
**European political space: a normative approach in light of Noel Parker's
"concept marginality"**



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Abstract:

The study addresses the theoretical shift in studies related to political spaces through the concept of marginality developed by Professor Noel Parker in postmodern International Relations sociology. The concept focuses on the intermediate position of the margin within the internal and external framework, enabling it to negotiate its belonging to the political space and claim the advantages it provides. The study concludes that margins can negotiate or renegotiate their affiliation within the political space managed by the center and demand the benefits of this position while an alternative to the current membership system exists. On a broader scale, the disruption or confusion regarding the concept of centrality as a normative dominance within the European Union has resulted in a reconfiguration of Europe's discursive meaning through strategies revisiting Europe as a space for national sovereignties rather than political investment to consolidate Europe's liberal dimension.

Keywords: Political Space; Center; Margin; European Union.

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Introduction:

The approach towards spaces through resorting to socially produced ontological units aids in transcending or surpassing geographical determinism. Relying on a critical method in interpreting spaces, where interpretation, fundamentally an effective understanding providing meaning, allows for surpassing the static nature that physical geography might exhibit. Geography, when confined to a narrow material vessel, renders space as a mere abstract, non-social, geometric entity overpowered by practicality, in contrast to normative objectives.

It is crucial to "practice space" by adopting epistemological references beyond topographic continuities, engaging a methodology entwined with the ontological. It intertwines form and content: "Form loses its immanent and philosophical significance if separated from its content, and content cannot be embodied except through the presence of the container that holds it." This occurs when a geographical point assumes symbolic value or acquires different values for competing traditions.

The European Union, when contemplated from this perspective, becomes a political space or a geographical point exerting pressure on traditional concepts to disentangle/absorb the dynamics of interaction within an active and complex space. Analyzing the relationship between the center/margin and developing the concept of marginality according to Parker's model, the study attempts to dissect these dynamics within the European political space. Employing a coordinated approach that derives varied sub-patterns from the European Union, intertwining them to outline disparate geopolitical entities [center-margin], it produces outcomes depicting the disturbance, inconsistency, or interstitial disjunction between the active units within it. This subsequently prompts a reassessment of the modernity and nationalism context and the reshaping of a cognitive structure, which might aid in the emergence of a post-modern European "region." It evolves from the duality of [dismantling-pattern], directed towards a critical reading of the European political space geography, allowing us to observe avenues liberating from the modernist dogma, towards utilizing the margin as an exception to the modern concept of European regional politics.

This presented study aims to analyze the frameworks/outputs of center-margin interactions within the European political space by raising a pivotal question: How can the normative relationship of center/margin reconstruct the contours of European identity? This study commences from the fundamental premise that envisioning the relationship between center and margin as a bidirectional interactive dynamic, both centrality and marginality are contingent upon a unique spatial-structural normative framework that redirects the concept of influence and impact towards the contextual prevailing meaning system within the political space.

1. spacio-normative approach: political space and the transformation of concepts, center/margin:

The historical and social studies of modern states have addressed how rising sovereign states sought to expand their spatial scope based on what David Sack describes as 'regionalism, a spatial strategy that can be employed to influence, control, or dominate resources and people through control of the area.' From the mid-17th to the mid-20th century, states demonstrated their regional strength (especially in Europe) by demarcating borders. The prevalent development during this time distinguished the organization of space through the extension of state sovereignty onto it (Paasi, 2000, pp. 3-7).

a. Subjectivity and interaction in light of Noel Parker's concept of marginality: the architecture of political space:

Parker argues that the keen sense derived from a critical perspective suggests that the organized spatiality resulting from centrality will encounter an alternative arrangement or disruption from the margins through a reactive pressure against centralized arrangements. With the late 20th-century global developments, Marxist concepts needed a critical adaptation to assume a reactive assumption from the edges of globalization centers, enabling the possibility of transcending margins for a centrally organized spatial system. If the centers expand their organizational power into political space, there will be a counter-reaction that might be unstable and prone to competing symmetries that do not align with the centralized model. Henri Lefebvre embodies this dynamic through his concept of the "contradictory space" in the modern world.

