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The Globalisation of Peripheries

Introduction

The category of periphery – although fundamental for the study of political space – seems to be troublesome, not to say suspicious. Due to its ambiguity and vagueness, it often serves as a handy tool for conducting sharp ideological disputes. The controversy around this category arises from the fact that no one wants to live in marginal territories and so this awareness is often suppressed and denied. Peripherality – like an insurmountable fate – is associated with backwardness, stagnation and, above all, a lack of autonomous concepts for the development of a given entity. Margins are usually regions that do not participate in mainstream modernisation processes due to their specific history and identity, which are not easy to reconcile with functioning in a supranational community.

The purpose of this work is to analyse the functioning of periphery areas in global structures, with particular emphasis on integrative groups such as the European Union (EU). The hypothesis of this analysis is that the crisis of the liberal architecture of the globe may affect the tendency of the margins to replace real convergence

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with superficial imitation of supranational institutions, potentially deepening centrifugal tendencies, including in the EU community. The concept of Europeanisation, which is key for this text, will be used in the sense of a multifaceted transfer of norms, rules and values, understood as a local variant of the phenomenon of globalisation, taking place within the EU (unionisation). This area of consideration is examined later in the article using the systems method, which is primarily based on Immanuel Wallerstein's core-periphery paradigm¹, as one of many possible variants perceiving the relationship of power and subordination taking place in a specific political space².

Modernisation as adaptation through integration

It is worth starting with considerations about the nature of the European integration process, which is unlikely to force the peripheralisation of new member states. Its inclusive character is manifested, inter alia, in empowering individuals from all areas of the community through the institution of supranational citizenship. The key decisions regarding this community are taken by unanimity, and the community respects the identity and procedural autonomy of its participants. Established based on international treaties, the EU does not assume diversifying the formal status of its member states. Its margins gain influence on the internal metamorphoses of the system because, under legal regulations, they are equal

¹ I. Wallerstein, *World-systems Analysis. An Introduction*, Durham – London: Duke University Press, 2004, p. 129.

² Cf. R. De Santis, T. Cesaroni, "Current Account «Core-Periphery Dualism» in the EMU", *World Economy*, 2016, vol. 39 (10); B.C. Thomas, "Core-Periphery Relations in the European Union and the Role of Central Places in Europe with a Focus on Regional Policy in Britain and Germany", *European Review*, 2013, vol. 21 (3); B. Copcea, "Integration and Inequalities in the Eastern European Countries", *Annals of Constantin Brancusi University of Targu-Jiu. Economy Series*, 2015, vol. 4; B. Plechanovová, "The EU Council Enlarged: North-South-East or Core-Periphery?", *European Union Politics*, 2011, vol. 12 (1).

participants in the decision-making process. Until now, the community has been quite open to new member states. Transitional periods on the road to full accession to the European core were usually the sole decisions of accessing countries.

Unlike Sovietisation, which maintains its subordinate republics in a state of permanent enslavement, Europeanisation assumes the subjective participation of its participants in joint institutions. Functioning in the communist empire led to the consolidation of the relationship of domination and supremacy through the advantage of politics over law, resulting in the allocation of costs to the periphery, and benefits to the main core. The assumption of the EU community was to reverse this trend, by also using structural assistance instruments. Integration understood in this way was to be the beginning of the interdependence of non-perpetuating inequalities that would serve to overcome old divisions. Its current foundation is not a highly integrated core, but a network of many sub-state and state entities as well as supranational agencies with a fairly low level of coordination. An independent judiciary, efficient bureaucracy and the implementation of the idea of the rule of law form the essence of this law-driven community³.

The Europeanisation process is implemented using rather soft forms of persuasion, such as demonstrating best practices, presenting guidelines and issuing specific recommendations. Many areas of this project involve coordinating activities, which assumes voluntariness in achieving common goals. The welfare of this kind of community depends, among others, on the socialisation mechanism of its participants, who learn new roles and formulas of cooperation. Since its functioning as a whole depends on the will of its members, reducing the inclination to joint modernisation can lead to the revival of the original fragmentation, resulting in the recurrence of the classic relationship between the core and the periphery of the

³ T.A. Börzel, T. Risse, "Conceptualizing the Domestic Impact of Europe", in: K. Featherstone, C.M. Radaelli, *The Politics of Europeanization*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 57.

system. At this point, it should be noted that the less significant the level of Europeanisation of the periphery countries is, the greater the pressure from EU structures on their adaptation seems to be. Therefore, the pressure of supranational institutions is felt more, not so much by the smallest countries as by entities with the lowest stage of modernisation. Then the actions of EU structures – as the guardians of the globalisation rules – may appear as disciplinary acts aimed at the least Europeanised countries.

