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Department of Modern and Contemporary History

Area of Contemporary History

PhD programme in Comparative, Political and Social History

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona



**BRIDGE TO NOWHERE:
KALININGRAD ON GEOPOLITICAL
MAP BETWEEN RUSSIA AND
EUROPE**

PhD thesis presented by

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Acknowledgements

I dedicate this thesis to my grandmother Anna Ivanovna Postnova, who along with her two infant children in the year 1945 undertook an arduous journey from a tiny village in Central Russia to a distant, war-torn and foreign (in each and every sense of this word) city of Königsberg. One of them - my uncle Valentin – has raised me the man I am now. I could not have achieved anything I have so far without him. The second, my mother Liubov, has done her best nurturing me as a strong and unyielding person. To these three I owe my success in life and profession.

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Introduction

“‘Borders of Russian Statehood’ – the title of this conference could not have been more topical anywhere else as it is here, in Kaliningrad on the shores of the Baltic Sea. Here everything is “breathing” with proximity of the national border, propinquity of other countries, an open sea, so to say – the line where the Russian land ends... Also, it is a border-territory, an enclave placed in the far West... Kaliningrad Oblast is a fruit of Victory, its material result and Kaliningraders, perhaps to even greater extent than other Russian citizens should feel themselves to be the chief custodians of the Victory. The Oblast was created not merely as a Russian strategic fort-post with a prime task of forestalling this previously mentioned “thrust toward the East” for good. It has to become a spiritual fort-post of Russia in Europe. Not however a region being most susceptible to Western influence but a district that is ready for a dialogue with the West to the most possible extent, being prepared to saturate this talk with our national spiritual norms and values”¹.

“Kaliningrad will never become a region of peace and cooperation... It will always remain the Russian ‘fortress’. Back in the 1990s when Russia was developing one project it was possible to promote ideas of so-called “Baltic Republic”. Now this is not going to work - not only because of internal transformations experienced by Kaliningrad. Times have changed. Without Kaliningrad Oblast (as far as I am concerned) it would be virtually impossible to fulfill strategic plans pertaining to the task of restoration of the Great Russia”².

Perhaps, these two assessments of Kaliningrad, its role, place and historic mission – expressed by such different personalities as Russian Patriarch Kirill and a prominent Russian conservative military strategist Igor Nikolaychuk, respectively – do in many ways capture general trajectory of development of Kaliningrad Oblast within the course of its Soviet/Russian history: starting from 1945 when it was de-facto incorporated in the Soviet Union and until the end of the second post-Soviet decade when it seemed that the

¹ “Выступление Святейшего Патриарха Кирилла на I Калининградском форуме Всемирного русского народного собора”, *Русская Православная Церковь*, 14.03.2015. Accessed 21.10.2017. <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/4013160.html> .

² Андрей Выползов, “Никогда не удастся превратить Калининградскую область в регион мира,” *Newsbalt*, 12.04.2016, Accessed 11.09.2017, <http://newsbalt.ru/analytics/2016/04/kaliningrad-russia-usa/>.

demise of the old ideology would engender advent of the a new era. Judging from another angle one might presume that these arguments ought to be seen as a living testament to the Russian long-lasting strategic interests connected with the Baltic Sea region and the task to be played by the oblast in this paradigm.

Nevertheless, before starting to tackle key aspects of current PhD dissertation it will not be superfluous to provide basic explanation for three concepts that from the author's point of view has acquired pivotal meaning for the entire framework of this Doctoral research:

- "Geopolitical Hostage";
- "Kaliningrad Identity";
- The "region/corridor of development".

The first idea was convincingly argued by a political scientist from Lithuania Prof. Raimundas Lopata³ and later will be developed by a number of international experts⁴ including myself⁵. Based on Realist perspective as one of key theories of international relations and political history it does by and large capture complicity of historical fates of Kaliningrad Oblast within indicated interim. Arguments encapsulated in this theoretical framework construe the oblast as an object serving accomplishment of key regional objectives of Russian policies. Furthermore, it does explain existence of numerous limitations for independent actions in the domain of both internal and external policies maintained by the Kremlin in its stance on Kaliningrad.

The second theory has two main connotations. The first one is concerned with the phenomenon as a complex synthesis of the Soviet/Russian and the German historical-cultural tradition. Another reading thereof claims that the local identity has in fact very little to do with the German past as such, rather it ought to be perceived as direct offspring of the Soviet system, its legacy that in many ways hinders successful transformation of

³ Lopata, Raimundas, *Anatomy of a Hostage: Kaliningrad Anniversary Case*, (Tartu: Baltic Defence College), 2006.

⁴ Jadwiga Rogoża, Agata Wierzbowska-Miazga, Iwona Wiśniewska, "Wyspa na uwięzi: Kaliningrad między Moskwą a UE," *OSW*, Warszawa, (25.07.2012).

⁵ Sergey Sukhankin, "Kaliningrad in the "Mirror World": From Soviet "Bastion" to Russian "Fortress"," *Notes Internacionals*, CIDOB, Barcelona, 06/2016.

Kaliningrad from “centre-dependent entity”⁶ into a viable, buoyantly developing entity actively cooperating and interacting with its geographical neighbors. Moreover, it does provide a succinct explanation of emergence of some kind of “exceptionalism”⁷ based on alleged uniqueness of Kaliningrad in comparison with other Russian regions. The second interpretation of the above-mentioned phenomenon does to a considerable degree explain the fact that the local population widely agreed on existing Modus Vivendi thus exhibiting compliance with key conditions presented by the former notion.

The third framework – that presented Kaliningrad Oblast as a “Baltic Hong Kong”, a “bridge between Europe and Russia” or a “region/corridor of development” – should be seen as a direct juxtaposition to both previously identified notions. These three (undoubtedly very much desirable and appealing ideas portraying the future of the post-Soviet Kaliningrad) primarily stemmed from two major landmark events/interims in relations between Russia and the West: the collapse of the USSR and the advent of President Vladimir Putin who initially seemed to be a stalwart of closer relations with the United States (to a lesser extent though) and the EU countries (making special emphasis on partnership with Berlin⁸). Nonetheless, almost full collapse as well as general improbability of these theories has become a focal point argued by this Dissertation.

Reflecting about the topic of this PhD thesis it should be noted that it has gained particular importance in the light of the most recent political developments that have involved practically all major global and regional players. Namely, the outbreak of the Ukrainian crisis (starting from November 2013) and ensued collapse of political, economic and military cooperation between the Russian Federation on the hand and the West (primarily countries that constitute NATO and the European Union) on the other, has precipitated growth of acute frictions in the Baltic Sea region making Kaliningrad Oblast the centre of existing antagonisms. Indeed, as a result of this debacle Kaliningrad Oblast – what might be erroneously perceived as a tiny “Russian island” physically separated from the mainland could be mainly seen as liability (in terms of military-related

⁶ S. Sukhankin, “A Story of One Unsuccessful “Island” Kaliningrad 1991- 2010 from “Baltic Hong Kong” to the Center dependent entity,” *Tiempo devorado*, Vol. 1 Núm. 1 (2014), p. 1-15.

⁷ S. Sukhankin, “Militaryization of Kaliningrad Oblast 2009 - 2016 and Its Implications for the Baltic Sea Security,” *Research Seminar, IBEI*, Barcelona, 25.11.2016.

⁸ S. Sukhankin, “Russia and Germany: strategic partners, rivals or both?” (MA thesis, Collegium Civitas, Warsaw, 2013).

strategic calculations) instead of an advantage⁹ – has turned out to be a new battlefield between two parties, whereby completely dispelling hopes, dreams and expectations vested in it in the late 1980s and early 1990s by proponents of Liberal Institutionalism¹⁰ both in Russia and among Western intellectuals. The most remarkable transformation, is the ongoing process of rapid re-militarization of the oblast that has been profoundly influenced by developments in Ukraine.¹¹

On the other hand, importance of this thesis is premised on an attempt to analyze crucial historical events and tendencies not on a separate basis but in a conjuncture with current paradigm. Thus, the research argues that the most recent developments should not be viewed as a temporary or completely unpredictable sequence of events, yet a logical and quite natural continuation of patterns of historical path of the oblast within its Soviet-Russian period.

Another distinctive feature of this Doctoral dissertation is related to the fact that the Kaliningrad Oblast, its historical mission and its place in Russian/Soviet – Western relations has not been exhaustingly studied neither by domestic, nor foreign scholars and observers. The lack of analysis on the topic is stipulated by the fact that prior to 1991 the oblast had remained closed to foreigners. On the other hand, crucial geopolitical transformations experienced by the region within 1991 – 2004 that first witnessed the collapse of the USSR, the re-birth of three Baltic Republics (Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia) and Poland and their subsequent accession to the European Union (EU) left Kaliningrad on the margins of international attention. Moreover, it was wrongfully estimated that with the breakdown of the Soviet empire Kaliningrad would cease to be a military danger.¹²

The bulk of already mentioned aspects makes it instrumental a task to properly identify and analyze the main *literature sources* employed in scopes of the research. The

⁹ “Дмитрий Горенбург: Калининград является одновременно и обузой, и важным объектом,” *Rugrad*, 30.07.2015. Available at: <http://rugrad.eu/opinion/794185/>; Dick Krickus, “Kaliningrad: Russia's Own Breakaway Region?” *The National Interest*, 21.03.2014. Available at: <http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/kaliningrad-russias-own-breakaway-region-10094>.

¹⁰ Perhaps, the most well-known and passionate cohort of this line of thinking was Russian Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev (1990 – 1996).

¹¹ Sergey Sukhankin, “From ‘Bridge of Cooperation’ to A2/AD ‘Bubble’: The Dangerous Transformation of Kaliningrad Oblast,” *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, Volume 31, 2018, Issue 1 (09.02.2018).

¹² Sergey Sukhankin, “The Kaliningrad Oblast Today: A “Military Bastion 2.0”, not a “Bridge of Cooperation”,” *Diplomaatia*, No. 165, May 2017. Available at: <https://www.diplomaatia.ee/en/article/the-kaliningrad-oblast-today-a-military-bastion-20-not-a-bridge-of-cooperation/> .

group of primary literature sources is constituted by valuable materials obtained in the local archives such as GAKO (State Archive of Kaliningrad Oblast) and GANIKO (State Archive of Contemporary History of Kaliningrad Oblast). Very important materials were obtained from the Kaliningrad Regional Museum of History and Art that yields a number of valuable expositions related to the post-war re-settlement of Kaliningrad Oblast. Namely, such archival data as visual images, memoirs and memories of first settlers arriving to Königsberg/Kaliningrad enriched the thesis adding a qualitative element to it. These pieces have had particular meaning for the First Chapter of the dissertation. In addition, rich factual compound enclosed to this segment of primary sources made it possible to discuss such acute and debatable topics as first information campaigns carried out among local settlers by the Soviet authorities; initiation and waging of the early cultural and ideological campaigns; the process of construction and forging of the Soviet identity as well as militarization and unification of mass conscious carried out during the period of Soviet history of the oblast (1945 – 1990/1).

Among secondary sources three key groups should be identified. The first one is attached to the scientific scholarship elaborated before the year 1991¹³. Even though bearing visible ideological footprint these pieces gave an understanding of the Soviet vision of Kaliningrad and historical mission. For instance, it is not superfluous to take a closer look at the overall perception of Kaliningrad Oblast by intellectual and the Party members at a time: this enables to trace down the issues that were obfuscated (such as perception of German legacy, place of Kaliningrad in the course of ideological confrontation with so-called Capitalist world and many other issues).

Second group includes works on pre-1991 produced by contemporary Russian historians. For instance, an outstanding role in the course of collections, processing and construing major pillars of the local post-Soviet history has been played by such well-known locally-based scholars as Yuriï Kostiaшов, Evgeny Maslov, Gennady Kretinin,

¹³ *Калининградская область: история, экономика, культура, природа*, ред. З. Н. Глушкова, (Калининград: Кн. изд-во, 1978); К. Ф. Щёкин и др., *Калининградская область: Очерки становления и развития*, (Калининград: Кн. изд-во, 1988); Колганова Э. М., Колганов И. П., *Самая западная: краткий очерк о Калининградской области*, (Калининград: Калинингр. кн. изд-во, 1959); В.Г. Бирковский и др., *История края (1945 – 1950): учеб. пособие для студентов-историков Калинингр. ун-та*, (Калининград: Изд-во КГУ, 1984); *История Калининградской области (1951 – 1965): учеб. пособие для студентов-историков Калинингр. ун-та*, (Калининград: Изд-во КГУ, 1986).

Valerii Galtsov and a number of other noticeable historians¹⁴. These specialists should be seen as proponents of historicism and objectivity in an attempt to link task/goals enshrined in their research with impressive factual compound chiefly based on locally derived primary sources. Moreover, reflecting about this segment of secondary sources it would be instrumental to mention a collective monographic book titled “*Sketches of East Prussian history*”¹⁵ – a collective work that provides a comprehensive outlook on pre-1991 history of Kaliningrad with a unique collection of archive sources and images attached.

Third group of authors is represented by foreign (primarily European, with some rear exceptions) scholars who have dedicated their vigor and attention to problems of the Soviet Kaliningrad. In this regard, it would be especially worthwhile to mention such illustrious German historians as Eckhard Matthes¹⁶ and Bert Hoppe¹⁷ who assumed rather critical stance on the Soviet interim of Kaliningrad history. According to these scholars (largely endorsed by Western intellectual school) transformation of Kaliningrad was abrupt and measures and strategies employed by the USSR were rather counterproductive and even harmful. Their analysis is impressive from yet another point of view: instead of merely providing facts and figures German historians have promoted the idea of a correlation between proliferation and fostering of Communist ideology based on the “Sovietization” of Königsberg and on numerous occasions utterly barbaric attitude of new generation of locals to local material culture which would in the final analysis preordain emergence of certain distinctive features among new masters of the former German territory.

¹⁴ For instance, see: Кретинин Г. В., “Военные комендатуры Кёнигсбергского особого военного округа в 1945 – 1946 годах,” *Вестник РГУ им. И. Канта*, Вып. 12, (Калининград: Изд-во РГУ им. И. Канта, 2006): 55 – 62; Костяшов Ю. В., “Переселенцы рассказывают,” *Запад России*, (1996. № 1); Kostyasov J., “Russen und Deutsche in Ostpreußen nach 1945 – Konfrontation oder Integration,” *Annaberger Annalen*, Nr. 7 (1999): 161 – 172 ; Костяшов, Ю. В., “Изгнание прусского духа: как формировалось историческое сознание населения Калининградской области в послевоенные годы.” In *Секретная история Калининградской области. Очерки 1945 – 1956 гг.* (Калининград: Терра Балтика, 2009).

¹⁵ Г. В. Кретинин, В. Н. Брюшинкин, В. И. Гальцов и др., *Очерки истории Восточной Пруссии*, (Калининград: «Янтарный сказ», 2004).

¹⁶ Э.Маттес, *Запрещённое воспоминание*, (Калининград: Изд-во КГУ, 2003), 7 – 80.

¹⁷ Норре В., *Auf den Trümmern von Königsberg. Kaliningrad 1946 – 1970*, (München, 2000); Хоппе Б., “«Злой город» или часть собственной истории? Об отношении к немецкой архитектуре в Калининграде после 1945 г.” In *Кёнигсберг – Калининград: город, история: сб. науч. Статей*, (Калининград: Изд-во РГУ им. И. Канта, 2005): 82 – 91.

The most visible gap that did not allow covering certain crucial areas of local historical narrative within pre-1991 period is tightly related to still existing restrictions on obtaining valuable information concerning certain areas. Among others these domains include issues pertaining to the extent of militarization of Kaliningrad. Unfortunately, this trend has not changed even in spite of visible liberalization of access to archive materials.

Reflecting about Parts Two and Three it should be underscored sizable practical importance of employment of such electronic web-pages as Новый Калининград (<https://www.newkaliningrad.ru/>), RuGrad.eu (<http://rugrad.eu/>), Клопс.ру (<https://klops.ru/news>), Government of Kaliningrad Oblast (<https://gov39.ru/>), Duma (Parliament) of Kaliningrad Oblast (<http://duma39.ru/duma/>), Kaliningrad Eparchy of the Russian Orthodox Church (<http://kdeparh.ru/>). Materials to be found on these electronic sites have constituted a backbone of primary source basis of the post-1991 stage in development of Kaliningrad Oblast. On the other hand, a speaking tube of the local conservative and nationalist forces information-analytical portal NewsBalt (<http://newsbalt.ru/>) provides numerous extremely important pieces that nevertheless do have a vital meaning in terms of ascertaining of the position of this segment of Russian society and their perception of Kaliningrad.

Furthermore, special attention should be allocated to the web-page of Russian Ministry of Defence (<http://mil.ru/>) as well as the Government of the Russian Federation (<http://government.ru/>) that contain normative documents, statements and legislative acts that help explaining Moscow`s perception of Kaliningrad.

Among secondary literature sources one would find it particularly important to analyze R. Krickus¹⁸ (as a North American scholar who has extensively worked on Kaliningrad) and his monographic research on the first years of post-Soviet Kaliningrad that raises a broad range of questions. His monograph was one of the first attempts to provide an external vision of Kaliningrad, its relations with Moscow and its geographical neighbors.

Already mentioned Lithuanian scholar R. Lopata in a series of articles specifically devoted to Kaliningrad Oblast¹⁹ unravels many broad and complicated topics related to

¹⁸ Richard J. Krickus, *The Kaliningrad Question*, (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Lanham, MD, United States, 2002).

¹⁹ Lopata R. (together with Jokubaitis A.), “Геополитическая трансформация Калининградской области”, *Балтийский регион*, т. 2, № 4, (2010): 28-43.; Lopata R., “Kaliningrad anniversary: the first

the oblast, its development, and posture in regard to relations with Moscow and its external partners. The most interesting distinctive trait of an approach developed by this scientist is based on orientation on narrow topics and subsequently addressing more general issues.

Lithuanian school of political history/international relations is also represented by a nationalist school of intellectual thought²⁰ that assumed extreme position in tackling “Kaliningrad question”, whereby inflaming irredentist moods within largely marginal part of Lithuanian (and in broader meaning European) society.

In the broad array of secondary literature devoted to Kaliningrad Oblast is the Scandinavian school of humanitarian and social sciences presented by Pertti Joenniemi²¹, Ingmar Oldberg²² and Thomas Lunden. Undoubtedly, Finland and Sweden (constituting an integral part of the Baltic Sea Region) do have a long-standing strategic interest (frequently evolving into concerns) related to the Russian “island”. Analysis presented by this (and alike thinking) group of scholars is impressive for objectivity and impartiality which ought to be construed as a natural strong point especially considering acuteness of the topic.

Among Russian scholars dealing with post-1991 period of local history several most noticeable researchers should be identified. G. Fedorov and A. Khlopetski²³ came up with a fundamental monographic research on economic development of Kaliningrad whereby collaterally tackling political implications of economic disaster that dashed onto

steps of Georgy Boos”, *Lithuanian foreign policy review*, nr. 1-2(15-16), (2005): 127-152.; Lopata R., “Транзит российских граждан из Калининградской области и в Калининградскую область через территорию Литвы”, In *Калининград в Европе: исследование подготовлено по заказу Совета Европы*, (2003): 115-127.

²⁰ For instance, see Brian Vitunic, “Enclave To Exclave: Kaliningrad Between Russia And The European Union,” *Intermarium*, Volume 6, No. 1, (Columbia University:2003). Available at: <http://ece.columbia.edu/files/ece/images/enclave-1.pdf>; Vincas Steponavicius, “Karaliaučiaus problema,” *Amzius*, Atnaujintas 2003 m. sausio 24 d. Nr.7 (2003). Available at: http://xxiamzius.lt/archyvas/xxiamzius/20030124/nuom_02.html.

²¹ Pertti Joenniemi, “The Kaliningrad puzzle: Russian region within the European Union,” *Åland Island Peace Institute*, Marichamn (2000); Pertti Joenniemi. “Gibraltar, Jerusalem, Kaliningrad: peripherality, marginality, hybridity,” *Ålands fredsinstitut* (1/2007).

²² Ingmar Oldberg, “Kaliningrad between Moscow and Brussels,” *Working Paper No. 17*, Center for Security Studies (2001). Available at: http://www.css.ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/special-interest/gess/cis/center-for-securities-studies/pdfs/Working_Paper_No_17.pdf.

²³ Хлопецкий А.П., Федоров Г.М., *Калининградская область: регион сотрудничества*, (Калининград, 2000).

Kaliningrad within first post-Soviet decade. Economic compound has also been seriously explored by Vinokurov²⁴.

Anna Karpenko, Andrey Klemeshev and Nataliya Anderychuk have tackled many issues including local identity traits and formation of the local society reflecting about fates and historical mission of Kaliningrad in terms of correlation between identity and exclave/enclave status of the region. From his side, Alexander Sergunin²⁵ being a proponent of Institutional Liberalism as a response to mounting challenges faced by Kaliningrad Oblast.

Nevertheless, more detailed analysis of the existing secondary literary sources and relevant academic scholarship pertaining to historical, economic, political and cultural aspects of local history within 1991 – 2010 points to *existing literature gaps*.

First, analysis of Kaliningrad and its post-1991 development is dominated by excessive concentration on narrow topics, yet the complex analysis is not done.

Secondly, the emphasis in research is done on socio-economic and political developments. At the same time, such vital issue as militarization of Kaliningrad Oblast is either obfuscated or occupies marginal attention. This gap has been in some way filled by the author's deep and extensive research that included both scholarly and non-scholarly (policy-oriented) publications.

The *goal* of this thesis is to trace the development and transformation of Kaliningrad Oblast within 1945 – 2010, with specific emphasis on the alteration of its geopolitical role/status for Moscow under the influence of both internal and external developments.

In order to achieve this goal, the following *objectives* have been posed:

- To explain strategic importance of Kaliningrad Oblast for the Russian Federation through the prism of Kremlin's long-lasting regional interests;

²⁴ Vinokurov E., "Kaliningrad: Enclaves and Economic Integration," *CEPS*, Brussels (2007).; Lamande V., Vinokurov E., "Trade in Kaliningrad Oblast, Problems of Economic Transition", *Problems of Economic Transition* 46, no. 6. (October 2003): 56-72.

²⁵ Alexander Sergunin, "Kaliningrad: an Exclave or Pilot Region?" *Nizhny Novgorod State Linguistic University*. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/267938889_Kaliningrad_an_Exclave_or_Pilot_Region.

- To ascertain immediate and deeply-placed reasons that did not allow the oblast to successfully transform from planned to market economic model;
- To trace main stages of militarization of Kaliningrad Oblast and its correlation with internal trends and transformations.

Chronological scopes of current Doctoral dissertation cover the period from 1945 to 2010. These dates should be deemed as crucial primarily because of their historical meaning: the former one coincided with the de-facto incorporation of the respective part of the East Prussia into the USSR and inception of the Soviet period of local historical narrative. The second pivot came to be known for a sound collapse of many previously established and artificially maintained policies in regard to the task of “handling” the oblast by Moscow which translated into the eviction (as a result of mass public demonstrations) Kremlin’s appointee Georgy Boos, whereby signifying an advent of a new epoch in the history of non-German Kaliningrad. Even though these scopes might appear too ambitious, a very important aspect ought to be underscored: tackling 65 years of local history does not mean that it will be analyzed as a homogenous and inseparable description of events. Instead, this interim is viewed as a constellation of pivotal occurrences, facts and developments. Thus, it can be concluded that this study follows the longitudinal approach.

Reflecting about *geographical scopes* of research, it would be quite logical to presume that the main focus (which naturally stems from the title of this dissertation) will be the Kaliningrad Oblast. However, it does not mean that the area is solely reduced to the oblast as such; rather it ought to be more prudent to use Kaliningrad as a link with the so-called “Wider Europe”, which implies broadening the area onto the countries of the BSR primarily including Poland and Lithuania (as two closest geographical neighbors of Kaliningrad) but also not obfuscating Germany (due to a vast number of historical, cultural and political ties), Latvia, Estonia and Scandinavian countries (mainly due to security-related issues).

In terms of *methodology* this research follows the exploratory nature of research. Thus, it would be adequate to establish the main research philosophy as Interpretivism. On the other hand, this dissertation has been influenced by “multidisciplinary” approach. Namely, using historical science as a backbone, elements of political science, sociology,

security studies, economic science and even theology have used as a valuable supplement aimed to add new facets and ways of explanation of previously evaded/obfuscated themes and topics related to Kaliningrad Oblast. This approach should by and large suffice to the task of understanding and comprehensive analysis of Russian posture and actions both on the Baltic Sea theater as well as the role allocated to Kaliningrad Oblast by Moscow as a means to achieve its local strategic goals. At any rate, as the course of regional developments since 1945 has shown Russia steadily relying on Political Realism (power politics) and its juxtaposition to Liberal Institutionalism maintained by Western actors.

On the other hand, aspects related to the *novelty of the research* is based on three lines.

This research has *for the first time*:

- Presented a complex analysis and assessment of key episodes of Kaliningrad history within its Soviet and post-Soviet period not as a monolithic narrative but a constellation of various events (frequently repeating themselves);
- Used Kaliningrad Oblast as an example of continuity and tradition in Russian geopolitical thinking within the period 1991 - 2010;
- Discussed and explained the notion “Iskander diplomacy”²⁶ and its application/applicability to/for Kaliningrad.

Reinstated:

- Main steps of post-war transformation of the oblast;
- Difficulties and challenges associated with post-Soviet transition;
- Existence of the debate between various intellectual schools on the mode of development that should (should have been) pursued by Kaliningrad Oblast;
- A perception of Kaliningrad as a “pawn” in geopolitical games played by Moscow;

²⁶ Sergey Sukhankin, “Kaliningrad: From boomtown to battle-station,” *Wider Europe Forum*, ECFR, 27.03.2017. Available at: http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_kaliningrad_from_boomtown_to_battle_station_7256.

- A correlation between transformations experienced by the Russian Federation after accession of Vladimir Putin and their implications for the fates of Kaliningrad.

Further developed:

- Interpretation of the phenomenon known in scholarly circles as “Kaliningrad identity”;
- Understanding of the notion “Kaliningrad puzzle” and its historical evolution;
- Crucial impact of the “Russian World” (“Russkij Mir”) doctrine for Kaliningrad.

While working on current PhD thesis the author has encountered with a number of *challenges and limitations*. These were primarily connected with two main aspects: first, a dramatic (though not completely unpredictable) deterioration of political relations between Moscow and its Western counterparts; secondly, the atmosphere of secrecy and opaqueness that surround key aspects of local history at both pre-1991 and post-1991 periods. As a result, such domains as economics and military/security-related issues – areas that represent strategic importance and huge symbolic meaning for the Russian Federation – have become hardly accessible. Thus, not only was it rather challenging to derive credible information pertaining to aforementioned segments of knowledge, yet it has only become possible to rely on and employ data that is publically available. These obstacles have resonated with particular acuteness in the aftermath of events that occurred within 2014/15 as a result of intensive information warfare between Russia and the West. Nonetheless, it needs to be stated that the author has made an attempt to overcome these predicaments. The main approach employed primarily consisted of employing as many sources in the languages of origin (both primary and secondary) as possible. This strategy allowed processing more material and analyzing various (frequently diametrically opposed to each other) facts that did in the final analysis saturate the research.

In the end, particular attention should be allocated to *practical application* of results obtained during the work on this PhD thesis. As far as the author is concerned outcomes of current analysis could be used in a broad range of disciplines ranging from political history and sociology to security-related studies and international relations. Moreover, taking into account previously identified general lack of research pertaining to the Kaliningrad Oblast (especially within contemporary period of its development) results obtained in scopes of this dissertation could be used in scopes of Eurasian and/or Baltic Studies as a means to trace the fates of Russian transformation within the post-1991

period. Also, this study primarily contributes to a growing number of policy-making literary sources attached to the Baltic Sea Region, although it should not be necessarily reduced to it, since it contains significant historical compound.

Part 1. Emergence of Kaliningrad on geopolitical map of Europe: from East Prussia to the last gasps of the Soviet Union (1945 - 1990)

This part of current PhD thesis aims to provide a succinct outline of the Soviet period of historical development of Kaliningrad Oblast.²⁷ The chosen interim of the current research embraces a broad period of local history stretching from the end of the Second World War (and the East Prussian Offensive²⁸ that was finalized only in May 1945) until the last days of the Soviet Union. This should provide solid background for later reflections and give a room for further discussions that are going to be continued in the next segments of the thesis. Therefore, this segment is to discuss the following aspects:

- **Emergence and formation of Kaliningrad Oblast, its legal status.** This is to be achieved through analysis of positions (their evolution and transformation under the pressure of external factors) of the leading powers on the issue of territorial aggrandizements by the USSR within the course of the WW 2;
- **Ethno-cultural composition** of the Oblast through analysis of the “ethnic portrait” of first settlers;
- **Socio-economic model** established in Kaliningrad after 1945 and its adaptation to altering situation as well as challenged posed by souring economic conditions in the USSR closer to its demise;
- **The balance of power and the conflict between military and civilian** authorities on formation of the local milieu;

²⁷ In scientific literature the entire Kaliningrad Oblast is usually referred to as Kaliningrad. Therefore, this research will use this name to define contemporary Kaliningrad Oblast.

²⁸ “Восточно-Пруская операция 1945”, *Большая Российская Энциклопедия*, Т. 5, (Москва: Издательство БРЭ, 2006), 762.

- **Relations between Kaliningrad and its geographic Socialist neighbors** (Poland and Lithuania);

- **Factors and conditions that influenced emergence of the local identity:** the role of German legacy and its replacement by the Soviet equivalent and the ways how this goal was to be achieved.

Detailed analysis of the aforementioned topics ought to present an explanation to the key trends and tendencies experienced by Kaliningrad Oblast in the course of its post-Soviet transformation. Namely, such approach should suffice for the task of giving a clarification to the implications of the Soviet legacy and establish a clear bond between past experiences and forthcoming developments brought about by decisive transformation caused by the collapse of the USSR (the year 1991). On the other hand, taking into consideration relatively brief history of Kaliningrad (that in many respects started in the year 1945) the Soviet period cannot be ignored or omitted (at least its most crucial and instrumental aspects) since many symbols established by the Soviet authorities managed to outlive the regime itself and are now being actively re-installed currently in one way or another (which is chiefly seen in such domains as ideology and security).

In the meantime, the local elites have by and large re-embraced (there are however doubts that those were lost in the course of transition from Communism to the contemporary Russia²⁹) key patterns of the antecedent model in the domain of economy and relations with the centre. Furthermore, I would argue that discussion of main aspects of pre-1991 period of Kaliningrad should help understanding of most essential perils and challenges as a result of post-Soviet transformations. Moreover, it will be argued that contemporary Kaliningrad (after 1991) has much more in common with its Soviet predecessor than the German ancestor.

²⁹ See: Sergey Sukhankin, "Kaliningrad changing role on the geopolitical chess board of Europe (1991-2015). Does history repeat itself?" In *Problemy bezpieczeństwa Europy i Azji*, Arkadiusz Czwolęk, Magdalena Nowak-Paralusz, Szymon Gajewski, Tomasz Ambroziak (Eds.), (Torun: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, 2016), 223-245.

From methodological point of view, it would be worthwhile to conduct research as a synthesis between chronological and thematic approaches which would grant grater understanding of the complexity of the local milieu and prove much more a clear picture of transformations experienced by the region over the course of its post-1945 history.

Chapter 1. From German Konigsberg to the Soviet Kaliningrad

The Soviet incorporation of Konigsberg turned out to be one of the most daring acts aimed at re-drawing of the geopolitical map of Europe conducted by the Soviet Union. Indeed, it would be argued that the occupation of the Kuril Islands was also a remarkable event that is still affecting Russian stance in the Asia-Pacific region and shape relations between Moscow and Tokyo. However, inclusion of an area that for centuries had been construed as a citadel of German military might and one of the key elements of subsequent German Reich situated in the heart of Europe sharply contrasted with sparsely populated islands placed on the margin of regional core. Moreover, Konigsberg and its pre-WW2 historical experience should not only be viewed exclusively from security-related angle – its multifaceted cultural legacy (shaped by German, Polish, Lithuanian and Jewish heritages) constitutes one of the most magnificent case studies in the entire Baltic Sea region. In scopes of this segment of research a brief description of the aforementioned event will be undertaken aiming not only to provide analysis of the deed as such yet mainly aiming to highlight geopolitical compound of the action and implications for the future developments.

1.1. Looking behind the closed scene: sealing the fate of Konigsberg (1941 – 1946)

In the late autumn of 1941 when German troops (the *Wehrmacht*) and their allies were approaching Moscow any discussions pertaining to the would-be change of the legal status of a distant German city of Konigsberg (the capital of East Prussia) could not possibly have been seriously tackled. Although, the Soviet dictator Josef Stalin had already been pondering plans about the post-war Europe and the role of the Soviet Union in it. Experience of two World Wars, the Polish – Soviet military conflict (1920 - 21) and the civil war in Russia (1917-22) underscored vital importance of Central and East

European states as an effective hedge against the west and vital strategic base as well as the instrumental meaning of so-called “border territories”. Similarly, the issues of access to both Black and the Baltic Sea seemed to have preserved vital importance³⁰ and turned out to be not exclusively related to the Romanovs Russia for whom that endeavor turned out to be a graveyard. In this regard ideas of Halford Mackinder (although highly disputed and questioned by some academics)³¹ that implied strategic importance of the area between the Baltic and the Black seas had been reiterated once again in the Soviet political doctrines.

In this juncture, it should be relevant to specifically highlight that the Baltic States that managed to first break away from dilapidating Russian Empire as a result of the detrimental First World War only to later be incorporated into the Soviet Union as a result of the Molotov – Ribbentrop Pact (August 1939)³² and subsequently acquiesced by Moscow in the course of German offensive that started in 1941, would once again become one of the main targets of the Soviet expansionist policy.

Interestingly enough, yet if Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia had belonged to the Russian Empire prior to the October Revolution than J. Stalin`s interest regarding Königsberg should be construed as a development of indeed revolutionary scope and scale. It may not be a very well-known fact, yet Stalin had started to seriously ponder over the would-be incorporation (to be more precise potential profitability of such a move) of Königsberg into the USSR as early as in the year 1939.³³ Undoubtedly, at a time such ideas seemed to be a matter of wishful thinking rather than feasible goal especially taking into consideration economic and military capabilities of the Soviet state. Nevertheless, the course and trajectory of the Great Patriotic War witnessed profound transformation of the USSR that was able to become a military superpower within a breathtakingly limited historical interim. Starting from the Operation Uranus (November 1942 – February 1943) Moscow could back its political ambitions and claims with

³⁰ Артур Багиров, “Курдский проект Иосифа Сталина”, *Русстрана*. November 13, 2007, For more information see: <http://русстрана.рф/article.php?nid=346703&sq=19.22.652.783.2632&crypt=> , (Accessed November 17, 2013).

³¹ Halford John Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality: a study in the politics of reconstruction*, (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press. 1996), Originally published: H. Holt, 1919.

³² Source: “September 01, 1939 Secret Supplementary Protocols of the Molotov Ribbentrop Non-Aggression Pact, 1939”, *Digital archive, Wilson Center*, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110994.pdf?v=61e7656de6c925c23144a7f96330517d> , (Accessed December 21, 2013).

³³ Юрий Костяшов, “Сталин и Калининградская область: попытки исторической реконструкции”. In: *Acta Historica Universitatis Klaipedensis XVIII*, (Klaipeda, 2009, 57–70) 58.

tremendous might of the Red Army. With growing military capabilities and rapid westward advance, the Soviet political leadership would make it clear that the future border of the USSR would not be constrained neither by the pale established by humiliating Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (March 1918) nor even the post-1939 arrangements.

It would be curiously to mention, that even such a staunch antagonist of the Soviet ideology as Great Britain (and Winston Churchill who became a living embodiment of anti-Soviet sentiments)³⁴ did indicate a profound level of understanding of the Soviet geopolitical ambitions in the Northeastern part of the Baltic Sea region (whether genuinely or being influenced by other motives). In spite of the shock and explicit condemnation of the Molotov – Ribbentrop pact (once detail of the Secret Protocol had been discovered) British political leadership silently conceded to the Soviet advance.

For instance, on 6 October 1939 soon after the Pact was signed, W. Churchill had invited the Soviet Ambassador in Great Britain Ivan Maisky to discuss the current state of affairs. During the conversation, the British Prime Minister referred to the fact that “the USSR should be the most important power on the Baltic Sea shores... I am glad that the Baltic States have been incorporated in the Soviet, not German governmental system”³⁵ – this was the way the British Prime Minister expressed his view upon geopolitical transformations.

The very first official (some might be inclined to define it as semi-official) claim that J. Stalin came up with regarding Königsberg post-war status was put forth during A. Eden`s (by then British Secretary of State of War) visit to Moscow that commenced within the period 16 - 20 December 1941 when the Soviet capital itself still was in a state of great peril. Ambitious Soviet demands were hinged to the assumption (in many ways not bereft of the kernel of truth) that it was the Soviet Union that had been able to attract the vast bulk of German military and thereby suffering the greatest losses among the Allies (which has been corroborated by new research)³⁶. Incidentally, the same argument

³⁴ Winston Churchill, “Germany Invades Russia, June 22, 1941”, *Broadcast on the Soviet-German War*, London, June 22, 1941, <https://greatspeeches.wordpress.com/2008/09/29/winston-churchill-germany-invades-russian-june-22-1941/>, (Accessed January 15, 2014).

³⁵ Олег Ржешевский, “Визит А.Идена в Москву в декабре 1941 года. Переговоры с И.В.Сталиным и В.М.Молотовым”, *Новая и новейшая история*, № 2, 1994, (Москва: «Наука», Институт Всеобщей истории Российской Академии наук, 1994) 87.

³⁶ “Минобороны уточнило потери СССР в Великой Отечественной войне”, *Интерфакс*, 13.11.2015, <http://www.interfax.ru/russia/479070>, (Accessed January 6, 2014).

would be used by the Soviet diplomacy (and Stalin himself) in the course of the entire war.

In the secret Addendum to the Protocol put forth by Stalin, of particular interest should be seen point №1, which stated that once the war was over Western Polish border should include East Prussia and the Corridor, whereas the remaining German population was to be removed to Germany. The eastern Polish border must be shaped by the river Neman, and Tilzit (Sovetsk, nowadays a town in Kaliningrad Oblast) was to become a part of Lithuania. Anthony Eden deliberately circumvented that issue appealing to a very high level of sensitivity of the matter in question and offered to postpone the ultimate solution until the final peace conference. However, expressing his personal opinion, representative of British government stated that East Prussian lands should be included in the Polish state, and that in his opinion Mr. Churchill would not raise his voice against it³⁷. During the meeting both sides discussed Additional Protocol that stipulated main conditions and terms of cooperation between Great Britain and the USSR regarding possible solution of issues after the end of the war. Among other points, it would be relevant to outline the following one`s taking into account the attitude of the Soviets regarding the postwar future and status of Königsberg³⁸:

№10. Reinstatement of Poland in its borders prior to the year 1939. Territories of Western Ukraine and Western Belarus (with the exception of the territories predominantly populated by Poles) are to be included in the Soviet Union. L`viv was to remain as a part of new Polish state provided that the USSR was to receive Bialystok and Vilno (now Vilnius) as a compensation (or the other way around). In addition, Polish territory was to be augmented at the expense of East Prussia.

№14. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania that had been occupied by the Nazi troops were to be reinstated in their borders as prior to 22 June 1941 (which practically meant their legal and universally admitted re-incorporation into the Soviet Union).

³⁷ Ржешевский (1994), 96.

³⁸ Ibid, 98 -99.

№17. b) Division of Germany on several independent states (which to some extent resembled and to a significant extent outstripped the Morgenthau Plan³⁹), where Prussia becomes sovereign state, and East Prussia to be separated from the rest of Prussian territories.

g) Part of East Prussia adjacent to Lithuania (including Königsberg) becomes a part of the USSR for the period of 20 years as a compensation for Soviet losses during the war. The rest of East Prussia comes under the Polish sovereignty (as was previously stated under the point №10).

Assessing evolution of geopolitical vision of post-war Europe that J. Stalin and the Soviet leadership had undergone within 1939-1945 one should be able to trace its profound transformation in both meaning and essence. Astounding military successes and changing international milieu encouraged the Soviets to expand their ambitions beyond the Baltic States, parts of Ukraine and Belarus (which had actually been incorporated in the Soviet Union within 1939 – 1940). These territorial entities though very volatile and permeated by nationalist sentiments gradually ceasing to be perceived as a buffer zone against potential Western aggression but rather as an organic part of the emerging superpower, its natural and integral parts. This vocally stated that the USSR (even though it did and could not possibly have declared it out loud) assumed the role of a legal successor to the late Russian Empire, which was also reflected in numerous symbolic gestures conducted by Moscow in the immediate aftermath of the outbreak of the Great Patriotic war⁴⁰.

With the advance of the Soviet Red Army to the borders of the USSR (prior to the German invasion) and driving off German armies from its territory East Prussia (including Königsberg) started to appear more frequently in the Soviet diplomatic parlance during inter-Allied conferences.

For instance, on 1 December 1943 (during *the Teheran Conference*) question regarding future status of Königsberg and adjacent areas was tackled again and much

³⁹ For more information see: Morgenthau Plan, "Suggested Post-Surrender Program for Germany", Complete text of official statement, September 15, 1944, <http://www.worldfuturefund.org/Documents/Morg.htm>, (Accessed January 20, 2014).

⁴⁰ For instance, see: "Почему Сталин вернул погони в 1943 году", *Русская семерка*, 24.08.2016, <http://russian7.ru/post/shoulder/>, (Accessed September 10, 2016).

more firmly than before. J. Stalin`s official position was expressed as follows: “Russians do not have in their possession non-freezing ports on the shores of the Baltic Sea. Therefore, it seems vital for the Russians to acquire Königsberg and Memel (now Klaipėda) and corresponding part of East Prussia. Moreover, due to historic reasons these are the *native Slavic lands*. If the English are sympathetic with our demands, we will proceed with further reflections upon other important aspects”⁴¹.

This was first (yet not last) attempt to justify legitimacy of the Soviet claims on Königsberg using the reason of history.

In 1944 in his letter to Churchill dated by 4 February, Stalin highlighted the following idea: “we state that north-eastern part of East Prussia (including Königsberg) must be ceded to the Soviet Union. This is the only piece of German territory upon which we are putting an explicit claim. Should this petty demand of the USSR be not satisfied, every further deliberation regarding our would-be acknowledgement of the Curzon Line will be meaningless”⁴².

Although Franklin D. Roosevelt agreed privately, Churchill expressed much more a cautious position. In fact, he was hoping that the Soviets would allow the whole of the East Prussia to become Polish territory. Stalin remained adamant, however, and threatened to reject the entire formula of the Curzon Line unless this "minimum claim" was met⁴³. In addition to the above-mentioned arguments, in his subsequent letter Stalin underlined rightfulness of the Russian demands upon Königsberg with the fact that even during the First World Wars these lands witnessed Russian soldiers spill blood and die in great numbers. Undoubtedly, it was not because of rather hyperbolized and unsophisticated arguments (particularly the ones that called East Prussia “truly Slavic territory”) that led Churchill to concede and eventually agree with the notion that the Russians did have fairly justified right on this part of German territory.

⁴¹ Громько А.А. (ред.), “Тегеранская конференция трех союзных держав – СССР, США и Великобритании. 28 ноября – 1 декабря 1943 г.”, In *Советский Союз на международных конференциях периода Великой Отечественной войны, 1941-1945 гг., Сборник документов, Министерство иностранных дел СССР*, Т. 2, (Москва: Политиздат, 1978/84), 150.

⁴² Громько А.А. (ред.), “ Лично и секретно от премьера И.В. Сталина премьер-министру г-ну Уинстону Черчиллю,” In *Переписка Председателя Совета Министров СССР с Президентами США и Премьер-министрами Великобритании во время Великой Отечественной войны 1941 – 1945 гг.*, Т. 1, М-во иностр. дел СССР, 2-е изд., (Москва: Политиздат, 1989), письмо № 236.

⁴³ Tony Sharp, "The Russian Annexation of the Königsberg Area 1941-45", *Survey: A Journal of East & West Studies*, Vol. 23, № 4:156–162, 1977–78, (London: Information Bulletin Ltd. on behalf of the International Association for Cultural Freedom.), 156.

The Crimea/Yalta Conference (February 4–11, 1945)⁴⁴ did not deal with the issue of Königsberg directly, yet some important documents enable one to suggest that the Allied powers must have reached an implicit (and what is more important at this point unrecorded) understanding with the Soviet Union. According to such a tacit agreement, northern and eastern parts of East Prussia with Königsberg included were to become the Soviet war trophy⁴⁵, although it needs to be reiterated that there is no officially documented agreement on this matter. It seemed that the issue of such sensitivity and importance was deliberately evaded although the reasons are still unknown and remain a matter of speculations emanating from various spectrums depending on political orientation and perception of historical legacy of the Soviet Union. Although the Yalta Communiqué makes no direct mention of granting the Königsberg area to the Soviets, this seems to have been the operating principle for the future agreement. Moreover, the Soviet political thinking kept reiterating previously made point regarding "at least one ice-free port at the expense of Germany". Apparently, it was Königsberg that was meant to become a compensation for the Soviet military losses and boost Moscow`s presence on the Baltic. On the other hand, it seemed that the major players seemed to have been rather unwilling to get to matter of great controversy purposefully leaving the solution for the next conference.

The Potsdam Conference (July – August 1945)⁴⁶ that marked victorious end of the war in Europe not only revealed (or reiterated) growing discord between the UK and the US on the one hand and the Soviet Union on the other yet also highlighted profound level of mutual distrust within the Allied camp. It was also clear that the Soviet leadership had developed its own understanding regarding the postwar Europe which was stipulated by the "sphere-of-influence" mode of thinking. By that time, Königsberg and its outskirts

⁴⁴ Source: "The Yalta Conference, 1945", *Office of the Historian, Bureau of Public Affairs United States Department of State*, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1937-1945/yalta-conf>, (Accessed October 9, 2014).

⁴⁵ For more information see the following materials: Громько А.А. (ред.), "Крымская конференция руководителей трех союзных держав – СССР, США и Великобритании. 4–11 февраля 1945", In *Советский Союз на международных конференциях периода Великой Отечественной войны, 1941-1945 гг., Сборник документов, Министерство иностранных дел СССР*, Т. 4, (Москва: Политиздат, 1978/84.г.), 139, 147, 148.

⁴⁶ Source: "The Potsdam Conference, 1945", *Office of the Historian, Bureau of Public Affairs United States Department of State*, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1937-1945/potsdam-conf>, (Accessed December 11, 2014).

had already been put under effective control of the Soviet Army and this fact preordained its future, rendering all discussions on this regard futile and largely unnecessary.

1.2. The “German question”, Konigsberg and the “house divided against itself”⁴⁷

The course of events that followed the end of the Second World War revealed the fact that the debacle in relations between the Soviets and the Allies was a matter of time and the ad-hoc alliance was based not on existence of mutual principles and values yet immediate peril posed by Germany and Japan.