The formation of spatial capitalism as a production force managed by the center necessitates a unified, homogeneous, and open political space. This process of abstraction reduces the real space into a mental image, its function being to minimize differences, contrasting with Lefebvre's notion of the "reality of space," where abstract space falters due to various social practices that surpass this reductionism serving the most imperialistic institutions of economic and political power. No center can claim to govern political space in a single direction because centrality is in a continuous dynamic relationship with the margin, which defines itself as the "center." From this perspective, flexibility can be sought in post-structuralism/post-modernism studies of the regional system where political space opens up to areas of interaction that may make a difference (Parker, 2008).

This marks the starting point of post-structuralism by asserting a cognitive/epistemic claim that 'if the process of constructing the arrangement of parts around centers occurs, we can anticipate open processes on behaviors that won't align with the structures dominated by the center'. Consequently, these margins become distinctive angles to monitor and anticipate the formation/reformation of the political space. The idea is expressed in an

exceedingly complex manner in the post-structuralist argument by assuming that 'knowledge revolves around the organized whole with concepts, methodologies, and resources directed towards this wholeness, lacking anything incompatible with it'. Therefore, perception from a marginal viewpoint reveals what is obscure and can focus our attention on the anthropological context of the prior assumption that socio-political identities are not as fundamental as they seem. States, regions, and groups, in their diversity, contribute to affirming the essential identity, and this affirmation contains both margins and associated centers. However, the margin challenges the centrally organized pattern and its identity might be more flexible or expectedly detached from this system. The dynamics of margins (their relationships, motivations, potentials) and their impact on central action spaces confirm them as active entities in the overall political space arrangements. Without margins, centers cannot be centers, and without centers, defining marginal positions of the margins is impossible (Parker, 2008).

A number of poststructuraliste international relations theorists have essentially developed a theoretical approach that addresses identities in a dynamic manner. The reason behind this is that post-structuralism questions the rigidity of entities, where no structure can be conclusively closed. According to Professor Ole Waever, 'The challenge of post-structuralism lies in a more detailed and methodical understanding of identity, emphasizing the fragility of all conceptual closures. Emphasizing the distinctive potential of margins acting independently under tension with the logic of the center, this makes them an entry point for inquiries and a source of independent impacts. Considering the fluidity and flexibility of the political space surrounding the center, this directs us towards margins as sites where identities become gelatinous and susceptible to manipulation. This pivotal point in constructing political space leads to a triad in post-structuralist analysis: the ambiguity of identities in political space and the conflicting, competing dynamics around them from the center and the margin. With this theoretical perspective, Professor Parker defines the conceptual scope of analyzing marginality as a 'positive' process, meaning it shifts the concept from a fixed notion to an attempt to attach it to essential qualities related to the actor's existence on the dynamic edge of a systematic and/or influential domain managed by the center. Accordingly, the work focuses on phenomena, processes, and actors occupying marginal positions, interpreting the characteristics and potentials inherent in this positioning, which are traits associated with their presence in this political space (Browning, 2010).

Through this description of 'marginal existence,' we can identify the marginal entity/actor as an entity perceived to occupy a position on the edge of another larger, more cohesive, and/or influential entity (the center) in the political space or resource areas. The concept of 'resources' here refers to a range of organizational capabilities encompassing power in all its material forms and

ideological-cultural-religious influence, structural cohesion, and identity. It is implicitly evident that margins and centers are defined through their relationship. Consequently, the capabilities of the center somewhat depend on the nature of the margin that can influence its centrality. The ability to impact from the margin can be identified through certain tactics of the marginal actor facing central behavior, placing the identity of the center and the margin under the reality of non-essence (Parker, 2008).

b. Noel Parker's Influence Strategies: Margins as Active Entities:

Parker argues that there is an urgent need to separate margins from the notion of their weak influence and reliance solely on the 'core' for analysis. For Parker, placing uncertain margins positioned on the boundaries of any specific system provides them with an opportunity for influence. This argument poses a challenge to modern approaches when conceptualizing regions or political spaces in international relations, which tend to perceive margins in terms of their distance from central power cores. This understanding of regionalism and boundaries represents an analytical gap, as borders are rarely clear-cut dividing lines. Instead, it's better to describe them as ambiguous areas and intermediary spaces for interaction. Thus, margins close to or adjacent to these borders are 'essential territories in themselves as spaces for action.' This interconnection provides margins with a degree of strength against the center (Browning, 2010).

In reality, the interconnection across borders points to the center defining itself based on what happens within the margins. As a result, 'the spatial engineering resulting from the actions of the center will be met by an alternative ordering or disruption from the margins,' affecting the nature of the relationship between the center and the margin. Parker argue that margins and centers are defined through their relationship because the centers' capabilities for action have effectively become contingent on the margins. Therefore, understanding the nature of this influence and the strategies available to activate it is crucial.