In order to undergo the process of Europeanisation, a given country should have an appropriate potential and capacity for transformation manifested in efficient administration, public support and the weakness of integration opponents. This gives hope that the country will be an active participant in the transnational community in the future. Thus, if its government does not express the will to truly internalise European standards, the EU will remain helpless. Therefore, the motivation of citizens to participate in the mechanism of political and economic exchange is of key importance since these individuals are able to influence the policies of national authorities under the conditions of a democratic system.

A number of factors affecting the quality and effectiveness of the Euro-modernisation mechanism are emphasised. The most important are the costs of adapting to EU standards, as well as the scale of pressure exerted by community structures on the metamorphosis of a candidate/new member state. If the costs of remaining outside the integration process are higher than the outlays necessary for adaptation, the interested parties exhibit a greater tendency to adapt. What is more, the core's demonstration of consistency and determination in enforcing progress in the area of Europeanisation is also an important factor conducive to the internal transformation of these entities.

In the pre-accession period, integration is carried out based on “conditionality” by formulating expectations, persuasion and socialisation of the elites. Paradoxically, the community has a greater impact on candidates than on member states, given the scale and

pace of their intra-system metamorphoses. Due to the magnetic attracting power of membership prospects, Europeanisation can be most effective before a country joins the EU. Then, the integration core has an asymmetrical advantage but the goal of this process is the convergence of periphery countries, aimed at overcoming the traditional core-periphery division⁴. Since marginal areas have more to gain than core countries, they attempt to adapt to the community order. Instead of violence and domination, these countries experience pressure encouraging them to learn to gain the chance for subjective participation in a favourable economic exchange. While admission to cooperation becomes a reward for adopting EU standards, a delay in their proper implementation may suspend cooperation. Therefore, there are essentially no negative consequences of participation in the Europeanisation process, but rather positive incentives for undertaking mutually beneficial cooperation⁵.

Being in the EU community is a two-pronged process as it involves adapting to its principles on the one hand and projecting its own regulations on a supranational level on the other hand. In order to effectively carry out this “uploading”, the adaptation phase must first be completed by anchoring a state and internalising the rules for functioning in the community bodies. It is worth noting that the state should have sufficiently solid institutions to be able to finalise the first of the aforementioned stages. One of the accession criteria is the administrative capacity to implement the *acquis communautaire*. The institutional weakness of the margins can be a burden that extends the adaptation stage. Therefore, in the case of new member states, the projection phase cannot begin

⁴ This concept refers to Immanuel Wallerstein’s world-systems theory, dividing the globe into territories that differ from each other, including due to the degree of their wealth in capital, i.e. the core, the semi-periphery and the periphery. Vide: I. Wallerstein, *The Modern World System. Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World Economy in the Sixteenth Century*, New York: Academic Press, 1974.

⁵ A. Niedźwiecki, *Exploring the European Constitutional Sphere. Centre-Periphery Perspective*, in: *Europe in the Time of Crisis*, ed. by S. Konopacki, Łódź – Kraków: Uniwersytet Łódzki, 2014, p. 85.

unless the adjustment phase has definitively ended. At this point, it should be noted that it is the core of the system that defines criteria for belonging to the community and has discretionary power in assessing the degree of their fulfilment. Hence is the core states' right to express their opinions on the internal relations of countries accessing the EU.

The modernisation brought by the integration mechanism, however, seems quite uncertain because it involves a multitude of irregular and asymmetrical processes, not necessarily related to each other. It is uneven, chaotic and has periods of increased regression, which undermine the transmission of European standards to the national level. The ambiguous legitimacy of the EU community calls into question the effectiveness of its impact on marginal territories. Stronger national legitimisation, compared to the supranational level, enhances peripherality at the expense of the cohesion of the EU polity. Its reduced effectiveness may result from the adopted structure of the EU's institutional system. It is a mechanism without a centre, which is characterised by a fairly high level of dispersion. The process of Europeanisation, therefore, appears to be patchy and inconsistent because the community remains an insufficiently coordinated and institutionalised body. Its inconsistency and heterogeneity may lead to the weakening of the convergence process and, at the same time, to the revival of direct forms of supremacy and dependency among the community's participants. The community is unable to dominate marginal areas through EU regulatory mechanisms but its collapse may lead to the revitalisation of the historical core-periphery dichotomy⁶.

