

*Far away and excluded: citizens on OR. Outermost regions'
citizens: the challenge of inclusion*

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Abstract

The modern world acknowledges the societal fabric built by tradition and emergency with hints of brightness and shade. A dialectical framework like this opens the door for continued investigation into the social, cultural, and economic effects. Specifically, a thorough discussion about humanitarian issues that opens up fresh perspectives on justice, citizenship, and peace. This inspiration fostered the creation of a new idea called “plenipheral” citizenship (just translated into English from its original Portuguese definition). The concept unfolds semantic, political, and ideological movements, from the periphery to the centre. With a great deal of promise for the future, the so-called Outermost Regions of the European Union and their population, express a desire to be acknowledged as European Geographic locations by the EU and its institutions. This research celebrates the utopic movement of a regional paradise that is centred on justice and peace and looks toward deeper integration between the European Union and, ideally, other continents.

Keywords: European Union; Outermost Regions; Plenipheral Citizenship; Justice; Cohesion

Introduction and explanatory note

While the creation of a neologism may raise ethical concerns, there is, in essence, a conceptual enrichment that occurs when words are combined, and a novel term is suggested to communicate an idea that has not yet gained acceptance. In this instance, another neologism is the research field to which the researchers are committed: the Ultraperipheral Regions of Europe. The terms ultra and periphery were

combined to create what is currently referred to as *ultraperiphery* - at the Rhodes European Council, João Bosco Mota Amaral, the first President of the Regional Government of the Autonomous Region of the Azores, introduced it.

The concept of outermost regions is enshrined in the Treaty of Amsterdam, signed on 2 October 1997, through Article 299(2). This Article provided the legal basis on the part of the European Union for the adoption of measures in their favour until the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon (2009). Article 355 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU) determines the territorial scope of the Treaties, specifying that they apply to the ORs, in accordance with Article 349 of the TFEU. Article 349 of the TFEU recognizes the concept of outermost regions, acting as a legal basis, autonomous and sufficient, which allows European standards to be adapted and excluded, and specific and lasting measures to be adopted for their benefit.

Coming to this point, it is very important to grasp the essence of the other neologism, *plenipheral*, from a critical standpoint. It expresses from the edges toward center, from the periphery to the *plenipheral*. Semantics, draws attention to the aspect of citizenship that considers movements that have ontological implications. Considering this inspiration, the idea of *plenipheral citizenship* seeks to challenge the exclusionary connotations associated with the term "*peripheral*" and, consequently, to highlight the avenues that the term has opened. This movement is social, political, and ideological, and it moves people from the edges to the center of the European Union, especially in the Outermost Regions.

Plenipheral citizenship, in this sense, refers to the idea of encouraging the acknowledgment of the most remote areas. There is the shared identity and particular reality among the nine areas, each comprising three Member States, that make claims to its membership. The argument is that for people to experience full European citizenship, the European Union must create special policies and assistance to help them compensate for their geographic location and inherent qualities.

In essence, this may draw criticism, but it effectively combines two ideas to create something entirely new. Take the example of the German language that still employs the technique of building compound words out of multiple concepts that combine to form a new one. Considering semantics, this is the proposal put forth to broaden a new ontological horizon.

The concepts

Several works produced in the Contemporary Era have maintained that the nation, not the geography, is the driving force behind history.

The regionalist theses did not appear to have much support or a bright future in Europe until lately. Centralization was the defining characteristic shared by the governments that constituted the European Community during its founding in the 1950s, with the exception of Germany. Consequently, the regions were mostly disregarded by the founding treaties.

The people who believed that the region needed to be created and established as a "entity with political power" and included in the European integration process, have now been validated by current historical, political, and social developments. An examination of the situation shows that several of the participating states have politically decentralised and established a new, more accessible level of government, as the European integration process has progressed.

Therefore, we may say that rather from being mutually exclusive processes, regionalization and integration are really the two sides of a single phenomenon: the state's crisis as the only level of government capable of resolving the majority of societal issues. At the intersection of representative and participatory democracy, the region serves as an individualising framework of diversity, and while progress is made in the "adventure" of the single currency or the common foreign policy, issues related to education, culture, research, land-use planning, agriculture, and other areas are typically better addressed by organisations closer to the citizens and with which they have a high degree of self-identification.