1-Loyalty Rewards: In this scenario, the margin seeks to gain privileges from the center in exchange for not enhancing the position of another center. In this case, the margin refers to activating implicit or explicit threats to steer toward Russia if the European Union doesn't offer acceptable concessions.

2-Mediation Rewards: By positioning the margins as sensitive boundaries between areas of influence of competing centers, this case implies the potential for activating the role of the margin as a means of communication between the European Union and Russia.

3-Playing One Center against Another: The margin seeks to create a type of competition for privileges and rewards between the centers in exchange for loyalty.

4-Model Simulation : Here, the margin pretends to adopt characteristics of the center's identity. This strategy defines effective adaptation and selective appropriation of the center's characteristics and could even extend to actual appropriation as a tactic by incorporating the values and fundamental standards of the center.

5-Explicit or Clear Rejection : The margin exerts influence on the center by rejecting its initiatives. In this case, it can refer to rejecting the European Union's initiatives and turning towards Russia or at least moving towards isolation, as seen with Albania during the Cold War.

6-Renting as a Movement within or outside the Center's Space: Examples include the gains Denmark achieved from its presence at the Baltic Sea estuary.

7-Guaranteeing a System outside the Center's Scope : This scenario allowed Russia after 1990 to present itself as a force against instability and "terrorism" in the Caucasus and Central Asia, establishing relations with the West based on its ability to organize spaces beyond the West's reach.

8-Asserting Relative Independence at the Margin: There's a degree of implicit independence in using any active entity for margin tactics, and the more self-reliant it is, the more reasonable the use of marginal actors.

9-Competitive Emulation : Adopting elements of the center's identity in anticipation of competing or surpassing it.

10-Developing Self as an Alternative Center : This enhances margin maneuverability by leaving uncertain third parties regarding the dominant center in the future. During the 20th century, Sweden and to some extent the Nordic countries promoted themselves as alternative centers for foreign relations and prosperity driven by the liberal market.

11-Legitimizing Differences: The marginal entity markets itself as distinct from the dominant center and even better than it, attracting others as an alternative center. In the first half of the 20th century, the United States promoted itself by not being a colonial power, unlike the dominant European powers of the time.

12-Redefining Others: If defining an individual's identity requires defining the identities of others, then the self-definition of the marginal entity might be parasitic or obstructive to the identities of those who consider themselves similar or different. Over centuries, Russia acted as an alternative to Europe and the West. This kind of redefinition might take the form of a projection and counter-projection of identities (Parker, 2008).

2. The European Union and the New Dynamics of Center-margins Relations: Towards a Post-Liberal Scene:

The theoretical underpinning of this approach is drawn from the social and political system spaces, considered as areas of interaction constructed by will and/or interactive processes. This serves as a starting point for analyzing what Noël Parker terms as "the engineering of centers and margins," aligned with the concept of engineering as defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as "the relative arrangement of parts or things."

Beginning with the necessity to comprehend the meanings formed by smaller actors that now hold central importance in the European security/identity system, Bertrand Badie argue that major powers can no longer unilaterally dictate terms due to the influence of smaller actors, anchoring concepts of power and weakness as contextual notions dependent on the prevailing "standard" meaning system structure (Malejacq, 2019). The primary focus on two sources of power in geopolitical studies—size and location—typically gets reduced. However, a closer examination of both concepts due to their interaction creates a complex set of four contrasting models:

1-Large states playing a central role in the existing political system, such as France and Germany in the European Union.

2-Large states classified as margins/antagonistic to the European center, like Russia and Turkey.

3-Small states located on the periphery of the European center, like Estonia.

4-Small states with a central position like Switzerland, deeply integrated into the heart of the center like Luxembourg, or considered centers in themselves, such as the Vatican (Fernandes, 2019).

What interests proponents of this theoretical perspective is the issue of conceptualizing and presenting non-central actors that are considered non-central but are positioned within the heart of the European center, particularly within the security/identity domain. This sheds light on redefining relationships characterized by influencing security perceptions and the broader concept of European security management.