In this approach, the crisis of the unification process, aimed at eliminating the old divisions, may mean that politics revealing a more primary fragmentation dating back to the pre-modern era will come to the fore. These perturbations weaken the attractiveness

⁶ The leading core-periphery concepts include Stein Rokkan's theory of the "centre-periphery" cleavage (political science), Pierre Bourdieu's theory of forms of capital (sociology) and Teun van Dijk's critical discourse analysis (linguistics).

of the EU model for new member states that oppose adaptation to the unpopular project. In fact, the motivation to make changes left much to be desired in times of the recent economic downturn. The influence of the community clearly diminished and the modernisation of the periphery was shaken. It turned out that in the past the core was satisfied with their superficial transformation of the periphery countries, thanks to which the latter could obtain the expected effects quite quickly without modifying their internal relations too much. The community's weakness was that it accepted this state of affairs and did not draw conclusions from the fact that candidate countries did not actually implement standards. The periphery structure subject to apparent modernisation often appeared as a façade covering the rusty institutional machinery, only subject to cosmetic transformations. The impact of European bodies could therefore be assessed as insufficient since the marginal areas formerly simulated Europeanisation and today they are boldly contesting it.

The crisis of the periphery

An alternative to the implementation of the community order is exclusion and alienation, which cannot constitute a real development proposal for the periphery. Outside the process of Europeanisation, marginal territories can only function as crumple zones for geopolitical forces. This lack of alternatives makes the problem of voluntary membership in the integration system quite ambiguous. Participation in community mechanisms is not obligatory, but the costs of staying outside the circle of modernisation tend to be higher than the price to be paid in the course of adaptation. Therefore, the attitude of periphery areas towards the integration process is often limited to the consumption of goods produced by the core of the system. Being unable to contribute to ensuring universal peace, security or prosperity, margins are a passive reservoir of

basic production factors. They are not the creators of modernisation standards but become their recipients and objects of influence. Peripherality is therefore a deficit in the use of the opportunities that being part of a larger community entails. This gives way to passive behaviour and not thinking in terms of the community as a whole. Without paying attention to the convergence process, amorphous marginal areas only deepen existing divisions.

The elites of the periphery areas do not strengthen the order resulting from local conditions, but rather play the role of interpreters transposing the foreign order to hide their own, outdated institutional structure⁷. In this sense, the periphery formally establishes an order inspired by supranational patterns, but it tends to be only a screen that conceals past habits. These leaders choose the attitude of the proponents of the idea of the core, but they do not internalise its rules in practice, often barely creating the impression of transformation to weaken the modernisation pressure exerted by the core. At the same time, they contest the experience arising from the traditions of a given entity, which are treated as useless in the process of globalisation. Being dependent on the economic situation, the elites of marginal areas in fact argue over which core should be imitated in order to maintain continuity of existence because their fate is rather uncertain in the era of change. From this point of view, the true socialisation of the elites, which involves the assimilation of the community norms of conduct, is a rather debatable matter. By imitating the core's order, the interpreters miss a chance for real modernisation that would authorise them to influence the community's agenda. The core area is not interested in the prescriptions of non-Europeanised periphery elites.

In the era of globalisation, in which not only location matters, the core and periphery are not only geographical terms, but they also stand for a division into imitated and imitating countries. Participation in the community implies the import of transnational

⁷ Z. Bauman, *Legislators and Interpreters. On Modernity, Post-Modernity and Intellectuals*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987, p. 165.

ideas, rules and norms of action, which do not always remain compatible with local conditions, to national orders⁸. The order proposed by the core is sometimes a foreign construct for marginal areas so these regions prefer to imitate solutions coming from outside, making them a façade that hides their old habits. Undertaking adaptation activities is necessary to demonstrate internal and external progress. However, the periphery usually decides to imitate the EU order to maintain the benefits of the economic situation generated by the community. The “the end of history” period and the related dividend of peace can sometimes be spent on mindless adaptation instead of autonomous development that would be more suited to the local specificity of the periphery. Many regulations are adopted there almost without discussion as part of the implementation of the Euro-integration order.