One of the most evident examples of the approaching tempest that could potentially have led to the outbreak of a new global conflict (this time between now not-co-much-allies) was the so-called “German question”. Incidentally, in his “History of the Second World War” Churchill on numerous occasions expressed his fear that the Third World War could have erupted because of the mounting tensions between the USSR and the UK (in alliance with the US) related to the future of post-war Germany. Acuteness of the situation was reflected in many ways. For instance, even such a petty detail as legal definition of post-war German state caused profound debate on the very second meeting in scopes of the conference and revealed insurmountable nature of existing problems. W. Churchill and Harry Truman (who represented the US in a capacity of its president after the death of F. D. Roosevelt in April 1945) put forth a project according to which Germany would be preserved in its “borders that would be similar to those in 1937”. Nevertheless, J. Stalin insisted on preservation of German state in the borders of 1945, which the Soviet leader briefly formulated as following: “as it is right now”⁴⁸.

Diverging positions of great powers effectively made void all previous rhetoric, agreements (both tacit and recoded) and the overall bulk of discussions on the matter

⁴⁷ Abraham Lincoln, “House Divided Speech”. Springfield, Illinois, June 16, 1858. In *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, New Brunswick, Roy P. Basler (Ed.), Volume 2, (N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1953), 462.

⁴⁸ For greater details see: Громыко А.А. (ред.), “Берлинская (Потсдамская) конференция руководителей трех держав – СССР, США и Великобритании”, In *Советский Союз на международных конференциях периода Великой Отечественной войны, 1941-1945 гг.*, Сборник документов, Министерство иностранных дел СССР, Т.6, (Москва: Политиздат, 1978/84.г.) 56–58.

being held within the antecedent period (1941- 1944), whereby making Germany (and East Prussia) one of the main inter-allied “battlefields”.

In this juncture the issue of East Prussia became a matter of particular concern for the Soviets who after having won the war were afraid of losing the peace (as it frequently happened in the times of Russian Empire).

In 1945 the Soviet political leadership presumed that if all previous agreements (both formal and informal) had been followed by the parties involved, East Prussia would have become a zone of shared responsibility at least until the final peace settlement. Naturally, this was the worst scenario possible for the USSR, since it would have abrogated all gains in the Baltic Sea region and Poland made by the Red Army effectively putting a lid on the Soviet regional ambitions. Another scenario envisaged “provisional” reestablishment of German administration in East Prussia until the final settlement accord. This idea infuriated Soviet delegation and J. Stalin in particular. Keeping the distance from emotional aspects and accessing the problem from historical prospective Stalin`s ire appeared to be understandable. After all, it was the Soviet Union whose population and the arm forces paid the highest toll during the wartime and the idea of German administration being reinstated even on the temporary basis (especially taking into account the role of Königsberg as a military stronghold of Nazi Germany) would have been a severe diplomatic defeat. Moreover, it was by no means clear who would comprise this “provisional administration”, which theoretically could have seen the former Nazi generals and administration being re-installed.

Strong determination of Stalin to preserve Königsberg at any rate (perhaps, even at the cost of looming confrontation) may be deduced from his unambiguous position assumed at the time of the conference. The Soviet leader expressed his opinion on the matter in the following unsophisticated formula: “if German administration is to be reinstated in any form, the Soviet troops would drive it away from East Prussia... we most certainly will.”⁴⁹

It should also be kept in mind that Königsberg preoccupied minds of the Soviet political leadership for yet another reason – it had a very deep symbolic meaning. Aside from the fact that it was the first German land that was invaded by the Red Army it was widely

⁴⁹ Ibid., 57.

associated with the “spirit of Prussian militarism” and a source of perpetual threat and apprehension for so-called “Soviet part” of the Baltic Sea region.

On the one hand, matters related to geopolitical calculations should also be taken into serious account: Moscow intended to preserve its territorial gains in the west and subsequently use the issue of territorial aggrandizement as a powerful stimulus. For instance, the Soviet position on the “Polish question” and explicit support for the Lublin Government (that had assumed a pro-Soviet stance)⁵⁰ were a statement of Stalin`s lack of intent to conduct “free and democratic elections” in states of Central and Eastern Europe that had found themselves under effective control of the Soviet Army. Otherwise he would most certainly have expressed visible concern with the fate of East Prussia being “sandwiched” between the Baltic States and Poland. Second assumption was related to the first one: it was undisputable that the entire East Prussia (with Königsberg as its major city) was perceived by the Soviets either as an unalienable part of the USSR or a part of a satellite state/s that would constitute its sphere of influence once the war was over. With stiffening rhetoric from both sides, the Soviet perception of Königsberg altered to something akin to the “war trophy” that belonged to the Soviet Union as a compensation for tremendous human and economic losses suffered during the war with the Nazi Germany.

Also, the Red Army once again demonstrated its outstanding level of military proficiency, expertise and offensive capabilities by crushing the Japanese Kwantung Army (approximately 1.3 million soldiers and officers).

Coupled with visible fear of the sweeping westward advance by the Soviets the Allies could only comply with developments on the Baltic Sea region. Moreover, both H. Truman and W. Churchill had issues of their own: if the former had just assumed presidential post and was unaware of many foreign policy maneuvers conducted by the former administration, the latter had new elections coming, which in democratic states does not necessarily yield victory to the incumbent authorities (actually, Churchill did lose to Anthony Eden even despite pre-term elections deliberately conducted at his hour of triumph).

⁵⁰ For more information see: George H. Janczewski, “The Origin of the Lublin Government”, *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 50, No.120 (July 1972), (London: University College London, School of Slavonic and East European Studies, 1972), 410-433.

Official statement that was produced during the Potsdam Conference regarding Königsberg and the East Prussia stated: *“The Conference has considered proposals of the Soviet Government. Therefore, until the final solution of territorial questions pertaining to the Baltic Sea area, part of the western border of the Soviet Union is to be delineated by the Danzig Bay in the east- northern Braunsberg-Goldap towards the butt joint of Lithuania, Poland and East Prussia. In principle, the Conference has agreed to pass Königsberg to the Soviet Union, as is stated above. The exact border is to be established after careful expert analysis. President of the US and the British Prime Minister declare that they will support this decision on the final conference that will stipulate terms and conditions of the final peace settlement”*⁵¹.

This citation from official statement explains that the legal status of the post-war Königsberg was in fact not clearly defined, primarily due to the fact that date of the final conference which should have made the ultimate ruling was never decided. Therefore, it would not be a mistake or an exaggeration to suggest that the main factor that allowed the Soviet Union to incorporate Königsberg was imposition of effective military control of the Soviet forces over the German province in question.

This status quo (that was not questioned by the Allies in any recorder form) de-facto made Königsberg an integral part of the Soviet Union bequeathing it with a constellation of complex historical issues and unclear legal status that could become a matter of potential discord with regional players whose historical and cultural ties with Kaliningrad/Königsberg had lasted for centuries. Whereas in 1945 such prospect appeared to be largely detached from reality such a scenario could attain visible shape in the future giving way to nationalist/irredentist aspirations⁵². In the final analysis, it should not be an exaggeration to suggest that consequences of this decision (or, to be more precise the lack thereof) became an indicative moment for the system of relationships that would be established between Kaliningrad Oblast, adjacent states, the West and the Kremlin for decades to come. The lack of recorded compromise that should have been universally accepted by all parties concerned made Kaliningrad/Königsberg a gray zone of the Baltic Sea region.

⁵¹ Громыко А.А. (ред.), “Берлинская (Потсдамская) конференция руководителей трех держав – СССР, США и Великобритании, Советский Союз на международных конференциях периода Великой Отечественной войны, 1941-1945 гг.”, In *Сборник документов, Министерство иностранных дел СССР*, Т.6, (Москва: Политиздат, 1978/84 г.), 457.

⁵² These topics will be dealt with in forthcoming chapters of research.

The act of incorporation of Kaliningrad contained yet another crucial aspect. Contrary to the Baltic States and Poland (that had been forcefully occupied by the USSR) that were subjected to foreign ideology and artificially pulled from their European roots, status, mission and historical destiny of Kaliningrad/Konigsberg seemed unclear. Incidentally, the clarity would not be achieved even after the attainment of relative normalization of relations between the USSR and its western counterparts.

The Final Settlement of World War II that was signed on September 12, 1990 (finally came into force on March 15, 1991) that actually gave way to German unification, left the same question in regard of the legal status of the Kaliningrad Oblast. Although the Potsdam Agreement does speak of "the ultimate transfer to the Soviet Union of the City of Königsberg and the area adjacent to it" it does not state (or even imply for that matter) the right of the Soviets to annex the territory on a permanent basis was done. Furthermore, in this juncture it would be worthwhile to quote essential parts of both Article VI and Article IX that did explain the nature of the Soviet control of Königsberg which was to be "placed under the administration of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in accordance with the understanding reached at this Conference". Therefore, following the latter of International Public Law Königsberg was neither directly transferred to the Soviet Union nor did it necessarily become the Soviet zone of occupation⁵³ as was the East Germany.

1.3. German population and the new regime: unwanted foreigners on the native land

Another crucial issue that escaped attention of the leading international powers (or was simply neglected lest to deepen the already apparent rift) was the fate of remaining German population in East Prussia and Konigsberg in particular. By 1946 between 114,070⁵⁴ and 129,614⁵⁵ officially registered Germans still remained on the territory of

⁵³ Robert A. Vitas, "The status of Kaliningrad Oblast under international law", *Lithuanian Research & Studies Center*, Volume 38, No.1, Spring 1992, (Chicago: Lituanius Foundation, Inc., 1992). Available at: http://www.lituanus.org/1992_1/92_1_02.htm#Ref.

⁵⁴ Piotr Eberhardt and Jan Owsinski, *Ethnic Groups and Population Changes in Twentieth-century Central-Eastern Europe: History, Data, Analysis*, (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2003), 456.

⁵⁵ Юрий Костяшов, *Секретная история Калининградской области: очерки 1945-1956 гг.*, (Калининград: Терра Балтика, 2009), 165.

Konigsberg and adjacent area (unofficial number is still unclear remaining a matter of debate and further research).

According to the Potsdam Conference, special Control Council on Germany was established, which however by and large failed to successfully resolve the above-mentioned puzzle. In special report issued by the Control Council, only one phrase was directly pertaining to the remaining Germans that were “to be transported in organized and humane manner so as to safeguard proportionate allocation of these Germans among zones of occupation”⁵⁶. From his side Stalin clearly and unequivocally stated that Article №12 of the Protocol would not be applicable to the remaining German population. This left German civilians (who did not manage to escape from Konigsberg or had not been evacuated by the German troops and would be subsequently fully removed from the oblast) to the full mercy of the Russians. The Soviet political leadership was also facing an extremely challenging dilemma: how to reconcile the much-loathed image of Germans (that was based not only on actual war crimes, yet also skillfully elaborated by the Soviet propaganda) with the fact of Soviet and German population would have to be living in a rather precarious vicinity on the territory of East Prussia?

After all, even within a very brief period of encounter between civilian Germans and the arriving settlers (including families of the Soviet soldiers) relations between two sides started to develop at a very different trajectory than might have been anticipated. Indeed, initial period of interactions between the indigenous population and the newcomers was marked by a very high level of incredulity mixed with an acute sense of animosity. Nevertheless, later on with the growth of contacts and the proliferation of communication (also based on incredibly difficult living conditions experienced by both the Germans and Russians) the hatred was being superseded by interest and even curiosity.⁵⁷ The Soviet people did not express much interest in cultural traditions, books or art - their interest was largely related to more practical aspects (so-called “utilitarian exploitation”) ranging from architecture to cuisine. In Konigsberg many Soviet settlers were amazed by German orchards (that in many ways would become the only source of vitamins during winter time) especially taking into consideration local conditions in the

⁵⁶ For more information see: “Раздел. VII. Перемещение населения”, In *Доклад Контрольного Совета в Германии Совету министров иностранных дел*, (Берлин, 1947), 18.

⁵⁷ “История города, Глава 11. Немцы”, *Калининград, официальный сайт администрации городского округа “Город Калининград”*, http://www.klgd.ru/city/history/peresel/gl_11.php (Accessed December 17, 2014).

Soviet mainland. One of the most unusual courses that the Soviet people borrowed from the Germans was elderberry jam, charlotte cake with apples (strudel) and many other widely unknown courses.

It needs however be noted that upon the arrival outlooks and previous experiences of the settlers got initially confused and later they started to measure their routine by standards differing from their previous habitat. Particularly amazing for Soviet people were small towns, villages and even the tiniest hamlets: all buildings were made of bricks, roofs protected by roof tiles, bridges intact with openwork grids of cast-iron. On the other hand, all roads and pedestrian lines were in perfect state, always paved. Unusual flora, unknown herbs and plants at each house, woods with well developed lanes (also paved with bricks) was a sheer revelation for people coming from Russian mainland. Everything seemed foreign yet inexplicably appealing. Houses with small basins, perfect amenities, sophisticated heating systems, constant water supply and other things mostly unknown for ordinary citizens of the Soviet Union – those were genuinely amazing things. One of the most interesting pastime was visiting local cemeteries with monuments, sculptors and crypts – things that were not easily found in the Soviet Union, particularly those who arrived from Russian and Belarusian hinterlands. Some people testified that visiting of so-called “German markets”⁵⁸, where various things were being sold was tantamount to going to a museum. In rural area ordinary people would be amazed (many of them genuinely perplexed) with effectiveness and high level of mechanization as well as economic and agricultural tactics employed by previous masters. For instance, for many it was a sheer surprise that the small farms (ruthlessly eradicated and superseded with collective farms in the Soviet Union) were extremely competitive and amazingly effective: each farm possessed its own inventory, livestock and the land. One might think that such an encounter with other lifestyle should have induced new owners of this land to at least try to follow certain patterns that had been established by the Germans – unfortunately, such scenario did not materialize.

One the other hand, it was clear that the days of Germans in de-facto Soviet Kaliningrad were counted. The Soviets had no intention of keeping this rather mixed blessing and expose the region to any forms of potential cooperation between the arriving settlers and the enemy. The allies on the other hand had neither interest nor other special

⁵⁸ Source: ГАКО: Н. А. Строганова, *Немецкие дети-сироты на территории Калининградской области (1945—1948 гг.)*, Available at: <http://www.gako.name/index.php?publ=165&razd=208>.

interest in meddling in such a sensitive question. Moreover, growing international tensions and a number of highly sinister developments in various theaters extending from the Far East to the Middle East and even Europe largely eclipsed such a “petty” problem as stateless Germans locked in the area that was engulfed by the Soviet Union.

In this juncture it would not be superfluous to mention Winston Churchill who uttered the following statement regarding the fate of ethnic German population that had survived intense urban fighting between the Soviets and the Nazi forces as well as tremendous bombardments incurred by the Allied aviation forces: “expulsion is the method which, in so far as we have been able to see, will be the most satisfactory and lasting. There will be no mixture of populations to cause endless trouble.”⁵⁹

1.4. The incorporation: challenges, threats and prospects

In spite of certain previous remarks that may have portrayed the process of acquisition of Königsberg as totally off-hand action committed by the Kremlin, it would be quite inaccurate to reduce the overall argument to this largely oversimplified supposition. Even though Moscow could not have been able to precisely estimate all costs and consequences of the action it undoubtedly was well aware of the fact that it would have to somehow deal with the repercussions once hostilities had come to an end. The logic should be looked for in general stance assumed by the Soviet ruling elites in the hierarchy of priorities. The course of the Soviet history explicitly states that the Soviet leadership rarely prioritized “means” above the “ends” opting to follow classical postulates of the Realpolitik⁶⁰. After all, it was assumed that geopolitical gain of such a weight and vitality clearly outweighed potential difficulties and predicaments caused by it. Moreover, historical memory, previous (quite recent for this matter) experiences and deeply rooted phobias in Russian perception of the “outer world” was a powerful force that made the Soviet leadership commit sometimes reckless steps. On the other hand, it would not be superfluous to underscore that in addition to artificially created images,

⁵⁹ Clare Murphy, “WWII expulsions specter lives on”, *BBC News*, August 2, 2004, Available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3528506.stm>.

⁶⁰ Henry C. Emery, “What is Realpolitik?”, *International Journal of Ethics*. Vol. 25, No. 4, July 1915, 448-468.

there was a number of quite real perils: after all, two most bloody military conflicts (the First World War and the Great Motherland War) came from the west.

However, there was much more to it than purely geopolitical calculations of the Soviet leaders. Stalin`s profound hatred to Poland stemming from humiliating defeat suffered by the Red Army in during the Soviet-Polish War, largely explained his strong desire to put Poland under control of the USSR. On the other hand, in communication with F.D. Roosevelt and W. Churchill (February 1945) Stalin pointed out that Poland was the main corridor through which the enemy had been invading the Soviet territory “at least for the past 30 years”⁶¹. Moreover, taking into account strong nationalist and anti-Soviet sentiments in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and their role during the Civil War in Russia and the Second World War the Soviet Union had to make sure that these remnants of the Russian Empire remain under its control as well. In addition, as it was clearly shown in the beginning of the war, Leningrad could be easily cut off the mainland, becoming a liability rather than an undisputed strong point.

Secondly, from military point of view acquisition of Königsberg would put the entire eastern part of the Baltic Sea region under the total control of the Soviet armed forces, which could in turn lead toward transformation of the Sea into the “Russian lake”⁶². Under these circumstances the Baltic States (Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia) and to a substantial degree Poland (that would be facing heavily militarized Belarus) would be sandwiched between two Soviet strongholds and enjoying volatile and largely illusory sovereignty – not otherwise. Thirdly, in case of a major war with the West Königsberg could have been used as a stronghold for a massive offensive strike against anti-Soviet forces on the Baltic Sea flank. Depending on both military strength and rapidity of actions forces of other regional players could have been overrun within days securing Soviet domination and sparing Leningrad from its tragic experience during the course of the blockade imposed by Finland and the Nazi forces. This may very well sound quite outlandish nowadays yet for the Soviet people (including the ruling elites) experience of the Great Patriotic War was a footprint that pre-determined the lifestyle of at least one generation becoming a landmark event in formation of the USSR. Its vitality is additionally strengthened by the current developments in Russia (after more than 70 years

⁶¹ “Сталин о Польше”, *Русская народная линия*, November 29, 2010, http://ruskline.ru/analitika/2010/11/29/stalin_o_polshe/ (Accessed April 11, 2014).

⁶² The Baltic Sea was once referred to as the „Swedish lake” in the 18th century.

since its outbreak) and growing appeal to the legacy of the war and its impact of the Soviet society.

In the end, it would be adequate to suggest that in the year 1945 acquisition of Königsberg was widely considered as a large success pervasively hailed by the Soviet propaganda. Nonetheless, despite upbeat rhetoric it was the sense of uncertainty and confusion over the fate of Königsberg and the ways of its integration into the Soviet state. Its “foreignness” amplified by remaining German population and the lack of final agreement on its status sharply conflicted with the level of destruction suffered by the USSR and the lack of resources (both human and material) that were to be diverted to the arduous task of the post-war healing.

Judging by forthcoming historical developments, it appeared that instead of declarative gain Moscow had acquired a complex problem whose gravity and seriousness it was yet to fully comprehend.

Chapter 2. The post-war transformation of Kaliningrad: a thorny path to the unclear future

After several days of intensive fighting zealous German defense was finally broken and Königsberg was captured by the Soviet Troops on 9 April 1945 (one month before unconditional surrender of German high command). Soviet operation coincided with destructive, quite indiscriminate and largely unnecessary retaliatory bombing raids (on August 27 and 30, 1944) conducted by British and American air forces⁶³. It has been argued that the air raids were a part of a retaliation campaign for the sufferings brooked by the English. Conclusion of such a sort could be drawn from Churchill’s fundamental work on the history of the WW2.⁶⁴

In the end, it was the Red Army that carried out land operation that led to the establishment of complete control over the city and its outskirts. Of course, at this point the post-war fate of Königsberg was not at all obvious, posing many pivotal questions

⁶³ For more information see: Royal Air Force Bomber Command 60th Anniversary: Campaign Diary, August 1944, UK Government Web Archive; Д.Якшина, “Кёнигсберг сожженных детей. Тысячи фосфорных бомб обрушились на их головы”, *Новые колеса*, Калининград, August 21, 2008, Available at: http://www.rudnikov.com/article.php?ELEMENT_ID=16580.

⁶⁴ Уинстон Черчилль, *Вторая мировая война*, Т. 6, (Москва: Терра, 1998), 33.

(the first of which pertained to the issue of jurisdiction) for future discussions. Nonetheless, after some months passed it became apparent that Moscow was not going to wait until the “final peace settlement” in order to formalize its de-facto control over this strategic point. Although, once the fighting was over other by no means less important aspects and challenges were to be dealt with. How to deal with a large number of Germans still remaining on the territory controlled by the Red Army? Who would replace indigenous population? What would be the way of incorporation of the territory into the Soviet Union? All these undoubtedly pivotal questions would be overshadowed by yet another one, which boiled to the following task: what would be the remedy against persevering sense of “foreignness” intertwining with a certain feeling of “temporariness” that had already been experienced by the Soviets residing in Königsberg.

On the other hand, the end of the Second World War brought about a number of daunting tasks that underscored general inability of Moscow to simultaneously deal with them. Taking closer look at the post-war Soviet Union, it would not be difficult to ascertain that Königsberg (in spite of its strategic geopolitics) was merely a miniscule part. The key question however boiled down to the matter of timing: precisely how long Königsberg/Kaliningrad would occupy peripheral position in estimates of Moscow. On the other hand, another crucial issue was to be discussed: what would be the place and role of this area in the Soviet leadership’s political calculations. Given its geographic position it could have become a link bridging the Soviet proper with the “outer world” or it could be re-transformed into an entity of totally different quality that would largely follow the footsteps of its historical predecessors evolving into a “tinderbox” of Europe. Another scenario could have led the newly acquired territory to becoming a “gray zone” – economically, politically and culturally isolated and depressed “island”.

In the end, the outcome primarily depended on the position of Moscow (ruling elites), internal as well as external factors and the pace/scope/nature of measures applied to the area. Furthermore, by its very emergence Kaliningrad largely owed to the desire of one person – Joseph Stalin, which leads to two key questions: for how long would the current political leadership be interested in its “creature” and what would happen under new elites?

2.1. The “war trophy” or the “unwanted child”?

This segment of research aims to discuss first decade of Kaliningrad history after the year 1945 and its de-facto incorporation in the Soviet Union. Specifically, the emphasis will be made on a very perplexing transformation of perception of the area by the Soviet political leadership. Namely, as it has been noted before Stalin had been markedly expressing his concern with the fate of the post-war East Prussia (initially in scopes of the “Polish question” and later as a separate aspect of the Soviet foreign policy) and drastic change of demeanor of Moscow that was reflected in complete ignorance of the topic within at least two forthcoming decades (in particular until 1953). Furthermore, the fierce confrontation between emerging civilian authorities and military units stationed in Königsberg/Kaliningrad would be discussed extensively. This strife is to be tackled in the context of development of post-war Kaliningrad, its role and perception by Moscow. Ultimately, the issue of German population that has been portrayed as one of the most immediate tasks to be attended by the Kremlin and its gravity as well as measures undertaken by the Soviets is to be tackled with particular attention and precision. Aforementioned aspects should not be viewed as separate issues yet require complex analysis in conjuncture with other events and tendencies experienced by the Soviet Union and evolving outlook of Russian political leadership within indicated historical interim.

2.1.1. Königsberg and the East Prussia through the lens of the Soviet propaganda

Taking into consideration the role of propaganda in Soviet policies it would be particularly worthwhile to apply this experience to the Kaliningrad post-war realities and underscore methods, tools and strategies employed by the Soviet propaganda machine. This should be especially valuable taking into consideration the landscape and historical context encountered by the Soviets in this former German land.

Reflecting about these issues, it ought to be recognized that the launch of official propaganda related to East Prussia and Königsberg in particular was dated by October 1944 when Soviet armed forces had not yet reached the area. The mechanism of the Soviet military propaganda had an explicit aim of creating a very specific image of East Prussia and its inhabitants – the one that would be profoundly loathed by the Russians.

Incidentally, the patterns of ideological propaganda employed by Soviet branches responsible for ideology did not greatly deflect from the one that had been applied during the antecedent period.

Namely, it would be possible to identify the following historical periods which contributed to the future propaganda campaign to be carried out in the East Prussia:

- **Russian Civil War and the “War Communism”**⁶⁵, which coincided with the foreign intervention and the Soviet-Polish military clash, whereby explicitly depicting the image of an “ideological enemy” with a clear-cut reference to respective nationalities;

- Parlanse associated with so-called “**Stalin`s Revolution**”⁶⁶ that by and large reinstated the image of an alliance between “foreign counter revolutionists” and the “fifth column” working within the USSR

Nevertheless, considering these aspects general patterns of Soviet propaganda campaigns aimed at working with local particularities are not to be disregarded⁶⁷.

There was however a substantial difference between anti-German propaganda (primarily related to *Ilya Ehrenburg*⁶⁸ to be further developed by his colleagues) with German troops present on the Soviet territory and the period when the Red Army was about to encroach upon the enemy’s land.

Many historians put particularly emphasize the fact that the East Prussian Offensive had been preceded by intensive propaganda campaign that consisted of public lectures, meetings with war veterans (especially those who had fought on these lands during the First World War). Particular attention was paid to the instances of rape, mass

⁶⁵ Светлана Шешунова, “Язык пропаганды 1918—1922 гг. в контексте русской культуры”, *Постсимволизм*, Available at: http://postsymbolism.ru/joomla/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=33&Itemid=29

⁶⁶ Даниэль Вайс, “Сталинистский и национал-социалистический дискурсы пропаганды: сравнение в первом приближении”, *Политическая лингвистика*, Выпуск. 3(23), (Екатеринбург: Уральский государственный педагогический университет, 2007), 34—60.

⁶⁷ For more information see: Jolanta Darczewska, “Anatomia Rosyjskiej wojny informacyjnej. Operacja Krumska – stadium przypadku”, *Punkt widzenia*, No. 42, Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich im. Marka Karpią, (Warszawa, May 22, 2014).

⁶⁸ Илья Эренбург, “Убей!”, *Красная звезда*, №173 [5236], 24 июля 1942 г.

executions, deprivation of paraphernalia and basic necessities committed by German soldiers against the Soviet civilian population⁶⁹. Those measures were to foster deep sense of hatred and to simultaneously diminish the feeling of remorse, whereby preparing soldiers and officers for a mortal fight with an enemy.

Reflecting upon memoirs and testimonies of the Great Patriotic War veterans who took part in the East Prussian operation it ought to be admitted that the Soviet propaganda did have a huge impact resulting in emergence of a very specific perception of various aspects related to Germany. Perhaps, common line of sentiments was best reflected in the following quotation: “during the years of war Germany became associated with blood and damnation, whereas the word “German” was perceived as something inhuman”.⁷⁰

For instance, the Soviet newspaper “Pravda” issued in October 1944 presented image of disgusting in every way and adverse to the Soviet nature East Prussia. Eydtkuhnen (nowadays village Chernyshevskoye in Kaliningrad Oblast) was the first town to be entered by the Soviet troops. It was described in the following way: “Eydtkuhnen is a town full of contradictions. On the one hand, it is a typical habitat of small vendors, bank clerks, Prussian officials and boring pedantic philistinism of which the main symbol is a monument representing a big beer mug. On the other hand, this is a border town – an ideal place for spies, smugglers, gendarmes and thieves. Here, in dirty beer halls spies used to create their plots before penetrating through the border. In small, dimly lit restaurants diversionists and saboteurs were planning arsons and explosions they would later carry out. Here, Prussian officers fat and filled with beer were hanging around being the only local authority. Here on the black Sunday of 1941 German troops had gathered and crossed the border. First military echelons “Nach Osten” directed their way towards the Soviet Union from this territory.”⁷¹ This image of East Prussia with an exorbitant emphasis on its role in the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union was to justify violence and destruction as an atonement of sins committed by the Nazi regime (along with local population that supported the aggression). In this regard, retaliation was

⁶⁹ Александр Сологубов, “Формирование образа Восточной Пруссии Советской военной пропагандой и его использование в послевоенное время”, *Вестник Балтийского федерального университета им. И. Канта, Серия: Гуманитарные и общественные науки*, Вып. 12, (Калининград, 2011), 3.

⁷⁰ For more information see: Анатолий Генатулин, *Вот кончится война: повести и рассказы*, (Москва: Правда, 1988). Available at: http://militera.lib.ru/prose/russian/genatulin_au/01.html.

⁷¹ Мержанов М. “В Германии. Вступление советских войск в Ширвиндт и Эйткунен в окт. 1944 г.”, *Правда*, 25 октября, 1944 г.

understood as an adequate response to German atrocities committed against peoples of the USSR.

Somewhat similar sentiments were presented in “Izvestia” newspaper: “How pleasant it is to see a dead Prussian on his own land – in Tilzit and Gumbinnen near Konigsberg, on the road that leads to Berlin. The war has returned to the land that had engendered it. A dead Prussian is seemingly uncomfortable in his trench: cadaver on cadaver... Black snow...Ashes. On the West – red rim of sky, the fire arch signifying our offensive. The war is moving there. In our hearts June 1941, Minsk ablaze, children’s blood on the road, dust... German bombs treacherously falling on crowds of refugees. Now we have chased the war engendered by the Germans back to its own den. Insterburg is ablaze. Fluff from German down-beds is in the air. German soldiers were hiding in these down-beds. They were carved out from there with bayonets... Let the flame of revenge devour it – we remember Minsk, Kiev, Smolensk and Viaz`ma.”⁷² Another telling example of such sort of propaganda may be found in the article “The fall of Konigsberg” issued by a newspaper “Pravda”: “Konigsberg – this is a history of German crimes. Throughout its centuries old history, it has been living by banditry, no other style of life has it even been accustomed to.”

These templates of propaganda were used in two main ways: to develop a strong sense of loath and disgust in the Soviet Soldiers with Germany and Konigsberg as a “nest of aggression”. On the other hand, taking into account growing contradictions between the Soviet Union and the West, Nazism was to be construed as a form of capitalism⁷³ innately adverse to the Soviet regime. This ushered in a campaign on first somehow equalizing the notion “capitalism” and the Nazi ideology and subsequently replacing the latter with the former.⁷⁴

Another remarkable example of the Soviet propaganda was a cycle of radio programmes (1947 – 1948), which were meant to present history of Konigsberg in a “right way” and explain its “foreign” past. For instance, the anchors with special guests

⁷² Евгений Кригер, “Твой час наступает, Германия!”, *Известия*, № 26, 1 февраля 1945г., 2.

⁷³ For more information see: Георгий Димитров, “Наступление фашизма и задачи Коммунистического интернационала в борьбе за единство рабочего класса против фашизма. Доклад на VII Всемирном конгрессе Ком. Интернационала”, In *В борьбе за единый фронт против фашизма и войны. Статьи и речи 1935-1937*, (Москва: Партиздат ЦК ВКП(б), 1937), 4.

⁷⁴ For more information see: William Z. Foster, *History of the Three Internationals; the world socialist and communist movements from 1848 to the present*, (New York: International Publishers, 1955).

(historians of so-called “Pokrovskii school”⁷⁵ hailed under J. Stalin) presented the former German territory in the following manner: “Center of the most reactionary Prussian militarism in the world... place, where misanthropic theories and aggressive plans were being cherished, where everything related to democracy had been ousted – here the Fascist regime of German militarists had prevailed and all boons were put in the hands of affluent capitalists and feudalists who had made their fortune on banditry”⁷⁶. In similar vein went another description: “Seven centuries stood on the shores of the Baltic Sea this gloomy city- fortress, erected by the Teutonic dogs- knights, it became an embodiment of war-like nature of Prussians. Decade after decade were Prussians reinforcing their bandit nest. From the times of Teutonic Knights to the Hitler’s SA had this city remained a protective hound of the German Reich on the East. Here the idea of invasion on the Soviet Europe was growing up, the weapon of death was being hammered, murderers and arsonists were being trained - vial performers of the Barbarossa Plan.”⁷⁷

By using these definitions and portraying Königsberg as a fortress and the generator of war, the Soviet propaganda tried to justify transition of the area into the hands of Soviet Union as a crucial event for the entire Eastern Europe – it would serve as a guarantor of non-aggression from the part of Capitalist world against the Soviet State and its allies. “Throughout its centuries-old history, East Prussia remained an arch-enemy of the entire free humankind. Its capital Königsberg was a fabric of war. It was a source of all military conflicts in Europe. Until the Prussian military beast remained free, not a single Slavic state could live normally, without apprehension of being attacked”⁷⁸. This quotation did not only refer to East Prussia itself, it was an explicit attempt to define spheres of influence of the Soviet Union – “all Slavic countries” as a clear juxtaposition to non-Slavic and therefore unfriendly community of nations. Other “eloquent” definitions describing pre-1945 East Prussia were the following:

⁷⁵ Николай Артизов, “Школа М. Н. Покровского и советская историческая наука, конец 1920-х - 1930-е гг.”, PhD thesis, Государственная Академия Сферы Быта и Услуг, Москва, 1998.

⁷⁶ Source: Из передачи “Будущее Калининграда”, 20.09.1947 г., ГАКО. Ф. 19. Оп. 1. Д. 10. Л. 223.

⁷⁷ Ibid., Прахов, Из передачи “Кёнигсбергская победа”, 7.04.1948 г., Д. 22. Л. 20.

⁷⁸ Ibid., Из передачи “Древняя славянская земля возвращена законным хозяевам”, 10.04.1948 г Л. 33.

„bastion for aggressive actions against neighbors”, “a highwayman stronghold of German militarists and reaction”, “the vespiary of Fascism”, “Fascist bandit nest”, “the black town of Europe”, “the first den of Ottokar”.⁷⁹

Other towns that now constitute Kaliningrad Oblast were referred to in no less extreme terms: “former resorts Grantz and Rauschen were a sanctuary of Hitler’s thugs and German bourgeoisie... Not long ago, here in luxurious villas and hotels surrounded by orchards and woods Hitler’s thugs and German bourgeoisie were hanging out”. Insterburg was defined as: “Prussian town of military barracks, hagglers and small business. Many times, have these gates served for bloody forays on Russian lands”⁸⁰. Very similar ideological stamps and clichés were used when it came to Tilzit: “here before advent of the Soviet troops was situated a cabaret... Nazi films were shown for German burgers. The local theater served for the powers of obscurantism, and an outlet for German thugs as a mouthpiece for expressing their propaganda. The war has destroyed this factory of spiritual enslavement – all sorts of cabarets and varieties are now gone for good. The theater is also set ablaze”⁸¹. Using those peremptory forms of propagandist onslaught, the Soviets were reiterating existence of a steady link between Nazi Germany and the West, whereby underscoring the existing conflict between two systems and preparing local population to treat foreignness with suspicion and malevolence.

2.1.2. “*Oprichnina*” and “*zemshchina*”: military dictate in the post-war Kaliningrad

In addition to the remaining Germans the backbone of the local population consisted of the Soviet military personnel and very few civilians. In many respects composition of the post-Soviet Kaliningrad/Konigsberg pre-determined its vector of development for a significant historical period.

The atmosphere was also shaped by the general lack of explicit instructions from Moscow regarding Konigsberg. This coupled with “foreign” nature and appearance of

⁷⁹ Юрий Костяшов, *Изгнание Прусского духа. Как формировалось историческое сознание населения Калининградской области в послевоенные годы*, (Калининград: издательство КГУ, 2003), 14.

⁸⁰ Ibidem.

⁸¹ Source: ГАКО. Ф. 19. Оп. 1. Д. 11. Л. 64.

Konigsberg, aggressive anti-German propaganda and a strong desire for retribution for the wrongdoings committed by the German side – these factors by and large shaped the attitude of Soviet military that perceived Konigsberg as an inalienable “prize” won in a mortal battle with the “Fascist beast”. Contrary to Moscow established control over this land was construed in terms diverging from geopolitical calculations, yet as a form of “compensation” for huge human and material losses sustained by the Soviets.

Taking into consideration the fact that these were the Red Army regiments that happened to be first to settle down in Konigsberg (many soldiers had to make their way through the entire European part of the USSR) they construed their final destination as an inalienable “prize”. Existing balance of powers automatically exalted the military to the top of the local architecture, which owed to the lack of official reaction from Moscow and general inability to alter the existing state of affairs by arriving civilians. The main obstacle was enshrined in the very slow pace and scope of integration of Konigsberg (with adjacent area) into the Soviet state architecture, which was hindered by two major factors. First, it was somewhat haphazard manner of attraction of civilian settlers to the area, which if done otherwise would have insured more rapid “normalization” of public life. Secondly, supreme and practically unchallenged position of the military that became the only effective power both within the city and in the northern part of East Prussia (which would later be included into the Soviet Union as well)⁸² created a monopoly of power and eliminated any competition between branches of power whatsoever.

The area was taken under control of troops comprising the 3-rd Belorussian Front (until June 1945) and subsequently established Military Council of Special Military District⁸³ which would stipulate practically all spheres of life in the post-war Konigsberg. This interim came to be indicative in a number of ways, bringing into public display the worst image of the Soviet morale. Pillage, vandalism and numerous instances of outright barbarism would soon become normal and even acceptable way of behavior. Evidences are amply contained in works of both local and external authors and historians.

Moreover, being unaware of the future status of Konigsberg army regiments stationed locally would pouch and subsequently transport all the resources and materials

⁸² Костяшов (2003), 18.

⁸³ Военный энциклопедический словарь: в 2 т., Т. 2, *Серия Энциклопедические Словари*, (Москва: Большая Российская энциклопедия, Рипол классик, 2001), 245-246.

obtained in the range of their location to the mainland (Leningrad in particular) severely affected by war. Partly justified by this cause, this behavior was largely based on “utilitarian consumption” attitude and explicit moral rejection of “foreign” and therefore “adverse” environment encountered by the Soviets. In this regard, it would be worthwhile to provide conceptual meaning of the decree issued on May 22, 1945 directed to the commandant of Königsberg that stated: “Immediately start collecting hatchets, saws, iron spates, hammers, crowbars, pickaxe-mattocks as well as each piece of carpentry tools... are to be separated from wooden particles, cleaned, oiled and prepared for shipping to the Soviet Union”⁸⁴. This last phrase clearly shows that the area was not considered to be a part of the USSR in the full sense, which might have owed to both lack of clarity regarding its future and a very brief period spent by the Soviets on this territory.

In the meantime, the lack of understanding and practical absence of general directives from the Centre incurred devastating effect on Königsberg which was being treated as a “loot” that had to be squeezed to the last drop with crudest methods possible rather than a de-facto integral part of the Soviet Union⁸⁵. Gruesome and dreary images of decay, negligence and anarchy stipulated initial period of the Soviet history of the area⁸⁶.

The same corollary resulted from special commission that was sent to the spot in 1946 (18 - 26 April), with a task to provide Soviet political leadership with clear picture of events. This inspection was headed by the Kremlin`s appointee V. Ivanchenko who had previously occupied top rank position in Gosplan of RSFSR (“State Committee for Planning”) and had earned the fame of skillful manager. In this context it would not be superfluous to provide a succinct summary of Ivanchenko`s response to the Kremlin: “the newly acquired lands were treated with outrageous negligence... it has practically not been dealt with in terms of any sort of restoration works”. It was also mentioned that vast masses of arable land had been expropriated by the military and exploited as a test ground for incessant (and rather useless) war games and maneuvers. Moreover, even in spite of looming famine, the land was not being transferred to collective farms and small agricultural formations. On the contrary, numerous attempts undertaken by local peasants to start agricultural or other labor activities would immediately clash with resolve of

⁸⁴ Source: ГАКО. Ф. 330, Оп. 1, Д. 15, Л. 50.

⁸⁵ For more information see: ЦХИДНИКО. Ф. 1. Оп. 1. Д. 62. Л. 4 + Л. 62 – 63

⁸⁶ For more information see: Под редакцией Юрия Костяшова, *Восточная Пруссия глазами советских переселенцев: Первые годы Калининградской области в воспоминаниях и документах*, (Санкт Петербург: «Бельведер», 2002).

military to preserve their sway over the land⁸⁷. Various evidences and testimonies present an abominable picture close to calamity even despite the fact that the land had already been controlled by the Soviet side for several months.

Furthermore, author of the report was genuinely terrified by anarchy that he faced during the trip. His description is full of gruesome images portraying piles of tools, inventory, broken machinery – everything was “chaotically scattered all around Königsberg and its outskirts... great deal of constructions and paraphernalia are not secured and not being exploited”⁸⁸. In that rapport to Moscow, the top rank delegate concluded that civilians and peasants were deliberately and systematically deprived of land, tools and even basic necessities, which brought local newly arrived would-be citizens to the brink of starvation and inevitable humanitarian catastrophe⁸⁹. Very similar sentiments could be discovered in a great number of letters sent by local settlers to Moscow as well.

The rapport clearly underscored the existing rift between two main (and to a significant degree bitterly opposed to each other) branches of power that emerged in the Soviet Königsberg (after 4 July 1946 – Kaliningrad⁹⁰): civilian and military.

Aside from harsh criticism the rapport contained another crucial detail. Namely, Ivanchenko indicated his sincere and profound amazement and even the sense of admiration after having encountered with what was being portrayed by the Soviet propaganda machine “pestilent and inferior to the Soviet patterns of Western culture”. Namely, the commissioner openly admitted extremely high level of development of villages (and even tiny hamlets) scattered all over East Prussia – a striking contrast to the Soviet mainland. Moreover, the very type of German economic activities in the rural areas (private farming as well as extremely comfortable, smartly designed and fully adjusted housing) came to be a matter of genuine surprise for the Soviet deputy. These evidences did not exactly agree with the picture portrayed (and incidentally still zealously defended by some Kaliningrad historians) by some official sources that hyperbolized the level of destruction in the rural area (where intensive fighting had not taken place) was

⁸⁷ For more information see: ГАКО. Ф. 181. Оп. 1. Д. 10. Л. 6.

⁸⁸ For more information see: ГАРФ. Ф. 374. Оп. 2. Д. 173. Л. 58 – 61 об.

⁸⁹ Юрий Костяшов, “От военных к гражданским. О передаче власти в Кёнигсбергской - Калининградской области в 1946г.”, *Новый часовой*, 2002, 381-389.

⁹⁰ This topic will be extensively discussed in the forthcoming segment of research.

significantly much lower than elsewhere. Undoubtedly, these parts of report were highly undesirable and could not be publically displayed.

Meanwhile having assumed precedence the military bided for putting the civilian life onto the military track as well, which came to be known as “militarization of public life”. Namely, it was tried to somehow reconcile military methods of management to exclusively civilian branches of public life. Among most well-known examples one could recall attempts to establish system of household plots in military regiments as well as in a number of military *sovkhos* (numbering 30 all in all) established in January 1946 and employing Germans and Soviet repatriates⁹¹. Interestingly enough, yet this experience had already been tried before and turned out to be a sound failure. Namely, one should be able to recall so-called “Military settlements” (1810-57) actively promoted by Count Alexei Arakcheyev who had proposed a peculiar synthesis of measures that included militarization of peasant lives and economic activities in the rural area.

With the laps of time the conflict between military regiments, civilian authorities and the newcomers on the territory of Königsberg Oblast (established on 7 April 1946) was becoming more acute and intensive. This trend did not come to an end even after the declarative transfer of powers from military to civilian authorities that had taken place.

Furthermore, the following steps aimed to strengthen civilian branch of local authorities were undertake:

- Dissolution of the Königsberg Special Military District;
- Establishment of Civilian Administration with wide regional decision-making powers;
- Initiation of massive campaign on allocation of additional work force to rural areas (approved by the Council of Ministers of USSR on 9 July 1946⁹²).

⁹¹ Иван Гордеев, “Военные совхозы их роль в становлении социалистического сельского хозяйства Калининградской области (1945–1947)”, *Северо-Запад в аграрной истории России*, (Калининград: Изд-во КГУ, 1995), 84–93.

⁹² Виталий Маслов, *В начале нового пути: документы и материалы о развитии Калининградской области в годы деятельности чрезвычайных органов управления (апрель 1945 – июнь 1947)*, (Калининград: Комитет по делам архивов: Изд-во ИП Мишуткиной И.В., 2004), 94–98.

However, neither the bulk of legislative initiatives nor material help diverted to the region by Moscow did little to alleviate acuteness of the ongoing confrontation or diminish predominant positions of the military that enjoyed full and unchallenged preeminence.

Unfolding conflict evolved into a standoff where military had no intention of slackening its grip over the area and turning into economically stable entity. Confirming this notion, it might be curious to quote Soviet military hero General Kuz`ma Galitsky who blatantly defined the situation as a “big war between military and civilian authorities”⁹³.

A wholesale criticism of vandalism and open disregard displayed by the military might provide somewhat erroneous image and put the burden of blame entirely on this group. In this context it would make sense to briefly describe activities and the mode of behavior of civilian administration as well. Historians have on numerous occasions blamed civilian authorities for the failure to provide an adequate response to the hardships that Konigsberg/Kaliningrad Oblast was facing at the initial stage of its development, whereby underscoring institutional weakness of the system established in Kaliningrad. Incidentally, this trend greatly diverged from Russian proper since bureaucratic institutes played a vital part (perhaps even excessive) in the Soviet state`s architecture. For instance, it has been stated that frequent field trips to rural areas, usual and rather useless rhetorical escapades did not suffice for the task of raising efficiency of agriculture as a vital branch of economy and normalization of economic activities in general. In addition, on frequent occasions members of civilian administration would markedly display low level of both theoretic and practical preparation⁹⁴ which largely owed to comparatively low education level as well as other key factors such as the mode settlers had been recruited. Moreover, able managers were desperately required on the mainland where the Soviets started a campaign of unprecedented scale aimed at recuperation of the country.

⁹³ Source: Докладная записка по вопросам управления и хозяйственного освоения Калининградской области, Российский государственный архив социально-политической истории (РГАСПИ). Ф. 17. Оп. 122. Д. 142.

⁹⁴ Ольга Фёдорова, Геннадий Кретинин, “О послевоенном восстановлении Калининградской области: к вопросу о конфликте властей”, *Вестник Балтийского федерального университета им. И. Канта. Серия: Гуманитарные и общественные науки*, № 12, 2010, (Калининград: РГУ им. Канта, 2010), 64-70.

Incidentally, the conflict was profoundly deepened by the issue of financial subsidies that Moscow was sending to the area. In some sense the early history of the Soviet Kaliningrad and the very first steps that stipulated development of nascent structures were largely shaped by the struggle for power and material benefits. This not only projected onto relations with the Kremlin yet did in a number of ways came to be seen as a part of emerging local identity.⁹⁵

Unquestionable dictate imposed by the military on Kaliningrad/Konigsberg resulted in open public discontent. Torrents of petitions and remonstrations sent by the locals to various Moscow based institutions lamented about the Army hindering normal course of civilian life, pervasive vandalism, unnecessary destructions of orchards and gardens as well as petty larceny.⁹⁶

The local political apparatus was deeply concerned with the state of affairs as well. For instance, head of the local party structures Afonas`iev compared damage committed by the Red Army with anti-Soviet activities in their most outrageous forms. His rapport was entitled “*About anti-Soviet criminal activities committed by military men of both rank and file and officers of the 4-th Guard Artillery Division*”.⁹⁷ Prominent Russian Kaliningrad-based historian Y. Kostiashev specializing on the local history gives a striking image of outspoken sabotage committed by the Army when a bridge of republican importance was dissembled for firewood.⁹⁸ This and many other instances gained particular gravity taking into consideration the level of local infrastructure.

