial fund that finances the ORs the most, according to the advisor for External Relations of the president of the Regional Government of the Azores between 2012 and 2020 (interview 2021c). Nevertheless, as mentioned by the Regional Undersecretary of the Presidency for External Relations between 2012 and 2016 (interview 2021g), there is a use of sporadic opportunities in several policy areas in terms of regulatory influence, especially in ensuring the mention and respect for the statute of outermost regions, as well as other measures to mitigate the added costs of insularity, which is why energy, transport and maritime policies are also important.

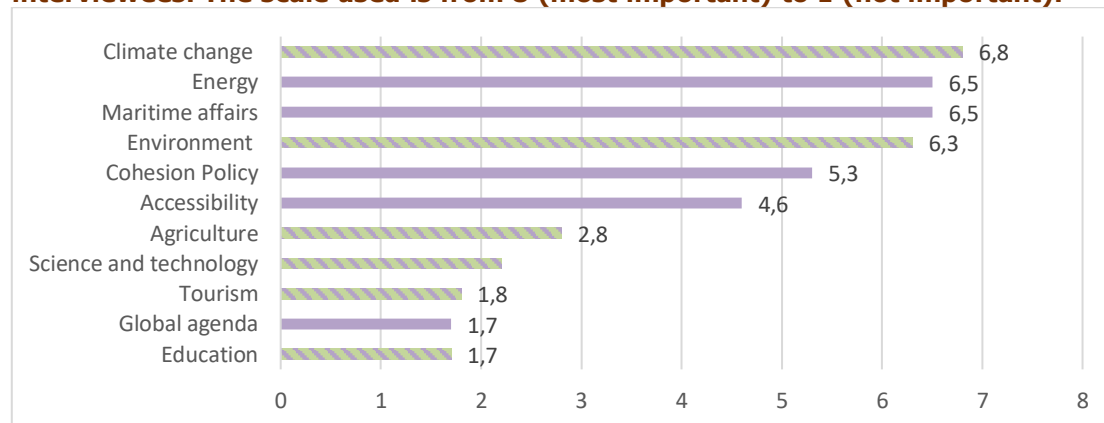
Regarding financial mobilization, the most important areas have to do with the environment in a broad way (graph 3): climate change (6.8/8), energy (6.5/8) maritime affairs (6.5/8), environment (6.3/8). Cohesion policy appears in a less important position compared to the prominence it has in regulatory mobilization. As the assistant to the Regional Undersecretary of the 12th Government of the Azores (interview 2021b) points out, when we talk about fundraising, we refer to "*identifying sources of funding other than those to which we would be entitled at the outset, for example, responses to calls, Horizon Europe, which we compete with other regions*".

In this regard, the projects that the member regions integrate, given the nature of their interests, stand out, in addition to the projects promoted by the consortia created within the organization itself. As the advisor for External Relations of the President of the Regional Government of the Azores between 2012 and 2020 explains (interview 2021c), "*these consortia are not exactly from the CPMR, they are from some of the regions that*



make up the CPMR (...). The organization [CPMR] assembles a consortium, typically 3 to 5 partners, applies as CPMR and, if it wins, the money is shared by all the regions”.

Graph 3 – Averages of the areas of financial mobilization ordered by the GRAA interviewees. The scale used is from 8 (most important) to 1 (not important).



Explanation: In lilac, the conventional areas of activity of the CPMR. In green, the additional areas suggested by respondents.

Source: Authors' own

This information is also confirmed by the Assistant to the Regional Undersecretary of the Presidency for External Relations between 2012 and 2016 and the Regional Director for European Affairs between 2016 and 2020 (interview 2021b), who states that *“these regions can determine that the CPMR will keep a part of the financial envelope for its own financing, to accompany the project, but it is not the core business of the CPMR. The CPMR operates normally until the moment the consortium is formed”*.