Imitating the process of Europeanisation to obtain a certificate of normality quickly was to be the shortest path to freedom and prosperity in periphery territories. However, this did not bring the expected results because this did not give a sense of satisfaction and fulfilment. The pursuit of the idealised model created tensions that turned into confusion and alienation. A defensive reaction took the form of an escape into familiarity by referring to a specifically interpreted local culture and tradition, aimed at restoring dignity and weakening the dominance of the core⁹. A vote of no confidence for copying and interfering in internal affairs, which limited local possibilities for action, met with quite an ephemeral response of the core, which could only observe this phenomenon due to the illusory possibility of imposing sanctions. Criticism of the core, which was once ascribed to unintelligent people, is now becoming more and more noticeable in the periphery. The recent economic crisis has destroyed the image of the West, which is no longer worth imitating

⁸ Z. Krasnodębski, *Demokracja peryferii* (Democracy of peripheries), Gdańsk: słowo/obraz terytoria, 2003, p. 84.

⁹ M. Magier, „Tożsamość peryferyjna. Tożsamość centrystyczna. Lokalne i globalne kłopoty z tożsamością” (Peripheral identity. Centrist identity. Local and global identity problems), *Przegląd Politologiczny*, 2012, No. 1, p. 23.

from the perspective of the marginal areas which no longer anchor their institutions there. The weakness of transnational structures reduces the will to achieve the core's order in periphery areas whose citizens once wanted to live like people in the West.

As the periphery is deprived of autonomous development concepts, it can only generate ideas for adapting to the transformation pattern originating from the core, not innovative ideas of modernisation. Since the original is currently experiencing perturbations, there is doubt as to whether it should still be imitated. By definition, the copy will always remain a substitute for the original, which is now experiencing difficulties, so perhaps it is no longer worth following. Undoubtedly, it makes no sense to idealise the crisis-stricken core which, due to its problems, does not represent an attractive model of social, political and economic relations. This core does not have the former force of attraction and so it ceases to be a bastion of normality. Its values, such as openness, pluralism and multiculturalism are interpreted as an existential threat to marginal areas under crisis conditions. The side effect of globalisation which is the fear of others and the related diversity leads to a retreat from Europeanisation. It also strengthens the will to protect the homogeneity of periphery territories.

The imitativeness of marginal areas is assessed by the core countries as aberration, particularly dangerous for the system as a whole, which may disintegrate due to the dysfunction of its edges¹⁰. Under the modern epidermis, the periphery camouflages old customs and the façade forms of their organisation, which are a cluster of EU standards and local specificity, arouse dislike among the so-called "old" member states. Since the periphery imitates the core of the community, the latter has the right to control and intervene in the former because it is the core, not the periphery, that was to properly implement the normative solutions of the West. Hence, participation in the process of EU modernisation has created

¹⁰ I. Krastev, S. Holmes, "Explaining Eastern Europe: Imitation and Its Discontents", *Journal of Democracy*, July 2018, www.journalofdemocracy.org/article/explaining-eastern-europe-imitation-and-its-discontents (access: December 2019).

a sense of loss of independence and, at the same time, frustration caused by the fact that the copy will never match the original. It will always deviate from it and so the core will most likely remain critical of the imitating edges.

The peripheralisation of Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkans?

The question arises whether the relationship between Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and the Balkans and the process of European integration can exemplify the theses presented above. During the EU accession negotiations, CEE was subject to internal changes as a result of the transfer of standards flowing to it from the core of the system. The implementation of European standards was voluntary, supported by numerous incentives and promises of future participation in the community. This enabled actions aimed at overcoming historical divisions by forcing internal reforms according to the regulations of the Europeanisation mechanism¹¹.

The modernisation of the territory in question was supposed to weaken the asymmetry in relations between the so-called “old” and “new” Europe. Participation in the integration process guaranteed a buffer zone for CEE, stabilising and protecting the region against the negative consequences of long-term peripheralisation¹². The community was to secure this area against anachrony, bringing with it values such as democracy, free market, human rights, pluralism and freedom of speech. This strengthened the stability and security of this zone, contributing to its escape from the fatalities arising from the post-communist past.

Rational mechanisms for implementing the EU order, based on the principle of conditionality, were to help adapt the imperfect

¹¹ R.A. Epstein, W. Jacoby, “Eastern Enlargement Ten Years On: Transcending East-West Divide”, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 2014, vol. 52 (1), p. 88.

¹² T. Zarycki, “Politics in the Periphery. The Interpretation of Political Cleavages in Poland in Their Historical and International Context”, *Europe-Asia Studies*, 2000, vol. 52, No. 5, p. 851.

statehood of CEE to the system that has been shaped by liberal Western structures for 50 years. The socialising elites of candidate countries gained strong legitimacy to introduce internal changes as the supranational model was attractive for the anachronistic CEE. Although this allowed limiting criticism of local opponents of the integration process, significant adjustment costs put into question the reality of the modifications introduced there¹³.