It would however be inaccurate to suggest that only Konigsberg/Kaliningrad was subjected to uncontrollable and haphazard pillage – surrounding area shared its grim destiny. For example, Insterburg (nowadays Chierniakhovsk in Kaliningrad Oblast) one of the oldest and most picturesque towns of East Prussia suffered from debauchery incurred by the military. In numerous reports directed to the head of the regional authorities V. Borisov (local high rank official) complained that Lt. Gen. O. Koshevoy in a derogatory manner refused to admit existence of civilian authorities as such. Namely, he denied them access to accommodation (both personal and allocated for public

⁹⁵ Sergey Sukhankin, “Kaliningrad: Russia’s island in Europe”, *New Eastern Europe*, Cracow, January 29, 2016. Available at: <http://www.neweasterneurope.eu/interviews/1876-kaliningrad-russia-s-island-in-europe>.

⁹⁶ Маслов (2004), 119–122.

⁹⁷ For greater details see: ГАКО. Ф. 265. Оп. 1. Д. 2. Л. 29 – 30.

⁹⁸ Available at: ЦХИДНИКО. Ф. 121. Оп. 1. Д. 10. Л. 18 об.

institutions) and public buildings, whereas military had occupied best houses. This attitude was primarily based on O. Koshevoy's conviction that the Ministry of Defense would not undertake any actions against those who had won a fame of a military superpower for the Soviet Union and subsequently would not deprive its heroic troops of their justly won "prize".

Similarly, local party official A. Rudenko wrote to the Center on 14 August 1946 that he was powerless to do anything under such circumstances. From his standpoint decisive steps had to be taken by more powerful authorities than those stationed in Kaliningrad. Despite the introduction of a Nationalization Act (21 June 1946)⁹⁹ that was to grant more powers to civilian authorities and transfer land and economic means under their auspices the military did not comply with its main points and still, frequently threatening with arms, forceful and violent actions, denied civilians access to the rights engrained in this legislation act.

As far as facts and evidences go, it seemed that the military was about to establish their own quasi-governmental structure that was to be ruled from within. Such militarised quasi-state would have performed defensive functions by shielding the Soviet part of the Baltic Sea and consume resources allocated to it by Moscow. Following this trail of thoughts, financial subsidies from Moscow were to be primarily diverted to the purpose of maintaining that militarized and highly unproductive "fortress". In the meantime, civilian authorities were to have been supported by residual principle.

One additional episode can bring more light to the issues of actual strength of military and its spirit of impunity. On 30 September 1946 the decree №2210 was adopted by the Council of Ministers of USSR and signed personally by Joseph Stalin. The act required military forces to immediately forfeit spaces allocated to the newcomers and settlers within a fortnight. The outcome, unnatural and rather inexplicable as it might have seemed from the first glance, ensued: the military commanders did not obey, even taking into account the fact that the act was adopted and signed by the most influential figure on the Soviet political Olympus¹⁰⁰. This strong sense of infallibility from the side of military

⁹⁹ Source: ГАКО. Ф.297. Оп.1. Д. 125. Л. 1-2.

¹⁰⁰ Source: ГАКО. Из истории предприятий, учреждений и организаций: *Сельское хозяйство*. Available at: <http://www.gako.name/index.php?publ=98&razd=33>.

could be better understood should one take closer look at international political environment and profound changes that were underway.

The March 5, 1946¹⁰¹ became a sound summary of the overall tendency in relations between the USSR and its former Allies. The infamous “iron curtain” would separate two conflicting ideologies for decades at certain point making a hypothetical military confrontation quite real. In the light of these developments Kaliningrad acquired profound geopolitical and military importance for both Soviet own security and regional ambitions of Moscow.

Naturally, this boosted confidence of the Soviet armed forces stationed in Kaliningrad and uplifted their self-perception as a stronghold of the Soviet Union. This was also reflected by an attempt of undertake strict physical delineation of the area between military and civilian authorities. Russian history presents several cases that could be to some extent compared with first years of post-war Kaliningrad. In this regard, so-called Oprichnina (1565 - 1572) introduced by Ivan the Terrible could be seen as one of the most natural examples.

Developing further discussion on the topic it would be worthwhile to mention Tilsit (nowadays Sovetsk in Kaliningrad Oblast) where locally stationed military regiments deliberately blocked parts of town, whereby explicitly claiming transfer of self-proclaimed zones of influence under their effective jurisdiction. As a response, highly ranked local official A. Zverev issued a decree on 2 November 1946 titled “*About violation of architectural planning of the town committed by military regiments and organizations*”.¹⁰² The document bristles with multiple instances of noncompliance and deliberate sabotaging rendered by military forces that prevented normal functioning of the entire town and its parts in every possible way. In Ragnit (nowadays Neman in Kaliningrad Oblast) military formations refused to give up building of a hospital, which led to the fact that population of the entire town was left without proper medical care. As a result, approximately two thirds of the town were blocked and redistributed between military forces.

¹⁰¹ Winston Churchill, “Sinews of Peace (the Iron Curtain Speech)”, *WinstonChurchill.org*, Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri, March 5, 1946, Available at: <http://www.winstonchurchill.org/resources/speeches/1946-1963-elder-statesman/120-the-sinews-of-peace>.

¹⁰² Source: ГАКО. Ф.309. Оп.1. Д.2. Л.252.

However, the Red Army regiments should not be seen as the only institution responsible for destructive activities. State security agencies and structures developed their own understanding and vision of/for Kaliningrad. For instance, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of State Security (the latter in particular) and local militia incurred a great deal of damage upon Königsberg/Kaliningrad and adjacent areas. In the end of 1946 head of the local civil services Kolosov sent a secret message to Maj. Gen. B. Trofimov, where he complained about actions of his own staff that he had no effective means to control¹⁰³. The author expressed his deepest concern with the military illegally expropriating “everything it could”, in the meantime severely damaging or utterly destroying the rest. It took place despite the fact that the objects of vandalism were under strict protection, which led him to conclude that those in charge were in fact responsible for the damage.

Multiple complains were also stemming from “below”. Newcomers and settlers were responsible for an avalanche of remonstrations and grievances blaming the military for incurring destructive actions: lack of primary goods, accommodation, pervasive banditry and mined fields – all this made their lives in Kaliningrad unbearable. “We are living like cavemen: we do not have matches, so we can hardly keep our houses warm at night. Without fuel we have no light at home, whereas not having soap we cannot take shower regularly”, - that is how settlers from Yaroslavl` described their living conditions after they had arrived to the area.¹⁰⁴ Such a challenging state of affairs suggested that drastically new approach was required.

2.1.3. Constructing the wall: isolationism and the post-war Kaliningrad

Taking closer look at the course of ideological confrontation between Communist and Capitalist blocks within the course of the Cold War it would not be difficult to ascertain the notion “isolation” as being frequently used by the former in order to reduce contacts and “hedge” its population from any forms of external influence. This trend was visible on various occasions ranging from difficulties of foreign travels to such petty

¹⁰³ Source: Ibid, Ф.237. Оп.1. Д.5. Л.11.

¹⁰⁴ Source: Государственный архив новейшей истории Калининградской области (ГАНИКО), Ф. 1, оп. 1, д. 83, л. 99.

restrictions imposed by the Soviet ideology as jeans, bubble gum, foreign music and western mass-culture. In this juncture, it would not be superfluous to recall the Berlin crisis and construction of the Berlin Wall (1961) that is now associated with the Cold War.¹⁰⁵

This image however had been preceded by yet another telling though less known example. Almost 15 years before that a project of very different scope and nature had been set in motion - Kaliningrad Oblast – that would become a vivid evidence of burning antagonism between the Soviet ideology and its external counterparts. Aside from ideological compound as such that would be discussed further on, it was an attempt to create physically isolated and adverse to its neighbors “island” that would become the Soviet military stronghold.

The overall tone was set by two crucial initiatives adopted by the Council of Ministers of the USSR via two pieces of legislation: №1435– 631 cc (29 June 1946) “*About the prohibitive border zone and the coastal line*”, as well as the secret act №131cc “*About the prohibitive border zone on the territory of Kaliningrad Oblast.*”¹⁰⁶ Those acts gave a legal basis for initiation of physical separation of Kaliningrad Oblast from its neighbors and turning it into an impregnable bastion of Communism and a symbol of the Soviet victory over Nazism. Official explanation of necessity to introduce special restrictive/isolationist measures were reflected in the following formula: “In order to improve the security of external border, Kaliningrad Oblast is to be included into prohibitive border zone”¹⁰⁷. Ensued steps gave practical meaning for formerly adopted legal acts. Within one-month time comprehensive passport system was introduced included both urban and rural population. This particularly affected members of the *kolhoz* system (collective farmers) for whom changing their residence would become significantly much more difficult a thing and directly controlled by local law-enforcement authorities.

Also, entrance and obtaining of a residence permit by outsiders would be stipulated by special living permit to be issued only by the local branch of Ministry of Internal Affairs, which imposed total control over all incoming/outgoing residents.

¹⁰⁵ Hans-Peter Schwarz, “The division of Germany, 1945–1949”, In Melvyn P. Leffler (Ed.) *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, Vol.1, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 133 – 153.

¹⁰⁶ Full text is available at: ГАКО. Ф. 318. Оп. 1. Д. 1. Л. 2 – 3 об.

¹⁰⁷ Ibidem.

Furthermore, even those with permanent residence permit were allowed to migrate within territory of the Oblast with their passports or certificates “sealed with special stamp on a passport, which was to be provided by local militia”¹⁰⁸ present. In addition, local organizations and institutions were not allowed to accept work force without first being given necessary living permit and supporting documentation from applicant. Ability to move in/out of Oblast was being subsequently restricted as well: tickets for all long-range journeys could only be obtained upon presentation of special pass or a passport with registration/resident permit. The quintessence of secrecy and restrictiveness was attained with implementation of a ban on all sorts of “photographical and cinematographic activities on the terrain” as well as on “storing, breeding and importing of post and other breeds of pigeons” without special permit from border services and frontier troops of Ministry of Internal Affairs of the USSR.¹⁰⁹

These measures harshly restricted an access to the Oblast and reflected growing isolation thereof from its neighbors and newcomers, whereby minimizing external contacts. First Secretary of the local Communist Party V. Sherbakov in a secret letter to the Party Central Committee dated by 15 August 1947 openly called upon the Center to “*turn Kaliningrad into a citadel of the Soviet Union on the west*”. This radical summon became an objective reflection of historical predisposition of this area to militarization in the context of its physical separation from the mainland. Unfortunately, in the Soviet political thinking Kaliningrad did not inherit other aspects such as rich cultural legacy, central commercial knot of the Baltic Sea or a status of a well-known German resort.

The spirit of isolationism imposed from above and not being objected from below ushered in emergence of a very specific type of relations between the local elites and their patrons in the Kremlin. On the other hand, the local residents had developed a very specific and, in many respects, very distinct from the rest of the Soviet regions system of norms, values and self-perception. This would form a popular belief that Kaliningrad Oblast as a part of the Soviet Union yet being most exposed to both external and internal perils should be treated differently. Speaking in advance, it would be worthwhile to mention that the model established in the second half of 1940-s (and reaching its zenith

¹⁰⁸ Source: ГАКО. Ф. 293. Оп. 9. Д. 1. Л. 16.

¹⁰⁹ Костяшов (2003), 21.

in the late 60s) would persevere evolving and simultaneously rapidly adjusting to the changing environment and political model.

On the other hand, it would not be an exaggeration to note that the myth of so-called “encirclement” was largely being developed within the aforementioned period. Undoubtedly, this supposition harshly contradicted with the reality primarily stemming from the fact that both Poland and Lithuanian were members of the so-called Socialist Camp.

As early as in October 1947 Sherbakov wrote to the Minister of State Security of USSR Gen. Colonel Viktor Abakumov complaining that “the Oblast is filled with numerous people who are arriving without necessary documents enabling them to reside in borderland areas”¹¹⁰. This letter was a prelude to what would later trigger so-called “spy fever” that would dominate Kaliningrad’s internal milieu and development from 1946 until 1953 (the death of Stalin).

Even though this may be construed as a matter of speculations, it should not be dismissed that such line of behavior could have been developed out the knowledge of Stalin’s growing suspiciousness and apprehensiveness. Certainly, the demise of Stalin did lead to alleviation of the hysteria, yet simultaneously held left a long-lasting effect and put significant footprint on the outlook of the local residents that translated into a deeply rooted sense of incredulity toward geographical neighbors.

On the other hand, it would be valuable to underscore that the local civilian authorities had done their utmost in order to strengthen control over Kaliningrad by Moscow. Moreover, one of the top rank local officials V. Shcherbakov openly summoned the Kremlin to „turn Kaliningrad Oblast into the citadel of the Soviet Union in the West”¹¹¹.

2.1.4. “...turned into the rubbles”. Portrayal of the post-war Kaliningrad: beyond hope or beyond common sense?

¹¹⁰ Source: ГАКО. Ф. 293. Оп. 9. Д. 58. Л. 50.

¹¹¹ Source: ЦХИДНИКО. Ф. 1. Оп. 1. Д. 58. Л. 5.

Core changes presented in the antecedent part of research undoubtedly required full acceptance from the side of Moscow as well as certain level of financial support for such an ambitious endeavor. In this juncture the local elites assumed more assertive position on numerous occasions portraying somewhat different picture of the real state of affairs. Namely, it would not be superfluous to suggest that one of the main vehicles would be an overwhelmingly artificially inflated gruesome picture of post-war Oblast whose main aim was to convince the centre that any kind of recuperation was impossible without extensive external support. Similarly, this interaction implied active appeal to both historic and geopolitical aspects as reportedly being responsible for the slow pace of recuperation.

In order to ascertain the actual state of affairs and match it with the image presented by local functionaries it would be worthwhile to take a very brief glance at data available on this matter. In spite of the dark images reflected in the numerous rapports sent to Moscow by local officials, the recorded (if taking into account that it might have been purposefully distorted) data suggest somewhat otherwise. For instance, a famous shipyard “Yantar” (founded in 1827) that has been a backbone of first Soviet and later Russian economy in Kaliningrad did not suffer significant damage which did not encroach beyond 5-8%. The second largest industrial site “Kaliningrad Dump-cars Plant” (founded in 1830) that during the Soviet period would present its production on major trade fares and export its production to the GDR, Poland, Yugoslavia, Japan, China and Korea had suffered medium-size damage.

All in all, it has been estimated that out 364 industrial sites present before 1939, 186 were utterly destroyed, whereas the rest sustained damage of different scope¹¹². Nevertheless, local historians have frequently questioned the actual scope of material damages brought about by war.

In effect, the city did suffer severe damage (although hardly comparable with Warsaw, Sevastopol or Stalingrad and largely tantamount to neighboring Klaipeda) whereas the rural areas (as had been underscored by special commission sent to Königsberg from Moscow) and small towns did not suffer demolitions of comparable gravity. Frequently, such rapports were meant to justify outrageous pillage, negligence,

¹¹² Щеглова О.Н., “История региона”, *Калининградская Областная Дума*, Available at: <http://duma39.ru/region/history.php>.

vandalism and deliberate destruction of remaining property or bitter consequences thereof.

On the other hand, pecuniary issue was a crucial one later developing into much more than merely financial support as such. Complete dependence of the Oblast on financial injections from the centre in many ways distorted the patterns of relations between the centre and periphery and established very specific model of cooperation that would persevere for decades to come.

In the end, these subsidies were to become one of the major sources of income for the local elites. To some extent one would not be wrong to suggest that the image of devastated, unprofitable, economically broke, underdeveloped and turned into dust Kaliningrad Oblast as a “German heritage” catered for the interests of local civilian authorities and relevant branches of administration.

For instance, one of such reports claimed: “Konigsberg is a pile of rubbles. Just several houses have survived only in southern and western parts of the city... it is still ablaze. Streets are filled with bricks, metal, logs and furniture. It is impossible to drive by the city with an exception of several streets cleaned for troops to move”¹¹³. Information of very similar content would be presented by both civilian and military authorities even much later. On 31 December 1947 in his annual New Year address V. Borisov (a key figure in the local Communist party structures) did not evade a chance to complain about the legacy that Kaliningrad and its population received from its historical predecessor. Among other things he stated that: “In the year 1945 our beloved city with adjacent villages and hamlets was in ruins. Carcasses of destroyed buildings, chaotically scattered piles of metal and bricks instead of fabrics, blown up railways and tramlines, fields with broken machinery and entrenchments – this was how the reality looked like. Vista of devastation was appalling and unbearable.”¹¹⁴

However, post-war experience of many countries revealed that conditions to be met in Konigsberg and its outskirts were not fatal: even a half of remaining German industrial potential coupled with resources of by and large undamaged rural area could have become a basis for steady economic recuperation of the Oblast basing it on local resources and capabilities rather than binding growth with external support.

¹¹³ Костяшов (2003), 16.

¹¹⁴ Source: ГАКО. Ф. 19. Оп. 1. Д. 13. Л. 412 – 413.

2.1.5. Changing sociological portrait of Kaliningrad

In order to successfully complete implementation of integration of Kaliningrad into the Soviet Union yet another task of paramount importance was to be accomplished. Namely, the remaining Germans came to be seen as a matter of perplexity and even vexation from the part of both Moscow and local party functionaries. In spite of strong desire to solve the German question as soon as possible, the task appeared to be much more difficult than it might have seemed from the first glance. The predicament was not only based on the lack of clear agreement upon the expulsion between the parties concerned, yet also pertained to the role of Germans for the local economy and quite disturbing turn that relationships between them and ordinary Soviet people was starting to take shape. Discussing the former, it should be mentioned that by the year 1947 almost 48% of workforce in agriculture and up to 90% of workforce in heavy industry (especially in key branches) were Germans.¹¹⁵

This state of affairs was unacceptable for the Soviets for two main reasons. First, in case the picture remained unchanged for a substantially longer period it might have slowed the process of formation of the local working class, which according to the Soviet ideological postulates was the most “conscious element” of the Soviet architecture. Secondly (and in this regard perhaps even most importantly) it was growing uneasiness stipulated by lingering German presence and inevitable proliferation of contacts between this group and the Soviet newcomers. Fostering ties and establishing human-to-human contact could have broken the animosity stemming from previous tragic experiences with consequences most unpleasant to the Soviet propaganda.

In case such highly hypothetical project would have worked out even to a very limited extent, Kaliningrad might not have become the “impregnable Bastion of the USSR” on the shores of the Baltic Sea, yet an area where two diverging cultures and outlooks would have met giving the way to cooperation instead of confrontation. The full-fledged eviction of German population started from the end of 1946¹¹⁶, reaching its zenith

¹¹⁵ ГАКО. Ф. 297, Оп. 3, Д. 7, Л. 23—25

¹¹⁶ Source: Юрий Костяшов, ““Желающих переселиться мало...” Об организации переселения колхозников из Воронежской в Калининградскую область в послевоенные годы”, *Государственный архив Калининградской области*, Available at: <http://www.gako.name/index.php?publ=266&razd=211>

within the period 1947 – 1951. In the course of deportation some 102.494 Germans were replaced from Kaliningrad Oblast (this was stipulated by the decree № 3547-1169c “*About the deportation of the Germans from Kaliningrad Oblast of RSFSR into the Soviet zone of occupation in Germany*”¹¹⁷).

Having mentioned eviction of the old population it would be worthwhile to outline the new image of Kaliningrad by discussing changing ethnic landscape and in particular the “clay” of which the new Oblast was to be created. This should be deemed particularly important from identity-related point of view.

Initiation of massive settlement of Kaliningrad Oblast was launched in the year 1947. The act that stipulated the legal basis was a decree №1522 (signed personally by J. Stalin) and envisaged initial transfer of 12.000 families of peasants ranging from Belarus to the most distant parts of the USSR (all in all, 23 territorial units). In order to attract more settlers, the central authorities offered a number of privileges, which included free of charge transfer, financial stimuli (including credit possibilities) as well as solution of the housing-related issues. Moreover, those who were to abandon their place of residence to settle in Kaliningrad would be exempted from the necessity to cover their previous arrears and would also be exempted from all sorts of taxes and duties within the forthcoming 2-3 years¹¹⁸. According the testimonies of the first settlers they had been promised “a real paradise”¹¹⁹.

Desperate need to promptly fill the human gap induced the Soviet authorities to allow approximately 84,500 people (out of the entire bulk of population) who were Soviet repatriates from Nazi concentration camps¹²⁰ to move to Königsberg/Kaliningrad on permanent basis. Naturally, in accordance with the Russian post-1917 traditions these so-called “unreliable” elements were frowned upon by local security services, which created an atmosphere of distrust and alienation of certain groups that did not exactly feet in the community.

¹¹⁷ For more information see: Staatsarchiv des Kaliningrader Gebiets. Sachthematisches Inventar zur Nachkriegsgeschichte des nordlichen Ostpreussen (Kaliningrader Gebiet) 1945 – 1955, Koblenz/Kaliningrad, Februar 2012.

¹¹⁸ ГАКО. Ф. 183, Оп. 5, Д. 1, Л. 9–12

¹¹⁹ Оксана Сазонова, “Первые переселенцы попадали в Калининградскую область по конкурсу”, *Клонс.ru*, August 6, 2015, Available at: <https://klops.ru/news/obschestvo/114496-pervye-pereselentsy-popadali-v-kaliningradskuyu-oblast-po-konkursu>

¹²⁰ ГАКО Ф.181, Оп.1, Д. 10, Л.1, 2, 19, 123; Ф. 298, Оп.4, Д. 2, Л. 61

Significant portion of local population were military men for whom the war had finished with the final takeover of Königsberg. The sense of superiority and ability to redistribute material wealth, enjoy explicit support from Moscow and occupy best buildings/apartments made this segment privileged. Third and the most debatable portion of local population were persons with so-called “questionable past”: those who had served their time in various state institutions (prisons, colonies, working camps). Kostiashev pointed out an extremely widespread practice to bring former criminals for the purpose of permanent residency on this newly acquired territory¹²¹.

This succinct description of overall composition of Kaliningrad post-war population provides an image of extremely diverse and complicated ethno-cultural composition of Kaliningrad Oblast within first two decades. An acute necessity to “Sovietize” the former part of East Prussia, which led to assembling together elements from various paths of life (frequently even polar) that might not have been pulled together under different circumstances.

Similarly, the level of professional qualities and experience of the newcomers was extremely unequal and frequently did not match tasks that they had been expected to perform upon the arrival. According to official statistics approximately 1/6 of the would-be rural workforce had previously been residing in cities and for obvious reasons could not boast with extensive knowledge of agriculture¹²², which significantly decreased their value in terms of the workload they could perform outside their previous habitat. Many of them had presented fraudulent information in order to be able to legally escape from territories ravaged by war or economically depressed areas.

Another remarkable group of settlers were those who had lost their homes and property due to the war – primarily rural citizens of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. Naturally, promises of accommodation, stable job, fresh start and ability to avoid famine were the main arguments that attracted people. It ought to be clarified that it was not their moral convictions or strong desire to settle in Kaliningrad yet aforementioned factors that had spurred those people into leaving their natural places and moving to a distant and completely foreign environment which must have been subconsciously loathed even

¹²¹ Юрий Костяшов, “Заселение Калининградской Области после Второй Мировой Войны”, In *Гуманитарные науки России: Соросовские лауреаты. История. Археология. Культурная антропология и этнография*, (Москва: 1996), 84.

¹²² ГАКО. Ф. 183, Оп.5, Д. 136, Л.38

before the arrival. Incidentally, those people exerted the strongest anti-German (for obvious reasons) and anti-Western (due to the connection established by Soviet propaganda) sentiments easily becoming one of the staunchest (along with the military) and blindfolded supporters of the Soviet ideology.

Finally, yet another important detail should not be omitted. Numerous testimonies of newcomers and settlers suggest that within first several years Königsberg/Kaliningrad experienced an avalanche of people with “tacky past”. Indeed, public perception of Königsberg/Kaliningrad was built on a popular myth about “immeasurable treasures concealed in the former German land” being something remotely comparable to some sort of “Eldorado”. This segment induced numerous adventurers, tomb riders and “black diggers” to direct their steps to the new Soviet region in search of “wild money”.

Speaking about ethnic composition of the first settlers within the period 1947–1950 could be deduced from the following table¹²³:

Table 1.1. Ethnic composition of Kaliningrad Oblast within 1947 – 1950.

Republics	Incoming (thousands)	Outgoing (thousands)	Accretion (thousands)	Proportional weight of the republic (%)
RSFSR	253,3	79,2	174,1	70,0
Belarus	35,2	7,6	27,6	11,1
Ukraine	29,2	11,7	17,6	7,0
The Baltic Republics including Lithuania	24,1	11,6	12,4	5,0
	14,0	5,5	8,5	4,3

¹²³ Костяшов (1996), 86.

Other republics of the USSR	50,0	32,9	17,2	6,9
<i>Total number</i>	391,8	143,0	248,9	100,0

Another interesting trend was visible in the dynamics of “leave – stay” trajectory within the period 1946 – 1958.¹²⁴ Data presented by local historians suggest that within the initial period of local historical development approximately 2/3 of the overall number of incoming settlers would abandon the Oblast. This demonstrates that during a decade Kaliningrad did not have permanent population, which bereft it of the key quality – stability - that stipulates successful development of young territorial entities. Furthermore, already discussed sense of “temporariness” that was evident after 1945 persevered further into the later 1950s as well. This detail could be supplemented with another vital tendency. Settlers from western parts of the Soviet Union did not feel comfortable upon their arrival and tended to leave the area on significantly much more frequent occasions than Belarusians (18% of returns) and Russians. For instance, the Latvians were accountable for 66% of returns, which made them least interested in staying group of settlers.

The sense of “foreignness” and “temporariness” would also be evident in the way the settlers would call their final destination: “going to Germany”, “Prussia” and “German lands”. Their feelings could be described as a mixture of unknown future, legends brought back home by Soviet soldiers and a steady aspiration to feel how the “foreign lifestyle” tastes.

In this regard, post-war experience of Soviet Kaliningrad could be seen as one of the greatest social experiments ever conducted by the Soviet Union. Settlers from various paths of life, different regions of the vast USSR were to be somehow molded into coherent entity, whereby creating “the Soviet Union in miniature”.

¹²⁴ Юрий Костяшов, Обратничество в процессе заселения Калининградской области в послевоенные годы, In *Балтийский регион в истории России и Европы*, (Калининград: Изд-во РГУ им. И. Канта, 2005), 211–219.

Indeed, if Kaliningrad is to be perceived as an incubator for social experiment, it could offer conditions not to be encountered with in any part of the USSR (or territories re-acquired by the Soviet Union in the course of the World War such as Ukraine, Belarus or the Baltic States). Its uniqueness was stipulated by the following aspects:

1. **Absolution from antecedent ethno-cultural environment** which was to be attained through eviction of the remaining German population in order to abridge and minimize contacts between Russians and their “foes” and via drastic change of the local ethno-cultural landscape;

2. **Ability to alter the local history** in the way compatible with the Soviet school of historical science;

3. **The “workers-peasants” (“rabochekrest`janskii”) image of the local residents.** For obvious reasons the majority of newcomers and settlers were of origin that had been praised by the Soviet ideology and therefore deemed as an ideal “clay” for the new society. Moreover, it should be noted that the local sociological composition did not contain elements of the “old regime” and “exploitation class” that had been subjected to severe repressions in the 1930s and therefore the local opinion about Soviet ideology had to be positive (at least in theory);

4. **Absence of religion** (primarily no infrastructure for worshipping)¹²⁵. From Communist prospective the clergy was perceived as one of the main enemies of the Soviet Union. In spite of Stalin`s reluctant recognition of the Russian Orthodox Church and its profound role for the Russian society it would be Nikita Khrushchev who would re-launch aggressive campaign against it. That is why an area practically completely absolved from Orthodoxy and related infrastructure was a very much desired asset.

¹²⁵ For more information see: Sergey Sukhankin. “The “Russkij mir” as Mission: Kaliningrad between the “altar” and the “throne” 2009-2015”, In *Ortodoxia* 56, (University of Eastern Finland, 2016), 117-151.

In the final analysis, characterizing the main trends related to accretion of the human capital of the post-war Kaliningrad Oblast it needs to be admitted that the term “inconsistency” should be chosen as the one most applicable to the state of affairs in this domain. By and large, the

2.2 Building a “military bastion”: a “state-garrison” or a “garrison without a state”?

One of the key tasks vested upon Kaliningrad Oblast from the earliest period of its acquisition was a utilitarian exploitation of its strategic advantages in the domain of security. In this regard, it would be quite curious to mention that previous historical experience (primarily associated with German period of local history) so much loathed and condemned by the Soviet propaganda would in certain way be replicated in the post-war period as well. On the other hand, it would be valuable to discuss how and in which ways did the process of militarization of Kaliningrad carried out by the Soviet authorities affected its patterns of development, and the overall impact that this process incurred upon the local milieu.

2.2.1. The “most militarized spot in Europe”

Due to its geopolitical location and the pre-war historical experience Königsberg/Kaliningrad was perceived differently by Moscow in comparison with other annexed territories. This former German land was seen as a border between two worlds - an area of ideological and potentially open conflict between two conflicting blocks. Nevertheless, the task of integration of the territory posed a number of questions that were to justify the annexation as such and simultaneously underscore profound positive effect thereof. Moreover, strategic geopolitical location of Kaliningrad was to be used in full.

The paramount task was to transform Kaliningrad into a formidable fortress that would protect the Soviet Union from the West and simultaneously allow Moscow to expand its influence in the Baltic Sea region. Another reason that does to a substantial

degree explain strategic importance of Kaliningrad would be reflected in the so-called “June 22 syndrome”¹²⁶ (when the Nazi troops managed to undertake a breathtaking advance capitalizing on tremendous surprise the effect) and strong desire to minimize threat coming from western flank.

Accretion of military power of the area was additionally facilitated by the fact that the city was controlled by the Red Army and therefore en mass transfer of troops and ammunitions was not required (at least at this stage). By the end of the war Konigsberg and adjacent area were under the effective control of the 1st Baltic and 3rd Belorussian Front numbering more than one million soldiers and officers.¹²⁷

Regretfully, there are no sources that could provide credible information regarding the overall quantity of military men who stayed at their final destination for good, which does not allow to answer the key question related to the actual extent of militarization of the post-war Kaliningrad Oblast. In spite of the fact that the archives have been opened to historians and researchers with valuable documents pertaining to the early stages of local history, the question of militarization still remains a matter of heated debates and numerous speculations. It ought to be admitted that strict control, secrecy and practical absence of studies on Kaliningrad history during the Soviet period created a void that has hindered clarification of this matter up until now. With practical absence of credible data on this matter many historians and political scientists do agree that within the interim that preceded the breakdown of USSR (1945 – 1991) the number of troops stationed on the territory of Kaliningrad Oblast on permanent basis may have reached indeed astounding number oscillating between 120.000 and 250.000 military persons.¹²⁸ Some speculations have gone as far as to claim numbers close to 500.000.¹²⁹ Nonetheless, this should be seen as excessive and difficult to reconcile with. Instead it appears to be worthwhile to compare the aforementioned data with opinions of the local sources. For instance, the first post-Soviet governor Yury Matochkin confronted the data pertaining to the number of the

¹²⁶ Леонид Радзиховский, “Загадка”, *Российская газета*, Федеральный выпуск №6410 (138), 24.06.2014. Retrieved from <http://rg.ru/2014/06/24/radzhovskij.html> .

¹²⁷ Сергей Аптрейкин, “К 70-летию Победы в Великой Отечественной войне: Восточно-Прусская наступательная операция (13 января – 25 апреля 1945 г.)”, *Минобороны России*, Retrieved from http://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12006189@egNews.

¹²⁸ F. Stephen Larrabee, *NATO's Eastern Agenda in a New Strategic Era*, (Arlington: RAND Project Air Force, 2003), 74.

¹²⁹ Костомаров В. , “Адмирал рассеивает слухи и говорит о доверии”, *Янтарный край*, 30.11.1994.

Soviet troops in Kaliningrad prior to 1991 that was circulating in external sources stating that the actual figure must have been exaggerated by 2-3 times. Instead he suggested (in May 1994) to divide the figure presented by foreign experts (around 200.000 men) by three¹³⁰. From his side Admiral Vladimir Yegorov (the would-be governor of Kaliningrad Oblast whose activities will be discussed in the next part of this thesis) said that he had come across astronomic 400.000, which should have been divided by ten¹³¹. In any event, various speculations, exaggerations and numerous attempts to present Kaliningrad Oblast as one of the main sources of regional insecurity stemmed from the atmosphere of secrecy and unwillingness from the side of Moscow to present any concrete data on this crucial issue. On the other hand, even if the actual number of troops was closer to the Russian version, it still effectively made the oblast one of the most militarized spots in Europe, where tremendous military might was installed on an area covering merely 15.000 square kilometers.

Furthermore, being scared by a possibility of any information leaks whatsoever the Soviet side made its maximum effort to maintain the atmosphere of secrecy. This was visible even in the fact that major infrastructural routs practically came to an end at the Polish border.¹³²

In addition to these rigorous measures status of Kaliningrad within the Soviet security architecture would be upgraded in a drastic manner. For instance, in the year 1956 Baltiysk (town situated in the coastal area of Kaliningrad Oblast) was made the main base of location of the Baltic Sea Fleet (instead of Kronstadt) which was stipulated by its strategic location.

The soviet propaganda tried to justify this by appealing to the legacy of the Great Patriotic War (especially its initial phase) and general necessity of accretion of defensive military might on the western borders. Aside from allegedly positive aspects, this model posed a number of grave challenges faced by the region: both immediate and far-reaching.

¹³⁰ Киреева О., “Шведское правительство проявляет интерес к анклавному региону”, *Янтарный край*, 24.05.1994.

¹³¹ Костомаров В., “Так брать шинель или остаться?”, *Янтарный край*, 30.09.1994.

¹³² For more information see: Юрий Зверев, “Калининградская область России в новой системе геополитических координат”, In А.Зверев, Б.Копитерс, Д.Тренин (Ред.), *Этнические и региональные конфликты в Евразии: в 3 кн., Кн. 2. Россия, Украина, Белоруссия*, (Москва: Издательство «Весь мир», 1997), 45-82.

First, excessive tilt toward military needs distorted development of civilian branches effectively making Kaliningrad something akin to the “fortress without state” or a “garrison state”¹³³. It also needs to be underscored that excessive tilt toward militarization and isolationism should not be seen as a universal remedy for solution of security-related issues. This regularity was discovered by W. Churchill and was particularly true for the USSR.

Secondly, the local economy could not possibly have accommodated to the needs of expanded military personnel stationed on the territory of Kaliningrad, which led to disfigurement of the economic model and urged Moscow to provide additional resources that were not used for civilian institutions. On the contrary, financial means obtained as a compensation for alleged “isolation”, yet not as a reward for achievements corrupted local elites (and in many respects ordinary Kaliningraders) becoming a fare justification for claiming more concessions and privileges.

Thirdly, numerous military exercises (the exact number cannot be ascertained with precision) and complete disregard to the local environment by military would lead to a host of daunting ecological problems faced by the region.¹³⁴

In spite of these drawbacks the main goal that had been set forth by Moscow (becoming the strongest power on the Baltic Sea basin) was achieved even within Stalin`s lifetime. Number of measures allowed Admiral of the Soviet Navy Nikolay Kuznetsov to boastfully declare the Baltic Sea "our mare nostrum"¹³⁵. Baltic Sea fleet indeed achieved tremendous might and operative capabilities. Taking into consideration overall scarcity of official information, it may be presumed to have included 8 to 14 cruisers of all types, 40 to 60 destroyer-types, 100 to 150 submarines and a sizeable numbers of motor torpedo boats and gunboats, patrol craft, minelayers and minesweepers supported by 800 or 900 naval aircrafts.¹³⁶ Implementation and fulfillment of the central parts of the “Fortress Kaliningrad” (isolation and militarization) project sharply contrasted with deficiencies in other vital domains of public life – incongruity that was to be re-compensated by Moscow

¹³³ Petersen P., Petersen S., “The Kaliningrad Garrison State”, *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 1993. Vol. 5., No. 2., 59-62

¹³⁴ Source: Congressional Record. *Removal of Russian Troops from Kaliningrad*. Congressional Record Online, Volume 142, Number 135, US Government Publishing Office, September 26, 1996. <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CREC-1996-09-26/html/CREC-1996-09-26-pt1-PgH11250.htm>

¹³⁵ Hanson W. Baldwin, “The Soviet Navy”, *Foreign Affairs*, July 1955, For more information see:

<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/71194/hanson-w-baldwin/the-soviet-navy>

¹³⁶ Ibidem.

in one form or another. The model did work largely due to the political dictate imposed by Moscow on the Baltic States and Poland and unmatched military might the Soviet Union based its international prestige. Furthermore, while the USSR could maintain high rates of growth it was able to allocate significant financial means to the outskirts. The era of weak economic growth posed numerous questions that the Soviet elites did not seem to have any answers.

Reflecting about security-related aspects in conjuncture with Kaliningrad, it would be valuable to claim that this area was crucial in terms of securing Soviet geopolitical predominance over the territory stretching to Leningrad and encompassing the Baltic States as well as Northern Poland¹³⁷.

2.2.2. Imposing greater control over public conscious, strengthening the anti-west propaganda

Ideology was one of the most frequently used tools that served the Soviet authorities in proliferation of isolationism and seclusion based on raging anti-Western sentiments. In case of Kaliningrad Oblast that was surrounded by very specific sort of geographical neighbors intense activities in the domain of spreading anti-Western ideology would be experienced with particular acuteness. The mentioned campaign encompassed all major institutions, collective farms, industrial plants and shipyards – venues with the highest share of the workforce and the least educated strata of the local society.

For instance, during one such a meeting with extensive presence of members of the Communist party that took place on the local shipyard it was stated that: “enemies are trying to infiltrate their spies into our factories and institutions... the enemy is determined to steal the documents belonging to the Party... to obtain everything that can possibly facilitate their destructive activities”. On the other hand, it was pointed out at “excessively liberal stance of the Russians toward German population... existing and unnecessary compassion of the Russians towards Germans”¹³⁸. Another example of such attitude was

¹³⁷ W. Gordon East, “The New Frontiers of the Soviet Union”, *Foreign Affairs*, July, 1951, Available at: <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/70906/w-gordon-east/the-new-frontiers-of-the-soviet-union>

¹³⁸ ЦХИДНИКО. Ф. 121. Оп. 1. Д. 18. Л. 67.

speech at a meeting that took part on 21 June 1946: “we live on the enemy’s territory... we are surrounded by adversaries and our Party documents are being hunted for by spies and provocateurs...”¹³⁹. In the meantime, the Party cell’s meeting was titled “About the work of foreign spies and our revolutionary vigilance”¹⁴⁰.

Incidentally, presence of ethnic Germans still remaining on the territory of the Oblast vested a powerful propagandist tool in the hands of the local Soviet authorities. After all, it was much easier to explain numerous misfortunes by spying and sabotage committed by alleged anti-Soviet agents especially taking into consideration physical presence of “foreign elements”. The overall tone of the officials could be best described as follows: “We live and work being surrounded by population of our archenemy and agents of foreign intelligence services, which are interested in Kaliningrad much more than every other city of the Soviet Union... we have to always remain truly Russian people, whose vigilance is the most acute sense... Germans are our open enemies... we have to preserve and even reinforce our revolutionary vigilance”¹⁴¹. Secretary of the local Communist Party Committee Ivanov in his letter to J. Stalin dated by May 28, 1947 described remaining local population as extremely “infuriated people”, “ready to do everything in order to weaken and destabilize local security and derail economic recuperation” of the Oblast. Similarly, he claimed that “espionage, diversions, sabotage, dissemination of anti Soviet proclamations mixed with religious prejudices – these are the main forms of German harmful activities on the territory of Kaliningrad Oblast”¹⁴². In this context, one should constantly keep in mind what a profound impact such news from the westernmost Soviet point must have had. Given Stalin’s progressing obsession with espionage and clandestine anti Soviet conspiracies that were plotted both inside and outside the country as well as historical background of the area it was not very difficult for newly established Kaliningrad authorities to exploit these factors in their own benefits. Interestingly enough, yet it should also be mentioned that even when all Germans were removed from Kaliningrad Oblast and the German Democratic Republic (GDR) was started to be zealously portrayed as a friendly state and a living example of a nation that was able to overcome its “dark past”, the rhetoric emanating from Kaliningrad authorities did not undergo substantial change¹⁴³. In addition to anti Nazi propaganda that could be

¹³⁹ Ibid. Д. 15. Л. 40 – 42.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. Д. 5. Л. 8.

¹⁴¹ ЦХИДНИКО. Ф. 2. Оп. 1. Д. 1. Л. 13, 41

¹⁴² ЦХИДНИКО. Ф. 1. Оп. 1. Д. 62. Л. 4

¹⁴³ Ibid. Оп. 2. Д. 98. Л. 102

observed previously, since 1949/1950 the Oblast started to experience a wave of anti Anglo- American campaigns as well. This trend was quite understandable. On the one hand, the Eastern Part of Germany (being under the Soviet control) was being presented as an example of successful transformation from a hostile entity permeated with a spirit of Nazi ideology into a friendly nation. On the other hand, the split in relations between Moscow and its former allies would increasingly receive hostile ideological surcharge, turning the not-so-long-time-ago partners into archenemies.

Even public holidays were painted in very specific tones – on 11 December 1950, the local Committee of the Communist Party adopted special resolution that stipulated celebration of the day of the Frontier Guard, which became one of the most popular and widely celebrated holidays among the Oblast population for the next several decades. Even though the emphasis of ideological campaigns may have changed, the essence remained largely untouched¹⁴⁴. Since “Anglo-American imperialists” were quite a rear commodity in the Soviet Union and Kaliningrad in particular, Germans and Lithuanians were chosen as the main target of espionage and covert activities. In this context, it ought to be underscored that the first generation of the Oblast inhabitants had developed a very specific ideological trait: being an avant-garde of the Soviet Union in the west, experiencing constant sense of fear of repressions made their lives something akin to the frontier routine permeated with perpetual sense of approaching war. Those sentiments were deliberately influenced and fuelled with constant rumors of imminent war with “Imperialist beast”. Incidentally, certain historians consider the above-mentioned factor to be crucial one in the process of recruitment of newcomer and settlers. Therefore, even those inhabitants who had already spent certain amount of time on the territory of the former East Prussia developed very distinct perception of their homeland. Incidentally, in spite of de-facto control established by the Soviets and largely illusory prospect of losing the area the local residents still preserved certain sense of temporariness and rather weakened sense of moral bond with the land.

In the final analysis it could be stated that the ideological pillar of the “Fortress Kaliningrad” elaborated with the help of ideology and propaganda would have major impact on both self-perception and vision of the outer world by various layers of local society.

¹⁴⁴ ЦХИДНИКО. Ф. 1. Оп. 9. Д. 58. Л. 1 – 2

Most importantly however was that the emerging “islander” status of the Oblast promoted among local population resulted in growing sense of frustration, isolationism and a nagging fear of being forgotten by Moscow.

2.3. Economic recuperation of the post-war Kaliningrad: plans vs. the reality

Victorious ending of the Second World War left the USSR in a dire yet in a way very contradictory state. Its civilian economy was close to collapse with approximately 26 million of human casualties although Moscow could boast with perhaps the most powerful standing army in the world and the Communist ideology rapidly gaining popularity in the regions unimaginable before. Sweeping victory over the Nazi Germany and the ability to effectively mobilize internal resources (which was far greater a difficulty in western democracies) came to be seen as a palpable alternative to liberal democracy and market-oriented economy which had been wrongfully blamed by many for letting the Second World war to happen. From China to Greece and Italy the Communists enjoyed significant support. Moreover, having rejected so-called Marshal Plan and boons it was to have brought with it the USSR had also to spend handsomely on economic recuperation of the Central and Eastern Europe that became a part of the Soviet sphere of influence once hostilities had come to an end.

On the other hand, the level of destruction sustained by the Soviet Union claimed attraction of huge means and resources to the task of overcoming of the post-war devastation. Therefore, as it has been stated before Kaliningrad Oblast did not seem to be a priority goal in economic sense, rather its role was discussed largely from security-related angle.

In addition, the status and the ultimate pertinence of Königsberg/Kaliningrad were still in vague, which posed questions regarding profitability of investments. Perhaps, this was one of the main reasons that explained overall velocity of incorporation of Kaliningrad Oblast into the Soviet system of economic management which went at extremely slow pace. This came in a sharp contrast with previous experience of the Soviet incorporation policies in the Baltic States, the Ukraine and Belarus that took place prior to the inception of the Great Patriotic War, where somewhat similar processes were

conducted at significantly much more expeditious manner¹⁴⁵. It could be explained by urgent necessity of incorporation of these areas in the light of the looming military confrontation (either the Nazi Germany or Western democracies with their Central European allies). On the other front, the aforementioned territories had not suffered comparable devastation and had belonged to the Russian Empire prior to the year 1917, which facilitated the process of integration. Moreover, it is by no means strange that even after effective control over Kaliningrad had been established local civilian authorities did not attempt to turn to experience of neither its neighbors nor the Germans. Actually, it would not be an exaggeration to claim that only by 1951 Kaliningrad had received more or less adequate civilian institutions¹⁴⁶, which however was aggravated by extremely high rate of volatility of the local population.

Within the following 9 years (by 1960) Kaliningrad witnessed establishment of a number of vital industries that were to answer to the needs of local population. Moreover, towns of the Oblast (Gusev, Cherniakhovsk, Sovietsk, Svetlii and others) started to develop various branches of economy. For instance, a shipyard “Yantar” that would become one of the cornerstones of the local economy was established.¹⁴⁷

In this context it would be adequate to mention Klaipeda (Memel) whose post-war gruesome fate¹⁴⁸ was largely shared by Kaliningrad. Nevertheless, this region experienced rapid growth in the civilian domain, re-population of the territory that did in the final result bring about growing economic recuperation and stability. Incidentally, local Lithuanian authorities did their utmost to hammer out all possible concessions from Moscow and directed those subsidies on revitalization of economic activities. Those measures led to the fact that by the year 1950 Lithuania was able to solve the main predicaments and perils associated with the post-war devastations and hardships¹⁴⁹.

¹⁴⁵ For more information see: Александр Золов, “Инкорпорация Литвы в Советский Союз: 1939-1940”, In *Studia Historica Gedanensia. Tom II (2011): Przewroty Rewolucje Wojny*, ed. Adam Kosidło, (Gdansk: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, 2011), 361-380.

¹⁴⁶ Евгений Ларочки, “Почти как настоящий, или десять лет, которые не прошли даром”, *Тридцатый регион Калининград*, Available at: <http://gazeta39.ru/kld/component/content/article/669.html?ed=97>.

¹⁴⁷ Ibidem.

¹⁴⁸ Екатерина Манюк, “Советское градостроительство в бывшей Восточной Пруссии (Калининград и Клайпеда в 1945 – 1950-е гг.)”, (PhD diss., Балтийский федеральный университет имени Иммануила Канта, Калининград, 2015) 137. Available at: http://spbu.ru/disser2/disser/Manuk_Dis.pdf

¹⁴⁹ For more information see: Геннадий Крети́нин, Ольга Фёдорова, “Клайпедский край после окончания второй мировой войны”, In *Antrojo pasaulio karo pabaiga Rytu Prusijoje faktai ir istorines izvalgos, Akta Historica Universitatis Klaipedensis XVIII*, (Klaipeda, 2009), 252–266.