Within the framework of the standard interpretation of the social/cultural construction process of center/margin relationships, some key spatial concepts transform into standardized notions. Specifically, reinterpreting "distance" ceases to be merely a geographical issue but rather a matter of compliance/non-compliance with European Union principles. Consequently, multifaceted, identity complex entities like Estonia (simultaneously national, European, Euro-Atlantic, Baltic, and Northern identities) find that alignment and harmony with power poles

are not geographical but cultural issues based on standard affiliations. Naturally, this situation falls under the inclusion of marginal actors' strategies within the space of renegotiating/redefining the terms of belonging (Kitsopoulos, 2005).

On another note, the post-liberal shift previously discussed can be viewed as a peculiar blend of rekindling spatial concepts on one hand and continuing to expand postmodernist models on the other. For instance, the phenomenon known as the imperialism of small states in the political discourse of countries like Belarus, Slovakia, and Hungary represents a revival of certain basic concepts of neorealism. Simultaneously, there's an increasing conceptual positioning of these marginal actors, promoting themselves as Europe's defense line in a broad sense—a paradigm for redefining the notion of the center relying on the margin (in a contradictory context) rooted in postmodern theorization.

Against this backdrop, the post-liberal momentum in Europe might inherently mean widening the political space for identities skeptical of the European Union, challenging the dominant standard essence that it seeks to transform. This view suggests that the liberal system adopted by the European Union is based on the central duality of "spatial/standard" France and Germany. On the other hand, there are influential political parties within the European center working on separating the nucleus from the standard essence of the European Union while simultaneously safeguarding the geopolitical dominance, especially for France and Germany, in the broader European political arena.

Concerning the influential margins for the European Union, the focus is on four main groups:

1-Actors within the European Union from the Baltic and Northern European regions, endorsing and investing in federal standardization.

2-Non-EU actors (Ukraine and Georgia) perceiving themselves as affiliated with the federal center and striving symbolically and institutionally for belonging.

3-The group of non-central EU members whose political elites deliberately and consistently distance themselves from the standard authority of the European Union.

4-A group of non-member states attempting to weaken the unitary center in favor of another standard center, anticipating the decline of the nucleus in Brussels (Fernandes, 2019).

Post-structuralists argue that the definition of identity is always drawn through a dialogue of self-definition from the outside. David Campbell contends that narratives of identity implicitly revolve around drawing boundaries and making the other foreign (not self) (Campbell, 1992). Within this framework, two theoretical trajectories emerge:

The first trajectory involves recognizing the discourse of the other as an agent acknowledging the claims of selfhood and its conception of identity, which is of utmost importance in legitimizing the political act of the self. Eric Ringmar suggests that it is crucial for others to accept our self-understanding and recognize us as specific types of actors. Thus, mere self-declaration of identity is insufficient, and there is a need to garner external recognition of the desired identity pattern. Otherwise, the self might require crafting an alternative narrative that gains acceptance and acknowledgment from the outside (Ringmar, 2002). It seems that one example of this 'recognition game' is embodied in the enlargement process in 2004.

Frank Schimmelfennig argues that prospective EU members kept enlargement on their agenda by consistently referring to the foundational myths of the European Union as a project for peace that encompasses everyone in Europe. The implicit implication here is that the legitimacy of the self-identity of the European Union will be in question unless membership remains on the table.

The second trajectory focuses on how defining and shaping the other will impact the nature of the boundaries established between the self and the other. In many literatures, there has been a focus on shaping the other in extreme terms such as an 'enemy,' against whom the political community can unite. However, achieving selfhood requires a narrative that can differentiate the self from the other. This other does not necessarily have to be only a threat; it could also be a friend, a partner, or an adversary. Professor Lene Hansen assumes a linear spectrum of 'degrees of otherness' within which the other can be positioned, ranging from positivity to negativity. This allows us to see a broader range of possibilities extending beyond just the binary of 'enemy/friend.'

Through this, the identities of others can be understood as competitive, complementary, or adversarial. It's also possible to perceive the other as superior to the self, prompting the self to undergo a process of emulation. In the case of the European Union, there could be a spectrum of others willing or unwilling based on their stances toward the transformative agenda of the European Union. Therefore, defining the nature of the other is a shared dual process, where the other has the ability to influence how the relationship (self/Other) is defined. The other possesses the choice to accept their position and description or challenge it by employing competing representations (Browning, 2010).