The post-communist past of CEE made the process of adaptation to the EU system more expensive than, for example, for the countries that joined the EU in 1995. For decades, the CEE area was subject to Sovietisation, which aimed to consolidate its peripherality within the so-called “external empire”, subject to the Moscow centre of control. Adaptation to the community order therefore involved not only the adoption of formal procedures, but also the actual adoption of new practices and attitudes. The above-mentioned circumstances often meant quite unreflective and inconsistent Europeanisation, manifested in the adoption of a significant number of legal acts almost without discussion, which resulted in relatively superficial changes carried out on the basis of “Potemkin harmonisation”. The large adjustment costs resulted from the rather low bureaucratic capacity of the CEE countries, which operated for many decades in an environment that preferred the primacy of politics over the rule of law.

For this reason, the internalisation of European values in the region was under question, not to mention the supranationalisation of national solutions at the community level. Due to the scarcity of sanctions for non-compliance with EU law, there was a gap between formal norms and their practical application. In the 1990s, the CEE countries tried to anchor their structures in Europe, but currently the inhibition of their modernisation is becoming more and more visible. The leverage effect worked much better before their accession, but the question arises whether the changes introduced at that time were real or only assumed the construction of a *quasi-*

¹³ R. Matyja, *Peryferyjność – wyzwanie czy fatum?* (Peripherality – challenge or fate?), Kraków: Ośrodek Myśli Politycznej, www.omp.org.pl/arttykul.php?artykul=330 (access: December 2019).

-EU façade. According to some researchers, CEE showed a lack of proper internalisation of EU standards in some areas, indicating shortcomings in the process of its Europeanisation (in particular Poland and Hungary). On the other hand, the EU turned out to be insufficiently consistent in placing firm expectations from the region in question and, at the same time, was insufficiently vigilant in enforcing their implementation by candidate countries.

As was the case with Central and Eastern European countries, the prospect of the accession of the Western Balkans to the EU is now contributing to liberal reforms leading to the transformation of this territory. The community seeks to transform the national structures of these countries in order to promote peace, stability and security in the worn-torn region. However, poor institutional capacity combined with ethnic conflicts reduce its readiness and capacity to implement the *acquis communautaire*. Despite the prospect of membership, the problems of limited statehood in the Western Balkans seriously limit the transformative power of the EU in that space¹⁴.

Phenomena such as secessionist movements, unresolved border problems, social tensions or nationalisms in fact make the Western Balkans a powerful test case for the process of Europeanisation. Participation in the EU community is to be the reward and the “end of history” for this region, but current difficulties in the areas of the rule of law, democracy and human rights inhibit its convergence to the supranational system.

The fate of the Western Balkans shows the problems and limitations of Europeanisation mechanisms. This area was considered an easy object of modernisation but due to internal conditions and the past, the process of implementing supranational standards has stopped. To make matters worse, EU institutions have ignored the imitative implementation of European order, indicating the superficial nature of transformations that conceal past habits. This raises

¹⁴ T.A. Börzel, “When Europeanization Hits Limited Statehood. The Western Balkans as a Test Case for the Transformative Power of Europe”, *KFG Working Paper Series*, September 2011, No. 30, p. 6.

justified doubts about the efficiency of EU mechanisms, whose crisis is manifested, inter alia, in the weak convergence of the region in question. The forces of change wanted to take advantage of Europe's popularity in domestic politics, but today the national parties are clearly strengthening. The selectivity, fragmentation and chaos of the integration process weakens the pressure of EU structures on the Balkans, calling into question the effectiveness of their Europeanisation. The costs of a real metamorphosis prove to be much higher than originally assumed and hence the Balkan states are permanently violating the schedule of correct adaptation to the order of the core countries.

It has turned out, again, that the EU needs strong bureaucratic capacities of candidate countries to bring the *acquis communautaire* to the national level¹⁵. Moreover, it is powerless again, this time due to the lack of proper state-building activities in the Western Balkans, despite the fact that it offered the prospect of membership to these countries in order to stabilise the region and overcome the problems arising from their ephemeral organisations. Since the tools of EU influence have not yet confirmed their effectiveness, delaying the process of EU enlargement with the countries of the area in question has been suggested.