In its turn Kaliningrad Oblast was not even included in the forth (and in each and every sense crucial) *Five-Year Plan* (1946-1950)¹⁵⁰ which led to rapid recuperation of the Soviet Union after the damages and war-incurred disasters. In concrete terms this rather inexplicable decision postponed development of Kaliningrad Oblast for almost two years. This decision had not only damaging immediate effect, yet also heralded in numerous problems for years to come.

Furthermore, even quite merger development of Kaliningrad starting from the beginning of the fifth Five-Year Plan practically came to a standstill with the advent of Nikita Khrushchev (March 1953). The genuine reasons are largely unknown which gives ample space for various rumors and suppositions. Most likely the First Secretary might have wished to either transfer Kaliningrad under the jurisdiction of the Lithuanian SSR which seemed plausible taking into consideration his decision regarding Crimea (though, it should not be seen as a transfer, rather an exchange) and his declaration pertaining to the two Kuril Islands (1956). Following this trail of reflections, it would not be difficult to imagine Kaliningrad being used as a pawn in geopolitical game with NATO, Poland, the Federal Republic of Germany or the German Democratic Republic. Setting aside speculative reflections regarding the fate of Kaliningrad, it would still be possible to establish two main corollaries. First, in calculations of the Soviet political leadership Kaliningrad was still being perceived as a “foreign body” and a matter of potential geopolitical bargain. This leads to the second point that boils down to the assumption regarding needlessness to divert strategically vital resources to this distant territory still recuperating from the impact of war.

To some extent the unwillingness of Moscow to deal with Kaliningrad on a serious basis could be found in the overall pace of reconstruction of the city. In fact, the conclusive general plan related to the mass construction works came to light merely in 1965¹⁵¹. The two-decade gap in development was astounding and hardly explicable, especially taking into consideration that the USSR was been able to attain the level of pre-war economic growth as early as 1950.

¹⁵⁰ Юрий Костяшов, “Калининградская область в 1947 – 48 гг. и планы её развития”, In *Вопросы истории* 4/2008, 111.

¹⁵¹ Source: “В зеркале истории,” *Запад России*, №1 (18), 1997 г. For more information see: <http://www.klgd.ru/city/history/gubin/mirror.php?print=Y>.

Moreover, only in the beginning of the second half of 1960s did Kaliningrad receive the concept of key decisions in the domain of economics. For instance, within this historical interim Kaliningrad became to turn into an importance centre of fishery industry and civilian navy. The period also witnessed rapid development of such crucial branches of local economy as shipbuilding, ship repair, pulp and paper, mechanical engineering, food processing and others. These steps were supplemented by attempts to somehow match production with R&D. For example, in 1958 the Fishery Institute was transferred from Moscow to Kaliningrad, whereas in 1967 the Oblast received permission to establish Kaliningrad State University establishing a tradition of tertiary education.

In this regard, one might be curious to discover that pervasive clearing of the rubbles and mass construction works would be finally initiated only in 1965 when Khrushchev had already been dismantled by Leonid Brezhnev – a strong proponent of conservatism and glorification of the Soviet war triumph over the Nazi Germany. In fact, the period within 1965-67 was a landmark interim that had underscored the comeback of conservatism and the return of themes related to the legacy of the Second World War, which came to be visible in various aspects ranging from upgrading of the annual military parades on the May 9 to cinematography and literature. Incidentally, it would become a turning point for Kaliningrad, which reflects indeed interesting regularity of the pre-1991 Kaliningrad history that is embedded in the following formula: comparatively liberal lap of Russian history witnesses less attention to Kaliningrad whereas growing conservatism would be reflected in a diametrically opposing tendency.

Returning back to the economic recuperation of the area it would be valuable to pinpoint that the progress and the vast bulk of achievements (that started to yield any palpable result in the mid-1970s) came into collision and would be drastically curtailed by sluggish economic growth that would later evolve into a phenomenon called “Zastoi era” (whose effect would spread far beyond economics as such). The advent of depressive economic growth based on the prices of hydrocarbons on the international market would have a serious effect on Kaliningrad, where measures of palliative nature would take precedence. Moreover, military-tilted Soviet economy could not catch up with rapidly changing international environment and economic modernization continuing to rely on extensive (as opposed to intensive) mode of development.

2.4. Kaliningrad and the “outer world”: matching the unmatched?

Historically, economically and geographically Kaliningrad Oblast is hardly separable from adjacent Lithuania and Poland. Nonetheless, the interim that embraced the period from the end of the First World War until 1945 filled with tragedy and bitter experience did in many ways predetermined the course of the post-war relations. Irrespective of the mutual distrust and in some respect even animosity, economic difficulties faced by Kaliningrad (coupled with Moscow being unable to fully provide for the Oblast at the expense of other key regions) put forth an idea of economic integration with Lithuania and conduction of certain steps aimed at synchronization of steps in this realm. In a way this could have become indeed a revolutionary endeavor, when integration of economies of RSFSR (Kaliningrad) and Lithuania (which was perceived as the “Soviet abroad”) would take place.

On February 19, 1962, in Vilnius the activists of the trade unions of the Lithuanian SSR Sovnarkhoz and their Kaliningrad-based functionaries converged in order to discuss proliferation of economic ties between Lithuania and the Kaliningrad Oblast¹⁵².

It was announced that according to the decision the Soviet Government taken in January 1963, the Economic Council of the Kaliningrad Oblast had been liquidated and its industrial compound would be transferred to the control of the Economic Council of the Lithuanian SSR¹⁵³. In practical terms that meant that "the economic leadership of the industries, which were under the jurisdiction of the former Kaliningrad Oblast Economic Council, has been delegated to the Economic Council of Lithuania", which included the following steps¹⁵⁴:

1. Administration of Cellulose and Paper Industry, a subdivision of the Lithuanian SSR Economic Council, was established in Kaliningrad;

¹⁵² Геннадий Крети́нин, “В составе Литовского совнархоза”, In *Вестник Российского Государственного университета им. И. Канта*, 2006. № 6, 36-37.

¹⁵³ Source: ГАКО. Ф. 47. Оп. 2. д. 492, л. 2.

¹⁵⁴ Martynas Brakas, “Overlapping administrative jurisdictions in the Soviet Union: economic management in Kaliningrad Oblast”, In Thomas Remeikis (Ed.) *Lituanus*, Vol. 9, No.3, (Chicago: 1963), Available at: http://www.lituanus.org/1963/63_3_03.htm.

2. Administration of Furniture and Wood Industry was formed in Vilnius to oversee industries of this type also in the Kaliningrad Oblast;

3. The large fishing industry, whose production comprises almost half of the general industrial production of the Kaliningrad Oblast, was not placed under the jurisdiction of Vilnius; together with all the fishing industry of the Baltic Sea, control of this industry is concentrated in one administration — the Supreme Administration of Western Fishing Industry, with headquarters in Riga, Latvia;

4. Production of amber not strictly defined;

5. Changes were also initiated in the administration of transportation in the Kaliningrad Oblast. To oversee industrial plants of auto transport there is a separate administration in Kaliningrad, which is a branch of the Vilnius Economic Council. Shipping in inland waters is overseen, as earlier, from Kaunas. However, the railroads of the Kaliningrad Oblast, which up to now were under the jurisdiction of the Railroad Administration of Lithuanian SSR, are now under the Baltic Railroad Administration, with headquarters in Riga, Latvia;

6. The agriculture of the Kaliningrad Oblast was not considered in the aforesaid meeting.

It could be easily deduced that not all industrial potential of the Kaliningrad Oblast was transferred under the Lithuanian control: cumulatively, 101 sites were to be allocated to the Lithuanian SSR Sovnarkhoz. Nevertheless, management and supervision of the economic activities were not to be carried out by Lithuanian branch unilaterally: the process would be divided between Vilnius, Riga and Moscow.

It ought to be stated that the results of the initiative should be deemed controversial, which was stipulated by both very short interim allocated to it and inconclusiveness of the experiment. Moreover, the topic has not been explored with

required depth and diligence, which casts certain shadow on the existing scholarship. Kaliningrad-based scholars claim that instead of cooperation the Lithuanians would act in their own interests decreasing local industrial capabilities simultaneously trying to reduce existing labor force. Naturally, this should be construed as a heavy blow delivered to Kaliningrad. On the other hand, should one take closer look at the actual essence of proposals put forth by the Lithuanians, these would be much clearer and logical. Aside from other aspects the Lithuanians claimed that the main polluters the local environment should have been responsible for sewage works (an issue that is yet to be overcome by Kaliningrad Oblast until now). In addition to that, economic profitability of the key industries placed in Kaliningrad was questionable to say the least. Moreover, reduction of labor did contain a kernel of rationality. After all, the USSR was one of the worst performers in the labor productivity among other industrial nations, which was further aggravated by absenteeism, alcoholism and low quality of human capital.

This infuriated the local officials: in 1965 Secretary of the local Committee of the Communist Party N. Konovalov sent a letter to A. Snechkus (Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in Lithuania) where he complained about alleged “harm” that such proposals had brought to the local economy. He also claimed that the growth of local industrial production had diminished by half.¹⁵⁵ Being very well aware of the weak resource bases welded by Kaliningrad as well as strictly limited consumers market the Lithuanian side bided for making stronger emphasis on developing small and medium size manufactures/industries. In many ways this path was a logical continuation of the patterns of development promoted by the Germans prior to 1945. The Soviet period clearly showed that Kaliningrad Oblast was incapable of successful development of large industries that fully depended on external conditions and ability of Moscow to provide necessary material support to ensure their functioning.

As it turned out, the Lithuanian proposal had contained a great number of indeed interesting findings related to restructuring of the local model of economy. The further course of history would show that excessive reliance on the centre and support of huge industrial sites would be detrimental in many ways: from rapidly decreasing number of collective farms leading to depopulation of rural areas (additionally aggravated by

¹⁵⁵Source: ГАКО. Ф. 47. Оп. 2. д. 46, л. 22.

dilapidating infrastructure and liquidation of so-called “non-promising” rural settlements) to the looming deficit in various products.

Cooperation with the Lithuanian SSR was not the only direction for Kaliningrad that could be explored during the Soviet period. For instance, within the aforementioned period Kaliningrad could have established closer contacts with Poland, whereby become an integral (and frankly speaking missing) element in Russo-Polish relations. Within 1956 – 1975 Kaliningrad had established steady relations with first Olsztyn and later Elblang regions of Poland¹⁵⁶. Interestingly enough, yet mutual visits of Kaliningrad and Polish delegates revealed that the Russians were truly amazed with high living standards, by far much more modern and sophisticated means used by the Poles in the absolute majority of domains: may it be agriculture or civilian building constructions.¹⁵⁷ However, in their official reports sent to Moscow Kaliningrad party leadership deliberately vilified their Polish colleagues, pointing at low level of “Socialist competition” or “inadequate level of propaganda work”¹⁵⁸ in Poland. As a result, Moscow was unable to understand the gravity of shifts that were underway in Poland within the 1970-80s. Should those factors had been taken more seriously, the course and trajectory of developments in Lithuania and Poland could have taken different direction. Being the most proximate area to Poland (and the Baltic states) it should have been Kaliningrad that was benefit from expansion of the intercultural dialogue and the knowledge transfer. Nevertheless, the Soviet leadership (with active support of local elites) opted not to use Kaliningrad in the capacity of a bridge between two worlds, emphasizing seclusion and militarization over progress and dialogue.

Blindfolded reliance on the centre in hope of economic and military support significantly abridged capabilities of Kaliningrad and developed very specific identity. These patterns of development made it possible for Kaliningrad to evade many existential difficulties and had not developed the “instinct of survivor”. This model worked relatively well while Kaliningrad Oblast was fully integrated into the Soviet economy and surrounded by Comecon/USSR members tight together with Soviet military force and generous system of economic subsidies. However, any dynamic change of the picture

¹⁵⁶Source: Государственный архив новейшей истории Калининградской области (ГАНИКО). Ф. 1. Оп. 69. № 69

¹⁵⁷For more information see: ГАНИКО. Ф. 1. Оп. 63. №53, Л.53, 32.

¹⁵⁸Source: ГАНИКО. Ф. 1. Оп. 66. № 93, Л.93.

could have posed questions of enormous gravity, exposing the entire framework to harsh external perils and challenges.

On the other hand, absence of foreign contacts also caused by artificially established separation from the “outer world” made Kaliningrad dangerously susceptible to changes posed by globalization. In this regard, geographically being a part of the Baltic Sea region, the Soviet period of local history practically carved off this area from the regional map. Incidentally, the only foreigners known to have visited there before Perestroika were five American journalists brought there under close supervision during 1985. In 1989, the Kaliningrad City Council decided to open the city and a number of Westerners visited, including a delegation of West German businessmen studying investment opportunities, a former Prussian Countess visiting her ancestral estate, a Soviet-American youth orchestra, and a number of journalists.¹⁵⁹

Speaking about the extent of cooperation between Kaliningrad Oblast and its closest and the largest geographical neighbor Polish Peoples Republic (PPR) it would also be valuable to underscore some additional key aspects that stipulated relationships between two actors.

Interestingly enough yet the date when the border treaty between the oblast and the PPR was signed was as late as on June 30, 1956 that stipulated development of ties in such domains as industry, culture and a number of other spheres¹⁶⁰. Taking into consideration that parts of Kaliningrad Oblast were closed (even for the Soviet citizens let alone members of other countries) cooperation could not have possibly been accomplished. Furthermore, highly ostentatious “joint projects” had an overwhelmingly visible ideological supplement which severely minimized the effect and crippled the idea of such actions.

¹⁵⁹Raymond A. Smith, “The status of the Kaliningrad Oblast under international law”, In Robert A. Vitas (Ed.), *Lituanus*, Volume 38, No.1, Spring 1992, (Chicago: 1992), Available at: http://www.lituanus.org/1992_1/92_1_02.htm#Ref.

¹⁶⁰ Калениченко П.М., Колесник В.П., *Граница дружбы и мира. О советско-польском приграничном сотрудничестве: 1956–1979*, (Львов: Изд-во при Львов. ун-те "Вища школа", 1980), 21.

Chapter 3. Kulturkampf in Kaliningrad (1945 - 1990). Making war on the past – defeating the future

3.1. Propaganda and beyond

Propaganda is a powerful tool whose effectiveness does not usually run beyond short and mid-term interim. In order to achieve greater results in a longer run it should be supplemented by a strategy based on various and much more far-reaching means and mechanisms. Speaking about the post-war Königsberg/Kaliningrad (that according to the Soviet leadership had to start its development from scratch) tactical moves that started to show their limitations were to be gradually superseded by clear and comprehensive strategy. This was particularly true in the light of previous history of the region and a rather patchwork-like image of the newly emerging Soviet area. Therefore, both cultural landscape and historical narrative of Kaliningrad were to be changed in a drastic manner. In fact, the Soviet had had in a way similar experience in the post-Romanovs Russia, where institutes and the entire classed that used to shape the appearance of the state for centuries were attempted to be liquidated (or reduced drastically). For this purpose, means elaborated by propaganda machine were to be merged (and to some extent even replaced) with “scholarly” findings of historians and archeologists that were supposed to depict the local pre-Soviet history from an angle commensurate with the general line established by Moscow.

Nonetheless, as it has been discussed previously vigorous (and frequently absolutely incogitant) vilification of the past and complete denial of achievements associated with previous historical epoch would nurture a sense of cultural and historic nihilism, rejection of the past coming into a sharp contrast with a thesis presenting the Oblast as “truly Slavic land”.

The Soviet authorities did not appreciate an opportunity to draw a delineating line between various historical epochs, personalities and phases that constituted a backbone of local historical narrative. As the course of local history has shown this blunder would have a profound and to some extent even detrimental effect on perception of the Oblast by both ordinary residents and elites for decades to come. On the other hand, vigorous attempt to diminish value of German/Western material culture and legacy branding it as

“deeply rotten”, “immoral” and “corrupt”, numerous attempts to portray its insignificance for the Soviet society resulted in Kaliningrad acquiring many traits ascribed to its historical predecessor.

Blatant and quite narrow-minded reference to East Prussia and its history as “strong military base”, “den of the enemy” and “the very heart of Prussian militarism”¹⁶¹ sounded more like a death verdict made by the new owners. On the other hand, an explicit ban on local history established by the Soviet authorities was an outcry of fear and apprehension that ordinary people would become appreciative of material culture created by Germans and would start comparing it to the Soviet analogs.

Therefore, the mode of operation widely accepted by the Soviets included the following key components:

1. Promotion of the Soviet material culture via deliberate destruction of previous cultural landscape;
2. Unification of mass consciousness;
3. Discarding from history of Königsberg and East Prussia along with its intellectual/cultural legacy and replacing it with patterns elaborated by the Soviet historical school.

Some historians are convinced that even heavy military destructions that East Prussia had experienced during the Second World War (and deliberate acts of vandalism committed with the Soviets that have been described) were perceived not exactly in the way that they should have been. On the contrary, on frequent occasions genuinely criminal behavior towards sites that represented undisputed historical and cultural value was followed by yet new unnecessary demolitions. In order not to sound groundlessly, it would be appropriate to come up with the following quotation that did in a very succinct manner outline stance of the new authorities toward German past of the area: “the Soviet soldiers have turned into rubbles all that disgusting foul of Prussian Junkers and Fascist

¹⁶¹ Костяшов (2003) Изгнание прусского духа, с. 15.

inhumanity”¹⁶². Another source blatantly stated that “everything that was promoted and developed by the Hannibals of Nazism is now gone into oblivion. The true masters – the Soviet people have come here to build a new life with our own labor on the rubbles of the dark past and are now going to base new achievements upon Socialist endeavors”¹⁶³

However, reflecting upon vicissitudes of Kaliningrad Oblast at early stages of its development (1945 – 1966) it would be worthwhile to reiterate the point presented before. A clear dissonance between portrayal of the Oblast as the “enemies land” where several “generations of invaders and imperialists” had been nourished and an explicit attempt to simultaneously claim it to be “genuinely Slavic land” which was supposed to encourage settlers and justify Moscow`s sway over this land. Such a contradiction became an additional factor that led to confusion and inadequate comprehension of their historic mission and role that the Soviet newcomers had, while arriving and living on this territory.

De-facto unilateral inclusion of Königsberg into the Soviet Union (April 1946) posed a number of questions related to the post-war future of this territory, its ethno-cultural image and the role it would play as new part of the USSR. Indeed, historical past of Kaliningrad constituted an area of particular importance and concern from the side of Soviet elites of various ranks. On the one hand, as it has been noted before even the staunchest members of the Communist Party would recognize achievements of German material culture at least from practical point of view. It would be impossible to make precise measurement, yet it would not be difficult to presume that for war-damaged, destitute and frequently illiterate ordinary settlers the impact of encounter with German culture and routine was even more profound.

Therefore, the Soviet propaganda machine and the Party authorities made numerous attempts to present an extremely distorted image of old Königsberg with specific emphasis on the adverse nature of its history, worthless architecture and inferior material culture. This was supplemented with perpetually and purposefully developing rumors about inevitable and rapidly approaching military confrontation with the West – now so-called “capitalist world” had largely replaced the “Fascist threat”, which nevertheless did not change much for the war-weary Soviet people who had decided to move to a far-flung and mostly unknown territory as a means to find an escape from the

¹⁶²Source: ГАКО. Ф. 19. Оп. 1. Д. 9. Л. 195.

¹⁶³Source: ГАКО. Ф. 19. Оп. 1. Д. 10. Л. 223 (Из передачи областного радио. 20.09.1947 г.)

war and constant sense of fear. Unfortunately, intensive propaganda coupled with tremendous tragic experience suffered by Soviet people that had moved to Königsberg/Kaliningrad fostering constant sense of alarm and uneasiness left a visible footprint on the first decades of local historical development, whereby creating a specific “atmosphere” that first two generations of Kaliningraders were subjected to.

In this juncture, propaganda, militarization and implementation of Soviet institutes could not possibly have changed local cultural landscape once and for all: measures of other content were additionally required. The most noticeable one: changing its appearance from western/German into the “Soviet”.

The process of dismantling of Prussian legacy became a very complex process that consisted of both physical destruction of material culture and attempts to erase cultural legacy of the antecedent period. Moreover, this set of policy also had a clear aim of creating new heroic pantheon that would be venerated by the local community and would make previous historical experience largely irrelevant. For obvious reasons this was to be based on glorification of the Soviet war heroes – figures mainly related to the Great Patriotic War, especially taking into consideration history of Kaliningrad and how it was born. An integral part of the war-related cultural/historical legacy was to be achieved via construction of memorials (with frequent brutal demolition of the old patterns) each of which was to be provided with the following inscription: “*Eternal glory to the heroes that have lost their lives for our Soviet Motherland*”¹⁶⁴.

Barbaric and hugely stepping beyond necessity, measures undertaken by the Soviet authorities came to be known as “eviction of the Prussian Spirit”.¹⁶⁵ This campaign could be provisionally divided on two main periods: 1945 – 1968 and 1970 – 1990. The former was marked by distinguishable and largely approved from above set of measures aimed at deliberate uprooting and elimination of German historic and cultural traditions. The second interim became a logical continuation of the first one, where vandalism and negligence (even though not being backed up as vigorously and unconditionally as previously) should be perceived as an offspring of previously established policy and its logical result.

¹⁶⁴ Source: ГАКО. Ф. 297. Оп. 1. Д. 12. Л. 17 – 20

¹⁶⁵ For more information see: Юрий Костяшов. Изгнание «Прусского Духа».

3.2. The campaign on renaming: looking beyond facts

First and foremost, one should be able to understand that the campaign of remaining of both Königsberg and other topographical places situated on the territory of the former East Prussia had a pivotal meaning for the Soviet political leadership that encroached far beyond mere practical reasons. The campaign on renaming of the oblast could be conditionally divided onto three main stages¹⁶⁶:

1. June 17, 1947;

2. November 17, 1947;

3. June 5, 1950.

Interestingly enough, yet the campaign itself was distinct for visible lack of coherence: for example, many villages and hamlets acquired new names in the course of three months, whereas Königsberg would preserve its name for significantly more protracted period. In the meantime, the matter of renaming posed a serious challenge for the Soviets, since the new name of the city had to reconcile several major requirements. It had to be distinctly Russian, clear and meaningful to the Soviet ideology. Under these circumstances, one of the most obvious options was for Königsberg to become Baltyisk and for the Königsberg Oblast to be renamed into the Baltyisk Oblast.

Nevertheless, Königsberg was destined to receive a very different name. On June 5, 1946 Königsberg was officially renamed into Kaliningrad – in the memory of Mikhail Kalinin (Chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets) – who had died one month prior to that date. Incidentally, Kalinin had no ties with the oblast and he had never even visited Königsberg.

The act of granting the city a name of Stalin's closest collaborator produced no reaction at a time, although the matter would receive huge impetus after the collapse of the

¹⁶⁶ Валерия Валь, “Роль экстралингвистических факторов при переименовании населенных пунктов Калининградской области”, In Андрей Селютин (Ред.), *Lingua mobilis* № 1 (47), (Челябинск: 2014), 56.

Soviet Union and would re-appear with visible frequency long after the change of ideology.

The forthcoming period would witness expansion and strengthening of the campaign. It would be worthwhile to provide a quote from an article published in “Kaliningradskaya Pravda” newspaper on June 24, 1949 where Dr. V. Murin urged to embark on the campaign with adopting a much more zealous approach: *«Weber, Gluck, Haydn... These names are familiar to me but I am aware of much more illustrious and dear to my Russian heart composers – names that are not to be met on the enameled tables placed on houses in our city. For instance, many citizens of our city are not familiar with the work of Gluck and they are right asking why and for which merits is he honored so much? And why is one of our streets bears name of a composer Haydn? And conversely, many heroes of the Great Patriotic War... who lost their lives fighting for Königsberg and many other generals, officers and soldiers are not granted such a privilege. I do not know which reason is put behind this worthless affinity for names of these German musicians – narrow-mindedness or myopia suffered by members of our key organs».*¹⁶⁷

The absolute majority of new names that replaced German place names on the territory of Kaliningrad Oblast could be divided onto several main categories¹⁶⁸:

1. Names stemming from famous Russian and Soviet military commanders and war heroes (Bagrationovsk, Gusev, Chernyakhovsk, Nesterov and many others);
2. Names related to the military themes (Gvardeysk, Krasnoflotsoye, Soldatovo, Partizanskoye, Krasnoarmiejskoye and others);
3. Names stemming from Russian and Soviet cultural workers (Timiriazevo, Pushkino, Fadeevo and others);
4. Names derived from natural objects and qualities of the local terrain (Miezurechiie, Zarechiie, Beregovoye, Yantarny, Lesnoy);
5. Names that were meant to symbolize the Soviet epoch (Sovetsk, Pionersky, Komsomol'sk, Pravdinsk, Krasnoznamensk);

¹⁶⁷ Екатерина Романова, “Последний вздох Кёнигсберга”, *Эксклав.ру*, July 4, 2016, Retrieved from <http://exclav.ru/sobyitiya/oblast/posledniy-vzdoh-kyonigsberga.html>.

¹⁶⁸ “Топонимика Калининградской области”, *Prussia39.ru*, Retrieved from <http://www.prussia39.ru/geo/rinfo.php?rid=6>.

6. Names related to the places of origin of the first Soviet settlers (Saranskoye, Marijskoye, Yasnaya Polyana, Izhevskoye, Krasnoyarskoye, Vielikorusskoye);
7. Names underscoring various types of economic and cultural activities (Rybachy, Okhotnoye, Sovkhoznoye, Matrosovo and Storozhevoye);
8. Names that resembled the German ones: Domanu-Domnovo, Taplacken-Talpaky, Varschken-Viershkovo, Kumehnen-Kumachievo, Gudgallen/ Großfelde-Gudkovo, Schillen-Zhilino).

Waged under the slogan „Russian names for the Russian city” the campaign had set up immediate goals that were to be ruthlessly implemented even in spite of visible lack of calculations and potential drawbacks for the future course of development. “For good has the flag of the Soviet Union been hoisted here – a place whence the Teutonic hound-knights, hoards of Keiser Wilhelm and bands of Hitler had been launching their incursions upon the Russian land... now Königsberg bears remarkable name of the great son of the Russian nation Mikhail Ivanovich Kalinin”¹⁶⁹ - beyond any doubt, such vilification and absolutely inappropriate oversimplification of local history should be construed a highly negative surcharge. On the other hand, sporadic and offhand campaign would become just a first part of the obscurity that would rein local historical memory and cultural traditions for decades to come. Once numerous horrible crimes committed by the Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin would become public and the personality cult trampled Kaliningrad would experience a new wave of renaming that had a clear aim of erasing previous experience (though not too distant) and haphazardly installing the new one.

3.3. War on the Royal Castle: frenzy or strategy?

Physical eradication of existing architectural sites also concerned burial places and cemeteries, where absolute majority of tombs bearing remnants of East Prussia were relieved of such signs. Genuinely tragic for both physical appearance and historical

¹⁶⁹ Екатерина Романова, “Последний вздох Кёнигсберга”, *Эксклав.ру*, July 4, 2016, Retrieved from <http://exclav.ru/sobyitiya/oblast/posledniy-vzdoh-kyonigsberga.html>.

memory of Kaliningrad became a campaign spearheaded against Königsberg Castle (1255 - 1968).

As early as in the year 1948 (May 13) in a decree № 195 approved by the State Committee for Construction under the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR stated: "... in spite of merger resources available a drastic change of policy in the domain of architecture is to be achieved in order to eradicate the Prussian spirit and accentuate our Soviet culture in architectural landscape... We have to overcome and eliminate a murky and bellicose spirit of Prussian architecture with its overburdened forms and deem walls, cumbersome pinnacle roofs. Instead, light, **jocundity of forms and welcoming image are to be established.**"¹⁷⁰ One of the main speaking tubes of anti-German architectural realignment was a newspaper "Kaliningradskaia Pravda", which starting from 1947 had been doing its utmost in order to explain "inferiority" of German architectural landscape in comparison with nascent Soviet. In one of such articles an architect D. Tian stated: "The most distinctive type of pre-war Königsberg and its architecture was simplified Gothic style... ample trees and bushes at summer time were to somehow mask ugliness of such buildings."¹⁷¹ In numerous rapports to Moscow and overall descriptions the Castle was portrayed in the following terms: "...in the middle of the capital is a citadel – a pinnacle stone of immense size in which there are numerous secret galleries and casemates. They descend deep down the earth surface."

In 1951 ideological crusade against the Castle received a new impetus – most well-known Soviet newspapers started a vigorous complain leveled against this architectural wonder: "in the middle of Prussian bandit state stands a citadel with manifold galleries sliding deep down the earth."¹⁷² Extremely valuable historical site and a living memory of Prussian (and the Baltic Sea region) history was portrayed as a worthless leftover of Nazi ideology, as a bastion of imperial militarism and a pile of stones that was to be demolished and a "decayed tooth of Prussian past". In order to fulfill a long-desired consent for actions from the side of Moscow numerous reports and rapports contained deliberately distorted information. For example, in a letter of 28 September 1956 head of the local Ministry of Culture M. Shumikhin noted that "the Castle had experienced such a level of destruction during military engagements that it represents no

¹⁷⁰ Source: ГАКО. Ф. 520, оп. 1, д. 8, л. 15.

¹⁷¹Тян Д., "Советский город Калининград", *Калининградская правда*, № 133, November 7, 1947.

¹⁷² Мерзлякова Е., "Штурм Кёнигсберга", *Калининградская правда*, April 8, 1951.

value whatsoever and should not longer be kept. Instead of it the Palace of the Soviets ought to be erected”.

This however was contested by B. Altshudter the Head Architect of the scientific-restoration branch of the Ministry of Culture of the USSR. Furthermore, special commission consisting of architects from Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Kaliningrad along with representatives of related scientific organizations¹⁷³ also did not agree with heavily politicized definitions.

Nonetheless, the Chairman of the Oblast Executive Committee Y. Prushinskii dispatched a letter (yet another one!) to the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR that contained the following:

"Our city is being rebuilt with new modern buildings, which means that remnants of dated rubbles in its centre will not be prudent. On the other hand, in case the Royal Castle is to be rebuilt it is going to require many years and big financial investments. According to the most merger estimates such an endeavor is likely to demand much more than one million of rubles. Therefore, we propose to completely destroy the remnants of the Castle established by the Teutonic Knights – a place that had served as a stronghold for crusades against the Lithuanians, Poles and Russians. The Castle has always been an embodiment of Piratical endeavors of first, the Knights and later Fascists and against the Slavic nations. The revanchists in West Germany are elaborating scientific works dedicated to the role of the Castle in Prussian history, so they will be grateful if we are to rebuild it. That is why we are positive that the ultimate destruction of the rubbles will mean the ultimate triumph of historical justice... Resurrect something that does not exist, wasting huge economic means (frankly speaking, building a new castle) we consider imprudent. On this spot we propose to build a new modern administrative building, which contrary to the Teutonic foster-child will be a genuine ornament of the Soviet Kaliningrad”¹⁷⁴.

In the end due to the series of measures agreed upon by Leonid Brezhnev (with active participation of Alexei Kosygin who had visited Kaliningrad and was said to have been infuriated by the Castle still standing in the middle of the city, which induced him to explain himself and express his discontent falling back on a foul language) led to the

¹⁷³ГАКО. Марина Клемешева, “О судьбе Королевского замка”, 28.03.2010, *Государственный Архив Калининградской Области*, Available at:

<http://gako.name/mainsite/kaliningradarchives/-2/293-2010-03-28-16-59-44>.

¹⁷⁴ *Калининградский комсомолец*, 31.03.1990; ГАКО. Ф. 135, оп. 1, д. 64, л. 4-5.

ultimate destruction of the Castle. By the year 1969 the umbilical cord that somehow connected Soviet Kaliningrad with its Prussian history was finally destroyed.

Nonetheless, it was not only the fact of demolition itself that signified tragic fate of the Soviet Kaliningrad, yet what the site would be changed with. On the same spot the House of Soviets – enormously cumbersome, utterly plain, bereft of any architectural sophistication or value building (in spite of huge financial means allocated to its construction) was erected. It has become a source of ridicule among locals and a symbol of inconsistency and senseless waste of money and resources.¹⁷⁵ On the other hand, the building became a living embodiment of inconsistency and simultaneously a grave reminder of the Soviet past that is still present in the nowadays Kaliningrad.

Being engaged in vigorous campaign aimed at complete transformation and modernization of Kaliningrad Soviet ideologists claimed that “it would not be enough to simply change names of streets, square and even cities – the entire appearance is to be altered, new forms apt for the Socialist ideas are to be found – harmful influence of the German past is to be wiped out.”¹⁷⁶ Characterizing Soviet campaign aimed against remaining German past, a German historian B. Hoppe described it as a “war of political regimes.”¹⁷⁷

In Kaliningrad Soviet ideology received its complete incarnation in nascent architectural landscape bringing unification and minimalism as an integral part of the Soviet identity. Regretfully, this was not only brought about by changing the old and creating new, yet frequently went hand in glove with attempts to utterly erase and uproot previous patterns. Also, this has been facilitated by generally weak interest (being additionally actively suppressed) to historical past of the Oblast that started to emerge merely in the early 1970s as a result of growing interest in “black digging” activities.¹⁷⁸

In this regard its glorification of the war-related legacy practically became the only chapter of local history that could be developed: it appeared that the local history had

¹⁷⁵ *Калининградская правда* 23.09.1990.

¹⁷⁶ For more information see: Владимир Щербаков, *Сталинская программа хозяйственного и культурного строительства Калининградской области*, Калининград : тип. "Советская Литва" в Вильнюсе, 1947.

¹⁷⁷ For more information see: Bert Hoppe, *Auf den Trümmern von Königsberg. Kaliningrad 1946-1970*. (Oldenbourg Verlag, München: 2000).

¹⁷⁸ "Тайны "Замка трех королей", In *Исторические сюжеты*, Available at: http://storyfiles.blogspot.com.es/2014/04/blog-post_5.html

begun only with the outbreak of the East Prussian military operation and ensued Soviet regime. This also found its reflection in historical literature that appeared within the 1960-80 that was filled with evidences and memoirs of soldiers and participants of the war. Furthermore, the local history was shaped by a very narrow circle of authors and scientists admitted to this process from above and therefore prone to sticking to canonical understanding of the local history, which was widely and passionately boosted by the local societies of war veterans. For instance, in texts written in 1988 the following descriptions and citations can be found: “forever was the nest of Prussian militarism destroyed”, “an ancient citadel of the Teutonic crusaders – hounds-knights”, “deeply constructed defense line”, “bastion of militarism and fascist aggression.”¹⁷⁹ Regretfully, this largely slanted image persevered practically until the final days of the Soviet Union.

For almost two generations population of the post-war Kaliningrad had been artificially denied any knowledge of the antecedent historical period, which had been supplemented by an extremely incomplete and utterly disfigured image. Instead, a fear of potential revanchist sentiments in Germany (or other capitalist powers) was being cultivated. These policies led not only to oversimplification of historical knowledge as such (which was a devastating blow to such areas as history and archeology), yet also nurtured toward development of narrow-mindedness and inability to critically analyze facts and developments in the outside world. Indeed, this quality was exactly what had been sought for by the Soviet propaganda practically from the first days of the Soviet power intact: the regime clearly did not endorse creativity, competition and private initiative. Deeper analysis may lead one to belief that such clear delineation of liberty in creative arts and sciences facilitated extensive development of “idleness” corrupting hearts and minds with indifference, aloofness and strong reliance on Moscow.

It needs also to be highlighted that trends and practices widely used in the Soviet Union were vested with particularly emphasis and meaning. For instance, the policy of strife for the Russian culture specifically leveled against “Rootless cosmopolitans”¹⁸⁰ (1948 – 1953) was also conducted in Kaliningrad. However, given historical and cultural background the overall tone of the campaign was mainly spearheaded against remnants

¹⁷⁹ Ким Щёкин и др., *Калининградская область: очерки становления и развития*, (Калининград: Калинингр. кн. изд-во, 1988), 13-14.

¹⁸⁰ It was primarily aimed to obfuscate internal problems that the Soviet Union was facing as well as to boost Stalin`s regime. Incidentally, after the year 1949 and the death of J. Stalin (1953) the campaign received the new impulse and was waged from different angle.

of German culture which markedly diverged from the Russian proper. This policy became a perfect complement to the already mentioned “Eviction of Prussian Spirit”, ushered in by pervasive renaming of streets, squares, villages and towns that took place in the second half of 1940-s.¹⁸¹ This ideological assault attained yet another facet by including cinematography as relatively new and very powerful means of propaganda. Came to be known as the “liquidation of mistakes in the domain of cinema” the campaign was meant to diminish the impact of foreign popular culture on the local residents. It would be imperative to mention that vast bulk of movies run in public cinemas were primarily German trophy films which not only vexed local Soviet elites not only because it “hindered the most outstanding pieces of the Soviet cinematography.”¹⁸² On 8 April 1952 the local department of Culture and Arts issued a circular that strictly prohibited public display, advertising and even mentioning in printed press/radio names of “trophy” films.¹⁸³

Reflecting upon “cultural” aspect of post-war history of Kaliningrad it would be possible to claim that a vigorous assault launched by the Soviet political and intellectual elites against the German past of Kaliningrad in certain sense leveled down the cord between past and present, leading to the denial of the past and simultaneous inability to appreciate present.

In lieu of conclusion: last chance for Kaliningrad and the Soviet "fin de cycle"

When Mikhail Gorbachev elevated non-material (ideological) compound of his reform program over economic one, he was severely criticized by Deng Xiaoping who was a well-known stalwart of a diametrically opposite model.¹⁸⁴

In order to understand chances and opportunities concealed in the last period of the Soviet regime for Kaliningrad one should be able to recognize the overall vitality of

¹⁸¹ Ирина Криворуцкая, *Кампания переименований 1946 – 1947 годов*, Калининградские архивы, Вып. 1 (Калининград: 1998), 90 – 106.

¹⁸² ЦХИДНИКО. Ф. 1. Оп. 9. Д. 30. Л. 102

¹⁸³ ГАКО. Ф. 232. Оп. 6. Д. 10. Л. 6

¹⁸⁴ Аллен Линч, “Стратегии реформ в СССР и КНР: Дэн Сяопин и Горбачев в сравнении”, *Россия в глобальной политике*, October 3, 2012. Available at: <http://www.globalaffairs.ru/woussr/Strategii-reform-v-SSSR-i-KNR-Den-Syaopin-i-Gorbachev-v-sravnении-15676>

decisive economic reforms as the only factor that could have stabilized local milieu. On the other hand, apropos measures in the aforementioned domain could have provided Kaliningrad with a safety cushion and alleviate acute consequences of the collapse of the common economy stretching from the Pacific Ocean to the Baltic Sea. Indeed, in many ways rather artificial and crippled by the lack of competitiveness, there still was a chance to avoid the havoc and transcend onto the path of market without having suffered such a severe shock. Being geographically engrained in the Baltic Sea area and able to directly communicate with other European countries, Kaliningrad Oblast had not yet lost a potential to become a bridge between the USSR desperately yearning for technologies, new markets and ideas and Europe that was primarily interested in the Soviet natural resources. In this context Kaliningrad should have been used as a venue of dialogue between the West and the Kremlin in the era of détente. And if a reconciliation between two conflicting blocks was unlikely to ensue on the ideological level (which was abridged to even a greater extent with the outbreak of war in Afghanistan), than it was perhaps the economy that ought to have taken precedence.

Incidentally, economic modernization of the early 1970s received new impetus in the form of Special Economic Zones (SEZ) or Free Economic Zones (FEZ) that were meant to create and develop better business climate via promotion of knowledge/technology transfer, entrepreneurship, borrowing of the international experience in the domain of new technologies and expansion of trade relations. The first of such SEZ initiative was proclaimed in 1973 in Kyoto, when international convention on free economic zones was accepted. Although, the first one would be Shannon Airport in Ireland as early as in the year 1959¹⁸⁵ these would be the newly industrializing countries of Southeast Asia and China that were to become the main proponents of SEZ regimes.

Unfortunately, the USSR was not on the list of countries that started to promptly implement the new model (the Soviet economists started to express any more or less concrete interest as late as 1987-88), which received huge attention in the Peoples Republic of China, Taiwan and South Korea.

In the year 1989 in Moscow an international seminar devoted to the mechanism of free economic zones (supported by the UN) was carried out. The event urged the Soviet

¹⁸⁵ “Political priority, economic gamble”, *The Economist*, April 4, 2015, Retrieved from <http://www.economist.com/news/finance-and-economics/21647630-free-trade-zones-are-more-popular-everwith-politicians-if-not>

leadership to enhance activities in promotion of this model, which was additionally supported on regional level as well (approximately 60 regions had submitted applications in order to be shortlisted).

On July 14, 1990 the Supreme Council of the RSFSR proclaimed Kaliningrad (along with other five regions) to be a zone of free entrepreneurship. The main idea ingrained in the project was granting to the Oblast various privileges and duty-free tax code that was supposed to attract foreign capital and improve the level of local infrastructure. This initiative subsequently led to the fact that on June 3, 1991 Special Economic Zone „Yantar” emerged.

Incidentally, first the idea of turning Kaliningrad into a Free Economic Zone had been voiced as early as in the year 1989 by Professor Y.S. Matochkin (the first governor of the post-Soviet Kaliningrad). Nevertheless, practical aspects pertaining to the experiment failed to materialize due to the outbreak of political and economic hardships experienced by the USSR in its last days. Political turmoil and ensued strife for power finally brought to life numerous existential problems that existed in the Soviet Union yet were concealed under the impenetrable glacial of propaganda and the image of the past glory. In this context the future of Kaliningrad was the most unpredictable: being cut off the mainland, economically dependent on the model established by the Soviet regime, heavily militarized and practically isolated from its neighbors this “island” was to face completely new reality that it had not been accustomed to before.

Concluding this introductory chapter Settlers and newcomers found themselves in a “melting pot” (in a contrast to the so-called “salad bowl”) which made them to abdicate from ethno-cultural traits they had to leave once starting anew in Kaliningrad.

For many of them it was the policy of Collectivization that had destroyed traditional peasant lifestyle replacing it with the “soviet identity”, whereas Kaliningrad turned out to be the place where this transformation became finally completed. This remote piece of foreign land turned out to be an extremely lucrative place for conducting so-called “Soviet globalization.”¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁶ For more information see: Johann P. Arnason, “The Soviet model as a mode of globalization”, *Thesis Eleven*, Vol. 41, May 1995, 36–53.

Therefore, Kaliningrad could be considered a place where the Soviet authorities had come to the closest point of formation of the genuine “Soviet identity”.

This might seem surprising though having gotten to know and appreciate German material culture and its superiority (perhaps, even at subconscious level) ordinary Soviet people would succumb to very crude propaganda and engage in destroying the past with vigor and determination that (had those qualities been applied in constructive activities) would have brought very different results. On the other hand, having capitalized on achievements of their historical predecessors the new generation of Kaliningraders did not seem to be able to act in a more constructive and creative manner. Of course, partly it was justified and even encouraged by the Center that would be willing to artificially maintain relatively high living standards and full employment in Kaliningrad Oblast, whereby bereaving local population of necessity to achieve goals via drastic intensification of activities and vigorous efforts. Being primarily concerned with Kaliningrad remaining a militarized bastion of the Soviets against the West both local and central leadership missed most important – potential role of Kaliningrad. This should go without saying that dealing with such a difficult historical baggage was one of the most urgent tasks (and simultaneously the hardest ones) to be addressed when it became clear that the antecedent regime had arrived to its deathbed.

Part 2. Kaliningrad between the “black hole of Europe” and the Russia’s “backwater district” (1991 – 2000)

Chapter 4. Kaliningrad after 1991: exclave, enclave or both?

Before getting closer to political and economic developments surrounding Kaliningrad region within the indicated historical interim it would be particularly worthwhile to present a brief theoretical explanation of changes that the westernmost region of the Russian Federation went through starting from the first years of its post-Soviet period and finalizing with the largest enlargement experienced by the European Union up until now. On the other hand, reflecting upon this undoubtedly decisive period it should be imperative to underscore that the events that befall Kaliningrad had less to do with evolution and gradual transformation. In this juncture one should be able to comprehend the drastic nature and decisiveness of changes as well as severity of political and economic impact suffered by the region as a result thereof. In order to be able to draw rightful corollaries, it would make sense to present some case studies that ought to provide additional mental pabulum while reflecting about Kaliningrad and its dilemmas.

4.1. Taking a dive into the theory of enclaves

An exclave is an entity that is a part of an independent state but separated from the main area by the territory of another state or by other states¹⁸⁷. Historical background of exclaves goes back to the period Modern History. Incidentally, the very first official document that mentioned the term “*enclave*” was the Treaty of Madrid (January 14, 1526).

This notion is currently used in a broad range of meanings and by various sciences ranging from geography to history and sociology. The notion “enclave” is also widely

¹⁸⁷ Thomas Lunden, “Exclaves – Geographical and Historical Perspectives”, In: Jarosław Jańczak, Przemysław Osiewicz (ed.), *European exclaves in the process of de-bordering*, (Berlin: Logos Verlag Berlin, 2012), 11.

applied to a by and large “foreign” body situated within certain environment. This stipulates its special relationship to the surrounding entities. In addition, one of the main criteria when a territorial entity could be identified as an enclave is the matter of sovereignty. Unfortunately, recently developed scholarship pertaining to the theory of enclaves has not been able to undertake an extensive and comprehensive cover of the subject opting instead for discussing individual cases. One of the most solid attempts to reflect on this topic was undertaken by E. Vinokurov¹⁸⁸. Nevertheless, it should primarily be viewed as an extensive discussion with a focus on individual cases and existing international practice rather than a deep theoretical reflection.

Reflecting upon the topic from theoretical angle, it would be worthwhile to highlight three main ideas pertaining to the aforementioned realm:

1) *A historical theory* which aims to stress “historical” compound in the process of emergence and formation of enclaves.

A. Transition from feudalism into nation states (1500–1815). It should be noted that in Germany and Italy this process stepped well beyond the identified chronological interim.

B. Collapse of the global empires and emerging post-colonial world (1945–2002).

C. Geopolitical shifts that took place in the beginning of the 1990s. In this regard, disintegration of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia should be seen as the most well-known examples. Incidentally, this last stage witnessed emergence of Kaliningrad Oblast as an enclave which resulted from proclamation of independence by Lithuania on February 16, 1990.

2) *A functional theory* focuses on the way that the independent state and its territory participate in the *nation-building* process.

¹⁸⁸ Evgeny Vinokurov, *A theory of enclaves*, (Lanham: Lexington/Rowman&Littlefield, 2007), 1.

3) A *socio-demographic theory* primarily focuses on how exclave inhabitants behave and react on the local conditions and the milieu.

4.2 Establishing the definitional framework

Notions „*enclave*” and „*exclave*” are currently widely used in geography and geopolitics in order to underline special position of physically separated parts of certain countries from their core. The reason why two notions are frequently confused is engrained in the fact that even though there are crucial differences between the two, they are still bind together by numerous common traits.

One of the fist Russian scientists to first conduct a comprehensive research in the topic was E. Alaev in his classical book “Social-economic geography. Notional-terminological Dictionary”¹⁸⁹.

Geographic science gives the following definition of enclaves. An *enclave* is a part/portion of the territory of a state that is enclosed within the territory of another state/s. In order to avoid certain ambiguity with other forms of similar spatial entities, these are defined as “*true enclaves*”.