3. The European Union Spacio-normative Reading from the Eastern Neighborhood: Ukraine and Belarus as Examples:

Through the margins' ability to influence the European Union's perception of its borders within threat scenarios, we'll focus on the cases of Ukraine and Belarus as exemplary models located at opposite ends of the spectrum. While Ukraine was strongly inclined towards the European Union, Belarus exhibited a

more radical stance through strategies pursued by each to influence the European Union and its conceptualization of its borders.

A-Ukraine: Ukraine's ability to influence the construction of the European Union's identity, borders, security, and policies (such as the European Neighborhood Policy) didn't become evident immediately after the Cold War.

Strategies pursued by the Ukrainian elite towards the European Union underwent substantial changes in the mid-1990s with shifts in how Ukrainian leaders defined their country concerning the European Union under the rule of Leonid Kuchma (1994-2004). Kuchma's regime revealed a clear strategy of selective appropriation and playing against one side, reflecting Ukraine's official stance positioned between Russia and the European Union.

Despite Kuchma's overall narrative favoring the European option, the turn towards European integration was employed as a strategic discourse tool to legitimize and reinforce internal authority while serving as an external balancing act to attract Russia's attention.

This orientation was evident in downplaying Ukraine's European identity based on geographical and historical references, which contrasted with the European Union's aspirations defining its Europeanness by adhering to specific standards and values. Consequently, despite signing the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the European Union in 1994 and being granted a special neighborhood status in 2002, Kuchma's strategy led to strengthening a sharp divide with the European Union in the Ukrainian self-perception and the perception of the other.

The events significantly shifted in the post-Kuchma era with the emergence of a new dynamic during what was known as the "Orange Revolution" in December 2004. After Viktor Yushchenko, a supporter of Europe, won the presidency in Ukraine, he declared in a speech to the European Parliament that Ukraine's European choice was not just a geographical matter but a matter of shared spiritual and ethical values. This was a clear attempt to position Ukraine on a more ideologically secure external trajectory, focusing on adopting internal reforms capable of taking Ukraine beyond the political discourse prevalent during his predecessor's era.

The new regime aimed to embody a strategy of genuine assimilation to legitimize the issue of EU membership by incorporating its standards. This was supported by the tactic of loyalty rewards offered by the center (the European Union) and the commitment to distance from the alternative center (Russia). Despite the socio-political context and the strategic shift within the Ukrainian elite after the Orange Revolution, Ukraine's structural impact appeared minuscule.

The Yushchenko regime refused to allow the dissipation of the membership issue, with his foreign minister, Borys Tarasyuk, stating that Ukraine was not just a neighbor to the European Union but a center of Europe. One of the primary goals of Ukraine's foreign policy was to influence the European Union's approach by advocating for the Union's open and flexible enlargement policy. However, in the face of Russia's intervention in Georgia, the geopolitical changes drove Ukraine closer to a genuine appropriation strategy, hoping to be within the European Union's sphere (Euronews, 2022).

The European Union's official stance on Ukraine, according to Andrew Duff, has been emotionally driven, detached from objective data on the future expansion of the Union's borders in that direction. Following Volodymyr Zelensky's presidency in 2019, the opportunity emerged to relinquish the emotional pretense that hindered positive developments in the West Balkans. Nevertheless, the European Commission's opinion aligns with the prevailing direction, indicating Ukraine's unsuitability for EU membership even before the Russian military operation in February 2022.

Since the Partnership Agreement in 2014, Ukraine's progress has been extremely slow, with its integration into the single market stalled due to its failure to meet European governance standards. Duff argues that even if the promise of membership was presented as an added value for President Zelensky, Ukraine today needs to navigate between societal gains, accumulated legislations, and legal decisions that formed the European Union.

After the conflict with Russia, Ukraine might be compelled to manage a highly charged nationalist sentiment while the European Union might be affected by the situation. The prospect of another expansion would require the EU to broaden its tools in assuming responsibilities within the broader European neighborhood. Thus, the boundaries of European identity remain subject to scrutiny in the open future (Duff, 2022).

B-Belarus: While Ukraine influenced the European Union by refusing to allow its membership file to be dropped from the European agenda, Belarus has proven itself a political barrier to the European Union. Until 2008, Belarusian foreign policy focused on gaining loyalty rewards from Russia alongside an explicit rejection strategy of European Union values and standards.