The supporting structure of European integration includes institutions and law, and the characteristic feature of the Western Balkans is bureaucratic weakness, translating into the primacy of politics over law, suppressive legalism and the rule of law. The pressure of EU structures to change the above remains problematic because, as was the case with CEE, EU agencies have so far been satisfied with superficial local metamorphoses, consisting of imitating the order of the core. There has clearly been no will to ensure the real internalisation of EU norms and rules in this area. The modernisation of the region is experiencing regression and so it moves into the periphery, which is only interested in the passive

¹⁵ U. Sedelmeier, "Europeanisation in New Member and Candidate States", *Living Reviews in European Governance*, 2011, vol. 6, No. 1, p. 17.

collection of EU funds. Europe once symbolised peace, security and stability, hence it had no alternative for countries threatened by destabilisation and the prospect of national conflicts. At present, however, the EU is no longer a symbol of the desired normality and so its gravitational force in the Western Balkans is declining¹⁶. Moreover, the community seems to react inadequately to the above phenomena, showing far-reaching fatigue in the process of expanding its structures.

The functioning of CEE as part of the process of Europeanisation can be a lesson for the countries of the Western Balkans. If a sufficient level of convergence is not achieved in the pre-accession period, it is not easy to make up for the deficiencies in adapting to EU governance. Perhaps in the case of countries such as Bulgaria and Romania the time was too short to achieve a higher level of convergence before joining the community. In its relations with the countries of the Western Balkans, the EU has so far been unable to define and enforce requirements for progress in the pre-accession process, and the lack of consistency and clarity of its expectations has undermined incentives to continue reforms. This may induce the countries of the Western Balkans, just like the previous CEE countries, to switch to unproductive imitation, leading to their peripheralisation under the conditions of an integrating Europe.

Conclusions

The integration processes of the European Union, through the phenomenon of convergence of its member states, were meant to abolish the historical core-periphery division. The phenomenon of peace, security and prosperity resulting from transnational cooperation has significantly contributed to the weakening of the above-mentioned dichotomy, extremely unfavourable for periphery

¹⁶ M.A. Vachudova, "EU Leverage and National Interests in the Balkans. The Puzzles of Enlargement Ten Years On", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 2014, vol. 52 (1), p. 122.

territories. Integration has become a tool for the production of international public goods, the benefits of which are still shared by the margins. The EU has become a community in which periphery countries have gained influence through the possibility of participating in decision-making processes on a supranational level.

Europeanisation, however, has proved to be a rather ephemeral mechanism whose impact on the periphery can be questionable. Due to the crisis of the liberal architecture of the globe, this model began to be perceived as less attractive by marginal countries, which did not achieve the expected convergence in certain areas and did not implement internal transformation according to European standards. There has been no real internalisation of EU standards in the new member states. It has also come to light that the socialisation process of their elites is surprisingly superficial and leaves much to be desired. The spatial division into the core and the periphery has been supplemented by fragmenting the European plane into imitated and imitating countries. In some spheres, the periphery countries have created a façade to mask old habits that can be a factor in disintegrating the community as a whole.

In the era of progressive economic exchange, peripherality does not seem to have a purely geographical connotation. It also involves, to a certain extent, copying supranational institutions by creating the appearance of adaptation to the order of the core to temporarily reduce the pressure of globalisation forces. Under EU conditions, the marginal zones opposed the process of real modernisation, often creating the illusion of implementing EU regulations. The core of the community has tolerated this state of affairs for too long, being content with the superficial metamorphosis of periphery areas. This weakness of Europeanisation mechanisms may in the future lead to the EU's disintegration processes. The defeat of the current, homogeneous unification concept may also induce the core countries to implement various cooperation formulas, based on "variable integration geometry", among others, causing the revival of the pre-modern core-periphery division in the old continent.

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The Globalisation of Peripheries

The author attempts to investigate connections and interdependencies between periphery countries and the globalisation process, including the attitude of these countries to unification blocs, such as the European integration project. The basic research tool used in this work is a systemic analysis, as well as the core-periphery method, derived from social sciences. Its fundamental hypothesis is that the decline of the liberal architecture of the globe may translate into the periphery's tendency to abandon real convergence in favour of the fragmentary imitation of supranational bodies, potentially leading to intensified disintegration tendencies within phenomena, such as the consolidation of Europe. In the past, the powerless core of the community only contemplated the imitative Europeanisation of marginal territories. Today, however – because the idea to construct a homogeneous *polity* has collapsed – postulates of "multi-speed" integration can lead to the reconstruction of the historical division into the core and periphery of the old continent.

Keywords: periphery, European integration, modernisation, adaptation.