Exclave – is a part of territory of a state which is surrounded by foreign territories in regard of the mainland state.

A *mainland state* is a political entity to which an enclave belongs and of which it is part. On the other hand, a *surrounding state* is an entity that surrounds an enclave but to which an enclave is not a part to.

A *semi-enclave* is a part of a state enclosed within the land territory of another state, and also being bordered by sea (that however suggests that the entity is not fully surrounded).

¹⁸⁹ Энрид Алаев, *Социально-экономическая география: понятийно-терминологический словарь*, (Москва: 1983), 69.

In literature one could come across yet another definition of this type of entity – “*coastal enclaves*”. It would be particularly valuable to underscore that these types of enclaves should be distinguished from true enclaves which is stipulated by presence of the sea border.

Pene-enclaves are territories that, although not directly/necessarily separated from the mainland, are in fact accessible only through the territory of another state.

A *mere exclave* is a region that, in addition to being isolated from its mainland, is also surrounded by more than one state. Therefore, following this description the entity in question is not an enclave in relation to other states per se, yet an exclave in relation to the mainland. This effectively makes Kaliningrad an exclave (for Russia), yet simultaneously an enclave if accessed from European point of view¹⁹⁰.

International practice currently identifies six *mere exclaves* – Cabinda, Dubrovnik, Kaliningrad, Nakhichevan, Strovilia and the UK Dhekelia of which the largest one is Kaliningrad (in terms of population).

Table 2.1. Classification of global enclaves and exclaves¹⁹¹

Type	Legal status	Sub-types	Examples
I. Enclave state	Sovereign state	IA. Enclave (not attached to the coastal line) state IB. Semi-enclave (coastal) state	Vatican, Lesotho, San-Marino, Brunei, Gambia, Monaco

¹⁹⁰ The concept could be found in: Ingmar Oldberg, “Kaliningrad: Russian exclave, European enclave”, (Stockholm: Swedish Defense Research Agency, June 2001).

¹⁹¹ Vinokurov (2007), 155-156.

II. International enclave	Administrative unit without sovereignty		West Berlin (1945—1990), the UN Headquarters in New York (since 1952)
III. External enclave	Administrative unit of the first class Part of administrative unit of the first class	IIIA. Coastal enclave subject IIIB. Part of the coastal enclave subject IIIC. Landlocked enclave subject IIID. Coastal overseas enclave subject	Alaska, Cabinda (Angola), Kaliningrad Oblast, Dubrovnik (Croatia), Nakhichevan (Azerbaijan), French Guinea
IV. Exclave part (not a subject) of a state (external enclave)	Unit or its part of administrative-territorial of the second or a lower level	IVA. Pene-enclave/exclave IVB. Coastal overseas enclave/exclave IVC. Landlocked enclave/exclave IVD. Coastal enclave/exclave	Jungholz (Austria) in Switzerland; Melilla and Ceuta (Spain), Gibraltar (the UK), Sokh and Shakhimidzhan (Uzbekistan) in Kyrgyzstan; Dubki (Russia) in Estonia; Likoma Island and Chizumulu Island (Malawi) in territorial waters of Mozambique.

		IVE. Enclaves/exclaves- islands	
V. Enclave subject (province) inside the other subject of the same state (internal enclave)	Unite of administrative-territorial division of the first level	VA. Landlocked internal enclave of the first level VB. Coastal internal enclave of the first level	Adygea Republic within the Krasnodar Krai (Russia), Land Brandenburg (Germany), Sankt-Petersburg within the Leningrad Oblast (Russia)
VI. Enclave/exclave part of a subject (province) of a state within another subject of the same state (internal enclave)	Unite of administrative-territorial division of the second of lower class	VIA. Landlocked internal enclave/exclave of the second level VIB. Coastal internal enclave/exclave of the second level VIC. Coastal internal enclave of the third level	Zelenograd District (Moscow) inside Moscow Oblast, Bremerhfen (Bremen Land) inside the Lower Silesia (FRG), Yantarny town inside the Zelenogradskii District of Kaliningrad Oblast (Russia)

In definition of the status of Kaliningrad Oblast it would be possible to distinct two major stages. First, 1991-94, when prevailing term was either “enclave” or “semi-enclave” – incidentally, this triggered an intensive debate in the local intellectual circles. Second stage was mainly related with academic scholarship of P. Jonniemi who first used

“exclave” while defining Kaliningrad Oblast¹⁹². Nonetheless, it would still be possible to define Kaliningrad as an “*enclave*” toward its neighbors. This possibility is related to the fact of the eastward expansion of NATO and accretion of the European Union that assembled the Baltic States and Poland. This leads to the belief that Kaliningrad may be defined as “Russian enclave in the European Union”.

In any event, it would not be superfluous to mention that different schools tend to provide definitions of their own in regard to Kaliningrad, which does not however have a major bearing on understanding of key challenges, threats, perils and opportunities that are faced by the region, the mainland as well as the countries that surround this “island” situated on the shores of the Baltic Sea.

4.3. Economic features of enclaves: challenges and opportunities

Taking into account physical separation of any enclave/exclave from the mainland issues related to the realm of economics attain additional weight and sensitivity. Indeed, economic vibrancy and well-being in comparison to surrounding states/territories (or absence of these instrumental qualities) could become a source of tensions severely affecting perception of the mainland by the local community. Undoubtedly, such a turn might in time evolve into a conflict between the local and central elites and engender separatist sentiments. Therefore, in this juncture it would be valuable to provide the main aspects and distinctive features to be taken into consideration while it comes to the economic vulnerability of enclaves/exclaves.

1. **Small size.** Closer look at geographical location and other key distinctive traits suggests that enclaves/exclaves are usually small territorial entities populated by relatively small number of people. Furthermore, economic activities are frequently crippled with constrained internal market that is likely to be able to cover only local needs. Moreover,

¹⁹² Pertti Joenniemi, Stephen Dewar and Lyndelle D. Fairlie, *The Kalininigrad Puzzle - A Russian Region within the European Union*, (Karlkrona, Sweden: The Baltic Institute and the Åland Islands Peace Institute, 2000), 261.

large scale production of goods and high-tech products is additionally hindered (though there are noticeable reservations known in the global practice).

This leads scientists to believe that enclaves and exclaves are locked into narrow economic specialization which frequently results in a severe incongruity between domestic consumption and domestic production making these entities to excessively rely on resources from abroad. On the one hand, such a model can lead to proliferation of international cooperation, yet on the other it could very well evolve into a major problem in case of political instability and raising international tensions. Therefore, in order to be able to somehow alleviate implied predicaments and transcend to sustainable development patterns full integration in both regional and global economy is an absolute prerequisite.

2. Vulnerability to external shocks. Being an example of a mere exclave Kaliningrad is bordered by the Baltic Sea on the west and Poland and Lithuania on both north and south. Undoubtedly, such geographical location might constitute a challenge to communication between the region and the mainland. This is especially true taking into consideration existing infrastructure (energy and railways) that had been established through Lithuania during the Soviet period (it should be also noted that Poland does not seem to be economically rational choice in terms of transportation).

3. Double periphery or “overlapping periphery”¹⁹³. These notions will be explained in greater details in forthcoming chapters of this research. Yet at this point it would be sufficient to state that due to various internal and external factors Kaliningrad has found itself to be both of the above-mentioned definitions. This is based on both economic and political aspects.

¹⁹³ Emerson, M., N. Tocci, M. Vahl and N. Whyte, *The Elephant and the Bear: The European Union, Russia and Their Near Abroads*, (Brussels: CEPS, 2001), 31-32.

This being stated it should not be superfluous to provide three main elements that theoretically are to provide a steady framework for successful functioning of a territorial entity of the aforementioned type:

- 1) A visa-free regime enabling the free movement of people;
- 2) Achievement of a certain degree of free trade in goods (ideally supplemented by the free flows of services and capital);
- 3) Establishment of a broad agreement between the mainland and surrounding states stipulating key aspects of interrelations between all parties concerned.

An international experience with enclaves that has been developed up to date suggests two main approaches elaborated by the mainland:

- 1) Compensatory approach - a special regime that introduces special mechanism aimed to compensate for the physical separation from the mainland. This way of behavior is considered to be rather costly and resource-consuming endeavor, whereas the results (the adequate and long-lasting level of economic development and personal incomes) do not always ensue. Statistical data (at least at the level of officially collected figures) contend that the level of economic development tends to be somewhat lower than in the mainland.
- 2) Liberal approach – achievement of economic prosperity ought to be based on intensification of cooperation with/integration in the local network, which is to be supplemented by greater economic openness. Perhaps, the most salient example would be the Hong Kong where remarkable progress has been achieved via harmonization of both internal and external factors.

In the final analysis, it would be valuable to additionally stress that out of 27 major enclaves that currently exist only 4 of them could be qualified as having high incomes per capita in comparison with the mainland. This fact reveals two prime aspects: first, such geographic entities tend to do worth economically and are to face difficulties and challenges that hinder their successful development; secondly, existing success stories point out that the progress is achievable.

In order to come closer toward understanding of economic, political and cultural conditions to be faced by Kaliningrad Oblast after the year 1991 it should be imperative to briefly describe certain aspects pertaining to two major enclaves: East Prussia (historical predecessor of the Soviet Kaliningrad) and Hong Kong (which according to a very popular notion persevered in 1990s was to have become a model for development for the post-Soviet Kaliningrad).

4.4. Case studies: East Prussia (1919-1939), Hong Kong and Singapore

4.4.1. East Prussia

Perhaps the most well-known similarity between two enclaves that by the virtue of history changed one another would be the realm of economic development and mechanisms that ensured material wellbeing of population of two entities. By its physical separation from the mainland East Prussia owed to President Woodrow Wilson who encapsulated the principle of free Polish state in his illustrious “Fourteen Points”¹⁹⁴. The Treaty of Versailles signed on October 4, 1919 and coming into action on January 10, 1920 formalized the event. In this regard, East Prussia (populated by 2.3 million people residing on 40.000 sq. kilometers) became cut off the mainland by so-called “Polish Corridor”¹⁹⁵ with population reaching approximately 1 million people and an area of 16.000 sq. kilometers. Being a bliss to Poland (it ensured its direct access to additional Baltic Sea ports) it would become a visible hindrance for transit and communication

¹⁹⁴ Source: President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points, 8 January, 1918, *The Avalon Project, Yale Law School*, Retrieved from http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/wilson14.asp.

¹⁹⁵ Grzegorz Łukomski, „Problem "korytarza" w stosunkach polsko-niemieckich i na arenie międzynarodowej 1919-1939”, *Studium polityczne*, (Warszawa: 2000).

between the enclave on the one hand and the mainland on the other. All communication could be held only on the transit basis with sealed cards being the only means of transportation. Incidentally, the transit issue (amply mixed with such notions as “damaged national pride” and “national disgrace”) was one of the main driving forces that stood behind electoral success of the National Socialist Labor Party in this region and a justification for the invasion of Poland¹⁹⁶.

In this juncture it would be worthwhile to take closer look at statistical data pertaining to the level of income of the locals in comparative prospective with inhabitants of other German regions¹⁹⁷.

Table 2.2. Comparative analysis of German Lands within 1913 – 1936

Region	1913	1928	1936	1913-1936
Eastern regions cumulatively	101	102	102	+1
Berlin- Brandenburg	138	132	136	-2
Pomerania	75	78	82	+7
East Prussia	64	69	73	+9
West Prussia	62	71	66	+4
Silesia	79	84	76	-3
Other regions				
Saxony	117	120	108	-9
Westphalia	96	91	89	-7
Schleswig- Holstein	100	98	101	+1

¹⁹⁶ Address by Adolf Hitler, Chancellor of the Reich, before the Reichstag, September 1, 1939. Available at: <http://fcit.usf.edu/holocaust/RESOURCE/DOCUMENT/HITLER1.HTM>.

¹⁹⁷ Vinokurov (2007), 176.

As it clearly stems from the finding the level of income was considerably lower than German average reaching 64 – 73 percent (although West Prussia demonstrated comparable data). On the other hand, the table underscores that the enclave status itself was not the sole cause of economic predicaments, on the contrary toward the end of the cycle economic conditions appear to be on the increase. Vinokurov identified six main tendencies faced by the region within the aforementioned period¹⁹⁸:

1. The breakdown of economic ties with the Imperial Russia (as its main economic partner) and profound alteration of the overall economic milieu that ensued after the end of the First World War;

2. Abridging economic cooperation between East and West Prussia;

3. Repercussions for existing transit routes and communication caused by emergence of the „Polish Corridor“;

4. Extensive relief program conducted by the mainland in regard of East Prussia (so-called Ostpreußenprogramm¹⁹⁹);

5. Global financial crisis within the period 1929-33;

6. Special focus of the NSDAP on East Prussia.

Analyzing the impact of physical separation and its repercussions for economic development of East Prussia in the aforementioned period one should take into close

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Source: Bundesarchiv, Ostpreußenprogramm : Nr. 298 Ministerbesprechung vom 17, September 1927. Available at: http://www.bundesarchiv.de/aktenreichskanzlei/1919-1933/1000/ma3/ma32p/kap1_1/kap2_56/para3_1.html;jsessionid=61E0571BAEEE49928AE0D358BF982040?highlight=true&search=Dammann&stemming=false&pnd=&start=&end=&field=all.

account that these were agriculture and trade that suffered the most. Incidentally, those branches constituted the backbone of economic growth prior to the act of separation. During the Third Reich the share of East Prussia in German GDP did not exceed 1.2% (and 0.4% in total exports), which suggests that the province did not occupy prominent economic place in German architecture. Nonetheless, East Prussia not only managed to successfully accomplish certain re-orientation of its economic model and maintain successful tendency thanks to optimization of production, yet also was able to develop relatively new branches of economy (such as tourist industry).

4.4.2. *Hong Kong*

One of the most amazing transformations attained by an enclave at contemporary history is an example of Hong Kong that made its way from a relatively unpopulated and drawback entity into one of the most important international financial centers in the world. In fact, numerous romantic projects aimed at economic recuperation of Kaliningrad Oblast presented in the first decade after collapse of the Soviet Union inadvertently pointed out to an example of this territory and its breathtaking transformation as well as very brief historical interim that the task was accomplished.

Economic science is keen to relay on identification of the following factors that constituted the backbone of economic progress of Hong Kong²⁰⁰:

1. Rapid industrialization aimed to increasing the overall numbers of small and medium-sized enterprises (SME), whereby leading toward greater diversity and competition and strengthening “private” compound;

2. Adherence to the free trade. This point is a testimony to the fact that Hong Kong did not shy away from diverging from the usual models of Asian economic that are based on either state-led industrialization (Japan, South Korea, Singapore and Taiwan) or

²⁰⁰ Catherine R. Schenk, “Economic History of Hong Kong”, In Robert Whaples (Ed.), *EH.Net Encyclopedia*, March 16, 2008. Available at: <http://eh.net/encyclopedia/economic-history-of-hong-kong/>

domination of foreign firms (Singapore). In this context, the main drivers of economic development of Hong Kong have been the following elements: low taxes, lax employment laws, absence of government debt, and free trade;

3. Investment in human capital. The second half of 1950s witnessed exponential growth in primary, secondary and tertiary schools and entities. As a result, by 1966, 99.8% of school-age children were attending primary school. In the meantime, free universal primary school was provided in 1971;

4. “One country, two systems”²⁰¹. The “Open Door Policy” announced by Deng Xiaoping (that was to serve as an example for Taiwan) at the end of 1978 became a harbinger of tremendous economic shift experienced by Hong Kong. Within the period 1978-1997 trade between Hong Kong and the PRC grew at an average rate of 28% per annum. Meanwhile, Hong Kong firms assumed that moving labor-intensive activities to the mainland would be essential since the PRC possessed comparative advantage in this realm. In its turn this branch (manufacturing) was rapidly superseded by the service sector (see the image).

Figure 2: GDP by Economic Activity at Current Prices

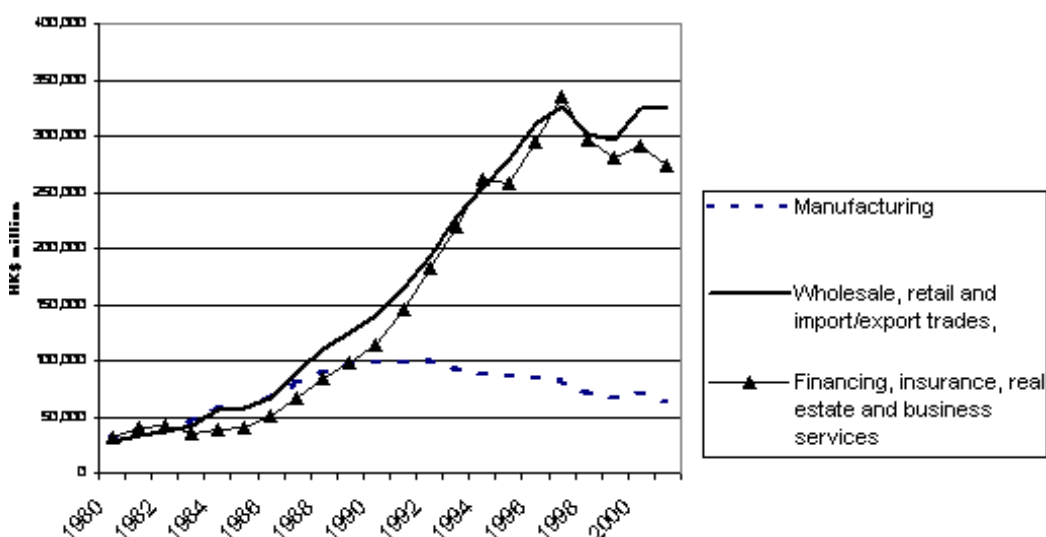


Figure 1. GDP by Economic Activity at Current Prices

²⁰¹ “One Country, Two Systems”, *China.org.cn.*, Available at: <http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/china/203730.htm>

In many parts of the world today governments are seeking to raise living standards through industrialization. To attain this goal, underdeveloped nations have indulged heavily in state planning and other forms of government intervention in economic life. Hong Kong's success in attracting foreign investment and achieving rapid development despite inherent disadvantages is striking testimony to the truth of liberal economic principles. Of the physical factors usually considered essential to industrial growth, nearly all are missing in Hong Kong. But Hong Kong has offered businessmen greater freedom from official interference than any other area in Asia. It has also provided a stable government and strong support for the free enterprise system. This policy has paid off handsomely by unleashing human potentials that in other countries have remained paralyzed by bureaucratic controls.²⁰²

4.4.3. Singapore

Reflecting upon prospective modes of development for Kaliningrad some researchers have come to think about the path of Singapore as an example.²⁰³

Nonetheless, deeper and more detailed analysis of transformations undergone by Singapore (that gained independence merely in the year 1965) provides solid explanation why this path should not be tackled seriously in respect to the westernmost region of the Russian Federation. In fact, aside from key geopolitical location there is very little in common between two entities. In this regard, it should be deemed worthwhile to briefly mention why did the tiny speck situated in the Southeast Asia managed to become of the most well-known "success stories" contemporary world has even known. It has been suggested that the key to the breathtaking success experienced by Singapore was largely based on the MPH: Meritocracy, Pragmatism and Honesty.²⁰⁴ On the other hand, it would

²⁰² Peter Thomas Bauer, "Hong Kong – A Success Story", *From the Monthly Letter of the First National City Bank of New York*, December 1959, Available at: <https://fee.org/articles/hong-kong-a-success-story/>

²⁰³ For instance, see: Sara Dutch, "Why Kaliningrad hasn't transformed into the "Singapore" of Russia", *Eastbook*, July 4, 2013. Available at: <http://www.eastbook.eu/en/blog/2013/07/04/why-kaliningrad-hasnt-transformed-into-the-singapore-of-russia/>.

²⁰⁴ For more information see: Kishore Mahbubani, "Why Singapore Is the World's Most Successful Society", *The Huffington Post*, August 4, 2015, Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/kishore-mahbubani/singapore-world-successful-society_b_7934988.html

not be a mistake to suggest that the dynamic transformations that led to the ascension of Singapore was placed on the following elements that had been prioritized by the local ruling elites:

1. Smart employment of geographic advantages;
2. Foreign trade, multiculturalism and foreign investments as a driving force of economic progress²⁰⁵;
3. Decisive war on corruption, bribery and illicit schemes;
4. Emphasis on efficiency and competition;
5. Education as a national priority (so-called “Big Bang” education reforms initiated in 1987²⁰⁶).

Taking into consideration scarcity of resources, physical separation from the mainland and the low level of financial means available at a time the westernmost Russian region should have adopted key ideas elaborated by elites of the “Asian Tiger”. On the other hand, in the beginning of its post-Soviet journey Kaliningrad had wielded much better a starting position in comparison with Singapore in 1965, which was however somehow tainted by both numerous plagues inherited from the Soviet regime with its ideological postulates and the lack of agreement between Moscow and European powers on Kaliningrad.

²⁰⁵ For more information see: “Why Singapore became an economic success”, *The Economist*, March 26, 2015, <http://www.economist.com/blogs/economist-explains/2015/03/economist-explains-23> .

²⁰⁶ Charlene Tan, “Educational developments and reforms in Singapore”, In Tan, C., Wong, B., Chua, J.S.M. & Kang, T. (Eds.), *Critical Perspectives on Education*, (Singapore: Prentice Hall, 2006), 133-150.

Chapter 5. Overcoming the new “Time of Troubles” (1991 – 2000): Kaliningrad adjusting to the changing(challenging) Russia

Disintegration of the Soviet Union brought about changes of enormous gravity and shook the Soviet society from top to bottom incurring profound changes that would soon rapidly outgrow into harsh challenges. It was obvious that even the most economically stable and well-developed parts of the former RSFSR were to encounter with multiple perils that encompassed virtually all the domains of public life ranging from economics, politics and culture to a broad range of other issues that any nascent state/political entity could face. The detrimental shock of changes was additionally aggravated by severe psychological trauma. If economic calamity could be brooked out by Russian population (as had happened before on numerous occasions) than the complete collapse of the picture/image that had for decades stipulated outlooks of several Soviet generations turned out to be a genuine tragedy.

Events that followed after the December 1991 did not only usher in new historical epoch and numerous prospects related to the demise of by than quite unpopular Communist ideology. The new reality with various perils, difficulties and social malaises from which the Soviet people had been artificially shielded by both tangible and invisible “curtain” would have an astonishing effect on the post-Soviet people. On the other hand, once the shackles of the past had been broken the “pond outlook” proved to be much more a deeply rooted and hardly breakable a phenomenon than one might have expected.

The impact of the collision of the Soviet society with the globalizing world was aggravated further by abrupt and ill-designed transition from planned to the market model causing genuine economic disaster leaving tens of millions of Soviet citizens destitute or on the brink of complete poverty. According to various estimates the newly emerged Russian Federation suffered GDP losses that exceeded those of the USSR in the aftermath of the horrific Second World War. Moreover, this deeply contrasted with growing polarization of the Russian society and the discontent of ordinary people accustomed during the Soviet period to certain semblance of “equality”. This gave a way to a quick change of moods when so-called “young reformers” and rather fuzzy “liberals” trying to fir Russia into some western patterns were culpable for the looming disaster.

It should also be stated that starting from *Perestroika* and the advent of “new political thinking”²⁰⁷ liberal political elites failed to recognize vitality of economic reforms being primarily concerned with rapid and complete demolition of the old system giving very little thought to the final outcome and potential impact on the Russian society and the statehood. In this regard one could recall Den Sao Ping (known as the father of the Chinese economic miracle) who ridiculed Gorbachev and expressed his deep condemnation with elevation of ideology over economics.²⁰⁸

Regretfully, those who stood in the forefront of transformations proved to be incapable of comprehending the lessons of previous reformist attempts. In the end string (and frequently blindfolded) drive toward market and twisted copy of western liberalism did not take into account the level of development of the Russian society, its moral readiness to brook enormous hardships in the pursuit of the goal and the lessons of the past. Ideologists of transformations were eager to merely copy (or shift) model of society from the west irrespectively of pre-conditions and historical path that accompanied its emergence and development.

For instance, such an outstanding social phenomenon as *Oblomovshina*²⁰⁹ that does in many respects vividly depict Russian national attitude to business and competition did not seem to have been taken into account. Furthermore, attempts to change Russian society via implementation of capitalist-oriented reforms by Peter Stolypin leveled against patriarchic *obshchina* and meant to promote individually oriented enterprises turned out to be a sound failure that was condemned not only by the majority of peasant community but intellectuals as well. Even significant monetary incentives and a prospect of independence from their former masters brought very little result and did not lead to emergence of the “*Russia that you will not recognize in twenty years*”²¹⁰.

²⁰⁷ For more information see: Матвей Полюнов, “«Новое политическое мышление»: возникновение и основные идеи”, In *Общество. Среда. Развитие (Terra Humana)*, № 1 / 2012. Available at: <http://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/novoe-politicheskoe-myshlenie-vozniknovenie-i-osnovnye-idei>.

²⁰⁸ Михаил Морозов, “Почему Дэн назвал Горби идиотом”, *Труд*, №, 18 Марта 2016. Available at: http://www.trud.ru/article/18-03-2016/1335413_pochemu_den_nazyval_gorbi_idiotom/print/.

²⁰⁹ Николай Александрович Добролюбов, “Что такое обломовщина?”, In: Н.А.Добролюбов. *Избранное*. (Саранск: Мордовское книжное издательство, 1974). For more information see: http://lib.ru/LITRA/DOBROLYUBOW/oblomov.txt_with-big-pictures.html.

²¹⁰ The full text available at: “Цитаты П.А. Столыпина о России, государстве, правительстве, обществе”, *Фонд изучения наследия П.А.Столыпина*, Available at: <http://www.stolypin.ru/mysli-o-rossii-tsitatnik/>.

Transformations initiated by the government in the later 1980s and early 1990s were neither anticipated by the majority of Russians (presented as an alternative form that could be chosen) nor alleviated by the government.

The overall dreary picture was further aggravated by yet another sinister development - reviving nationalist movements rapidly outgrowing into violent separatism, state of havoc and anarchy mixed with a sense of panic, distress and aloofness among wide layers of Russian society.

Damaged national pride also concealed another danger: growing popularity of the Russian Communist Party (KPRF) would be intercepted by “Russian Fascism” represented by the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) and its leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy²¹¹. During this murky period the issue of far-right radicalism in Russia seemed to have occupied prominent place and the ultimate destiny of this phenomenon was not at all clear²¹².

During this indeed fateful and one of the most arduous periods of contemporary Russian history it was Kaliningrad that turned out to be one of the most sensitive among other Russia regions. Aside from looming socio-economic and political perils stipulated by physical separation of the Oblast from the Russian proper it was the matter of “spiritual isolation” that in many ways affected local self-perception. Moreover, for Kaliningrad as perhaps the most “Soviet city” of the entire Soviet Union the aforementioned transition should be seen as challenge of utmost gravity.

In fact, rapidly altering milieu (both internal and supplemented with external compound) forced the new Russian government to act offhand without being able to use either plan “A” or plan “B” widely due to the fact that such option simply did not exist. To some extent this situation could be compared to the period within 1945 – 1965.

Therefore, it would be safe to suggest that contemporary stage of Kaliningrad history that started in 1991 was planned to a somewhat similar extent compared with the period when Königsberg Oblast was becoming a part of the Soviet Union. The general

²¹¹ Andreas Umland, “Vladimir Zhirinovskii in Russian Politics: Three Approaches to the Emergence of the Liberal-Democratic Party of Russia 1990-1993”, PhD thesis, Free University of Berlin, 1997.

²¹² Sergey Sukhankin, “Russia for Russians!” Ultrationalism and xenophobia in Russia: from marginality to state promoted philosophy”, CIDOB, *Notes Internacionals*, No 128, (Barcelona: September, 2015).

key characteristic was engrained in the lack of strategy that would have a profound impact on first steps of the Oblast.

This segment aims to discuss the following key **issues**:

1. Challenges related to the transformation of Kaliningrad Oblast after the collapse of the Soviet Union;
2. Alerting socio-economic and political milieu;
3. Aspects that stipulated transition of Kaliningrad from planned to market economy and its implications;
4. Correlation between internal and external political developments.

5.1. The breakdown of the USSR and its impact on Kaliningrad Oblast: economics, politics and identity crisis

In order to come closer to a proper understanding of processes that befall Kaliningrad and their impact on its relations with Moscow after 1991 it would be worthwhile to indicate and put into prospective several crucial aspects that in spite of the formal collapse of the Soviet Union and its ideology went on to persevere their bearing beyond this date.

First, being an artificially established “melting pot” that had absorbed population from various parts of the Soviet Union Kaliningrad would also have to reconcile with a new wave of migrants triggered by the breakup of the USSR. That consisted of three major groups: ethnic Russians (primarily from Central Asian republics), military personnel from the Soviet Armed forces station in the German Democratic Republic and ethnic non-Russians from the North Caucasus. Therefore, one would not be in error by suggesting that from demographic point of view the breakup of the Soviet Union would become an additional challenged to a relatively young local community.

Secondly, exorbitant tilt toward militarization that had disfigured the local economy placing security priorities well above civilian rendered this issue to be of utmost importance for the newly emerging Russian “island” even after the demise of Communism.

Thirdly, taking into consideration the complete collapse of the border established by the USSR as well as an economic model that stipulated pace, scope and mode of local development for decades the matter of changing internal as well as external environment became a matter of utmost concern.

Fourthly, decades of isolation and seclusion experienced by the region would now identify the problem in communication with the region`s closest neighbors - Poland and Lithuania that had clearly voiced their adherence to the Euro-Atlantic integration and dismissing (to some extent or another) previous experience.

Fifthly, in the light of the aforementioned events it was Moscow that was supposed to coordinate general trajectory of the development of Kaliningrad Oblast, which was to be exercised under a wholly new (and unknown before) environment. On the other hand, the Kremlin was indeed facing an extremely tough choice: whether to allow Kaliningrad to enjoy a greater extent of freedom (which would most certainly have resulted in growing external ties) gambling on whether the region would turn into a bridge of opportunity and the main means of cooperation with Russia`s European partners, or it would become yet another case of separatist sentiments and a new source of headache. On the other hand, Moscow could adopt more hawkish attitude providing a stiff framework and regulating activities of the local elites in each and every detail, which meant a necessity to provide for Kaliningrad for an indefinite period of time.

Sixthly, this being said another instrumental aspect needs to be underscored. Aside from the fact that those were the key regional players and the Russian Federation that were to become the main forces that were responsible for the future of Kaliningrad, the local population - its perception of its own role, destiny and historical mission – that was to have a say and, in many ways, determine development and the fate of their motherland.

5.1.1 Economic collapse, the “Black Hole of Europe” and implications for the image of Kaliningrad

Russian historical experience of the second half of the nineteenth and the twentieth century maintains a steady connection between economic predicaments and social unrest.

The February Revolution (1917) should be seen as a living embodiment of this thesis, where a relatively minor incident led toward transformation of indeed a historic scope and unprecedented gravity.

From its side Kaliningrad that had been fully integrated into the Soviet economic model appeared to be particularly susceptible to internal and external shocks. Prior to providing deeper analysis of economic calamity brought by the year 1991 and its repercussions for Kaliningrad, it would not be superfluous to precisely identify the type of the region in question in order to understand the mode of behavior toward it.

Theoretical discourse distinct two main types of regions depending on the model of economic performance²¹³:

- ***Extrovert*** regions - are characterized by higher opportunities of export, which stipulates the fact that foreign trade claims more autonomy and independence in actions of these territorial entities. It is also frequently stated that these regions should be perceived as the “winners” and “forward-looking” regions²¹⁴. In order to provide broader understanding of the phenomenon it would be adequate to mention Malmoe and Copenhagen (Denmark) situated in the Baltic Sea Rim as best examples of this regional type.

- ***Introvert*** regions – this type is more prone to rely on federal center in search for subsidies and support being usually unaccustomed to more pro-active position or external integration/cooperation. This type of region is also said to be more prone toward relying on the military-industrial complex.²¹⁵

Reflecting upon Kaliningrad Oblast as a region, it would not be a mistake to reconcile with the fact that due to a number of reasons (ranging from geopolitics to history) and a protracted period of the Soviet economic model intact the region had acquired the most distinctive features of an “introvert” entity. A synergy between external

²¹³ For more information see: V. Shlapentokh, R. Levita and M. Loiberg, *From submission to rebellion: the provinces versus the centre in Russia*, (Boulder Colorado: Westview Press, 1998), 109 – 110.

²¹⁴ For more information see: Janerik Gidlund and Magnus Jerneck (Eds.), *Local and regional governance in Europe: Evidence from Nordic Regions*, (Northampton, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2000), 205.

²¹⁵ Olga Bain, *University Autonomy in Russian Federation since Perestroika*, (New York and London: Routledge Falmer, 2003), 67.

factors and local particularities pertaining to Kaliningrad had to a significant extent predetermined its patterns of development as an identified type of a region. On the other hand, numerous historically established aspects made Kaliningrad to rely heavily on Moscow, whereby partly eliminating incentive from below leading toward social infantilism that would be artificially boosted by various compensatory schemes. Following this line of thinking it would not be superfluous to suggest that such essential (in terms of market economy) qualities as creativity and competitiveness were by and large excluded from the dictionary of local elites and ordinary citizens. In this respect Kaliningrad had been less prepared to shocks that came about with the collapse of the Soviet economic model and political architecture. At the same time the Baltic States and Poland (that had clearly requested for being defined as European states) looked forward to breaking hindrances imposed by previous regime.

As it stems from brief economic analysis of Kaliningrad conducted in the previous chapter, until 1991 the compensatory mechanism kept Kaliningrad afloat and even secured some sort of economic growth, worked fairly well which was stipulated by the ability of the Soviet Union to provide required amounts of financial support earmarked for specific branches of regional economy.²¹⁶ From another side, Kaliningrad as a part of the huge economic machine erected by the USSR was absolved from the liability of paying various taxes and duties due to its economical interrelation with the rest of RSFSR via the territory of Poland (member of the COMECON) and the Baltic States (the Soviet republics). Such a mode of operation ensured constant availability of strategic raw materials and other vital resources simultaneously allowing goods produced in Kaliningrad Oblast to easily appear in the Russian proper.

Nonetheless, once the Soviet economy encountered with hardships caused by rapid decrease in oil prices (in particular in 1980s as a response to the outbreak of the Afghan war) the local economy hit the rocks and economic development practically came to an end.

The center could have tried providing more opportunities (via slackening the grip over the freedom of external ties) for the Oblast to start using its unique geopolitical

²¹⁶ Source: ГАКО: Волокитин Ю. И., “История Калининградской области - О создании и развитии государственного страхования в Калининградской области в 1946-1990 годах”, *Государственный Архив Калининградской Области* 15.07.2013. For more information see: <http://gako.name/mainsite/kaliningradarchives/-9/676-2013-07-15-11-09-35?start=5>.

position as a means of achieving economic maturity and thereby providing more room for maneuver. However, taking into account already existing tilt of Kaliningrad towards being an *introvert* region it could not get easily used to the new environment and was unlikely to have embraced such opportunity even if it had been explored. Moreover, decomposition of the old model brought to the light new reality under which Kaliningrad faced competition not only from external actors but also with other Russian regions in terms of attraction of the foreign capital. On the other hand, having encountered with a wave of separatism and secessionist movements (that actually started to be visible in the late 1980s) the Kremlin had to divert huge resources in order to appease its disturbed subjects leaving inadequate level of financial support for Kaliningrad.

More importantly however was the inevitability of a tough competition between Kaliningrad and its neighbors that had explicitly declared their determination to join the EU in the foreseeable future. Independence of Poland and the Baltic States not only ushered in an intensive lap of competition for the Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) yet underlined the fact that key EU players would be willing to help these actors due to the commonality of destiny and staunch anti-Communist sentiments (which was gladly embraced by NATO). Therefore, in order to successfully sustain and subsequently adjust to competition on both domestic and external fronts a specific approach applicable to Kaliningrad was to have been worked out.

Naturally, Moscow should have played the key role in it primarily due to scarcity of local resources and arrival of competition from abroad. Moreover, this corollary stemmed from the fact that key European powers had no real intention in meddling in Russian internal affairs, where Kaliningrad was most certainly perceived in this capacity. However, neither did the Kremlin have adequate resources nor did it wield a though knowledge of the local environment to have been able to first accurately identify and subsequently effectively forestall challenges to be faced by the region.

In the book written in the year 2000 by Kaliningrad economists Khlopeckii and Fedorov²¹⁷ who discussed essence of economic performance of the Oblast in the first decade after collapse of the Soviet Union it was argued that within the period 1990 - 1999 the local economy experienced a shock by far outweighing the Russian average. For

²¹⁷ А.П. Хлопецкий, Г.М. Федоров, *Калининградская область: регион сотрудничества*, (Калининград: Янтар. сказ, 2000).

instance, within this interim decline in industrial production had reached 70% (compared to 50% in Russia), whereas agricultural sector suffered 55% decline (compared to 43% in the mainland). In this juncture, particularly curious seemed to be the fact that the services sector was doing better than the rest of economic domains. Yet one should not be overwhelmed since it was a delusive growth primarily stipulated by rapid decline in other branches of economy.

Table 2.3. The trade balance of the oblast within the period 1992-2000 (in \$ millions)²¹⁸:

Year	Export	Import	Turnover	Trade balance
1992	91.4	54.0	145.4	+37.4
1993	126.0	76.0	202.0	+50.0
1994	234.0	146.0	380.0	+88.0
1995	459.4	585.1	1044,5	-125,7
1996	480,8	1030,0	1510,8	-549,2
1997	457,7	1285,8	743,5	-828,1
1998	429,3	1187,9	1617,2	-758,6
1999	383,6	824,1	1207,7	-440,5
2000	519,0	884,2	1403,2	-365,2

Interestingly enough but the breakdown of largely unproductive and ineffective model of economic development established prior to the year 1991 caused very different reaction among local residents from what might have been expected. The liberal reforms were severely blamed for having caused hardships rather than ineffectiveness of antecedent economic model and necessity to come to terms with changing realities²¹⁹.

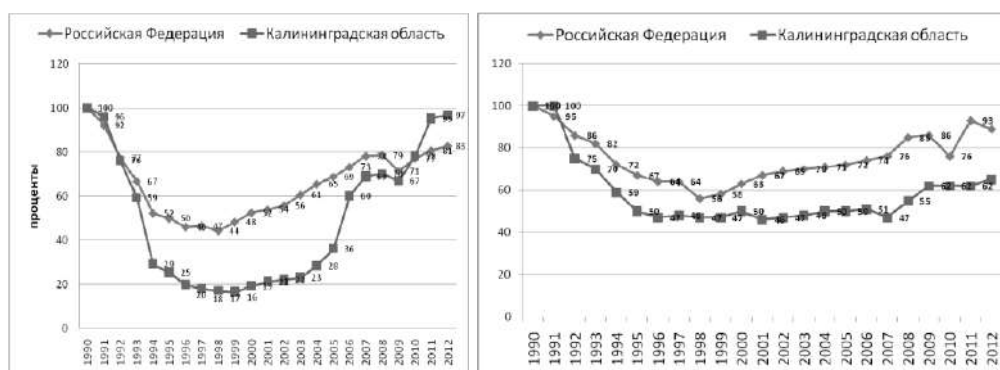
²¹⁸ Юрий Зверев. “Внешняя торговля Калининградской Области: основные тенденции”, In *Вестник Российского государственного университета им. И. Канта*, Вып. 3, (Калининград: 2009), 70 - 71.

²¹⁹ Кофанова Е. Н (Ed.), “Двадцать лет реформ глазами россиян (опыт многолетних социологических замеров)”, *Институт Социологии РАН*, (Москва, 2011).

The economic calamity experienced by Kaliningrad Oblast led to the fact that by the year 1999 almost 35% of firms located in Kaliningrad Oblast had been marked as unprofitable. By the year 1998 Kaliningrad had reached level of Moscow and Saint Petersburg by the overall number of small and middle entrepreneurs (in proportionate terms), which was still incomparable with Poland and Lithuania. On the other hand, financial collapse that occurred in the year 1998 nullified that quite positive trend, returning Kaliningrad back to stagnation.²²⁰

From figure №1 (industrial production) and figure №2 (agriculture) it is easily deducible that the impact of financial crisis for Kaliningrad was significantly much deeper than for the Russian Federation.²²¹

Figure 2. Industrial production and agriculture (comparative analysis of growth rates in Kaliningrad and Russia)



Systematizing economic development of post-Soviet Kaliningrad within first decade of its development, it would be adequate to distinct three major steps that reflect key developments and tendencies within this domain.

²²⁰ О. Бугрова, “Проблемы малого и среднего бизнеса в Калининградской Области”, Академия менеджмента и рынка Институт предпринимательства и инвестиций, (Москва, 2001).

²²¹ К. Гимбицкий, А. Кузнецова, Г. Фёдоров, “Развитие экономики Калининградской Области: новый этап реструктуризации”, In *Балтийский регион*, 2014. № 1 (19), Балтийский федеральный университет им. И. Канта, (Калининград, 2014), 57—58.

Stage 1 (1992-1994). The aforementioned statistical data suggest that this period was the only one within two post-Soviet decades when the local trade balance maintained positive figures. Naturally, this tendency must have stemmed from the fact that the heavy industry was still active and economic ties had yet to be broken completely.

Stage 2 (1995 - 1997). This period was distinct for skyrocketing of the import operations (approximately, 400.5% in comparison to the previous year). On the other hand, such factors as FEZ “Amber” and later implementation of Special Economic Zone (1996) lead to transformation of Kaliningrad into a some sort of “free gates” for transportation of goods to the Russian internal market.

Stage 3 (1998 - 2000). This period bore a visible footprint of severe economic crisis that occurred in the year 1998, which shuttered Russian economic architecture and led to the default. Kaliningrad Oblast was primarily affected by drastic devaluation of Russian national currency, which hindered locally produced/acquired from abroad goods from entering the Russian internal market. Incidentally, this episode unequivocally reflected brittleness of the local economy that was based on two major pillars: re-exporting of goods to the mainland and economic support from the side of Moscow (not necessarily in monetary forms).

On the other hand, this gruesome experience resulted in (from someone`s vantage point distorted) certain diversification of local economy and partial shift from heavy industry (which held dominant positions during the Soviet period) toward small and medium size enterprises. For instance, in addition to growth in the domain of services (though this point has to some extent been contested before) the Oblast experienced growth in foreign tourists, primarily German (yet the flow of Russian tourists was on the decline), which in case proper conclusions were to be drawn could have led to development of tourist sites and related infrastructure. Similarly, re-orientation from fishery and other industries resulted in mushrooming of electrical and car industries²²².

²²² Федоров Г. М., “Калининградская дилемма: «коридор развития» или двойная периферия? Геополитический фактор развития российского эксклава на Балтике”, In *Балтийский регион*, 2010. № 2, Балтийский федеральный университет им. И. Канта, (Калининград, 2010), 5—15.

Having described a broad variety of economic problems that would later take various shapes and transcend to other dimensions of public life it would be adequate to summarize the main reasons and roots of this economic distress:

1. The legacy of Soviet economic model that put a huge emphasis on militarization and development of heavy industry experienced a major breakdown caused by both internal and external factors. The former could be explained by its ineffectiveness and rapidly changing milieu to which its stiff frameworks could not adjust. The latter factors were primarily related to emergence of new sovereign neighbors such as Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia with interests and agendas of their own.

2. The local environmental problems seemed to have posed several major problems. Not only did they threaten the local biosphere but the entire Baltic Sea basin whereby making Kaliningrad the second largest polluter in the Baltic Sea basin²²³ (the first one was St. Petersburg). Environmental problems also appeared to be a huge disadvantage for the remnants of local manufacture and technology whose norms that did not comply with European norms and standards. On the other hand, lack of clean water negatively affected health of the local residents (which was aggravated with scarcity of natural iodine and fluorine). The main result of malfeasant Soviet attitude towards environmental matters was that by the beginning of new millennium Kaliningrad did not have at its disposal neither sewage treatment nor pure drinking water in the required amounts²²⁴.

3. Another vital issue was prompt paralysis and practical demise of fishery industry. It should be accentuated that the local oceanic fleet (and related branches) as a central pillar of local economy was hit particularly hard within the period 1991 – 2000. It suffered changing oil prices and was obviously not ready to compete with countries of the Baltic Sea basin with well-developed fishery capabilities supplemented by financial stimuli

²²³ For more information see: Elisabeth Braw, “Baltic Sea States Aghast At Russian Exclave's Sewage Dumping”, Reported in *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, June 04, 2015. Available at: <http://www.rferl.org/content/kaliningrad-baltic-sea-sewage/27053241.html>.

²²⁴ Helena Kropinova, “Environmental Issues of the Kaliningrad Region.” In Pertti Joenimmi and Jan Prawitz (Eds.), *Kaliningrad: The European Amber Region*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), 96–106.

from the EU. With departure of the Soviet Union that could protect local fishery with huge financial injections from central budget the local industry could not stay afloat on its own. On the other hand, economic ties with former members of the Communist Camp had been broken and fish derived by local producers could find no destination, whereas operation of local fleet became unprofitable. These problems resulted in an almost fourfold decrease in a number of local trawlers.²²⁵

4. As it has already been mentioned, the amber industry that occupied tangible share of overall manufacture output of the Oblast prior to the year 1991 experienced extremely difficult times. Since it remained state's monopoly, it could not count on proper financial support or any constructive programme for further development that is why it could not perform effectively due to a huge debt and appalling rates of smuggling. So-called "black diggers"²²⁶ and organized criminal groups found it extremely profitable to smuggle amber to adjacent states. Speaking in similar terms, it should be noted that international amber industry is primarily based on cooperation between small and medium size enterprises, whereas Kaliningrad opted for preservation of the Soviet model (concentration of the main operations regarding amber within the sole actor – the "Yantar Kombinat"). Moreover, the old temples of manufacture (quite fossilize) were not adjusted to the new designer trends. Taken together those factors led to a catastrophic decrease in Russian participation on the international amber market (from 70% in the year 1990 to just 15% in 2000²²⁷).

5. The result of poorly planned and equally ill-organized activities by both local and central Ministries of Agriculture, agricultural sector suffered huge losses and could put no competition to Polish and Lithuanian agricultural production. While being integrated into the Soviet economy, Kaliningrad specialized on large-scale dairy production, which disregarded grain production aggravated by complete disrespect to implementation in

²²⁵ Oldberg (2001), 31.

²²⁶ Римма Ахмирова, "Кто и как разворовывает уникальное богатство России?", Reported in *Собеседник.ru*, 31.08.2012. Available at: <http://sobesednik.ru/incident/20120831-kto-i-kak-razvorovyvaet-unikalnoe-bogatstvo-rossii>.

²²⁷ Michael Anz, "An Introduction to the Concept of Industrial Districts and Kaliningrad Reality", In H.H. Мартынюк (Ed.), *Калининградская область в окружении ЕС: роль региона в общеевропейской интеграции, Материалы международной конференции "Европа и Россия: границы, которые объединяют"*, (Калининград: Изд-во КГУ, Kaliningrad, 2003), 226-235.

agriculture new technologic wonders, clearing and draining technologies. Similarly, institution of private farming had not had previous background, was clearly underdeveloped and could not possibly have counted on sufficient financial support.