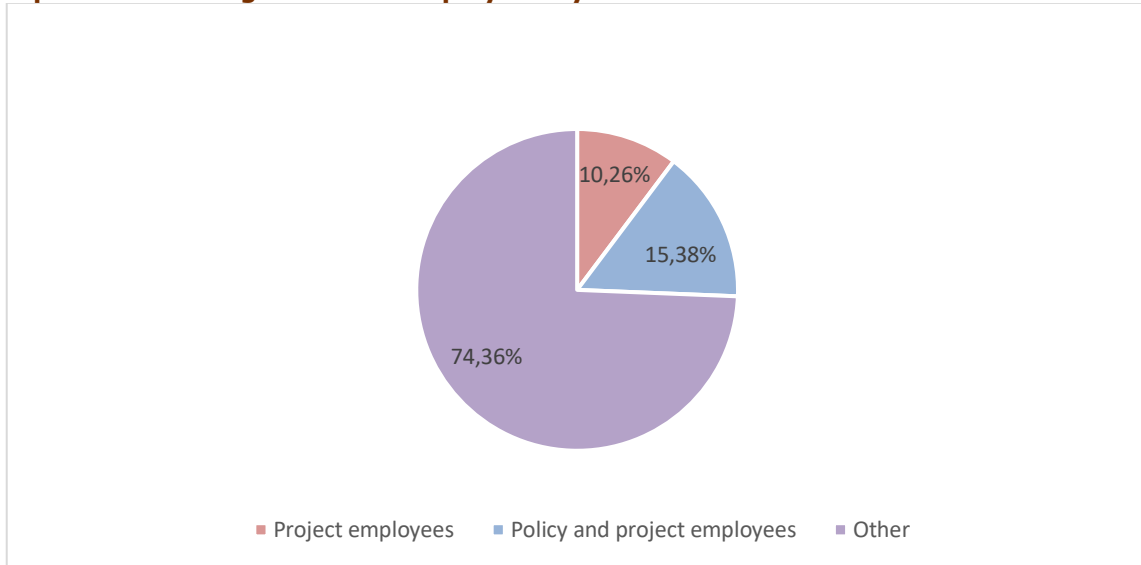
As we can see in Graph 4 below, some of the CPMR employees are only assigned to projects, such as Interreg, because what they do all their time is to develop these projects, they are the so-called project employees. Different from the above are policy and project officers, who spend between 20% and 30% of their time on projects and the rest on political issues, with a more regulatory bent. Cumulatively, the number of employees who dedicate themselves to the projects reaches approximately 26% of the total, although only about 10% do so exclusively.

At the CPMR, participation in Interreg programmes is also noteworthy, since the organization's structure is based on Geographical Commissions. According to the executive secretary of GC of the Islands (interview 2020e), the CPMR reached *“critical mass in terms of participation in some projects at European level”* and was a partner in about four dozen projects at the time of the interview, so it is relatively easy for the CPMR to set up a consortium and conduct a project. In this sense, the assistant to the Regional Undersecretary of the Presidency for External Relations between 2012 and 2016 and the Regional Director for European Affairs between 2016 and 2020 (interview 2021b) confirms the primacy of the practice of regulatory mobilization over financial mobilization by stating that: *“(..) although the participation of projects is important, the GRAA sought above all to promote regulatory mobilization at the level of the CPMR’. And she adds that “(..) as a rule, the regions that search for other [non-pre-allocated] funds where they*



have to do it in a competitive way, it is because they do not receive the structural funds that we receive (...)".

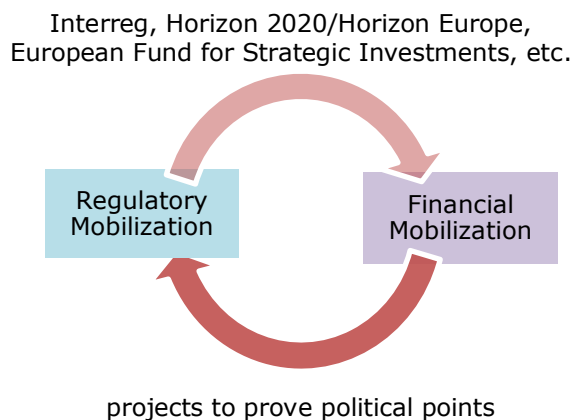
Graph 4 - Percentage of CPMR employees by function