The European regions had been organising since the 1970s of the last century to promote an effective lobbying with the European Communities in order to assert their common interests vis-à-vis the process of European integration. This movement gave rise to the unique construction of a regional utopia and the recognition that the European Communities should bear in mind their approach towards the furthest island regions: the Azores, Madeira, the Canary Islands, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Réunion, and French Guiane (a territorial enclave in the Amazonian forest). The Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of the EEC (CPMR), which includes the regions of the member states, was established in Saint-Malo in 1973 as the first step in this coordinated plan.

The word "*ultraperipheral*" may have been coined for the first time in October 1987 at the CPRM General Assembly on Réunion Island, where João Bosco Mota Amaral, however, its exact origin is still up for debate. In an attempt to find a subtle allusion within the theoretical framework, the President of the Azores at the time employed the idioms "more than" and "ultra" to describe the peripheral nature of the situation on islands that are remote from the European mainland.

Furthermore, the Maastricht Treaty was first proposed by France and included a statement regarding the outermost regions of the Community. This declaration acknowledged that the regions "struggle with severe structural handicaps, aggravated by various factors (remoteness, insularity, small size, difficult topography and climate, and economic dependence on a few products), the permanence and combination of which severely restrain their economic and social development." This signaled the start of the outermost regions' complete incorporation into the Community. The outermost regions thus came to represent a specific status for those regions of the European Union which share certain common features. In this changing context, the concept of *ultra peripherality* comes out.

The concept of *ultraperipherality* bears no resemblance to the geographically distinct regions of the European Union, such as islands, mountainous areas, or sparsely inhabited areas, where distinct legal and natural features exist. As a result, Article 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), which establishes core EU law, explicitly permits the Council to enact provisions intended to modify the application of EU law to the outermost regions. Regarding this, the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) recognises in its ruling dated December 15, 2015, that Article 349 of the TFEU provides an independent and adequate legal foundation for the adoption of special measures intended, among other things, to adjust European legislation to fit the needs of the most remote areas.

It is noteworthy that this status provides political guarantees regarding the participation of these regions in the process of European integration. The outermost regions and their nearly 4.8 million citizens thus expect the European Union and its institutions to affirm these territories as fully-fledged European areas with constraints but also opportunities for prosperity and development. Legal recognition of the outermost regions has gone hand in hand with a growing sense of the need for citizens of the outermost regions to have an increasingly active voice in the exercise of their

rights, for example in the co-authorship of European policies in general and those aimed specifically at their outermost territories.

The idea of *plenipheral citizenship* seeks to draw attention to these facts and phenomena, which call for the implementation of policies that support full and active citizenship among the people living in the most remote areas of the European Union; in other words, to support the relevance and application of citizenship as a plural and inclusive concept. Essentially, the enjoyment of full European citizenship by the citizens of the outermost areas corresponds with the affirmation and ultimate legal acknowledgment of full citizenship.

The latter have a long history of upholding the ideals and goals of the European Union, and this plenary citizenship will allow the people living in these regions to write or co-write European policies, which must be tailored to the unique circumstances of each region. Indeed, the most remote areas are not only human communities that are valuable in and of themselves, but they are also unique laboratories into which the European Union can gaze into the future.

A final note

Similar to earlier eras in history, the twenty-first century has presented a variety of persistent difficulties. There is a strong desire for humanization, which demands drastic measures to be taken both locally and worldwide. This image provides an excellent framework for introducing a new and provocative idea: *plenipheral citizenship*. It is essentially the ontological journey from the periphery to the centre. Actually the European Ultraperipheral Regions shed new light on the political, social, historical, and, most importantly, human geography of the globe.

The expression *plenipheral citizenship* is therefore an attempt to use semantics as the major source of interpretation. Inspired by Hermeneutics, the process of (un)folded meaning reveals that major transformations need an epistemology to take timely and preventive action when human communities across the globe demonstrate their demands. Touched by the concept of *ultraperipherality* and moved by the novel concept of *plenipheral citizenship*, we hope to contribute to Humanitarian Studies as interpreted in recent History.