6. Tourist industry was counted on by various political and economic groups as a would-be profitable branch of the local economy – it was relatively well-developed area prior to the disintegration of the Soviet Union. However, events that ensued after the year 1991 clearly depicted that that domain had been artificially supported from the center with attracting only Soviet tourists (officially Kaliningrad Oblast was closed for foreigners until the year 1991²²⁸). In this contest, Poland and Lithuania would easily win competition with Kaliningrad via developing infrastructure and recreation facilities attracting huge financial means into their respective economies- even residents of Kaliningrad preferred spending their weekends and vacations in Polish and Lithuanian resorts. Moreover, it ought to be mentioned that tourism as a branch of local economy made its first steps within the period 2000 – 2003, when the number of hotels to be discovered in Kaliningrad reached 17.²²⁹

7. Breakdown of USSR exposed numerous problems and deficiencies that Kaliningrad authorities were to deal with in a very rapid manner. One of them – inadequate infrastructure that hindered goods shipment via the Oblast, whereby crippling its transportation capabilities. Land infrastructure (primarily roads and highways) was inadequate even compared to Poland and Lithuania that were significantly lagging behind more developed European countries. Similarly, water infrastructure (the sea channel's depth, width and one-way traffic capabilities) could not be used for large-scale transportations. Taking into account conspicuous feebleness of civilian aviation and the fact that Kaliningrad had the only link with Europe via SAS Airline Company, air transportation was also in embryonic state.

²²⁸ For more information see: ГАКО: М. Клемешева, Е. Митина, “Тема туризма в Калининградской Области в современной научной и учебной литературе”, Available at: <http://www.gako.name/index.php?publ=243&razd=213>.

²²⁹ В. С. Корнеев, В. В. Пштыка, “Емкость калининградского рынка гостиничных услуг”, In *Вестник Балтийского федерального университета им. И. Канта*, 2011, Вып. 9, Балтийский федеральный университет им. И. Канта, (Калининград, 2011), 162—168.

5.1.2. From FEZ “Yantar” to SEZ (1996): the essence, mechanism and results

It is said that first ideas regarding creation of Special Economic Zone (SEZ) on the territory of Kaliningrad Oblast was conceived in Russian intellectual community in the year 1988 by V. M. Khodachek, who presumed that “special economic zones” should be established in the region covering Yantarny – Primorsk and Pionersky – Zelenogradsk areas²³⁰. This project put forth accomplishment of the following goals:

1. Granting local authorities more rights and freedoms in establishing external contacts in addition to more autonomous actions in the domain of identification of the programme pertaining to socio-economic development of the region;
2. Alleviating of consequences of economic crisis and ensuring sustainable growth on the basis of attraction of FDI;

The collapse of the Soviet Union brought about crucial changes that reverberated in Kaliningrad with greater power than in many other Russian regions. Severe consequences of economic crisis along with the outbreak of political strife in the Kremlin would bring about visible changes for Kaliningrad Oblast.

On September 25, 1991 the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR with a decree № 497 proclaimed emergence of the *Free Economic Zone (FEZ) “Yantar”*²³¹. By establishing this legal entity Moscow sought to achieve stabilization also relying on previous patterns of economic model maintained during the Soviet period. Aside from a number of grave flaws embedded in the aforementioned model, it ought to be acknowledged that the region did have in its possession unfreezing ports and relatively

²³⁰ Клемешев А.П., Люсейр П., Федоров Г.М., Управление региональным развитием, Учебно-методическое пособие, In Г.М. Федорова (Ed.), (Калининград: Борнхольм, 1999), 93.

²³¹ Source: “О Первоочередных мерах по развитию свободных экономических зон в Калининградской и Читинской областях,” *Совет Министров РСФСР*, Постановление от 25 сентября 1991 г. N 497. Available at: <http://minprom.gov39.ru/oez/history.php>.

well-developed transportation network. Ideally, this “island” was supposed to serve as a bridge and a linkage (at this point in economic sense) between European countries and the Russian Federation. For Russia whose ruling elites a time would be dominated by Euro-Atlantic sentiments emergence of such an “island” engrained in Europe seemed to be an advantage, where transition from highly centralized economy toward market could have been tested. Furthermore, a forfeiture of ports on the Baltic and the Ukraine Kaliningrad`s role and meaning must have grown exponentially.

The main pillars that could have ensured sustainable economic growth were the following ones:

1. Industrial modernization (without extreme shifts in either direction);
2. Improvement of infrastructure;
3. Utilizing recreational potential;
4. Upgrading managerial skills and effective employment of human capital;
5. Achieving solid economic growth in both micro and macro levels.

Without going into the details of FEZ functioning, one should be able to acknowledge that from the very beginning its demonstrated visible limitations, which were largely amplified by inadequate level of financial investments: within the initial period Kaliningrad received no more than 3% of the promised means. Secondly, taking into account practical absence of experience in working with SEZ/FEZ the law covered the entire territory of Kaliningrad Oblast, which included various social groups that simultaneously were residents of the area (such as children, military personnel, social workers and many other groups). Such unclear formula put forth numerous questions of which the central one was: what kind of legislation was the Oblast subjected to and how financial means were to be distributed between various branches?

Furthermore, economic reforms initiated in Poland and Lithuania could have been used as a template for the newly emerged Kaliningrad FEZ, where the key component toward success would be rapidity in reforms. Regretfully, this would become the major drawback, since the progress was sluggish and rather weak. This was based on a number

of both objective and subjective reasons, where the fear of separatism (both tangible and imaginary) would intertwine with general lack of resources stipulated by severe economic crisis faced by the state. On the other hand, unfavorable external image of Kaliningrad could hardly be a reason for foreign investors to get interested in initiation of economic activities (supplemented by huge financial injections) in Kaliningrad whose total area is close to 15.000 square kilometers. This must also have had to do with frequently populist approach and inconsistency in implementation of concrete steps. Most certainly, such a tendency served as a discouraging element for both domestic and external investors. Incidentally, as early as December 7, 1993 in a Presidential decree entitled „About Kaliningrad Oblast”²³² one will not be able to find a single reference to the FEZ Yantar, whereas declared subsidies were allocated to the exclave. This clearly exposed generally low level of awareness and understanding of what FEZ/SEZ actually is and how it should be used properly.

As a result, the idea of FEZ in Kaliningrad did not materialize rendering romantic projects identified with its future void. On the other hand, it became conspicuous that Moscow was not ready to follow any external experience (hypothetical Chinese example in respect to Hong Kong would be seen as the most appropriate option in this juncture) even in spite of sound declarations. As a response to changing political situation in Russia, in January 1996 B. Yeltsin signed a Federal decree “About Special Economic Zone in Kaliningrad Oblast”²³³. Even though the expert community claims that the SEZ project largely replicated patterns established in Malta, the Republic of Ireland, Island Man (the UK), Luxemburg and the Aland Islands (Finland) one should primarily take into close account genuine reasons (to be discussed later on) of this legislation.

Theoretically, the SEZ was based on the following principles that were supposed to galvanize interest from would-be external investors:

1. Goods turned out on the territory of the SEZ would be exempted from custom duties (also non-tariff regulations were not to be used in this regard as well);

²³² For more information see: Указ Президента РФ от 07.12.1993 N 2117 (ред. от 25.02.2003) "О Калининградской области". Available at: http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_23356/.

²³³ For more information see: Федеральный закон от 22.01.1996 N 13-ФЗ (ред. от 10.01.2006) "Об Особой экономической зоне в Калининградской области", Available at: http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_9010/.

2. Goods imported by SEZ were to be exempted from various import duties, whereas only some groups of items could be subjected to quota-based regulations and restrictions;
3. Those goods that are imported from other countries by SEZ to be later exported to other foreign countries, custom duties were not to be charged.

Speaking about the key principles that stipulated development of the SEZ it would be worthwhile to indicate the following ones:

1. Effective establishment and enactment of the free trade zone (with particular emphasis on the local ports);
2. Creation of Tecknoparks on the basis of already existing sites (for instance “Kvartz”);
3. Creation of small business zones (particularly in Kaliningrad);
4. “Tax heavens” as a powerful appeal to the external investors.

Furthermore, particular attention should be paid to the fact that goods were branded as „made in SEZ” if the cumulative additional compound was no less than 30% (for the majority of items), whereas for so-called value-added products the share was not to be less than 15%. In addition, custom code/classification of the final product was to be changed according to the Russian Custom Code.

As it has been noted initially the reform did yield positive results primarily in the domain of trade relations, whereby creating a steady image of growing economic openness. Nonetheless, one of the most striking limitations was embedded in the fact that the oblast practically lost any ability to produce its own goods being swamped under the torrent of foreign (cheaper and better quality) goods, staple products and other items. The answer should be look for in the Soviet period and the artificial isolation of the oblast from the outer world: as it turned out Kaliningrad was simply not ready to withstand external competition being reduced to the role of mere “outlet” for foreign goods to the mainland. This largely “imaginary growth” would be later damaged with particular severity during the 1998 economic crisis, which revealed dare limitations in the established economic model. On the other hand, it would not be a mistake that consequences of SEZ are evident event much later (in 2010): the local export is primarily

based on re-exporting of raw materials, European goods and various semi-finished goods. Moreover, foreign capital did not seem to become interested in investment in Kaliningrad. This is easily discernible from the following comparison: within the period 1993 – 1996 population of Kaliningrad Oblast constituted 0.6% of the overall population, whereas the share of FDI it accounted for was equal to 0.5% of the overall amount. In practical terms this means that the SEZ whose one of the main goals was attraction of the foreign capital actually lagged behind the Russian average. Moreover, in 1997 the overall amount of investments plummeted by half in comparison with the previous year. The situation somehow improved in 1998, though the nature of increasing investment activities remained rather dubious as well as the actual investors.²³⁴

Those facts clearly state that the main goals and hopes invested in the mechanism of SEZ either did not materialize or worked out not in the way it had been hoped. This may be explained by a number of reasons:

1. Kaliningrad Oblast remained an integral part of the Russian Federation, which meant that negative processes experienced by the mainland would be felt in the westernmost region as well;
2. Deep confrontation between liberal and reform-oriented part of the local community with conservative and quite retrograde part bereft Kaliningrad elites from mobilization and establishment of common position on most crucial aspects;
3. Global experience of SEZ and its mechanisms had not been studied properly. In case of Kaliningrad SEZ was understood as a vehicle meant to compensate for allegedly

²³⁴ More on that: Sergey Sukhankin, “Kaliningrad: Russia’s stagnant enclave”, *The European Council on Foreign Relations*, Wider Europe Forum, March 31, 2016. Available at: http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_kaliningrad_russias_stagnant_enclave_6052.

harmful geographical/geopolitical location, whereas experienced accumulated globally suggests that SEZ should be understood as an element of national policy;

4. The idea of SEZ primarily lacked clear identification of goals, prioritized branches and the markets it would tackle;

5. Inadequate promotion campaign. In globalizing world promotion has become one of the most essential elements of the overall success. Both central and local actors failed to comprehend this postulated (which might have been also caused by general lack of financial resources available), which was reflected by inadequate level of information about Kaliningrad. Furthermore, weak infrastructure (in comparison with neighboring countries), high level of corruption and the overall reputation of Kaliningrad most certainly did not lead toward growing interest.

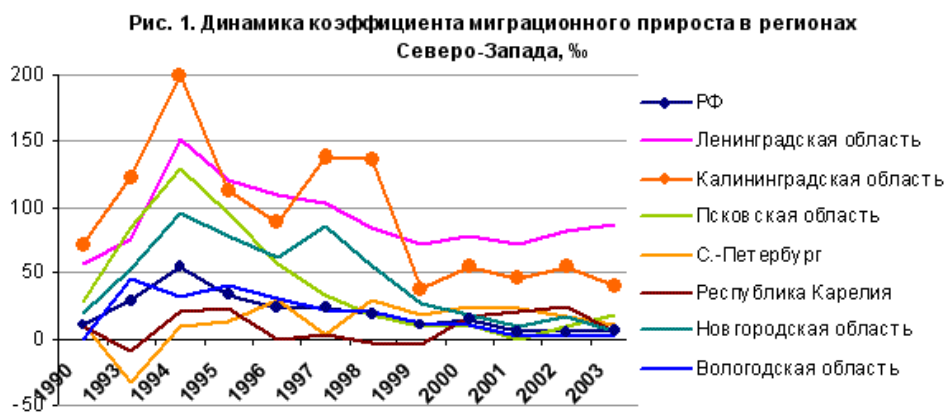
Moreover, the fact that Kaliningrad had been closed from external world for several decades would be further aggravated by a number of severe social malaises (both real and artificially inflated) the region was destined to experience within the first post-Soviet decade.

5.1.3 Social malaises (1991 - 2000)

In addition to stagnating economics the impact of the collapse heavily affected practically all other vital spheres of public life. For example, the life span had decreased dramatically: not also did this tendency stem from rising mortality (due to the decreasing level of public healthcare system) and falling natural reproduction rates, yet also due to the fact that illegal emigration from the Oblast rose. Nonetheless, depopulation in

Kaliningrad was not as tremendous as in the Center and North Western parts of the Russian Federation²³⁵.

Figure 3. Dynamic of population growth in Russia's North-West (in %)

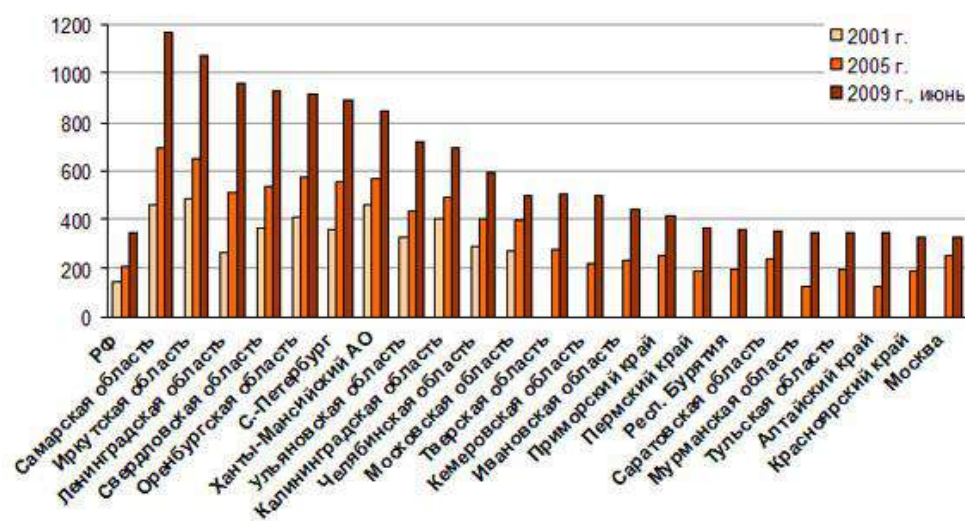


On the other hand, first years of the “new Russia” brought about shock and despair for ordinary Kaliningraders, since the region was destined to encounter with developments that (even if present during the period of the late USSR) were carefully concealed by the Soviet regime and propaganda. The epidemics of HIV, skyrocketing of drug trafficking, tuberculosis and prostitution would become a distinctive feature of post-Soviet Kaliningrad within first decade after the year 1991²³⁶.

²³⁵ Source: “Калининградская область”, *Независимый Институт социальной политики*, Available at: <http://atlas.socpol.ru/portraits/kalgr.shtml>.

²³⁶ Sergey Sukhankin, “Kaliningrad in the “Mirror World”: from Soviet “Bastion” to Russian “Fortress”, In *Notes Internacionals*, No 151, CIDOB, (Barcelona: June, 2016). Available at: http://www.cidob.org/en/publications/publication_series/notes_internacionals/n1_151/kaliningrad_in_the_mirror_world_from_soviet_bastion_to_russian_fortress.

Figure 4. The number of cases of HIV/AIDS cases in selected Russian regions 2001-2009



Especially hard that experience was for the first and second generations of settlers who grew up in the Soviet Union, when Kaliningrad was an artificially isolated “island”. It would not be a mistake to presume that for this segment of the local society it was particularly difficult to get used and adjust to rapidly changing realities. Numerous social and economic problems resulted in growing alcoholism (causing a great deal of lethal accidents) and very high male mortality rates²³⁷. Taking into account overall lower number of men compared to women (stipulated by both consequences of the WW2 and natural factors), it would not be an exaggeration to claim that this trend resulted in the local labor market being bereaved of qualified workers and specialists (especially taking into account its general scarcity and insufficient numbers).

Austere consequences of ill-planned transition to the market system resulted in the fact that the moral basics developed and broadly encouraged under the Communist ideology became practically void and obsolete. So-called “roaring 90s”²³⁸ produced diametrically opposing ideals, norms and values. For instance, pertinence to criminal circles or smugglers as well as general ability to “make easy money” without a necessity of spending long hours working full time job for meager financial incentives would soon

²³⁷ Никита Мкртчян, “Население города Калининграда на фоне области, страны, Балтийского региона”, In *Часть раздела “Стратегии развития города Калининграда”, подготовленного ЦСИ ПФО в 2007-2008 гг.*, Retrieved from: *Демоскоп weekly*, № 489 – 490, December 5 – 18, 2011. Available at: <http://demoscope.ru/weekly/2011/0489/analit05.php>.

²³⁸ Владимир Милов, “Лихолетье до реформ”, Retrieved from: *Газета.ru*, 14.01.2008, For more information see: <http://www.gazeta.ru/column/milov/2540383.shtml>.

become a new yardstick of achievement and the level of social status. Naturally, that sent a wrong message for younger generation, breaking the sense of impunity and exposing society to growing criminalization²³⁹. This was additionally facilitated by the mass culture, where images depicted in “Intergirl” and other pieces of mass culture would soon become widespread and publically acceptable reality.

Expanding social gap, inequality and subsiding trust in the government found their reflection in swift degradation of public morals and further dilapidation of traditional norms and values. It should also be kept in mind that the first decade of the newly born Russia went under the sign of the first war in Chechnya (1994 – 1996) that became a genuine shock, despair, aloofness and profound transformations experienced by the Russian society²⁴⁰.

In this regard, it would be worthwhile to underscore that that within the period 1991 - 2000 approximately 50 to 60% of local GDP in Kaliningrad Oblast came from illegal activities²⁴¹. Both local and external experts underscore the issue of smuggling that did at certain point became a byword for Kaliningrad in Europe. This type of activities turned out to be a proven source of rapid accretion of wealth and achievement of higher social status in the local social hierarchy. Naturally, emergence and rapid proliferation of this phenomenon damaged regional reputation and resulted in flourishing of the “black market” simultaneously leading to development of numerous social maladies.

Interestingly enough, yet it was military personnel that occupied leading positions in illicit smuggling (raw materials, munitions and food staff) activities. Second most important item to be smuggled from Kaliningrad was its spectacular amber resources: having at its disposal almost 97% of the world amber the local producers found themselves to be out of raw material that was being illegally transported to Poland, the

²³⁹ “Общественное сознание в 90-е годы: основные тенденции развития”, In Н.В. Шишовой (Ed.), *История и культурология, Учебное пособие для студентов вузов, Издание второе, переработанное и дополненное, Глава 15. Россия В 90-е годы*, (Москва: Логос, 2000), For more information see: <http://www.bibliotekar.ru/culturologia/78.htm> .

²⁴⁰ For more information see: Sergey Sukhankin, “The “Caucasus Knot”: a new lap of violence”, In *International Catalan Institute for Peace, Working Paper No. 2014/5*, (Barcelona, November 2014).

²⁴¹ “The EU and Kaliningrad”, *Commission of the European Communities*, (Brussels: European Union, 2001), 14–15.

Baltic States, China and the UAE²⁴² who would enjoy huge financial benefits by trading manufactured amber items. Whereas Kaliningrad's role would be reduced to a mere supplier of raw materials for Poland, Lithuania, Germany and even China.

As a result of above-mentioned activities Kaliningrad would soon become perhaps the largest smuggling outlet in the entire Baltic Sea region: alcohol and tobacco products were flowing to the neighboring European countries, whereas cars were the main commodity to be smuggled to the Russian mainland. For example, within the aforementioned period the number of cars officially registered in Kaliningrad became the highest in the entire Russian Federation. Accessing main types of smuggling in Kaliningrad Paul Holtom indicated the following major groups engaged in this activity²⁴³:

1. Primitive entrepreneurs

- «Professionals who are involved in shuttle trading to supplement their income»;

- «Professional shuttle-traders or 'ants'».

2. Smugglers – those who have make their profits from differences in prices and demands across the border and rely upon a network of informal relations that they have developed

3. Traffickers

In effect, first post-Communist decade of Kaliningrad history went under the sign of “shadow economy” that superseded planned Communist economy, whereby setting

²⁴² Ольга Першина, “Калининградский янтарь нелегально уходит тоннами за рубеж - в Польшу, Литву, Китай, ОАЭ”, Retrieved from: *Baltinfo*, October 22, 2009. Available at: <http://www.baltinfo.ru/2009/10/22/Kaliningradskii-yan-tar-nelegalno-ukhodit-tonnami-za-rubezh-111082>.

²⁴³ Paul Holtom, “Shuttle Trade and New Border Regimes”, In Н.Н. Мартынюк (Ed.), *Калининградская область в окружении ЕС: роль региона в общеевропейской интеграции, Материалы международной конференции “Европа и Россия: границы, которые объединяют”*, (Калининград: Изд-во КГУ, Kaliningrad, 2003), 218 – 225.

new rules and values and introducing very different model of economic development, effectively turning the westernmost Russian region into a gray zone of Northern Europe.

Another distinctive feature that practically went hand in glove with mounting economic difficulties and overall worsening climate was an inflow of both legal and illegal migrants. The former group was mainly comprised of ethnic Russians from the Baltic States and Central Asia as well as the North Caucasus, whereas the latter predominantly shaped by newcomers from Central Asia (autochthonous Islamic population). Statistical data suggest that the overall number of migrants within the period 1991-2004 was may have reached as many as 130.000 people²⁴⁴, of whom only 15.000 migrants were officially registered.

It would be adequate to mention that aforementioned migration from North Caucasus and Central Asia did have certain repercussions, especially taking into consideration that these groups were not inclined to rapidly integrate into new environment and accept certain rules and customs inherent to it. On the one hand, taking into account the ongoing war in Chechnya arriving Muslims were construed as adverse and unwelcomed by certain groups of locals (which fully complied with the tendency to be observed in the rest of Russian regions). That resulted in emergence of the skinheads (representatives of neo-Nazi groups) and local branches of the Russian National Unity Party²⁴⁵ – both of which represented ultra nationalist ideology²⁴⁶ that at a time experienced an exponential surge in the Russian Federation. This in turn resulted in even greater isolation of the Muslim community unwilling to interact with local population. Similarly, migrants arriving from the above-mentioned areas did tend to bring their local traditions and customs that greatly differed from the Russian ones. Growing unemployment, criminalization (that was frequently tinted in ethnic colors), lack of proper housing (that was also caused by using Kaliningrad as a transportation link for Russian troops transported from Europe) resulted in growing intolerance among local

²⁴⁴ Source: “Калининградская область”, *Независимый Институт социальной политики*, See: <http://www.socpol.ru/atlas/portraits/kalgr.shtml>.

²⁴⁵ Source: РНЕ-Калининград 1998, available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pLNI7CSzcPc>; РНЕ Кёнигсберг / Тильзит: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rEcAU1w79Lg>.

²⁴⁶ Sergey Sukhankin, “Anti-Semitism in the late Soviet Union: The rise and fall of Pamyat movement,” *Tiempo Devorado*, Vol. 4, No 1 (2017), http://revistes.uab.cat/tdevorado/article/view/v4-n1-sukhankin/pdf_86.

population. For example, neo Nazi and far right nationalist groups started to level their aggressive behavior not only against representatives of Islam but also against Jews²⁴⁷.

On the other hand, it ought to be recognized that on numerous occasions illegal migrants treated Kaliningrad as a place of temporary stay and a backdoor to Europe, which led to a very superficial treatment of the Oblast.

As it has been demonstrated economic hardships did in many ways become a screech owl of the ensued socio-cultural shifts and changing perceptions. Nevertheless, these processes in many ways coincided with similar tendencies experienced by Russian proper. Moreover, comparative glance at Kaliningrad and the Russian mainland clearly shows that the former appeared to be at a somewhat beneficial position: it was not destined to suffer major outbreaks of ethnic nationalism, violence or separatism that might have resulted in military involvement from the side of Moscow. On the contrary, the main aspect required by Kaliningrad was a clear plan identifying its course of development as well as a broad agreement between the Kremlin and key regional players that would have stipulated its development trajectory, whereby strictly delineating the extent of liberty and involvement of external players.

Undoubtedly, the local society (including both wide masses of ordinary population and the elites) was to have made an effort aimed at finding of tools and methods commensurate with an urgent necessity of transformations (on various levels) and adjustment to rapidly changing internal and external environment. Altering circumstances also put forth an acute necessity of changes pertaining to mental and ideological prospective and a task of re-discovering of the new place of Kaliningrad in both Russian architecture and in relations with emerging European Union.

Reflecting upon the stance of Moscow on Kaliningrad, it would not be a mistake to identify three main modes of operation. The first approach included allowing greater liberalization and ability to establish (and expand) both foreign and inter-regional contacts. The second approach – “path dependency”, based on revitalization of the model established during the Soviet period (1946 – 1990) with in many ways artificial maintenance of essential pillars of the local economy. The third one – working out some

²⁴⁷ Source: "Православное воинское братство" грозит убивать евреев в Калининграде, Retiwed from: *Грани.ру*, 25.07.2003. For more information see: <http://grani.ru/Society/Xenophobia/Antisemitic/m.39028.html> .

sort of “middle path” concept that could combine both aforementioned approaches and without going to extremes try to alleviate consequences of socio-economic and geopolitical shocks suffered by the Oblast.

5.1.4 Crisis of identity and changing self-perception: “...neither East nor West”

Experience of Kaliningrad (as well as its historical predecessor) of physical separation from the mainland has been a harsh and, in many respects, genuinely tragic case study. If the “German” period was marked by physical separation from the mainland than the following interim added “ideological” compound to it. Therefore, it would not be an exaggeration to presume that it was the Soviet period that would in the final analysis set up conditions leading toward creation of a phenomenon that can be described as “Kaliningrad identity”²⁴⁸. In spite of being partly discussed by both Russian²⁴⁹ and international scholars²⁵⁰ the issue clearly lacks solid and comprehensive analysis that should be conducted in a separate multidisciplinary framework. On the other hand, it would not be superfluous to make the following point: Russian historical, political and cultural sciences while analyzing certain aspects of the above-mentioned phenomenon tend to make an extensive appeal to the fact of physical seclusion and isolation of Kaliningrad from the mainland. However, this school of thought does not clearly explain why and how East Prussia managed to preserve its purely German identity as well as other interesting case studies. Moreover, numerous references tend to overestimate the

²⁴⁸ For instance, see: Anna Karpenko, “Regionalization and identity: the subjectivity of Kaliningrad”, In *UNISCI Discussion Papers*, January 2006, No. 10, (Madrid: CompuTense University), pp.277–286.; Anna Karpenko, “Social Identity of Kaliningraders in the European Context: Ethnic and Religious Aspects”, e-journal of the University of Art and Design, 2006, No.2. (Helsinki, 2006), 84–95.; Anna Karpenko, “The identity of Kaliningrad in the context of the EU-Russia relations”, In Д.У. МакФэддена, А.М. Карпенко (Eds.), *Russia, the United States, and Europe in the Baltic region*, (Калининград: Терра Балтика, 2005), 132–144.; Андрейчук Н.В., “Калининградская региональная субкультура : идентичность и ментальность”, In *На перекрестке культур : русские в Балтийском регионе*, Ч.2, (Калининград, 2004), сс.184-196; Андрейчук Н.В., “Калининградская региональная субкультура, идентичность и ментальность, Идентичность в контексте глобализации : Европа, Россия, США”, (Калининград, 2003), 155-168.

²⁴⁹ Михаил Берендеев, “Социальная идентичность: исследования самоопределения калининградского регионального социума”, In *Вестник Балтийского федерального университета им. И. Канта*, № 12, 2006, Балтийский федеральный университет им. И. Канта, (Калининград, 2006), с. 75-82; Соломон Гинзбург, “Калининградский европеец”, *Независимая*, 30.03.2010, Available at: http://www.ng.ru/scenario/2010-03-30/14_kaliningrad.html.

²⁵⁰ Ingmar Oldberg, “The emergence of regional identity in the Kaliningrad Oblast”, In *Cooperation and Conflict* September 2000 vol. 35 no. 3, 269-288.

role of enclave/exclave position of the region (its physical separation) that ensued after the breakdown of the USSR simultaneously failing to capture the impact of the earlier historical experience. It is also frequently omitted that due to distinct historical and geopolitical qualities even during the Soviet times the Oblast was developing at a very different pace and trajectory than the rest of the Soviet Union. Undoubtedly, it was the post-Soviet period that was marked by such definitions pertaining to Kaliningrad Oblast as “the westernmost”, “Baltic Hong Kong”, “Baltic Singapore”, the “Pilot region” and many other definitions that have become an integral part of the local self- and outer-perception.

On the other hand, it has been suggested in some studies that it would not be entirely correct to refer to so-called “Kaliningrad identity” as such since deeper analysis of internal milieu puts forth a visible dichotomy between perceptions of those whose ties with the oblast are greater in comparison with the newcomers for whom so-called “Big Russia” is still identified with the only “motherland”. Incidentally, such a phenomenon could be encountered with in some other parts of the former Soviet Union. Perhaps, due to the tragic events in Ukraine (that started in the end of 2013) it would be the Donbas region where the local population had developed some kind of a “regional patriotism” that predetermined its vector for further development²⁵¹. Although, this “regional patriotism” is somehow intertwined with globalization process that Kaliningrad Oblast encountered with after 1991: in this domain the westernmost Russian region clearly distinct from the Southeastern part of Ukraine.

In any event, any reflections about “Kaliningrad identity” could not possibly ignore the issue of “Kaliningrad society” as a prime-bearer of the previous notion. Having concurred to this hierarchy, it would be instrumental to also acknowledge the fact that each society is endowed with distinct traits and characteristics that require significant chronological interim to take definite shape. Incidentally, this is still actively discussed within Kaliningrad society: secluded ethnographic group (sometimes references to

²⁵¹ Станислав Васин, “Идентичность Донбасса: есть ли она?”, *Украинская правда*, August 8, 2015. Available at: <http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/articles/2015/08/8/7077054/>.

alleged “Kaliningrad ethnos” are made), or new and distinct Russian nation that is still pending proper scientific research²⁵²?

Furthermore, numerous concerns have been voiced regarding the term “identity” itself and to what extent it would be prudent to use it in respect to the population of Kaliningrad. Also, territorial delineation should be established in much more concrete terms: namely, is it only the city itself or the rural areas as well that can be defined as the key bearers of the “identity”. And particularly pivotal appears to be the following issue: what are the main distinctive features that the regional self-perception of the local inhabitants is based upon?²⁵³

Each society pre-supposes existence of socio-territorial cohesion between various elements thereof bind by common identity that could either stem from common/collective self-identification with certain group or as alternative juxtaposition to other groups. Scientists make a distinction between two major levels when formation of societies takes place: macro-level (with Siberia, the Ural or the European part of the Russian Federation being the most salient example), meso-level (republic, krai, oblast) and the micro-level (village, town or a combination thereof). In this juncture it is the “time” that is capable of fostering ties between various elements of the society, turning it into a solid entity.

Reflecting about Kaliningrad in the mentioned framework, one could presume that this region could be defined as an entity of meso-level, since its formation started in 1945 (at the earliest), which seems to be quite a short historical interim for a society with definite and conclusive forms to take shape. In any event, this reality is also supplemented by physical isolation and has to some extent affected evolution of “Kaliningrad identity” (though it would be quite challenging a task to identify the impact). What may have had far greater impact was the level of migration. As it has been depicted in the previous chapter within approximately first post-war decades (slightly less than one generation) Kaliningrad Oblast preserved a very high rate of volatility. In this respect, the post-Soviet period indicated somewhat close tendencies.

²⁵² Анатолий Городилов, *Россия в центре Европы*, (Калининград: Запад России, 1998), с. 129; Городилов А. А., Гомин А. П., Каргополов С. Г., Куликов А. В., *XXI век: Свободная зона и особый статус*, (Калининград: Янтарный сказ, 2001), 91.

²⁵³ Эжхард Маттес, “Останутся ли они россиянами?”, In: *Балтийский регион в истории России и Европы*, Российский государственный университет им. И. Канта, Балтийский межрегиональный институт общественных наук Россия и Европа: прошлое, настоящее, будущее, (Калининград: РГУ им. И. Канта 2005), 227.

In practical terms this means that the post-Soviet experience should be followed by yet another several generations in order to achieve certain stability and regularity.

Currently sociologists distinct the following major waves of migration in Kaliningrad²⁵⁴:

1. Settlers within 1940s-60s. First wave of settlers was of more advanced age groups exhibiting greater conservatism and thereby having the highest levels of regional identity. As for the first post-Soviet decade the aforementioned group accounted for approximately 20% of local population;

2. Settlers within 1970s-1980s. Generally, this group included those born in the first post-war years and later moved to Kaliningrad. The overall number did not exceed 10%, whereas the stance toward identity-related issues was not clear;

3. People born in Kaliningrad Oblast. Representatives of this segment of local population had spent their entire life in Kaliningrad and therefore maintained very high level of self-identification with it. German period of local history amuses those belonging to this group (which sharply contrasted with the first wave of settlers) and should be construed as an integral part of the local historical development – not a “blank spot”. On the other hand, in spite of physical separation and quite weak connection with the motherland the separatist tendencies were not evident. Share of this group was as high as 45%;

4. Settlers of the 1990s. According to the survey conducted within the period 1989 – 2002 the number of residents in Kaliningrad Oblast increased by 135.100 people. In some sense, this was a patchwork of various social and ethnic groups whose advent could not possibly have led to consolidation of the local society. The overall number of this segment has been estimated as close to 25%, which represents a staggering figure. Similarly, it could be presumed that one of the key aspects that hinder integration of this segment in the local society is a very high level of mobility exhibited in the course of a decade.

²⁵⁴ ГАКО: Л.Л. Емельянова, Г.В. Кретинин, “Формирование калининградского социума и проблема миграции”, Available at: <http://gako.name/index.php?publ=242&razd=213>.

In this juncture, it would be worthwhile to highlight the correlation between worsening economic conditions, consequences of acute political crisis faced by the region and so-called “regional patriotism”, which was reflected in a survey conducted within this interim. Interestingly enough, yet the respondents indicated no interest in abandoning the Oblast by moving either to the mainland or abroad. Nonetheless, it should be recognized that by the beginning of new millennium local population (especially the youngest segment thereof) had practically lost connection with the Russian rear – according to statistical data approximately 80% of local population who had reached 18 years of age had never been to Russia, whereas visits to Poland, Lithuania and other European countries were proliferating rapidly.

Another sociological poll that was carried out in the year 2000 revealed that 36% of respondents wanted for Kaliningrad to be granted a special status; 19% opted for equal standing with other republics within the Russian Federation; 5% considered formation of independent republic to be an ideal option for Kaliningrad. Even though the idea of full independence was not hailed by the majority of local residents, greater interest in pursuing further external contacts was evident, which may have stemmed from either “regional patriotism” or (which sounds more plausible) very different system of comparison where not the Russian rear but European neighbors would be seen as a yardstick.

For instance, while answering the question regarding necessity to expand economic contacts with neighbors, the absolute majority of respondents supported developing and proliferation of such contacts²⁵⁵:

- With the Federal Republic of Germany 60% (compared to 55% of the 1996 opinion poll);

- With Lithuania 49% (and 40% in the year 1996);

- With Belarus 40% (36%).

²⁵⁵“Калининград в зеркале социологии,” *Национальна информационная служба* (2001), 15 February 2001.

This data corroborated increasing interest of Kaliningraders in cooperating with European neighbors: prospects of interrelations with Belarus and other CIS received less sympathy than with the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and Lithuania. Another vital aspect reflected by the poll was that respondents expressed visible share of concern over the fact that potential expansion of the European Union could be harmful for Kaliningrad. This was a proof of the notion that even though tending to favor expansion of contacts with the West (as the only conceivable source of modernization) the local population was nevertheless interested to remain under protective “umbrella” provided and maintained by Moscow. In certain respect, it would not be an exaggeration to assume that sizable part of the local population was in favor of continuation of the model established during the Soviet times yet with certain reservations that included universal access to the benefits offered by proximity to the West. In essence, it must be stated that by the beginning of 21st century Kaliningrad society was predominantly Russian, Western oriented in terms of economic contacts yet spatially isolated segment with “islander identity”, developing along the concept of “double periphery”²⁵⁶. Although being part of the Russian Federation and mostly Russia-oriented, the local population could not follow the path of the rest of Russia – its proximity and extreme dependence on neighboring states resulted in major transformation of identity and its further hybridization. Previously the aforementioned phenomenon was mostly shaped by a mixed nature of settlers assembled from the USSR and the status of Kaliningrad as the “Soviet bastion on the Baltic Sea”, the breakdown of Communism and growing encirclement of the Oblast added to quasi-European elements resulting in a very peculiar phenomenon not to be found in any other region of the Russian Federation. One of the most visible outcomes that accompanied evolution of the local identity (especially with economic predicaments experienced by Russia and simultaneous acceleration of the Baltic States and Poland) was changing outlook of population of Kaliningrad. This change in paradigms primarily found its reflection in the way that Kaliningraders understood their social status, material wellbeing and economic (to certain extent even political) freedoms. Naturally, this perception differed from the rest of Russia because the local population tended to apply standards and measures mostly pertaining to European countries, yet not the ones to be observed in the rest of Russia.

²⁵⁶ Геннадий Федоров, “Калининградская дилемма: "коридор развития" или "двойная периферия"? Геополитический фактор развития российского эксклава на Балтике”, In *Балтийский регион*, 2010, № 2, (Калининград, 2010), 5-15. Available at: <http://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/kaliningradskaya-dilemma-koridor-razvitiya-ili-dvoynaya-periferiya-geopoliticheskiy-faktor-razvitiya-rossiyskogo-eksklava-na-baltike>

On the other hand, taking into consideration apparent drive of the local community toward cooperation with western countries (which might have born the traces of romantic feelings and frequently was based on the picture available to the ordinary people) those results were rather different from what might have been expected. Instead of working out a special plan aimed to meet expectations of the local inhabitants to one extent or another, the academic circles responded with a project that set very different goals, whereby aiming to counter this sort of sentiments. It appeared that the “ghost of separatism” whose artificially inflated image (whether purposefully or by incident) was blown significantly out of proportion was indeed taken seriously by Moscow and (ultra)conservative forces.

Reflecting about the response of Russian scientific circles, it would not be superfluous to recall an initiative elaborated by A.I. Kuznetsov that preached for creation of special cultural programme for Kaliningrad with a status “*presidential*”. According to the author the initiative was to pursue the following essential goals²⁵⁷:

1. Development and promotion of Russian culture in order to forestall “separation” of this island from the mainland;
2. Facilitate rooting of Russian population in the area from civilization point of view;
3. Harmonization of relations with the neighbors.

Unfortunately, the document failed to present any concrete strategies related to the last point, which implicitly elevated first two aspects. Furthermore, it was quite common for Kaliningrad to be perceived from the Huntington’s “Clash of Civilizations”, which pre-disposed the region toward being a zone of conflict instead of area of cooperation.

In the final analysis, it would also be prudent to underscore yet another remarkable and to some extent even crucial detail pertaining to the first post-Soviet decade that had to do with formation of Kaliningrad society in its post-Communist

²⁵⁷ Кузнецов А.И., “Калининградская область – культурный форпост России”, In *Вестник Балтийского научного центра*, 1996, №, Балтийский федеральный университет им. И. Канта, (Калининград, 1996).

form. Incidentally, this element should be viewed (at least this is how it was perceived within the discussed interim) as a sound breakup with the Soviet past and its most repulsive forms of treatment of the past experiences. Namely, the aforementioned interim witnessed the process of revitalization (perhaps, even emergence) of interest to the Prussian culture and history. It was the breakdown of the USSR that introduced a new chapter in the process of discovery of new and accretion of already existing knowledge about East Prussia. Moreover, growing international contacts (primarily with Germany) led to exchange of opinions and revealing of scientific positions of two major centres that conduct research on East Prussia, its history, culture and legacy. Also, German NGO`s that would be granted a permission to operate on the territory of Kaliningrad Oblast would spread the knowledge about Germany in the enclave. This mission was chiefly vested upon the “German-Russian House” established in 1993²⁵⁸ (incidentally, it would be declared a „foreign agent” in the year 2016²⁵⁹).

Among the most well-known events it was opening of the Kaliningrad Regional Museum of History and Art as well as establishment of I. Kant`s monument that could be listed. Thanks to financial support from the side of the GDR the famous Cathedral (which was being built within 1333-1380) that has now become one of the most well-known symbols of Kaliningrad was revitalized.

Contrary to numerous predictions this historical site has been widely accepted by local community as a part of Kaliningrad cultural landscape – not a residue of Nazi Germany²⁶⁰.

This statement is best depicted in the following sociological survey that aimed to tackle perception of the German past by various groups of Kaliningraders²⁶¹.

Table 2.4. Perception of the German past by residents of Kaliningrad

²⁵⁸ For more information see: *Ассоциация Культурно-образовательный центр "Немецко-Русский дом"*, http://www.drh-k.ru/rus/page/uber_uns .

²⁵⁹ Юрате Пилюте, “Немецко-русский дом — Троянский конь на русской земле”, *Северо-западный вестник*, 28.04.2016, For more information see: <http://www.info-leaks.ru/archives/9337>.

²⁶⁰ Г.В. Кретинин, “Из Кёнигсберга в Калининград: о формировании этнокультурной идентичности,” Доклад на международной конференции «Этно-культурная идентичность автохтонных меньшинств в приграничных районах», 02.10.2012, *Российский Институт Стратегических Исследований*, Available at: <https://riss.ru/analitics/976/> .

²⁶¹ Op.cit., Л.Л. Емельянова, Г.В. Кретинин.

Prospective replays/age	<23	24-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	>60	Cumulative data
I am very much interested in history of East Prussia	29,2	31,5	23,4	24,4	13,7	16,7	24,2
I respect history of East Prussia	52,8	50,7	57,1	57,0	70,6	56,7	56,4
I am indifferent about history of East Prussia	13,2	5,5	10,4	5,8	9,8	8,3	9,3
History of East Prussia is alien to me	3,8	6,8	1,3	3,5	0,0	0,0	2,9
I maintain utterly negative perception about pre-war history of Kaliningrad	0,0	0,0	1,3	0,0	0,0	1,7	0,4
Difficult to say	0,9	5,5	6,5	9,3	5,9	16,7	6,8

Concluding this segment of research, it would not be superfluous to point out that more than 80% of respondents were of positive opinion about history of East Prussia. This should be seen as a positive sign primarily because this fact suggested that the bond between past and present that had been attempted to so ruthlessly destroyed by the Soviets still preserved its relevance. Moreover, it signified that within the first decade of transformation the “regional patriotism” did by no means exist at the expense of preservation of historical memory and respect for the history of the local cultural tradition. Furthermore, this left a glimpse of hope for the prospect of cooperation and establishment of greater cultural contacts between Kaliningrad and its neighbors. It could also have effectively broken the circle of exclusion and isolation of the region artificially imposed and persevered during the Soviet interim. Therefore, even such a discouraging aspect as comparatively high level of indifference to the previous historical experience could be somehow justified with the age group (less than 23 years) that demonstrated the highest level of disinterest and generally weak cultural policies demonstrated by the Russian

Federation within first post-Communist decade. Furthermore, the survey reveals that the share of those born outside the oblast exhibited higher percentage of indifference than those for whom Kaliningrad is a place of birth. The highest level of indifference was demonstrated by those who moved to the oblast in aftermath of disintegration of the USSR.²⁶²

5.2. Kaliningrad as a “double periphery” (1991 - 1999)

5.2.1. Centre vs. periphery debate

The debate pertaining to the „centre – periphery” relationships as one of the key principles of the post-Soviet transformation that has acquired particular gravity in the Russian Federation should be deemed essential in scope of reflections pertaining to Kaliningrad and its status after the year 1991. This was especially true within the interim starting from the year 1991 toward the beginning of the new millennium which is stipulated by special geographical position of the region and dramatic shifts experienced in the aftermath of the Soviet collapse. In this juncture, it should be recognized that providing theoretical background as an introduction to further reflections regarding the “double periphery” concept and its projection onto Kaliningrad.

It should be underscored that the relationships between the “centre” and the “periphery” has always been shaped by a number of staunch stereotypes that has had a profound and deeply lasting effect. In particular, it has been argued that one of the most visible reflections of the debate is a perception of a typical centre as a “creator of cultural patterns”, whereas periphery has come to be understood as a “re-producer of the date patterns”.²⁶³

From his side, A. Makarychev has argued that a typical “centre” is widely associated with such notions as “aggression”, “unification”, “wellbeing”, “stability”,

²⁶² Андрей Клемешев, “Калининградский социум: проблемы консолидации и стратификации”, In *Регион сотрудничества*, Вып. 2 (20), (Калининград, 2003), 13.

²⁶³ Ростислав Туровский, “Структурный, ландшафтный и динамический подходы в культурной географии”, In *Гуманитарная география: Научный и культурно-просветительский альманах*. Выпуск 1, (Москва: Российский НИИ культурного и природного наследия им. Д. С. Лихачева, 2004).

“order”, “normality”, “civilization”, “complexity”, “dynamism” and “development”²⁶⁴. Therefore, it could also be argued that it is the centre’s prime responsibility to organize the way the entire system operates.²⁶⁵

On the other hand, typical periphery is seen and broadly understood as an entity that could be characterized by such notions as “dependency”, “drawback”, “replication”, “envy”, “chaos”, “deviations”, “misbalances”, “archaism”, “scarcity of resources”, “simplicity” and “inertia”²⁶⁶. Taking into consideration the fact that Kaliningrad should be perceived as a typical periphery in regard to the Russian core, one would be find it worthwhile to tackle the issue of its type as an entity of the indicated quality.

Makarychev distinct the following types of periphery²⁶⁷:

1. Province. This type of periphery could be characterized as an entity that in spite of adhering to political loyalty to the centre does nevertheless bear visible traits of both cultural and historic diversity. In some sense it could be argued that special type of identity could be discerned. One of the main precondition for an entity to be considered as a province is to be able to fulfill the internal potential within the local environment;

2. The borderland („*rubezhnost*”). Reflecting about this type of spatial diversification “duality” as a key distinctive feature thereof should be kept in mind. On the one hand, such entities could contain significant conflict potential (as a source of discord between other regional players), yet simultaneously could play a role of a “pole of cooperation” between the very same sides. In this context, the Russian region of Karelia could be used as an example (see Annex, Image 34).

²⁶⁴ Андрей Макарычев, “Концепты центра периферии в политической регионалистике: возможности пост-структуралистской деконструкции”, In *Псковский регионологический журнал*, Выпуск № 2, 2006, 22.

²⁶⁵ Владимир Каганский, “Центр – Провинция – Периферия – Граница”, In *Русский журнал*, 26 октября 2004, Available at: http://www.russ.ru/culture/20041026_kag-pr.html.

²⁶⁶ Глинский Д., “Современная Россия в центрo-периферической системе координат: к постановке проблемы”, *Полярная Звезда*, 11.06.2004.