Source: Authors' own³

However, as a final note, it should be noted that day-to-day practice presents 'grey areas'. Sometimes, consortia can have a dual purpose: they can be an end in themselves or they can be also an opportunity to prove certain political points (interview with the advisor for External Relations of the 12th Regional Government of the Azores, 2021c), so it is impossible to separate the two purposes of territorial mobilization, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 – Relationship between regulatory mobilization and financial mobilization at project level



Source: Authors' own

³ About the CPMR, check the website: <https://cpmr.org/who-we-are/> accessed on 10 December 2021.



Conclusion

The CPMR is important to the RAA because it enables networking, the importance of which has been highlighted in gaining influence in regional mobilization in the EU (Bomberg and Peterson, 1998; Hooghe and Marks, 1996, Tatham, 2008; Beyers and Donas, 2014). On the other hand, this horizontal interaction between regions through TEAs has received limited attention in the literature (Beyers and Donas, 2014).

This article aimed to identify the objectives behind the use of the TEAs, namely the CPMR, by complementing previous research and focusing only and deeply on the strategy of mobilizing the GRAA in the EU through the CPMR. The importance of the CPMR is evidenced by being mentioned in several works (Bomberg and Peterson, 1998; Tatham, 2008; Rowe, 2011; Callanan and Tatham, 2014), with authors naming the organization among peers able of exerting a significant presence at the level of EU mobilization. Of these authors, the contribution of Antunes and Magone (2020) stands out, who used the conceptual framework of Callanan and Tatham (2014) to study the general mobilization strategy of regional authorities in Mainland Portugal (i.e. the Regional Coordination and Development Commissions) and the Portuguese Autonomous Regions in Brussels.

By using this same conceptual framework, we intend to understand for what purpose(s) the GRAA uses the CPMR regarding its regional mobilization strategy. From the beginning, in line with Callanan and Tatham (2014), we assumed that, as an autonomous region, the GRAA would privilege regulatory mobilization over financial mobilization, without excluding the latter. Data analysis corroborated this hypothesis: regulatory mobilization is the most predominant, reaching an average of 4.9 out of 5, while financial mobilization reaches a value of 3.3 out of 5, although most respondents admit the strong connection that exists between both objectives.

Regulatory mobilization is also the central area of action for the association. The essential issue for GRAA is the maintenance of a strong cohesion policy. As an OR and a less developed region, this factor is crucial for the development of the GRAA. The main focus is on cohesion policy (7.5/8). However, opportunities are also probed in various policy areas that could result in more advantageous frameworks for the GRAA, namely maritime affairs (7.2/8), energy (6.5/8) and environment (6.3/8).

In terms of financial mobilization, the GRAA is mainly interested in areas that have to do with the continuum of climate change (6.8/8), energy (6.5/8), maritime affairs (6.5/8) and environment (6.3/8). In this context, the performance of the CPMR, in line with the GRAA, is related to the formation of consortia for projects within the scope of Interreg, Horizon 2020/Horizon Europe or projects financed by the EIB. These projects can be an end in themselves or an opportunity to prove certain political points.

The main conclusion we draw from this study is that regulatory mobilization is more prevalent in the representation of the GRAA through the CPMR in the EU than financial mobilization. This mobilization strategy is mainly related to the cohesion policy and the maintenance of positive discrimination for the ORs, particularly in areas related to energy, the sea, the environment and accessibility. In this way, this article made it possible to study a Portuguese Autonomous Region individually through the conceptual



framework used by Callanam and Tatham (2014), Tatham (2017) at the level of regional offices and local-based government associations and by Antunes and Magone (2020) to explain the mobilization strategy of the Portuguese Autonomous Regions in the EU.