In the post-independence era in 1991, Belarus pursued a multi-directional foreign policy without a predefined geopolitical direction, not aiming to return to Europe but rather to the past. President Alexander Lukashenko, elected in 1994, followed a strategy of garnering loyalty rewards from Russia by presenting an anti-Western values discourse in support of the Federal Russia. This Belarusian bias was supported by a strategic logic aiming to bolster his political authority and reinforce the concept of the Belarusian nation.

Presenting NATO and the European Union as enemies also aimed to enhance the credibility of the Russian-Belarusian alliance as an alternative model to European integration. Similarly, Belarus promoted the idea of local development by combining the concept of a strong and stable Belarusian state, distinct from the "evil West," while maintaining a relatively stable economy through Russian support, which allowed Lukashenko to sustain his regime and power.

Following 1994, Belarusian-European relations gradually deteriorated alongside the consolidation of the ruling regime's authority in Belarus. This had an impact on the European Union's policy, leading to a distinction between the negative authority as the "other" and the effort to empower Belarusian civil society by directing aid towards social and educational projects. This included supporting those affected by the Chernobyl disaster and disseminating information about the European Union. According to Javier Solana, the goal was to support Belarusian citizens in taking control of their destiny by creating a democratic process.

Despite being among the initial candidates in the Greater Europe Initiative, the lack of democratic reforms, including the modification of the constitution to allow Lukashenko's re-election for a third term in 2006, preemptively excluded Belarus from the European Neighborhood Policy framework, freezing the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement signed in 1995 (2023, ^{فهم}).

Subsequently, the European Union confirmed that the door of the European Neighborhood Policy remained open to Belarus, contingent upon fundamental democratic and economic reforms to bring the country closer to European standards and values. The European Commission attempted to bolster democracy in Belarus through its unofficial leaflet directed at Belarusian civil society in December 2006, with limited impact on Belarusian authority. In addition to the new geopolitical reality created by the Russian military operation in Georgia and the financial crisis, there was a growing awareness of the risks of relying solely on Russia.

However, the Belarusian regime activated media propaganda in these circumstances to bolster anti-Western sentiments and promote the "Belarus and the Rest" binary vision. This manifested in repressive measures against the opposition and civil society activities, such as the local elections in January 2007. Consequently, the European Union formulated policies towards the Belarusian regime by defining it as a violator of democracy and human rights (Browning, 2010).

Conclusion:

This theoretical shift is inspired by the concept of marginality developed by Professor Noel Barker starting in 2008 as part of post-modern/post-structural studies in the sociology of international relations. Through this perspective, the main feature of the margin is its intermediary position compared to the concept of "periphery," which is not structurally suitable for this approach. The margin simultaneously embodies both the inside and the outside unlike the peripheries. The margin can always negotiate and/or renegotiate its belonging to the political space governed by the center and claim the advantages of this position, taking into account that there is always an alternative to the current system of belonging.

The concept of marginality, as presented by Professor Parker and his colleagues in their academic discussions as part of the post-modern discourse, challenges the liberal hegemony discourse in the post-Cold War era. It opens perspectives for interpreting the political space "beyond sovereignty" and treats the margin as an exception to the modern concept of regional politics. It is expected that the margins will benefit from the affirmation of the post-modern discourse over the unhelpful modern discourse for the concept of marginality.

Ultimately, the anticipated international society (still hypothetical) in the post-liberal phase might blur the concept of the center as a normative hegemonic center in Europe. This would foster further discursive contestation regarding the future idea of Europe by employing strategies to redefine Europe as a space for national sovereignties (Hungary, Poland, Italy), and politically investing in consolidating the liberal understanding of Europe (Slovakia, some Baltic and Northern European countries, Portugal). However, this approach is criticized on two fundamental points that require attention:

Firstly, the idea of marginality has been tested on a limited number of cases encompassing Northern Europe as a region, Poland as a country, and cities like Kaliningrad, Gibraltar, and Jerusalem. To push the concept further, more examples and case studies are needed to expand the empirical base regarding centrality and marginality.

Secondly, there are conceptual observations about Professor Parker's interpretation, where marginality remains a spatial property not necessarily conceptually linked to the normative foundations of political Europeanism within the European Union. This has become a prominent issue in discussions about the transition from liberalism to the post-liberal international system, and it renews the accession standards known as the Copenhagen criteria, which include stability of political institutions and ensuring democratic practices, the rule of law, human rights, respect and protection of minorities, an effective market economy, and the ability to cope with competitive pressures, among others. These criteria must be met to initiate negotiations to join the federal European center.

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