²⁶⁷ Макарычев, Ibid. p. 24

3. „Alternative centrality”. This phenomenon is represented in Russia by the so-called „second capital” the city of Saint Petersburg situated in the Northwestern Federal District. This could be explained with both historical and cultural distinctiveness stipulated by the course of its antecedent development as well as growing increase in administrative and political weight. Moreover, its territorial proximity to Europe may not be omitted while reflecting upon its transformation;

4. „Double periphery” – this is applicable to spatial entities that are placed on the edge between two (or more) diverging political systems (states) and simultaneously occupying peripheral position to either system. Reflecting upon Kaliningrad Oblast in terms of political and economic development the notion “double periphery” should be deemed as the most apt one since for Poland and Lithuania (that have been members of greater supranational organization – the European Union – since 2004) as well as the Russian Federation (of which Kaliningrad Oblast is an integral part) the enclave/exclave performs the role of typical periphery.

5. Semi-periphery – regions/countries that serve as a source of labor and natural resources for more developed countries/territories. In respect to the Baltic Sea region Poland could be construed as an entity of this kind.

6. Poly-periphery – is a periphery that is indissolubly connected with certain external center/s of power which is reflected in their position as a zone where various interests intersect. For instance, it has been argued that such states as Georgia, Poland and Ukraine could be allocated to this category. Poland is a member of the EU and NATO, whereas Ukraine aspires to become a part of the EU (at least on the declarative level) and simultaneously remains tightly bind with its eastern neighbor linguistically, culturally and due to common historical experience (which has been demonstrated in the course of the Euromaidan and its aftermath that broke into an open military confrontation in the Ukrainian Southeast).

5.2.2. Conceptualizing the notion “double periphery” and its application to Kaliningrad

Economic stagnation and political predicaments experienced by the Russian Federation multiplied in Kaliningrad came into a sharp contrast with rapid economic growth in neighboring states, perplexed many Kaliningraders. On the other hand, the dreary “legacy” of the 1990s when Kaliningrad Oblast rarely appeared in the forefront of discussions between Russia and its European partners led many to believe that the region might have evolved into so-called “double periphery”²⁶⁸. The succinct sense of the concept may be presented as follows: Kaliningrad was neglected by both Moscow and Brussels which outgrew into growing sense of alienation and social apathy from the side of various layers of Kaliningrad community effectively turning the enclave/exclave into the “gray zone” of Europe. The paradox of the phenomenon was based on the fact that these feelings and sentiments did not result in the immediate growth of separatist tendencies or raging anti-western emotions. It needs to be underlined that the issue indeed preoccupied minds of many Russian and foreign observers, commentators and scholars. For instance, Germany whose weight and power on the European scene had dramatically increased by the beginning of the new millennium expressed an alarm with the state of affairs in Kaliningrad. In some way or another predominant view could be encapsulated in the following reflections that pertained to the Russian westernmost region. Namely, it was argued that: “...*Kaliningrad remained a problem of specific quality magnified by the boom experienced by the EU, which is to be dealt with accordingly. Otherwise, Kaliningrad is destined to become a depressive enclave. This is by no means trivial situation. In spite of the fact that Kaliningrad Oblast is situated within the European Union, it remains in a position of regions that territorially are placed beyond it, which bereaves it of rights and privileges enjoyed by states-candidates for membership in this supranational organization. Under these circumstances, attempts to alienate from the existing problem will most certainly doom Kaliningrad to remain the “double periphery”, a forgotten oblast on the margin of Russia and on the edge of the EU*”²⁶⁹. Aside from this, other researchers pointed out that the tendency in accordance to which Russian

²⁶⁸ P. Joenniemi, S. Dewar, L. D. Fairlie, *The Kaliningrad puzzle: a Russian region within the European Union*, Baltic Institute of Sweden, (Karlskrona, 2000).

²⁶⁹ Heinz Timmermann, *Berichte des Bundesinstituts fuer ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien*, 16.01.2001, Available at: <http://inosmi.ru/untitled/20010116/144169.html>

peripheral regions remain underdeveloped (as a legacy of the Soviet practices) remained one of the most visible characteristic of Russian development.²⁷⁰

Continuing the debate about “double periphery” and the case of Kaliningrad it would not be superfluous to mention a position presented by Vadim Smirnov²⁷¹ who described Kaliningrad as a „dual periphery” permeated by a spirit of “dual provincialism”. Nevertheless, pointing to the fact of peripheral location to both Russia and Europe, he simultaneously confided in the notion that Kaliningrad remained Russia’s “most profoundly European territory”. From his side Kaliningrad-based scholar G. Fedorov underscored instrumental meaning of policies conducted by the Russian Federation on one side and the European Union on the other. Although vital he did however offer not to be constrained by these two macro-players and broaden horizons admitting importance of the Baltic Sea actors and Belarus whose potential involvement could facilitate the enclave/exclave status of Kaliningrad and provide solid basis for overcoming most acute hindrances that severely limited abilities and effectiveness of the westernmost region of the Russian Federation. In this juncture it has also been particularly highlighted that by the virtue of history physically separated from the mainland entities tend to demonstrate considerable conflict potential²⁷² which might acquire more visible forms in case of deterioration of international as well as external conditions. This however greatly depends on a school of intellectual thought chosen by a researcher. Should one adhere to Realism with its strong emphasis on interests of a nation-state, enclave/exclave will then be construed as a source of tensions and a source of potential conflict. In the meantime, admirers of Idealism and its postulates are likely to assume a position that would differ from the one represented by the school of Realism and its doctrines. In case such notions as cooperation, agreement, dialogue and peaceful coexistence prevail over self-centered aspirations, physically separated areas could be diverted into areas of cooperation and partnership rather than conflict between parties involved. Undoubtedly, a key condition

²⁷⁰ Sergei Jakobson-Obolenski, Overlapping ideological boundaries and transformations in the EU periphery: the Baltic States and Kaliningrad, *Мегарегион - сетевая конфедерация*, (2004). Available at: http://net-conf.org/articles_text_29.htm

²⁷¹ Vadim Smirnov, Where Is the “Pilot Region” Heading? In *Russia in Global Affairs*, December 20, 2009, Retrieved from: http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/n_14247 .

²⁷² Клемешев А. П. “Трансформация эксклавности в условиях политической глобализации”, In *Полис(«Политические исследования»)*, 2005, № 4, (Москва: Редакция журнала «Полис» («Политические исследования»), 2005), 143—157.

to be fulfilled is attainment of a broad understanding and proliferation of a dialogue between all parties involved in the debate.

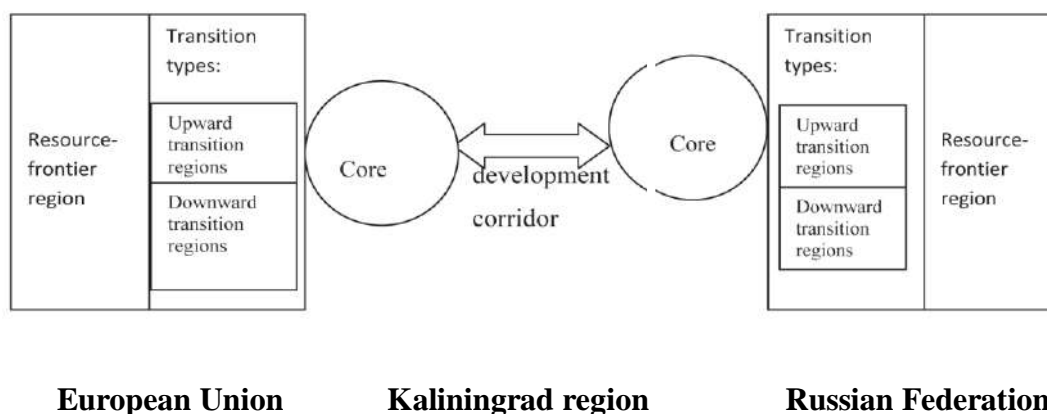
Numerous discussions on Kaliningrad additionally spurred by acceleration of development experienced by its geographic neighbors put in the forefront of the debate (which incidentally has not lost its relevancy until present) a question whether Kaliningrad should be perceived as the “corridor of development”²⁷³ or its role would be continuously reduced to being the “double periphery”.²⁷⁴

International Relations and political history could distinct two major types of the former notion, where specific regions could perform the role of:

- strengthening the domestic interregional ties;
- focused on development of ties with external environment.

Judging by its geographic position and previous historical experience Kaliningrad clearly should be bearing traits of the second pattern. This is thoroughly reflected in a graphical scheme presented below²⁷⁵:

Figure 5. Kaliningrad between the Russian Federation and the EU (the “development corridor” project)



²⁷³ Клемешев А. П., Федоров Г. М., *От изолированного эксклава — к «коридору развития». Альтернативы российского эксклава на Балтике*, (Калининград: Изд-во КГУ, 2004).

²⁷⁴ Наталия Смородинская, “Калининград в условиях объединения Европы: вызов и ответ”, In *Вопросы Экономки*, 2001, № 11, 106—127.

²⁷⁵ Федоров, (2010), p. 43

In the meantime, one should admit that judging by its potential, size and a broad range of other collateral factors Kaliningrad Oblast could not be identified as a zone of the would-be economic breakthrough (as for instance, Moscow, Saint Petersburg or Nizhny Novgorod may have been expected) based on innovation and technological advance. What however could have been achieved was turning the oblast into a “zone of cooperation” between the Russian Federation and the European Union. Under such circumstances the westernmost Russian region separated from the mainland had a potential of becoming a beneficiary of such an arrangement, whereas its scarcity of resources, isolation and small size would have been compensated by a bridge-like status and a venue of broad cooperation between two major poles.

Reflecting upon certain regularities of Kaliningrad status stipulated by the virtue of history David Thomas Kronenfeld identified the following *reasons* that pre-determined the model of its development as a semi-autonomous economic rule²⁷⁶:

1. Historic. Since history of Kaliningrad extends for more than six hundred fifty years where significant part of existence it has been close to the status of “independent state” it therefore would not be a mistake to presume that the idea of so-called “semi-autonomous rule” should not be considered to be a totally new idea²⁷⁷;

2. Socio-cultural. Taking into consideration that the city has been able to preserve traces of German cultural heritage, but its essence consists of Russian ethnic majority – this highly complex combination did not allow fostering of a cultural identity that would have captured various pivotal aspects pertaining to genuinely unique local conditions and the milieu;

3. Economic and legal. In the year 2006 (the year when the SEZ was implemented) it appeared that the changes would allow Kaliningrad to compete with both its geographic

²⁷⁶ David Thomas Kronenfeld, „Kaliningrad in the Twenty-First Century - Independence, Semi-Autonomy, or Continued Second-Class Citizenship?“, In *Washington University Global Studies Law Review*, Vol. 9, Issue 1, (Washington Unveristy, January 2010), 153-170.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 158.

neighbors and other regions of the Russian Federation, whereby leading toward greater autonomy.

On the other hand, in spite of certain benefits that the aforementioned model could bring the flipside effect should also be taken into a serious account. For instance, the above-mentioned tilt toward greater autonomy coupled with the lack of attention from both the EU and the Russian Federation could lead toward transformation of the local society into a “second-class citizens” which contains a broad number of implicit and explicit dangerous trends and perils.

This picture however would not be quite complete without mentioning of the EU and its stance on Kaliningrad during the period of discussion. Unfortunately, within 1991 – 1999 Brussels did not provide assistance to Kaliningrad commensurate with the bulk of problems faced by the region. Incidentally, this policy had been waged despite the fact that both Poland and Lithuania were demonstrating full commitment to the idea of Euro-integration, which would result in Kaliningrad becoming the Russian island within the European Union after these countries had joined the organization.

Reflecting about reasons that stood behind a position of the wider Europe several key factors should be taken into consideration. It would not be a mistake to assume that the attitude of Brussels might have had to be associated with the ongoing first Chechen war and apparent political havoc experienced by the Russian Federation at a time. These should be seen as the most vivid discouraging factors that precluded the EU from taking more solid stance on the issue of Kaliningrad. Moreover, being on the verge of pivotal changes the key players of the EU were preoccupied with matters that from their points of view significantly outweighed themes and topics related to Kaliningrad Oblast. On the other hand, deeply ingrained fear of Kaliningrad as yet another “black hole of Europe” (taking into consideration the war in Yugoslavia and a number of other regional conflicts that posed dreadful challenges to the European peace and security) should be named as additional matter of perplexity and concern from the side of Europeans. That is probably why the watershed that witnessed some key changes of perception and ensued altering of policies from the side of Brussels coincided with the advent of Vladimir Putin in the year 2000.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁸ „Russia's policy towards Kaliningrad“, In *Russia's policy towards Kaliningrad*, The British Helsinki Human Rights Group, Available at: <http://www.bhhrgarchive.org/Countries/Russia/Russia%20-%20Kaliningrad%20report.pdf>

Nonetheless, it would not be entirely correct to state that the issue of Kaliningrad had been completely omitted by the Europeans before the beginning of the new millennium and drastic political changes within Russian state architecture that brought about so-much-sought-for signs of stability. For instance, one ought not to disregard existence of so-called Tacis assistance programme elaborated, organized and coordinated by Brussels aiming to assist Kaliningrad Oblast in terms of post-Soviet transformation was initiated in the year 1994.

The key areas of cooperation included the following ones²⁷⁹:

- Human Resources;
- Food Production and Distribution;
- Networks: Energy, Transport, Telecommunications;
- Enterprise Support Services;
- Nuclear Safety.

Taking into consideration various specific traits of Kaliningrad Oblast, it would be worthwhile to indicate the following key pillars upon which cooperation between Kaliningrad and the EU would be based:

1. Private Sector Support. This area of cooperation included the following actions and domains:

- Proliferation of regional economic development, that was to be facilitated by allocation of €10 million for the purpose of boosting of the locally established Free Economic Zone/ Special Economic Zone (FEZ/SEZ). This was also supported by consultative efforts aimed to strengthen activities of the Regional Development Agency and working out clear regional economic development strategy as well as activities in the domain of trade, investment and transport branches of local economy;

²⁷⁹ Source: TACIS - Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States and Georgia (the EU Commission), For more information see: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-92-54_en.htm

- Activities aiming to restructuring/modernization of local entrepreneurial activities (approximately €3 million) implemented via establishment of an Enterprise Support Centre as well as systematization and optimization of the local SME Development Agency activities. Incidentally, the program particularly highlighted development of the local fish industry taking into consideration its role in the local economy before the year 1991;
- Emphasis on development of local human resources and proliferation of the local private sector via establishment of a Business Management department affiliated with the Kaliningrad State University (€1.3 million);
- Fostering innovation management and commercialization of innovation as a key trait of the new approach to business and market. Approximate scope of financial assistance for this segment was €1.8 million;
- Optimization of energy consumption (€3million): modernization of infrastructure, pursuing market-oriented reforms and facilitation of implementation of energy saving technologies;
- Measures concerning modernization and optimization of agriculture as one of the least developed branches of local economy (€1.5 million).

2. Cross Border co-operation.

Taking into account the fact that it was a matter of time until both Poland and Lithuania were to become members of the EU their border infrastructure was to be upgraded in order to meet European standards. This also included improvement of Kaliningrad border infrastructure as well. According to the the Tacis Cross Border Co-operation Programmes Chernyshevskoe /Kybartai-Nesterov (road/rail) and Bagrationovsk/Bezledy (road) were to be given special priority since their role in border traffic with both Lithuania and Poland is considered to be crucial.

Moreover, it should be argued that normalization of Kaliningrad border infrastructure may be deemed important for the functioning of the Pan European Transport Network and emergence of new opportunities in the domain of European logistics.

In addition, the Tacis Customs Programme particularly highlighted a necessity to provide assistance for the Kaliningrad Port in the area of customs control procedures. For this purpose, it was decided to allocate additional €0.5 million. It should also be stressed that the key notion – “competitiveness” – was frequently employed by European partners of Kaliningrad Oblast as the main instrument to be used for development of sustainable economic growth and facilitation of integration of the westernmost Russian region in the Baltic Sea Rim.

3. Environment.

As it was pointed out in the antecedent part of current research environmental problems became one of the main drawbacks caused by pervasive militarization of the oblast within the Soviet period. On the other hand, the Soviet overall attitude to environmental issues resulted in a great number of ecologic tragedies on the territory of the former Soviet Union ranging from Central Asia to Ukraine and Belarus. In this regard, it ought to be admitted that Kaliningrad Oblast did not become an exception – its environmental problems were chiefly related to an exorbitantly high level of water pollution, which incurred a negative effect both locally and affected the Baltic Sea as well. For instance, it was estimated that out from more than 400,000 tonnes of domestic and industrial wastes generated annually in Kaliningrad only a small portion (precise data cannot be collected) was recycled. This resulted in air, water and ground pollution being prime challenges to be coped with.

In order to overcome this state of affairs the EU provided local authorities with various tools ranging from various monitoring and management projects (€2 million) conducted both by Kaliningrad itself as well as on the basis of joint initiatives with Lithuania and Poland and special loans earmarked for the purpose of renovation of infrastructure (so-called EBRD/NEFCO/NIB loan). Also, the EU initiated (and defrayed) creation of the Environmental Centre for Administration and Technology (ECAT) with the headquarters in Kaliningrad in the year 1997.

4. Health and Education.

As it was noted in previous segments of this research skyrocketing of communicable diseases in the first years that followed the disintegration of the USSR became one of the most urgent and notorious challenges faced by Kaliningrad (HIV/AIDS in particular). It is also a well-known fact that the spread of such diseases could be drastically reduced in case preventive actions are carried out accordingly. Therefore, Kaliningrad was included in the so-called North West Health Replication Project that was to suppress regional health/social disparities via implementation of the key postulates of the health reform. Moreover, it should be stated that the EU with its strong adherence to the civil society put additional emphasis on the development of NGOs working in the domain of health sector. In this juncture, one could also recall strengthening ties between Kaliningrad and EU universities and initiation of scientific cooperation and exchange in the domain of public health (thanks to the TEMPUS programme).

In spite of the aforementioned initiatives it should be deemed essential to state that within the first stage of Kaliningrad taking part in the programme (1994 - 2000) the result could not be considered as satisfactory. Within this period Kaliningrad Oblast had received approximately EUR 40 million²⁸⁰, which appears to be incomparable with Poland and Lithuania that were granted as much as EUR 2 billion.

Although, yet another instrumental aspect must not be omitted: namely, that the failure does not have to be vested with the entire bulk of criticism. Rather, it would be safe to suggest that both parties should be bearing responsibility for the poor outcome of the initiative at the mentioned historical interim. Having put into display faults and shortcomings from the side of the European partners, it would also be imperative to specifically highlight substantial culpability of the opposite side. For instance, in October 1999 the local budget did not receive the earmarked funds due to the fact that the local authorities failed to demonstrate the appropriate level of transparency of the local budget. Indeed, on numerous occasions it was the abominable level of opaqueness and corruption that did not allow European partners to express more trust in Kaliningrad Oblast.

²⁸⁰ Source: EU-Russia partnership on Kaliningrad, MEMO/02/169, July 12, 2002, *European Commission*, Available at: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-02-169_en.htm .

In any event, it would not be superfluous to conclude that within the first post-Soviet decade Kaliningrad Oblast found itself to be in an extremely difficult position, which was significantly aggravated by the lack of agreement between all actors involved (though it would be impossible to present the exact share of respective responsibility for such a gruesome outcome). Undoubtedly, stagnating economy, political havoc and certain lack of orientates must have had profound negative effect on both local population and external players that were able to compare development of Kaliningrad Oblast and its geographic neighbors which clearly was not in favor of the former.

5.2.3. *The “triple periphery”*: establishing the concept – discussing the essence

First and foremost, it needs to be established that the concept of so-called “triple periphery” in regard to Kaliningrad Oblast is yet to be developed at a serious level. Some authors have implied existence of this phenomenon in earlier works.²⁸¹ However, my posture on this issue diverges from previously established ones. While making an interdisciplinary research on Kaliningrad Oblast within the period that roughly embraced the first post-Soviet decade (1991 – 1999/2000) I have come to believe that the notion “double periphery” widely accepted by international scholarship in respect to the developments in Kaliningrad does not fully reflect the overall complexity and multifaceted nature of the position of the Russian “island in Europe”. Therefore, I have concentrated on explaining a concept “triple periphery” as the one that does to a substantial degree capture the essence of Kaliningrad and the bulk of challenges it had to face in the aforementioned period.

Thus far, in addition to political and economic pillars I have added the “religious factor”²⁸² as yet another key element that stipulated distinctiveness of Kaliningrad from the rest of Russian regions. In this context I argued that due to the number of factors (both subjective and objective) the westernmost Russian region was practically excluded from the Russian Orthodox Church’s (ROC) “priority projects” that thereby its population could not fully rely on its support within one of the most arduous interims of Russian contemporary history. This could be traced in both number of visits paid by the ROC’s

²⁸¹ Sergey Sukhankin, “The “Russkij mir” as Mission: Kaliningrad between the “altar” and the “throne” 2009-2015”, In Pekka Metso (Ed.), *Ortodoksia*, № 56, 2016, University of Eastern Finland, (Kaarina: Lightpress, 2016), 117-152.

²⁸² *Ibidem*.

hierarchs to Kaliningrad as well as the fact that the local ecclesiastical infrastructure was practically not being dealt with in the discussed historical period. This was magnified to even greater extent by the fact that due to its historical experience (first, foreign and later associated with the Soviet Union that abdicated religion) the enclave/exclave did not possess a required number of infrastructural objects commensurate with its population (and the rates of growth that witnessed first post-Soviet years).

On the other hand, one should be able to admit that for centuries the ROC has been one of the key institutes associated with Russian national spirit, unity and a strong belief in God as a supreme protector of the Russian lands. Starting from the year 1991 Russia was experiencing so-called “religious Renaissance” or “religious boom”²⁸³ whose advent was in the air as early as in the beginning of 1980s and with the proclamation of Perestroika it received a new impetus. This sharply contrasted with Kaliningrad Oblast that had been practically excluded from this process up until 1985 until when virtually all signs of religious activities were not visible. The local Orthodox community had to practice their creed in adjacent Lithuania where in Klaipeda the required ecclesiastical infrastructure was preserved. This was additionally aggravated with the fact that Kaliningrad Oblast was considered to be the most atheist part of the USSR and thereby performed a role of the “Soviet atheist fort post”. Incidentally, if it had not been for Metropolitan of Smolensk Kirill (Gundiaev) – the next Russian Patriarch who became an “advocate” of Kaliningrad Oblast in Moscow – the “religious Renaissance” would have appeared in Kaliningrad even much later. Starting from 1985 Kirill was a frequent guest in Kaliningrad and undertook vigorous efforts for the purpose of development and strengthening of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) in the region.

And still the local community could not fully count on this institute at the fullest extent possible (in comparison to the rest of regions), which did in many ways have a negative impact on internal milieu, self-perception of the locals and in many ways facilitated emergence and growth of the discussion regarding allegedly growing separatist moods experienced by the oblast “forgotten” by the federal centre.

²⁸³ Шэрон Линзи, Яков Кротов, “Религиозность как фактор российской жизни в 1990-е.”, In *Журнальный зал*, 1999. Available at: <http://magazines.russ.ru/continent/1999/102/li17.html> .

5.3 The issue of separatism in the first decade after Communism: myth or reality?

Particularities of local self-perception stipulated by the fact of physical separation from the mainland, historical experience exacerbated by the gravity of economic hardships made issues related to separatism in Kaliningrad quite visible. The key question however was whether these discussions had a factual compound to it and to what extent those were actually connected with the reality. This was largely amplified by other instances faced by the Russian Federation in the early 1990s: both well-known and other less familiar. On the other hand, a clear line should be drawn between two key issues: “separatism” and “regional patriotism”.

It should be admitted that for Kaliningrad the specter of “separatism” attained qualitatively different meaning than in any other Russian region: in spite of absence of direct separatist claims it was primarily geographic position of the “island” that concerned Russian ruling elites. In addition, by the end of 1990s external contacts maintained by the local community was clearly not in favor of the eastward direction. According to various surveys as many as 40% of locals regularly visited neighboring countries, where the number of those who opted for Russia was incomparably smaller. Proliferating foreign ties frightened both local and Moscow-based elites, forging the notion “cultural expansion” to be frequently used when it came to the state of relations between local society and surrounding nations. In order to be able to understand whether the issue of separatism had existed and what was the extent of popularity of this phenomenon one should take closer look at both definition and distinct features and qualities that constitute the notion “separatism”.

5.3.1. “Separatism” vs. “regional patriotism”: looking for the difference

Separatism (from French „*separatism*”, and from Latin „*separates*”) — is understood as a determination toward isolation/separation which frequently occurs in national minorities in multinational states which has an aim of creation of independent

states or national-state autonomies.²⁸⁴ In S. Ozhegov`s Dictionary separatism is construed as a „determination toward separation or isolation”.²⁸⁵ In its turn Merriam Webster dictionary identifies this phenomenon as a belief in, movement for, or state of separation (as schism, secession, or segregation).²⁸⁶ Cambridge dictionary suggest the following definition: the belief held by people of a particular race, religion, or other group within a country that they should be independent and have their own government or in some way live apart from other people.²⁸⁷

In a long row of reasons and justifications that might bring about flourishing of separatist sentiments researchers ascertain the following key ones²⁸⁸:

1. Emotional resentment and hatred of rival communities;
2. Protection from ethnic cleansing and genocide;
3. Resistance by victims of oppression, including denigration of their language, culture or religion;
4. Propaganda by those who hope to gain politically from intergroup conflict and hatred;
5. Economic and political dominance of one group that does not share power and privilege in an egalitarian fashion;
6. Detaching from generally accepted stereotypes and sacrificing more time to create happiness more sustainability than the current flow of things;
7. Economic motivations: seeking to end economic exploitation by more powerful group or, conversely, to escape economic redistribution from a richer to a poorer group;

²⁸⁴ Ю.И. Аверьянов (Ред.), *Политология: Энциклопедический словарь*, (Москва: Изд-во МГУ, 1993), 352.

²⁸⁵ Ожегов С.И., *Словарь русского языка*, In Н.Ю. Шведовой (Ред.), 16-е изд., (Москва: Русский язык, 1984), 618.

²⁸⁶ “Separatism”, *Merriam-Webster on-line dictionary*. Available at: <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/separatism>

²⁸⁷ “Separatism in British English”, *Cambridge on-line dictionary*. Available at: <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/separatism>

²⁸⁸ Metta Spencer, *Separatism: Democracy and Disintegration*, (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), 2–4.

8. Preservation of threatened religious, language or other cultural tradition;
9. Destabilization from one separatist movement giving rise to others;
10. Geopolitical power vacuum from breakup of larger states or empires;
11. Continuing fragmentation as more and more states break up;
12. Feeling that the perceived nation was added to the larger state by illegitimate means;
13. The perception that the state can no longer support one's own group or has betrayed their interests;
14. Opposition to political decisions;
15. Wish to have a more practical political structure and not rely on people who are located far away to govern them or otherwise impractical solutions.

It should be pointed out that secessionism as a vehicle of separatism became a means of the national-liberation movement in the colonies/dependent territories/borderlands of the following empires: British, French, Spanish, Russian, Austro-Hungarian and the Ottoman. Nevertheless, the experience of this movement and instances of successful national-liberation campaigns would underscore that the act of liberation itself was an intermediary success: establishment of viable governmental structures was a threshold that many newly established countries did not manage to overcome. This regularity became even more visible with the advent of the Decolonization Act (December 14, 1960) and ensued instability in the former colonies.

This image should be also supplemented by the notion of “irredentism”, which is a radical form of separatism. This phenomenon as an additional incendiary compound to it – it involves third forces that do not shy away from using radical mottoes and exploit historical memory and national grievances, which might lead to ferocious consequences. Speaking about the post-Soviet area, it would be adequate to mention Nagorno-Karabakh (actually, the conflict itself started in the end of the 1980s) that led to enormous bloodshed (the most reserved sources claim the death of at least 200.000 people as a result of hostilities) between Armenia and Azerbaijan and involved third parties.

On the other hand, one of the main claims of the Nazi forces was embedded in the idea of “reuniting of all the Germans” artificially separated, where the issue of Danzig (now Gdansk) and its German community (reflected in the arguments over so-called “Polish Corridor”) became the formal pretext for the German assault against Poland on September 1, 1939.²⁸⁹

The post-Soviet Russia was destined to experience two most widespread types of separatism: ethnic and regional. The former included the cases of Chechnya and Tatarstan, where a strong drive for separatism was based on a desire to build nation-states. The second group was represented by the “Ural Republic”, the “Pomor’ie Republic”, “Oblast of the Army of the Don” and the “Baltic Republic”.²⁹⁰

Incidentally, the last example was closely associated with Kaliningrad Oblast. The beginning of 1990s brought about an array of various concepts (some of them quite plausible²⁹¹) that pertained to potential change of status of Kaliningrad Oblast, which consisted of the following alternatives²⁹²:

1. Attraction of ethnic Germans from the Russian Federation and Central Asian republics to Kaliningrad and establishing a German autonomous republic with the Russian Federation;
2. Transfer of sovereignty under the oblast to Poland and/or Lithuania;
3. Returning of the oblast to Germany;

²⁸⁹ А.Д. Богатурова (Ред.), “События 1918—1945”, Том первый, *Системная история международных отношений. 1918-1991 гг., в 4 т.*, (Москва: Московский рабочий, 2000), Гл. 11.

²⁹⁰ For more information see: Konstantin Fischer, “The Kremlin’s Love and Fear of Separatism”, *Institute of Modern Russia*, November 12, 2015. Available at: <http://imrussia.org/en/analysis/politics/2469-the-kremlin%E2%80%99s-love-and-fear-of-separatism>; Alexandr Litoy, “Separatism in Russia”, *Opendemocracy*, August 29, 2014, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/alexandr-litoy/separatism-in-russia>.

²⁹¹ Евгений Григорьев, Reported in “Москва была готова обсудить будущее Калининграда”, 24.05.2010, *Независимая газета*, Retrieved from: http://www.ng.ru/world/2010-05-24/8_kaliningrad.html.

²⁹² Федоров Г.М., Зверев Ю.М., *Калининградские альтернативы. Социально-экономическое развитие Калининградской области в новых геополитических условиях*, (Калининград: Изд-во КГУ, 1995).

4. Re-establishing of independent East Prussia on the basis of territories of Russia, Poland and Lithuania, whereby establishing some sort of condominium where the locus of decision-making power would have been engrained in a certain joint institution;

5. Creation of the “Fourth Baltic Republic”.

If the definition of “regional separatism” is identified as a desire of regions to hammer out greater concessions from the centre in exchange for greater obedience than the conservative “Moskovskij Komsomolets” did have a kernel of truth while arguing that regional conservative in Kaliningrad did take place, since the main message of the local bureaucratic apparatus boiled down to the following formula: “more powers for non-triviality of the region”²⁹³. Undoubtedly, that the specter of separatism in a physically separated territory produced a rush resentment in the Moscow-based elites. It appeared that the Kremlin was ready to constitutionally legalize a merger between Kaliningrad and Leningrad Oblasts in order to establish a bond between the mainland and the enclave. Furthermore, Moscow established a total control over military and security services stationed in Kaliningrad, whereby evading the blunder previously committed with Chechnya.

Regional patriotism – a phenomenon that has not received much attention from the side of international academic community. It would not be a mistake though to suggest that that greater interest to this relatively understudied activity has been greatly magnified by the outbreak of Ukrainian crisis in 2013. Nonetheless, it would not be entirely correct to side frequently diverging instances of this phenomenon.

Current scholarship contains various interpretations of „regional patriotism”. In this context it would be worthwhile to ascertain three major schools that have made the most visible contribution to the subject²⁹⁴:

1. neo-conservatives;
2. neo-liberals;

²⁹³ Московский комсомолец. 2004. 23 янв. Available at: <http://kominarod.bip.ru/php/news/archnew.phtml?id=6279&idnew=41878&start=595> (Accessed August 14, 2015).

²⁹⁴ Павел Заяц, “Осмысление категории «региональный патриотизм» в системе политического инжиниринга”, In *Юрист-правоведЪ*, 2013, №5, Ростовский юридический институт МВД России, (Ростов-на-Дону, 2013), 73.

3. neo-nationalists.

In any event, it should be deemed instrumental to contend that this area of knowledge required additional and much more thorough study.

5.3.2. *The “Baltic Republican Party”: separatists, “regional patriots” or romantics?*

Perhaps, it would not be a mistake to suggest that the most solid position on the issue pertaining to greater autonomy for Kaliningrad would be assumed by S. Pas`ko who in the year 1992 organized “The Baltic Republican Party” (which was officially registered on December 1, 1993).

The party established its own newspaper (with roughly 3000 copies per month) entitled “Delovaiia Zhizn’”.²⁹⁵ The “Constitution of the Baltic Republic” solemnly declared that: “The Baltic Republic is a sovereign democratic entity with republican form of governance being a subject of international law and associate member of the Russian Federation”. Furthermore, it was declared the capital of the republic should be Konigsberg.²⁹⁶

Incidentally, this brought to light the issue of renaming of Kaliningrad. The main argument encapsulated in this idea was that Mikhail Kalinin (who had been involved in mass repressions of the Stalinist era) had never actually visited the city that was bearing his name. Secondly (and perhaps most importantly), it was argued that the very name of that political actor was dragging Kaliningrad back to its Soviet background hindering initiation of fresh start and effective departure from Communism.

Aside from already mentioned points the party put forth the following objectives:

- Indication of the legal and Constitutional status for the region (very close to demands put forth by Tatarstan);

²⁹⁵ “Председателю общественно-политической организации Калининградской области “Балтийская республиканская партия”, *Деловая жизнь*, 23.08.2002г. № 07/1745, Издание Калининградского союза предпринимателей и Балтийской республиканской партии, <http://www.enet.ru/~baltia/bl020829.html>

²⁹⁶ Source: “Балтийская республиканская партия. Программное заявление. Общие положения”, *Деловая жизнь*, For more information see: <http://www.enet.ru/~baltia/index.html> .

- Signing of the separate treaty of cooperation with the EU (perhaps, given local specific traits this idea did have sense).

The party assembled members of such paths of life as legal professionals, economists, entrepreneurs and intellectuals – so-called “*intelligentsia*”. One of the most noticeable aspects produced by newly established political force was idea of establishing of separate federal budget in Kaliningrad by independently determining its tax policy. Though naïve, romantic and quite unrealistic as they were those sentiments did nevertheless create a steer within Russian conservative and nationalist circles, especially taking into account significant internal transformations that Russia was undergoing (for instance, in the year 1995 the Communist Party was able to gain majority in the Russian Duma).

Despite the fact that the party never actually preached for separatism (in its classic definition) it would soon experience a torrent of wrath emanating from powerful forces within Kaliningrad that launched an assault against its main ideas.

One of the most prominent enemies of the BPR was Vladimir P. Nikitin²⁹⁷ (leader of a national-patriotic society, elected deputy chairman of the regional parliament in June 1993) who being an extremely powerful political figure in Kaliningrad openly claimed that the region must remain as close to Moscow as it possibly could in order to forestall separatism and detrimental influence of the West.

Another step that was explicitly leveled against alleged threat of separatism was the law passed by the Oblast Duma in the year 1994 that strictly prohibited restoration of old German names in the Oblast²⁹⁸, which was explained by concern over protection of the Russian language.

However, in the 1990s those steps were unnecessary – by the end of 1990s the level of sympathy to the West among local residents took a downward trajectory. For instance, according to the sociological poll conducted by the EU, the majority of Kaliningraders negatively assessed NATO`s involvement in the Balkan war, whereby supporting the

²⁹⁷ Source: ГАКО, Никитин Владимир Петрович, In *Большой Энциклопедический словарь Калининградской области*, Электронное издание – справочник, (Калининград: Аксиос, 2011), Available at: http://gako2006.narod.ru/bolshoy_slovar/nikitin_vladimir_petrovich.htm

²⁹⁸ Валерий Панов, reported in “Калининград не будет Кёнигсбергом”, *Столетие*, 09.04.2013, Retrieved from: http://www.stoletie.ru/rossiya_i_mir/kaliningrad_ne_budet_konigsbergom_893.htm.

Serbs (which was in line with sentiments in the rest of Russia²⁹⁹). Therefore, it would be adequate to claim that anti Western sentiments (as a relic of the Soviet mentality based on subconscious level) did occupy significant part of the local outlook.

As a response to the allegedly growing separatism intellectual elites of Kaliningrad came up with the idea of creating a special cultural programme designed specifically for the region. The initiative was to be supported by the Federal center (financial compound) and the local elites (ideas and theoretical frameworks). Chief authors of the programme were A. Klemeshev (Rector of the Kaliningrad State University) and G. Fedorov (illustrious local economist). The main ideas encapsulated in the project could be summed up within the following lines:

- Very limited contacts with the West in order to avoid “westernization” and creation of the conflict between Moscow and its European partners;

- Active promotion of the Russian culture and education in Kaliningrad, whereby creating a positive external image of the Oblast;

- Transformation of Kaliningrad into large-scale education center.

Speaking of the internal perception of their status the majority of Kaliningraders understood themselves as Russians, yet the degree of discontent with Moscow and hopes for changes was evident. According to the sociological poll conducted in the year 1997, 53% of respondents favored special economic treatment of Kaliningrad, approximately 37% expressed neutrality and merely 5% of the locals expressed explicit “nay” when asked.³⁰⁰ On the other hand, results of another poll conducted in the year 1998 revealed

²⁹⁹ Сергей Романенко, “Судьба Югославии в сознании россиян”, In *Общественные науки и современность*, 1996, №6, (Москва 1996), 76-87.; Лев Гудков, reported in “Отношение к США в России и проблема антиамериканизма”, *Полит ру*, 22.05.2002, Retrieved from: <http://polit.ru/article/2002/05/22/479399/>.

³⁰⁰ For more information see: Ivan Samson (ed.), *Kaliningrad Region. The diagnosis of a crisis*, (TACIS Prometee II, Grenoble, Moscow, Kaliningrad, 2000).

very disturbing for the Federal center statistics – more than half of respondents supported deepening and widening of relations with Kaliningrad`s closest neighbor (Poland) and its former motherland (Germany). Moreover, the idea of creation of an independent Baltic Russian State was said to have been supported by approximately 1/3 of Kaliningraders.³⁰¹

In this regarding the BRP was being perceived as an instigator of public dissatisfaction. Finally, in the year 2003 it was officially banned by Kaliningrad Court. After several appeals Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation upheld decision of Kaliningrad Court.³⁰² Nevertheless, its posterity, the newly emerged Kaliningrad regional civil platform “Respublika”³⁰³ adopted and expanded mottoes put forth by its predecessor. Both of those initiatives had a visible trait of liberal – romanticism and contained mostly idealistic wishes of the most progressive share of Kaliningrad population. Nevertheless, signs of dissatisfaction emitted by certain part of the population did in fact suggest that in case of aggravating socio-economic conditions that trend could receive more support.

On the other hand, reflecting upon the possibility of separatism as a phenomenon in Kaliningrad other crucial aspects should be taken into a serious account. Since neither ethnic nor religious separatism cannot be possibly played out (the absolute majority of locals were ethnic Russians) in 1993 an attempt to come up with a thesis of “Baltic Russians” was first undertaken. Moreover, the idea of separatism was extremely valuable for the local elites that could claim more concessions from the centre. Nonetheless, this model should be regarded as highly detrimental, since it would be yielding benefits primarily to the elites – not the oblast. Furthermore, the Kremlin would also be inclined to use a monetary leverage (that would be translated in temporary freezing of the custom privileges) in order to “persuade” local authorities to act more in line with Moscow`s position.

³⁰¹ Vladimir Yemelyanenko, reported in “Kaliningrad at an Impasse”, *Moscow News*, No. 37, 24—30 September 1998.

³⁰² Source: Постановление Конституционного Суда РФ от 1 февраля 2005 г. N 1-П "По делу о проверке конституционности абзацев второго и третьего пункта 2 статьи 3 и пункта 6 статьи 47 Федерального закона "О политических партиях" в связи с жалобой общественно-политической организации "Балтийская республиканская партия". Европейская Конвенция о защите прав человека, Available at: <http://www.echr.ru/documents/doc/6070028/6070028.htm>.

³⁰³ Марина Фихте, reported in “Прусская республика с оранжевым стягом”, *Газета ру.*, 21.02.2005, Available at: http://www.gazeta.ru/2005/02/21/oa_148991.shtml.

In this juncture, both pre- and post-1991 experience of local development in Kaliningrad suggests that the term “separatism” is less relevant than the idea of “self-uniqueness” among other Russian regions. This concept was born in the Soviet Union and transcended to the post-Soviet interim being based on the necessity of compensation for physical separation and inadmissibility of the general for the Russian Federation model of governance for the local environment. As it was pointed out before even during the Soviet period Kaliningraders considered themselves to be distinct from the rest of Russia. Undoubtedly, these feelings experienced exponential growth in the 1990s. This had not only to do with improving economic conditions of the neighboring states (which became widely known thanks to the breach of isolation) but also with the attitude of the Russian mass media and politicians when Kaliningrad was on numerous occasions construed as a “lost part” of the Russian Federation, which quite naturally resulted in the local sources starting to claim that the enclave had been “abandoned” by the centre.

5.3.3. External factors and the issue of irredentism

Any reflections or speculations pertaining to the issue of “Kaliningrad separatism” that had gained particular popularity after disintegration of the USSR (partly as a sign of overall tendencies experienced by the Russian Federation at a time) cannot be possibly conducted without tackling positions of three regional players: Germany, Lithuania and Poland. This has primarily to do with the fact that these states have been bind with Kaliningrad Oblast with a myriad of ties dating back for hundreds of years. Incidentally, the scope and the extent of these bonds between the westernmost Russian region (to be more precise, the land currently occupied by Kaliningrad Oblast) and the aforementioned actors is much more complicated and multifaceted than those with Moscow. This discourse attains totally different and meaning taken into account worsening relations between the West and the Russian Federation as well as growing fear of foreign involvement in Russian internal affairs.

Germany

Founded by the Teutonic Knights in the year 1255 Königsberg would soon become one of the main military strongholds of the Order on the shores of the Baltic Sea.

It would also be worth remembering that while being the capital of the Duchy of Prussia (1525-1701) and East Prussia (until 1945) the city was performing the role of the coronation city of the Prussian monarchy until the year 1701, which had a very symbolic meaning for both Germany as a country and Germans as a nation. Moreover, Königsberg came to be associated with truly outstanding scholars, writers, inventors and intellectuals whose names have become an integral part of the global intellectual heritage. Undoubtedly, this would be naïve to presume that historical cord that had for centuries bind Königsberg with the rest of German lands would be immediately destroyed with the advent of the Soviet armed forces in April 1945 and forthcoming eviction of German population that was replaced by the Soviet citizens. Perhaps, it would not be an understatement to claim that the so-called “Kaliningrad question”³⁰⁴ that appeared right from the beginning of the early 1990s had mainly to do with two major overlapping factors: appalling economic conditions that were not mitigated by Moscow and historical memory (frequently exaggerated to a much larger extent) still present among certain layers of German society. Furthermore, in comparison with other actors that will be discussed later it was only the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) that could divert significant financial means for recuperation of economically weak Kaliningrad Oblast. On the other hand, Russian economic, political and military weakness stemming from the collapse of the USSR inspired many foreign intellectuals to openly claim that the pertinence of Kaliningrad to the Russian Federation should be considered as an “error of history”³⁰⁵ which was to have been rectified. These and other similar opinions did not find any palpable support from the side of official German authorities. Reflecting about the roots of such a behavior of the Germans it would not be superfluous to indicate at least two main factors. On the one hand, the FRG had to deal with rather painful (primarily in terms of economics) consequences or integration with the German Democratic Republic (GDR). On the other hand, Bonn (and later Berlin) did not want to address the “Kaliningrad question” and thereby jeopardize the process of normalization of relations with Moscow which (among other crucial factors) could have thwarted withdrawal of Russian troops from the territory of Germany.

³⁰⁴ “Germany in secret talks with Russia to take back Königsberg”, *The Telegraph*, January 21, 2001, Retrieved from: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/russia/1318819/Germany-in-secret-talks-with-Russia-to-take-back-Konigsberg.html>.

³⁰⁵ Gabrielle Tétrault-Farber, reported in „If Russia Gets Crimea, Should Germany Get Kaliningrad?“, *The Moscow Times*, March 20, 2014, Retrieved from: <https://themoscowtimes.com/news/if-russia-gets-crimea-should-germany-get-kaliningrad-33194>.

In spite of explicit position on Kaliningrad assumed by official German authorities as well as the overall friendly tone (and actions) in relations with the Russian Federation displayed by German top rank officials Moscow (and raising national-patriotic forces) apparently felt ill at ease with any potential involvement of Germany in affairs of Kaliningrad Oblast.

Even such seemingly innocent activities as joint cultural projects, expansion of economic and political cooperation were frequently construed as a sign of “creeping Germanization” of Kaliningrad. Reflecting about external factors and the topic of “Kaliningrad separatism” it would be quite curious to highlight certain correlation between its re-appearing on the public display and the state of relations between Moscow and its European partners. Once relations between the Kremlin and Western actors started to develop along the downward trajectory the aforementioned issue will be hoisted once again and vice versa. Moreover, it should also be stated that so-called “Kaliningrad question” would occupy very distinctive place in rhetorical escapades of national-populist forces both in Germany and Russia which would be particularly visible in the twenty first century.

Lithuania

Known in Lithuania as Karaliaučius (the King Mountain) this area has indeed acquired somewhat sacral meaning for the Lithuanians. It would not be an exaggeration to suggest that is widely associated with emergence and development of Lithuanian cultural and intellectual traditions. So-called Albertina (University of Königsberg) would become a major center of Protestant Lithuanian culture and studies. Such Lithuanian scholars as Abraomas Kulvietis, Stanislovas Rapalionis and Daniel Klein (who published the first Lithuanian grammar book in Königsberg in 1653³⁰⁶) worked in this city. On the other hand, known as the “Lithuanian Pushkin” Christionas Donelaitis (who is considered to be the father of Lithuanian literature) spent some time in Königsberg.

Visible historical, cultural and geographic ties between Kaliningrad Oblast and Lithuania have engendered a highly debatable concept that came to be known as the “Lithuania Minor”. This definition first appeared in the dictionary of Lithuanian

³⁰⁶ Walenty Piłat (Ed.), *W kręgu kultur bałtyckich*, (Olsztyn: Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna, 1998), 82.

nationalist circles as early as in the year 1988 (incidentally, when the USSR was still intact). According to Kaliningrad-based historian Prof. Vitaly Maslov during the Gorbachev period the Lithuanians had “discovered” a map of the “Lithuania Minor” where Kaliningrad Oblast was its integral part. This “proof” was considered sufficient for a claim put forward by certain groups of Lithuanian society on Kaliningrad. Namely, it was stated that Lithuanian names (designated on the map) of certain towns and villages situated on the territory of Kaliningrad Oblast in the 15th and the 16th centuries could and should be projected onto the 13th century (the time of arrival of the Teutonic Knights) as well.

In the meantime, historical right of Vilnius on Kaliningrad Oblast would be time and again reiterated by the top-rank Lithuanian politicians (with particular acuteness and resonance either prior to presidential/parliamentary elections or during/before talks with western counterparts). „Kaliningrad Oblast is a cradle of Lithuanian arts, sciences and cultures but we are threatened with the weapons here” – this was once stated by the President of Lithuania³⁰⁷. Incidentally, political forces sticking to national-patriotic orientation have been exploiting a topic related to the legal status of Kaliningrad with increasing frequency ever since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Starting from the year 1985 so-called the “Council on affairs in Lithuania Minor” has been put into operation under the auspices of the Lithuanian Parliament. Among other goals it was stated that activities of the Council were primarily concerned with a change of legal status of Kaliningrad Oblast as a response to the “colonization and occupation of this part of Lithuania”.