Finally, when considering acting in and through a TEA with regional base common interests, this work can outline some research paths. On the one hand, the mobilization objectives conceptualized by Callanan and Tatham (2014) can be used to understand the dynamics of the TEAs. On the other hand, the literature lacks a deeper understanding of the rationale for using financial mobilization in the service of regulatory mobilization.

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ANNEX

INTERVIEW GUIDE

PART I: The Territorial Mobilization of the 11th and 12th Governments of the Azores in the EU

1. What are the biggest challenges of the GRAA in terms of mobilization in the EU?
2. Why an EU presence is strategically relevant to the GRAA?
3. Indicate the regionally based mobilization channels in order of importance to the GRAA's strategy, with 1 being the most important and 3 being the least important.
 - National channels
 - o REPER (Permanent Representation of Portugal to the EU)
 - European channels
 - o European Commission
 - o European Parliament
 - o Committee of the Regions
 - o CPMR
 - o Representative Office in Brussels
4. Can you please justify your ranking?
5. Based on two possible mobilization purposes – for the purposes of influence or lobbying and fundraising –, for what purpose does the GRAA use 3 main channels of representation, namely:
 - a) Committee of the Regions;
 - b) CPMR;
 - c) direct representation via the representative office in Brussels
6. What is the importance of REPER for the representation of the interests of the Azores in the EU?

PART II: The participation of the Government of the Azores in the CPMR

1. When and how did the 11th and 12th GRAA first become aware of the mobilization opportunities at CPMR level?
2. From 0 to 5, what is the importance of the CPMR for the pursuit of GRAA's strategy? (0 being not important and 5 being very important)
3. In which institutions do you mobilize through the CPMR? Rank in order of importance, with 1 being the least important and 4 the most important.
 - a. European Parliament
 - b. European Commission



c. Committee of the Regions

d. COREPER

Would you add any? Which?

4. For what purpose do you use the CPMR?

a) to influence European legislation

b) to probe availability of financial transfers to the region

c) both

Assign a number from 0 to 5 (0 being not important and 5 being very important) to each one.

- To influence European legislation
- To probe availability of financial transfers to the region

5. When you use the CPMR to influence legislation, in which areas do you seek to act? Rate the different areas of activity from 1 to 5, with 1 being the least important and 5 the most important:

- Cohesion
- Regional policy
- Energy
- Maritime
- Agriculture
- Mobility
- Education
- Global agenda

6. Can you give examples of influence of European legislation?

7. Can you give examples of fundraising?

PART III: Evaluation of the Presidency of the CPMR and balance

1. What does the CPMR represent for the Government of the Azores?

2. What advantages did the CPMR Presidency bring to the Azores?

3. Do you think that the fact that you belonged to and held the presidency of the CPMR helped the Azores to fight insularity? If yes, in what way?

4. What were the main objectives of the CPMR presidency for the GRAA?

5. Bearing these goals in mind, what did they manage to do and what remained to be done?

6. How happy are you, from 1 (not at all happy) to 5 (very happy) with the mobilization potential of the CPMR in terms of:

- Regulatory mobilization
- Raising European funds

7. Which of the following policy areas continued to receive your attention in terms of mobilizing to influence European legislation?



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- Cohesion
 - Regional policy I
 - Energy
 - Maritime
 - Agriculture
 - Mobility
 - Education
8. Which of the following policy areas continued to deserve your attention regarding fundraising?
- Cohesion
 - Regional policy
 - Energy
 - Maritime
 - Agriculture
 - Mobility
 - Education
9. How has your level of satisfaction evolved over time? Has it been an ever-growing or up-and-down experience?
10. And now that the Government of the Azores no longer has the Presidency of the CPMR, what has changed?
11. Which other regions are particularly active in the CPMR?
12. Do you think you have learned from these experiences? In other words, do you think that the CPMR has been a source of learning for the Government of the Azores?
13. Do you think that the CPMR has encouraged networking with other regions? If yes, which regions have you networked with and in which areas of activity?
14. What benefits have the Azores reaped from this collaboration? Can you give examples?