Starting from the early 1990s and the de-facto acquisition of independence by Lithuania its top-rank officials, politicians and public figures would frequently appeal to a burning necessity to rectify the unjust wrongdoings of the Soviet regime, which also meant changing status of Kaliningrad Oblast. In the year 1993 Ambassador of Lithuania to the US firmly stated that Kaliningrad is a part of Lithuanian territory. From his side in the year 1995 one of the most influential Lithuanian politicians (he was the Head of the Parliament at a time) Vytautas Landsbergis claimed that the end of the Second World

³⁰⁷ Александра Таранова, reported in „С легкой претензией на Калининград”, *Новая газета*, 26.09.2014, Retrieved from: <http://www.novayagazeta.ru/comments/65443.html> .

War did not bring any clarification to the issue of legal status of Kaliningrad Oblast³⁰⁸. In the meantime, in December 1997 Speaker of the Lithuanian Parliament Romualdas Ozolas (who incidentally was one of the chief architects of contemporary Lithuanian nationalist ideology) made very similar statement that also concerned legal status of Kaliningrad Oblast. In the course of his speech the Lithuanian politician famously called Kaliningrad the “Forth Baltic Republic”³⁰⁹ thereby explicitly pointing at historical, cultural and geographic adherence of the Russian region to the European pole.

Aside from sound rhetorical escapades that aimed to tackle the issue of Kaliningrad the so-called “Council for Lithuania Minor” also undertook significant practical efforts. For instance, within 1992 – 94 the organization arranged and carried out a series of campaigns that intended to prove the “right” of Lithuania on this territory on the basis of historical narrative maintained and supported by the Lithuanians. In the year 1994 the Council issued a number of posters that were transferred to Kaliningrad. Those were entitled “Fifty Years of Genocide of Lithuania Minor”, which among other things stated that:

“Soviet genocide started when, on 16 October 1944, the Army of the Belarussian third front invaded the Königsberg region. A propagandist of the front headquarters, writer Ilja Ehrenburg, inspired this genocide by declaring: Kill! There is no one among you who would not find a guilty German. The first officially registered massacre took place on 21 October in Nemerkiemis (germ. Nemmersdorf, near Gumbinè), where Red Army soldiers raped and, after that, murdered them in sadistic way 72 women (even 12 years old girls and a 84 years old woman). The same occurred in the whole Königsberg region, i.e., near Ragainè 20 soldiers raped a local Lithuanian and, after that, in the presence of her children splashed her with petrol and burned her. The nationals, who had lived through the first stage of the red terror, were put into Königsberg, Isrutic, Prussian, Ylavan, Gastic, Tolminkiemis concentration camps, where they died from frost, diseases, and famine. In this way, over 300,000 people were exterminated - some 130,000 of them of the Prussian and Lithuanian origin. In 1947, only 102,000 natives were left in the Königsberg region and, in 1949, most of them were deported to Germany. In 1947, the

³⁰⁸ Vyacheslav Samoylov, “Bring Karaliaučius back!”: Why does Lithuania need Russian Kaliningrad?, *EADaily*, May 1, 2015, Retrieved from: <https://eadaily.com/en/news/2015/05/01/bring-karaliaucius-back-why-does-lithuania-need-russian-kaliningrad>

³⁰⁹ „Калининград: кругом проблемы и враги”, *Новый Калининград*, 11.08.2007, Retrieved from: <https://www.newkaliningrad.ru/news/politics/279313-.html> .

*Council of Lithuania Minor - re-established in Fulda, Germany - issued a declaration protesting genocide in the Königsberg (Tvangste) region and its colonization by Soviet Union. The United Nations Convention, adopted on 9 December 1948, defines genocide as a crime against humanity, violating international law and having no time limitation”.*³¹⁰

The year 2001 brought about a new lap of ideological tensions between Vilnius and Moscow, which immediately brought to light the issue of Kaliningrad in Lithuanian intellectual space. In October of the same year a conference “Unsettled problems of Karaliaučius territory” was carried out in Lithuania, which would once again reiterate points that had been made before regarding the Russian westernmost region.

Having underscored these issues, one should not be deceived or confused by bellicose expansionist talk produced by the Lithuanian side. It goes without saying that Vilnius was in no position to “digest” any potential territorial aggrandizements taking into account its relative economic feebleness and apparent mismatch between ambitions and military strength. Nevertheless, it would not be fully correct to ascribe these sentiments to the activities of certain external powers that may have been able to somehow influence the stance of Vilnius. Undoubtedly, while trying to understand the nature of this phenomenon one should take closer look to the historical experience of Lithuanian – in particular within 1940 – 1945 – when the country would first become a part of the Soviet Union as a result of a secret arrangement between Moscow and Berlin and later taken under effective control (occupied) by the Red Army and re-integrated (forcefully absorbed) by the USSR. Furthermore, as it has been discussed previously the interim within 1945 – 1991 should also be kept in mind. In particular the role of heavily militarized Kaliningrad Oblast that would be used by Moscow as a means of pressure on the Baltic States (naturally, including Lithuania as the closest one) and Poland.

Poland

Bordered in the south by Poland Kaliningrad is also bind to this country with numerous historic, cultural and political ties stretching to the middle Ages. Frequently referred to in Poland as Królewiec, this city does indeed occupy very special place in

³¹⁰ For more information: „Genocides in Prussia and Lithuania Minor”, Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2002/may/01/news.features11>

development of Polish culture, arts and scientific traditions. In fact, it would not be an understatement to claim that intellectual traditions of Königsberg are inseparable from Polish influence.³¹¹ This allowed Edwin Franciszek Kozłowski to write that: "Polish foundation, Polish culture and Polish heritage lies at the heart of the University of Königsberg, college, made famous by Immanuel Kant, and its name derives from Albertina Prince Albrecht, the Polish faithful vassal."³¹² Also, a constellation of genuinely outstanding Polish professors had worked at Albertina simultaneously enriching local cultural tradition and leaving a significant mark that was visible throughout centuries lasting until the beginning of the Second World War.

Nonetheless, it should be admitted that in spite of quite palpable bond between history of Kaliningrad Oblast and Poland it would be rather difficult (if possible at all) to recall Polish official politicians to pursue the same line of arguments encountered in case of Lithuania. In effect, Warsaw tried to pursue very cautious course instead concentrating its efforts on the matters related to economic cooperation with the region and trying to take an advantage of its dependence on materials and commodities from abroad.

Chapter 6. Searching for remedy

The immediate shock caused by an avalanche of economic and political challenges posed by various difficulties associated with the post-Communist transformation as well as the example of some former members of the Socialist Camp produced a number of projects aiming to tackle the issue of Kaliningrad and produce a plan of recovery from this struggling part of the Russian Federation. However, it is clear that the Russian elites lacked the most crucial element indispensable for finding a solution – there was no understanding of Kaliningrad and the nature of challenges it was facing. Perhaps, that is why the predominant trend in the course of reflections about the enclave/exclave was filled with a great number of surreal or semi-real scenarios rather

³¹¹ Janusz Małek, *Dwie części Prus: studia z dziejów Prus Książęcych i Prus Królewskich w XVI i XVII wieku*, (Olsztyn: Wydawn. Pojezierze, 1987), 193.

³¹² Edwin Franciszek Kozłowski, *Okładka Uniwersytet w Królewcu: zapomniana uczelnia Rzeczypospolitej 1544-1994*, (Gdańsk, 1994).

detached from the reality. This could be easily explained by rapid changes triggered by the globalization process and the effect brought about by the collapse of the vast Soviet Empire. On the other hand, the “parade of sovereignties” induced most active reformists to come up with ideas that implied drastic transformations. In this regard it would not be superfluous to take closer look at the most well-known ideas and projects that had primarily to do with the issue of normalization and stabilization of situation in Kaliningrad within the first post-Soviet decade.

6.1. The liberal approach

Ever since the illustrious debate between the Slavophiles and Westernizers that in many ways became a landmark event for the Russian intellectual history of the nineteenth century the Russian society has been bearing a mark of visible division, which could be formulated in a short question: where does Russia belong and which path it should follow?

By virtue of its geography and history post-Soviet Kaliningrad (or at least part of its elites) could not have possibly escaped from the prospect of being enchanted to develop closer ties with Europe. First ideas that envisaged vital economic and socio-political reforms in Kaliningrad Oblast (with emphasis of liberal capitalism over state control and closer ties with European countries) were voiced as early as in 1990-91.

In the year 1992 a portion of legislation that was to liberalize regional tax policy to even greater extent was adopted. In addition to tax and tariffs liberalization Kaliningrad was promised to receive full influence over its land resources and to be granted greater autonomy in the domain of foreign economic activities (particularly, in registration of foreign firms).³¹³

Aside from purely economic compound to it, these reforms had yet another common denominator: these were primarily championed by the first governor of Kaliningrad Oblast Yurii Matochkin (1991 - 1996), a scholar, experienced manager and

³¹³ For more information see: Heike Dörrenbächer, „Die Sonderwirtschaftszone Jantar’ von Kaliningrad (Königsberg). Bilanz und Perspektiven“, In: *Forschungsinstitut der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik*, e.V. 1994, (Bonn, 1994), 38–42.

an admirer of greater liberalization both in the domain of politics and economics. It appeared that the new set of opportunities emerged after the Federation Treaties had been signed (1992). Incidentally, these were the governor and his team who would first come up with an idea of transforming Kaliningrad Oblast into the “Baltic Hong Kong” (1993)³¹⁴. Matochkin was not prone toward any radical solutions of the “Kaliningrad puzzle”, instead the main emphasis was to be made on changing a role of Kaliningrad from either an “area of conflict” or “isolated island” (which it used to play before the year 1991) into a “bridge” between Russia and the wider Europe.

Incidentally, in spite of their experimental nature the aforementioned initiatives did have positive (though palliative) effect on the local economy (both macro and micro). For instance, Kaliningrad was able to evade high rates of unemployment (which in fact was extremely low) because of the duty and tax-free import for foreign goods on the territory of the Oblast. The overall bulk of goods exported from the Oblast over imports remained at the level of 100%. This led to the fact that by the total number of small businesses Kaliningrad was able to occupy second position after Moscow in the national ranking³¹⁵. Indeed, within the period 1991 – 2000 the Oblast did have a number of unique opportunities which could have been used on greater scale. Reflecting upon undisputed benefits Kaliningrad Oblast had over its Russian competitors, one should be able to distinguish the following ones:

- Already granted vast economic privileges (at least declaratively);
- Nonexistence of major ethnic or military conflicts (this factor did disqualify the entire Southern region of the Russian Federation due to the outreach of the Chechen campaign and overall high level of criminalization);
- Relatively satisfactory industrial and social infrastructures (compared to other Russian regions);

³¹⁴ For more information see: Sergey Sukhankin, “A Story of One Unsuccessful “Island” Kaliningrad 1991- 2010: from “Baltic Hong Kong” to the Center dependent entity”, *Tiempo Devorado. Revista de Historia Actual*, N1, December 2014, (Barcelona, 2014), 1-16.

³¹⁵ Константин Смирнов, “Особая зона упущенных возможностей”, *ТКС*, 29.05.2001, For more information see: <http://www.tks.ru/reviews/2001/05/29/06/print>.

- Unfreezing ports and favorable climate conditions;
- Presence of railways of both Russian and European width;
- Historical background and cultural ties with Europe, which could have turned Kaliningrad into a venue of joint initiatives between the EU and the Russian Federation.

Regretfully, plans worked out by Matochkin and his cohorts would not work out as planned. Perhaps, the Kremlin that was being torn apart by the strife for power had neither interest nor resources to deal with Kaliningrad, treating the problem as a mere trifle. On the other hand, it might have stemmed from other instances of separatism that (unlike in Kaliningrad) did outgrow into a bloody strife. In any event, Moscow did not accept (or simply underestimated) the famous Chinese motto in scopes of relations with Hong Kong illuminating the possibility of existence of two systems under the roof of one state.

6.2. Between liberalism and daydreaming

Meanwhile, the tumultuous 1990s engendered a broad and frequently incoherent array of liberal (frequently openly demagogic and populist in nature) projects that aimed to tackle Kaliningrad. For instance, Vladimir Shumeiko who used to occupy position of the Oblast special representative in the Federation Council claimed granting of even broader autonomy for Kaliningrad Oblast as the most vital and indispensable element of its progress. According to his idea, Kaliningrad should have been transformed into either FEZ with significant autonomy or even be granted status of “special political entity”. Having recognized and taken into account numerous difficulties and the overall seriousness of competition with adjacent states, Shumeiko presumed that Kaliningrad could be turned into potentially lucrative venue for international business congresses, fares, symposiums and a center of tourism in the Baltic Sea (of course, provided that necessary legal actions pertaining to visa free regime were to have been done). On the other hand, Boris Nemtsov who became leader of the Union of Right Forces Party presented somewhat populist yet quite noticeable project that revolved around an idea of granting “maximum economic and administrative independence” for Kaliningrad as a

main remedy for its ineffectiveness and economic feebleness. Extremely progressive for its time idea (although utterly unrealistic given political environment in Russia) was presented by его в статье Mikhail Prusak who was the head of administration of Novgorod Oblast (incidentally, this region had become the flagman of Russia – Europe partnership). The essence of this proposal included the twofold approach to Kaliningrad that was to have been headed by special presidential envoy and a possibility for this administrative unite to become an associate (or even full) member of the European Union, whereby simultaneously remaining a part of the Russian Federation³¹⁶. On the other hand, extremely unexpected ideas regarding future of Kaliningrad Oblast were emanating from the side of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) that firmly stood on principles of Russian neo-imperial nationalism and anti-Americanism.

Another group of initiatives was concerned with a change of political status of Kaliningrad from above: namely, so than the Kremlin would concede to change its legal status and thereby avoid huge financial injections to the stagnating area.

One of the first such ideas appeared as early as 1988 (when the USSR was still intact). It was voiced by a member of the Trustee Board of the “Deutsche Bank” V. Kristians, who presumed that Kaliningrad Oblast should be turned into some sort of a “joint corporation” functioning under the guidance of the USSR and the FRG – so called “K project”³¹⁷. For obvious reasons this idea was quite utopist and would not be destined to materialize.

Russian liberal academics also upheld an idea of establishment of so-called “Russian state concerns” whose subjects were to the land plots, natural resources and equity shares of various locally based firms. According to this project this initiative was supposed to create an international precedent without any abridgement of the Russian sovereignty over the territory of Kaliningrad Oblast and would subsequently become the first instance of joint governance over a portion of territory³¹⁸. The main idea embedded in this project could be summarized in the following mechanism: since Russia did not possess sufficient resources to secure economic growth and prosperity of its westernmost region, the only

³¹⁶ “Станет ли область республикой”, *Деловая жизнь*, 07.05.2001. Available at: <http://www.enet.ru/~baltia/bl010515.html>.

³¹⁷ Кристианс В., “Особая промышленная”, In *Новое время*, 1989, № 37, 24 - 28.

³¹⁸ “Концепция регионального развития Калининградской области Российской Федерации”, Центр политической конъюнктуры России, (Москва, 1994), 28, 116.

option available was to opt for closer ties with European countries. This idea came to be known as the “pilot region” project³¹⁹, whose main aim was the „way of export-oriented integration of Kaliningrad into the economic realm of the EU.”³²⁰

This project was further developed by “Kiel International Group of experts on Kaliningrad” that acknowledged unfeasibility of economic model established in Kaliningrad, stating that the local economy “was seriously ill and required prompt reanimation”³²¹. Incidentally, the idea of “pilot project” was at certain point supported by Vladimir Putin³²² though some representatives of research community had numerous doubts about Putin`s real goal in concurring with this thesis.

On the other hand, some members of Russian intellectual community went as far as to publicly recognize the fact that the Russian Federation could no longer exercise effective control over Kaliningrad, therefore it was proposed “while choosing between the hammer and the anvil to sell the oblast to Germany and establish a strong link between Moscow and Berlin.”³²³

6.3 The “United Opposition” and the question of Kaliningrad

President Yeltsin and his infamous phrase uttered in Kazan (the capital of Tatarstan) about the quantities of sovereignty that each subject of the Russian Federation was entitled to enjoy would produce a negative reaction from so-called “patriotic” forces that would rely on populist mottoes as a means to attract votes and public support. These forces severely criticized political decisions of Moscow in the domain of both foreign and internal policies and particularly emphasized supremacy of “national interests” over other aspects. Incidentally, this critique would grow proportionately to the worsening economic

³¹⁹ Наталия Смородинская, *Калининградский эксклав: перспектива трансформации в пилотный регион*, (Москва: Институт экономики РАН, 2001), 36.

³²⁰ Смородинская Н.В., Жуков С.В., *Калининградский анклав в Европе: заплыв против течения. Диагностика состояния и возможностей экономического развития*, (Москва: Институт Восток-Запад, 2003).

³²¹ “В фокусе — Калининград. Политические рекомендации с точки зрения разрешения проблем”, *In Калининград вызов. Варианты развития и рекомендации, Международная целевая группа экспертов по Калининграду*, Доклад, SCHIFF-texte Nr 67/ russisch, 2002, с. 22.

³²² Александр Куранов, “Калининград: проблемы могут подыгрывать сепаратизму”, *Русский Вопрос*, No-2002/3, Available at: <http://www.russkiivopros.com/print.php?id=158>

³²³ Николай Нартов, *Геополитика. Учебник*, In В.И. Староверов (Ред.), (Москва: ЮНИТИ, 1999), с. 207; 2-е изд., 2002, 247.

conditions and evaporating public support for liberal experiments undertaken in dawn of the Yeltsin presidency.

In this regard, the key players that should be mentioned were: Russian All-People's Union (ROS), Russian National Council (RNS), the National Salvation Front (FNS) and many other groups and movements that represented similar ideas. This became a somewhat unique and quite an unexpected alliance that united ideologies from conflicting poles of the Russian political spectrum. Even though the main stream of ideas did not coincide with official position of Moscow, many elements would later be borrowed by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs anyway³²⁴. For obvious reasons the main arguments of this agglomeration of movements were concerned with Russian foreign policy, its directions and the impact on the Russian statehood: the Kuril and Crimean problems, NATO eastward expansion and vicissitude of the Russian speaking minorities on the post-Soviet countries (especially the Baltic States). So-called “Kaliningrad direction” would be first seriously tackled in an article by P. Artem`iev entitled “About the conception of foreign policy of patriotic forces.”³²⁵

Deeper analysis of the text gives an impression that in his ideas the author was close to the Front of the National Liberation, which also flows from the fact that the article was published in a newspaper “Our Russia”, which was said to be some sort of a speaking tube of this ideological force.

In the many respects the following quotation does reflect (in most general terms) not only the state of affairs in Kaliningrad yet also its perception by Russian elites as well: “it appeared that the processes related to NATO expansion (to be more precise, the way the Russian side construed it) has had a profound and quite negative effect on contemporary state of affairs in Kaliningrad Oblast. Before Russia and NATO member-states had found a common denominator for cooperation the oblast was perceived by Russian military command as a strategic point which would have created problems for NATO in case of potential military conflict. The overwhelming bulk of attention was paid to so-called “military-strategic” questions which overshadowed other issues. These policies resulted in a chaotic crumbling of day-to-day problems, which became even more

³²⁴ Артем Фоменков, “Внешняя политика РФ глазами российской объединенной оппозиции начала 1990-х гг.”, In *Нижегородский журнал международных исследований*, (Н. Новгород, 2005), 40.

³²⁵ Артемьев П., “О концепции внешней политики патриотических сил”, In *Наша Россия*, 1992, №20(44).

visible today after Kaliningrad has lost its position as one of the main military bastions.”³²⁶

On the other hand, Russian “patriotic” forces were particularly alerted by alleged spreading of separatist trends in Kaliningrad (not any other Russian region) since this would have created an extremely dangerous precedent “with separatism emanating from ethnic Russian population.”³²⁷

6.4. Nationalist and neo-imperialist projects

Reflecting about projects put forth by the nationalist fraction of Russian political and intellectual milieu, it would be valuable to primarily concentrate on the following ones.

Such politicians as Vladimir Zhirinovskiy and Alexey Mitrofanov in a series of articles they revealed potential profitability of ceding of the Oblast to the Federal Republic of Germany as a part of a grand geopolitical plan that was supposed to establish anti-American axis on the Eurasian continent, whereby trying to exploit and resurrect remnants of nostalgia within nationalist circles in Germany³²⁸. In any event, naïve and separated from reality projects as they might have been deemed at the time, minted by liberal and populist circles within 1990 – 1999, projects and proposals regarding Kaliningrad underscored two vital elements. First, unique geopolitical location that Kaliningrad was endowed with should have been exploited to the fullest extent possible. Secondly, only close collaboration between Russia and European political, economic and intellectual circles could have established steady framework for the inception of dialogue regarding Kaliningrad. Attempts of either party to conduct unilateral steps were to produce mutual suspicion and hindered constructive dialogue.

³²⁶ Дмитрий Кацы, “Калининградская проблема и интересы России, Россия и Европейский союз в большой Европе: новые возможности и старые барьеры”, *Международная научная конференция*, Санкт-Петербург, 20—21 сентября 2002 года. (СПб., 2002), с. 91

³²⁷ Леонид Смирнягин, “Калининградская проблема: сенсация, которой могло не быть”, *Брифинг Московского центра Карнеги*, Т. 4, (Москва, 2002).

³²⁸ For more information see: *Izvestiya*, 7 April 1997; Алексей Митрофанов, *Шаги новой геополитики*, (Москва: Русский вестник, 1997), 190-193.

Another position that most certainly deserves mentioning was the one presented by one of the founding fathers of contemporary Russian Eurasionism – Alexandr Dugin and his “third way” theory³²⁹ as well as Vadim Tsumbulskii and his “Island Russia”³³⁰. This idea may sound outlandish now (especially taking into account Moscow-backed activities in the area) though in the tumultuous 1990s they did enjoy certain level of popularity. According to Dugin`s vision Kaliningrad should have been ceded to Germany as a part of a “grad bargain” meant to foster an alliance between these two major geopolitical centres of Eurasia as a response to American power (identified as Leviathan).³³¹

Chapter 7. The “Euroregion”, the “Northern Dimension” initiative and the “pilot region” project: was the breakthrough possible?

This segment of research will be primarily devoted to an extremely debatable and highly sensitive topic – external cooperation of Kaliningrad Oblast as an alternative path of development. Namely, the goal is to discuss prospects and opportunities stemming from this prospect. In particular, the following high-profile initiatives as “Euroregion”, the “Northern Dimension” and the “pilot region” will occupy the central place in the discussion.

7.1. The „Euroregion” initiative: essence, background and main principles

³²⁹ Александр Дугин, “Третий путь и третья сила. О геополитике евразийской интеграции”, In *Изборский клуб*, 29.05.2013, Available at: <http://www.izborsk-club.ru/content/articles/1300/>

³³⁰ Борис Межуев, “Остров Россия”: время и место одной историософской концепции”, In *Российское экспертное обозрение*, в № 5 (19), 2006. Available at: http://www.archipelag.ru/ru_mir/ostrov-rus/cymbur/ostrov/.

³³¹ “Как выглядит Российская Евразия у Александра Дугина”, In *Толкователь*, 11.02.2014, Available at: <http://tolk.ru/2014/02/11/%d0%ba%d0%b0%d0%ba-%d0%b2%d1%8b%d0%b3%d0%bb%d1%8f%d0%b4%d0%b8%d1%82-%d1%80%d0%be%d1%81%d1%81%d0%b8%d0%b9%d1%81%d0%ba%d0%b0%d1%8f-%d0%b5%d0%b2%d1%80%d0%b0%d0%b7%d0%b8%d1%8f-%d1%83-%d0%b0%d0%bb%d0%b5/> .

In comparison to other Russian regions Kaliningrad wields a unique geopolitical location – it is fully surrounded by European countries (Poland and Lithuania) which from their part are integral elements of a larger supranational entity (since the year 2004, although the accession talks had started much earlier). Undoubtedly, this position naturally makes the westernmost part of the Russian Federation as a region where cooperation between Russia and the EU should be seen as a matter of vital necessity, not coercion. In this context, it was assumed that the idea of so-called “Euroregions” could be used as a framework for proliferation of interactions between Kaliningrad Oblast and neighboring states (at least at the first stage).

Speaking about the background of this project one should be aware of the fact that the main hopes of the chief architects of the initiative were based on successful experience of other similar programs that had been carried out in Europe since 1958. To be precise, one could recall successfulness of the experiment that was carried out in Netherlands and Germany (countries that for decades had been divided by visible mutual animosity).

First Euroregions were primarily used in order to:

- Attain freedom of movement between peoples residing in the border territories;
- Freedom of movements of goods and services;
- Overcoming of language barriers and elimination of various historical prejudices;
- Synchronization of economic development of the territories in question;
- Creation of the Common Economic Space (CES).

As practice had explicitly displayed achieving such a deep level of integration on regional level required mutual understanding between the actors involved. Another key requirement to be fulfilled was recognition of the commonality of destiny between the actors involved supplemented by existence of common and collective purposes.

It could be argued that in Europe the “Euroregion” experience must have had a positive effect. This was corroborated by the fact that in the year 1971 an Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) that assembled as many as 90 Euroregions from all around Europe was initiated and put into operation.

Speaking about distinctive features of the concept “Euroregion” it needs to be highlighted that the key notions embedded in it stemmed from a number of principles revolved around “Europe” and “European” as a common denominator. Incidentally, the same principle was maintained even in spite of the fact that certain actors were not members of the EU, yet aspired to be integrated in this supranational entity, which once again underscored the commonality of destiny as a pivotal stimulus of integration.³³²

In this regard yet another crucial detail needs to be acknowledged: municipalities of the regions cooperating in scopes of this initiative were granted a unique opportunity to exercise their joint decision-making initiatives in such spheres as:

- Border infrastructure;
- Migration and employment;
- Cultural exchange;
- Ecologic security.

On the other front, it should be argued that while assessing the effectiveness of the aforementioned initiatives many European experts and intellectuals have voiced their positive opinion of it. Namely, it has been argued that the launching of “Euroregion” initiative in countries-candidates that bided for membership in the European Union had had a profound impact allowing these actors to get acquainted with European norms, standards, and requirements thereby facilitating the process of overcoming existing disparity between conditions in the EU and in the candidate-states.

Following this logic Kaliningrad Oblast was also hoped to display signs of growth and stability once it was to be given an opportunity to take part in projects of this sort, especially taking into consideration its geographic proximity to such rapidly developing

³³²Г. В. Крети́нин, В. А. Беспалов, “Еврорегионы с участием Калининградской области: ренессанс или стагнация?”, *Российский Институт Стратегических Исследований*, 28.09.2010, Available at: <http://riss.ru/analytics/2287/> .

states (aspiring to join the EU in a foreseeable future) as Lithuania and Poland on the one hand and mature EU member as for instance Scandinavian countries that had acquired significant experience in the domain of international cooperation on various levels (including the regional one).

7.1.1. Kaliningrad Oblast in the „Euroregion” initiative³³³

The second half of 1990s presented Kaliningrad Oblast very promising opportunity to be integrated in the Neman “Euroregion” (that was formed in June 1997), which assembled Grodno Oblast (Belarus), Suwalki Voivodship (Poland), Alytus and Marjampole Municipalities (Lithuania).

According to the project the eastern part of Kaliningrad Oblast was to have joined the “Euroregion”, whereby intensifying trans-border cooperation with adjacent territory of Lithuania. Unfortunately, because of technical shortcomings and a great deal of lingering displayed by the Russian side Kaliningrad could not join the initiative in a due course. This changed only in the year 2002, when Ozersk and Nesterov (town situated in Kaliningrad Oblast) became a part of the program, which significantly affected posture of the Russian side in the project. Furthermore, as the course of events would reveal the Russians did not seem to be particularly excited with the prospect of expansion of cooperation instead concentrating on specific narrowly-defined agendas.

On the other hand, extremely promising though quite fruitless was subsequent experience of Kaliningrad Oblast. In the year 1998 in Malbork (Poland) Kaliningrad Oblast became a new member of an extremely ambitious initiative that (aside from parts of the Russian Federation) included 9 regions from 6 different countries of the Baltic Sea region, namely: Sweden (Kronoberg, Kalmar and Blekinge Counties), Denmark (Bornholm), Poland (Pomeranian and Warmian-Masurian Voivodeships), Lithuania (Klaipeda District) and Latvia (Liepāja region). The project was entitled “Euroregion Baltic”. It would not be an exaggeration to presume that this initiative was one of the most comprehensive and daring actions that not only included members of both “old” and the

³³³ This theme has been extensively research in: Sergey Sukhankin, “Russian Regionalism in Action: The Case of the Northwestern Federal District,” *Journal of Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies*, No. 1, Columbia University Press (2018) (forthcoming).

would-be “new” Europe, yet parts of the Russian Federation as well. For Kaliningrad an ability to take part in a project of such scale could have become an excellent opportunity to enhance scopes of its external cooperation and borrow from experience of its European partners.

These arguments were amplified to even greater extent taking into consideration that the project aimed to tackle such vital areas as development of investment activities, infrastructure and transport as well as upgrading living conditions – domains of public life that did require serious attention taking into consideration local milieu. On the other hand, the key idea encapsulated in the “Euroregion Baltic” was harmonization of cooperation between parties involved and facilitation of improving of economic conditions on the basis of jointly conducted initiatives. Moreover, it would not be superfluous to reiterate that particular emphasis was to be made on development of competitiveness as a pivotal element of successful market-oriented economy.³³⁴ For Kaliningrad that by virtue of its historical development lacked strong tradition of competition development of this mechanism appeared to be indispensable for maintaining sustainable economic growth.

All in all, the main goals set up by all parties involved could be identified the following ones:

1. Increasing of life quality and well-being among population of the Euroregion;
2. Attaining harmonization in the life quality rates among population of respective countries involved in the initiative;
3. Promotion of mutually beneficial contacts;
4. Eradication of historically-based prejudices;
5. Achieving sustainable development;
6. Conducting actions aimed to foster and boost cooperation between local and regional authorities.

³³⁴ Виктор Кошелев, “Еврорегион «Балтика»”, In *Космополис*, лето 2008, № 2 (21), сс.86-90.

Therefore, it may be argued that the goals embedded in the initiatives did not deflect from the ones discussed in scopes of first Euroregions.

Regretfully, this initiative did not work out for Kaliningrad in a way it had been hoped for. As it turned out agendas declared by creators of the Euroregion (in particular, active interactions between respective NGO`s, people-to-people contacts, exchange of experience between civil societies, promotion of political dialogue) were way too bold and far-reaching for the Russian Federation. The Kremlin whose fear of separatism had by then somehow dwindled still felt rather uncomfortable with the fact of proliferation of the dialogue between less developed Kaliningrad Oblast and much more advanced partners whose “soft power” capabilities by far exceeded the opposing side. It needs to be said that Kaliningrad did not defect from the project though the extent of its integration in the initiative appeared to be less significant than might have been expected. Moreover, the initiative was administered a severe blow with Latvia pulling off in the year 2007.

Analyzing experience of Kaliningrad taking part in the “Euroregion” initiatives (even though formally the region continues to be a participant thereof) it would not be redundant to ascertain certain key elements that did not allow a partnership between the westernmost Russian region and its external counterparts to yield more results. In this juncture, it should be mentioned that the nature of this hindrance ought to be looked at in a complex of reasons of which the following ones deserve to be mentioned:

1. Legal predicaments. The fact that the project embraced countries that maintained legal customs of their own turned out to be a serious hindrance to the common cause. Predicaments related to legal regulations that varied on a country-to-country basis did not allow to dramatically upgrade the extent of cooperation additionally emphasizing the lack of commonality between Russia and its European partners;

2. Pecuniary matters. The initial stage of joint cooperative activities revealed the necessity to defray common costs associated with functioning of various commissions and implementation of projects. Unfortunately, this section constituted yet another hindrance that was not to be overcome easily;

3. Information. Despite of growing importance and overall meaning of communication the spread of information remained a challenge;

4. Politics. The would-be accession of Polish and Lithuanian to the EU (and NATO to even greater extent) brought up visa-related issues that appeared to be merely a cover-up for frictions of much greater magnitude;

5. The lack of qualified cadre. At a time, Kaliningrad acceded to the initiative it had not yet wielded personnel qualified enough to be able to maintain dialogue on serious international level, which at some point became a serious challenge;

6. Noncommitlteness of the Russian side. Kaliningrad (clearly being instructed from above) did not indicate profound interest in the process of intensification of ties and cooperation with external partners. This in turn resulted in decreasing effectiveness and deformation of ideas engrained in the project. As a result the dialogue on both regional and federal levels was not carried out properly.

As a result, slow pace of changes, certain indecisiveness and the lack of interest regarding widening and deepening of cooperation did in many ways diluted the initiative decreasing effectiveness and mineralized the effect of participation for Kaliningrad in particular.

7.2. The Northern Dimension

The new lap of Kaliningrad's participation in regional projects meant to foster ties with external players came about in the year 1999 and implementation of the Northern Dimension (ND) initiative. It included initiation of joint policy activities between the EU, Russia, Norway and Iceland. Although, it would not be entirely correct to bound emergence of this regional initiative with the year 1999. In fact, as early as the year 1997 thanks to Finland during the summit of the European Council in Luxemburg the blueprint of the ND was approved.

In accordance with the statement voiced by the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs "The essence of the Northern Dimension is, on the one hand, to emphasize the positive interdependence of the EU, Russia and the Baltic Sea regions. On the other hand, it aims at integrating Russia into European and global structure through increased cooperation. The ultimate goal of the Northern Dimension is to reduce all dividing lines."³³⁵

The initiative put forth the following aims that were to provide a framework for such domains as³³⁶:

- Promote dialogue and concrete cooperation;
- Strengthen stability, well-being and intensified economic cooperation;
- Promote economic integration, competitiveness and sustainable development in Northern Europe.

Furthermore, the ND ascertained the following key sectors that were separated by thematic principle, which included:

- environment (NDEP);
- public health and social well-being (NDPHS);
- transport and logistics (NDPTL);
- culture (NDPC).

According to Sergounin "the Northern Dimension is the first attempt to acknowledge that the EU and Russia may need to apply special cooperation at the regional or sub-regional level, particularly in northwest Russian areas that border the EU"³³⁷

On the other hand, it was presumed that the launching of the ND would be of significant interest to the Russian Federation. This assumption was based on the fact of

³³⁵Lars Hedegaard, Bjarne Lindström, "The Northern Dimension, Russia and the Prospects for NEBI Integration", *The NEBI Yearbook 1999*, 3-31, Available at: http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-642-57127-5_1#close .

³³⁶The Northern Dimension is a joint policy between EU, Russia, Norway and Iceland. The ND Policy was initiated in 1999 and renewed in 2006, "Northern Dimension", *European Union External Action*, Available at: http://www.eeas.europa.eu/north_dim/ .

³³⁷ Alexander Sergounin, "Russia and the European Union: the Northern Dimension", In *PONARS Policy Memo 138*, April 2000, (Nizhny Novgorod Linguistic University, 2000).

worsening relations between Moscow and its Western partners (primarily, NATO and EU member-states) which was stipulated by the outbreak of the Balkan wars and events in Chechnya that were surrounded by numerous instances of violation of human rights and international law which was particularly criticized by some European states. On the other hand, it was rightfully assumed that growing physical separation of Kaliningrad from the mainland – which due to the would-be accession of Poland and Lithuania to the EU would change its status from exclave to enclave - should have become a central point of interest for Moscow.

In spite of numerous optimistic prognoses and apparent importance of the project to the Russian side one should be able to admit existence of a number of aspects that in the end might have derailed effective implementation of the initiative. In this regard, it would be worthwhile to underscore the most visible barriers for cooperation in scopes of ND initiative:

1. Changing Russia. By the end of 1990s and beginning of the new millennium Russia started to undergo crucial internal changes that profoundly affected not only internal yet also external development trajectory. The advent of Vladimir Putin which coincided with the outbreak of the second Chechen campaign and increasing trend toward centralization proliferated the sense of incredulity among western partners of the Russian Federation and to some extent changed the attitude of Europeans to processes that were underway in Russia;

2. The factor of history. As it turned out a broad range of historically-stipulated suspicions and animosities that Moscow maintained in regard to its foreign partners did not vanish with the collapse of the USSR. In this regard, the ND initiative was frequently construed as an attempt to dilute Russian influence in the Baltic/Nordic region;

3. The Brussels bureaucracy. Excessively bureaucratized it took Brussels too much time for decision-making procedures, which undoubtedly became a matter of great vexation in Moscow;

4. Bad timing. The launching of the ND initiative coincided with the outbreak of war in Kosovo EU regional priorities have undergone profound transformation. The urgent necessity to immediately deal with the Balkans distracted attention and resources of major European players from the Northern theater of European politics;

5. The lack of unity on in the EU. Proposed by Finland the ND project was chiefly interesting to the Scandinavian countries and the Baltic States, whereas other members of the EU did not appear to be very much excited about it. Aside from the Balkans the main agendas that preoccupied attention of the majority of the EU states had primarily to do with the upcoming enlargement, European Monetary Union (EMU) and construction of common European defense architecture.

Taking into account the aforementioned points it should be stressed that in spite of prolongation of the ND initiative in 2006 it did not have the impact it should/could have been hoped for. As it has been indicted the Russian side cannot and should not be deemed as the only one culpable for this by and large unsuccessful outcome. Rather, it would be more prudent to take into consideration the overall bulk of challenges and complications as the main factor.

7.3. The “pilot region”

President Putin`s tenure started with a promise to turn Kaliningrad Oblast into a venue of cooperation between Russia and the European Union. In this regard, so-called “pilot region” concept was recognized as a new pivot for qualitatively new stage of development of the westernmost region of the Russian Federation³³⁸ especially taking into account its status in the early and mid-1990s.

The essence of the strategy rested on the recognition of distinctiveness of Kaliningrad in comparison with other Russian regions, which stipulated a necessity to bestow a special approach regarding the oblast. Indeed, revolutionary sounded the idea

³³⁸Paul Holtom and Fabrizio Tassinari (Eds.), “Russian Participation in Baltic Sea Region-Building: A Case Study of Kaliningrad”, Vol.5, (Gdańsk-Berlin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego Nordeuropa-Institut der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, 2002), 37.

of providing the local administration with additional freedoms and certain autonomy, so it could interact with geographical neighbors breaking the “vicious circle” of isolationism that had been haunting Kaliningrad since the Soviet period.

In order to upgrade local decision-making capabilities, the following institutional frameworks were proposed:

1. Establishment of **governmental/presidential commission** consisting of several departments (given the bulk of responsibilities and the range of tasks to be dealt with commensurate with ministerial level) that was supposed to work within such domains as Economic Development and Trade, Energy, Finance, Foreign Affairs, Health, Internal Affairs and Justice as well as Transport. Creation of such an organ was supposed to have positive effect on locally obtained financial means and resources and simultaneously increase effectiveness of managerial activities;

2. Reconsideration of previously outlined federal programme for Kaliningrad.

Establishment of such a new approach was to have been based on intensification of economic growth, which meant implementation of specific measures aimed to boost and promote small/middle-size business and abstain from wasting huge financial resources on mega projects that are not likely to yield a pay-back given specific traits of local economy and geopolitical location. Moreover, another crucial aspect should not be omitted: prior to start concrete work related to any project-building initiatives it was imperative to undertake deep and comprehensive analysis regarding both positive and negative aspects of the previous SEZ mechanism. Indeed, the change of appearance without structural re-configuration of previously established patterns was doomed to complete failure;

3. Constitutional regulation of the status of Kaliningrad. Without clearly established legal delineation of relations between Kaliningrad Oblast and Moscow that would have explained both the nature of relations and the extent of freedoms and responsibilities both sides would find it difficult to understand their posture in relation to each other. On the other hand, geopolitical location of Kaliningrad should have been reflected more clearly.

The issue of „pilot region” should be seen as a multifaceted and an extremely complex matter that could not have possibly escaped such sensitive domain as freedom of political activities that the region could exercise. Conversely, it was instrumental for Moscow to decide how much freedom was it able/willing to grant to the enclave/exclave, so it could start integration in the Baltic Sea Rim. While reflecting about this issue one should be able to recognize deeply seated sense of apprehension regarding assertiveness on regional level that Moscow had given tragic experience with Chechnya and the wave of separatism in the early 1990s. In case of Kaliningrad – an area completely surrounded by European countries – this matter acquired particular gravity. On the other hand, at this point part of Russian political elites recognized that complete separation of Kaliningrad from its geographic neighbors could have derailed the process of normalization of relations with key EU players (primarily, Germany and France) and would have tainted the image of changing Russia. This however posed yet another question that had to have been answered promptly: how should Russia react on foreign financial capital (which also meant spreading “soft power”) that would be able to enter the oblast?

Reflecting about this issue Aleksey Ignat`iev from “East – West” Institute assumed that in the future Kaliningrad could change its status from “pilot” region into “dual pilot” region, which could be valid for both internal and external dimensions. In effect it meant transformation of Kaliningrad into a “testing ground” for liberalization of the Russian economy via optimization of procedures related to initiation and conduction

of business activities via active usage of knowledge transfer from abroad³³⁹. Furthermore, it was decided to organize a major event in Kaliningrad (first in 2001 and later the date was shifted on 2002) entitled “Investments in the Russian North – West: Kaliningrad prospective”³⁴⁰. Moreover, in scopes of “pilot” region initiative the conference was to be attended by the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), “Delta Bank”, European and the Northern Investment Banks that were to get acquainted with investment opportunities offered by the region. Additional hopes were linked with the development of the tourist and recreation complex on both the Baltic and Curonian Spits.

In his comprehensive research pertaining to the “pilot” region initiative Sergey Medvedev³⁴¹ analyzed various scenarios along which Kaliningrad could be developing in the short and mid-term prospective. Incidentally, these reflections pertained to Kaliningrad through the prism of EU – Russian relations. In this regard, it would be worthwhile to provide a comparative table that outlines various scenarios relevant to the development of Kaliningrad Oblast.

Table 2.5. Scenarios for future development for Kaliningrad Oblast

Russia	Liberal modernization	Administrative modernization	Beuraucratic capitalism
Europe			
Global player	Pilot region	Stagnation/privileges	Fort-post

³³⁹ Елена Кром, reported in „Начало большого пути?“, *Эксперт Северо-Запад*, №7 (36), 2001, (Санкт-Петербург — Калининград), Retrieved from: http://expert.ru/northwest/2001/07/07no-bigput_53420/.

³⁴⁰ Валерий Бирюков, reported in "Калининградская тропа" для инвестиций на Северо-Запад”, *Росбалт*, 22.10.2002, Available at: <http://www.rosbalt.ru/main/2002/10/22/70575.html>.

³⁴¹ Сергей Медведев, “Калининград в отношениях России и ЕС Сценарный прогноз,” *Российско-европейский Центр экономической политики (РЕЦЭП)*, Схема 6.

Europe of regions	Stagnation/privileges	Stagnation/privileges	Fort-post
Foretress Europe	Fort-post	Fort-post	Fort-post

1) Negatively-probable scenario: Kaliningrad as a fort-post.

Development of Kaliningrad along this scenario would reiterate (partly or in full) pre-1991 status of Kaliningrad leading toward re-militarization of the Baltic Sea region and a collapse in relations between Russia and the EU as well as NATO. This could also result in the oblast evolving into the “double periphery” and continuing its drift toward the “gray zone” of Europe.

2) Probable scenario: stagnation/preserving of privileges.

Preserving existing status quo was extremely beneficial for various interest groups that derived huge financial means from “shadow” nature of local economy. Under these circumstances existing SEZ mechanism catered well for specific interests of the aforementioned groups.

3) Optimistic scenario: „pilot” region.

According to this scenario Kaliningrad would be able to undertake a breathtaking transformation from the “black hole” of Europe into an entity exhibiting strong economic growth and sustainable development. The point here was that this process was supposed to be based not on a simple increase in financial injections, yet achievement of qualitatively new trajectory related to evolution of Kaliningrad Oblast into a trans-national economic and political project – an area of cooperation between the EU and the Russian Federation. In accordance with this scenario Kaliningrad should have been turned in an area of joint responsibility between aforementioned actors. Economic model established in Kaliningrad was to have been changed toward accretion of new export capabilities and upgrading the nature of cooperation between the EU and the oblast to a

new level. The central point engrained in the project was attaining of higher level of completion.

Nonetheless, it should be reiterated once again that any hopes and wishes pinned on effective transformation of Kaliningrad Oblast into a “pilot region” required joint effort of both the Russian Federation and the EU that should have been reflected in attaining of broad agreement reflected in a “road map” that needed to have clearly indicated concrete steps aimed at achieving results. Furthermore, Moscow (since Kaliningrad was its sole responsibility) should have clarified its approach to the oblast via setting up a special programme. The key points that needed to have been engrained in the project could be identified as follows³⁴²:

1. Achieving of deep integration with European economic space;
2. Creation of legal platform for coopertaion;
3. Modification of SEZ regime;
4. Upgrading quality of both federal and regional management;
5. Promotion of business and lowering of the administrative barriers and the red tape;
6. Developing of infrastructure;
7. Upgrading of export-oriented competitiveness;
8. Support for small and medium-size businesses.

Reflecting about the „pilot region” project it needs to be born in mind that this idea was in many ways a revolutionary one and contained a number of points that – if implemented – could have not only led to the dramatic transformation of the role and status of Kaliningrad Oblast as such, yet produced an extremely positive impact on EU-Russian relations and created a precedent for development of Russian regions. Acting via Kaliningrad as its “representative” in the EU Moscow could have mollified the impact of the EU and NATO enlargements. On the other hand, the local community (being indeed distinct from the one to be encountered in the mainland) would have been able to experience patterns established in Europe. Needless to say, that the project – should it have become a success story – would have had a lasting positive effect on the local

³⁴² Ibidem.

business and breaking isolation as perhaps the most gruesome trait inherited from the Soviet period. In other words, Kaliningrad could have become the best “outlet of globalization” for Russia as no other region could have.

Chapter 8. The role of personality in the post-Soviet political strife: the case of Kaliningrad

The period that followed the collapse of the USSR and emergence of the new Russia was marked by the outbreak of acute strife for political power. Perhaps it would not be an error to suggest that the harbinger of the disgraceful events in Moscow within October 2 - 4, 1993 (the shooting of the Russian Parliament)³⁴³ occurred as early as in August 19–21, 1991 when elderly elites tried to cling to the remnants of power³⁴⁴. Regretfully, these precedents were destined to leave a legacy much more ominous and far-reaching than the deeds as such. In many ways the methods of strife engendered a cult of force in Russian post-Soviet political culture, where violence would be widely approved and recognized as a legitimate tool in the process of reaching certain goals. Therefore, the culture of dialogue, compromise and negotiations had not been established in the Russian tradition.

The first post-Soviet decade was also painted in the colors of chaos and a confrontation between two main camps represented by Liberalism/Institutionalism³⁴⁵ and conservative-nationalist ideology that started to take preeminence in the second half of 1990s with the advent of Yevgeny Primakov³⁴⁶. From its side, Kaliningrad Oblast was not spared from acute struggle, which nonetheless would take place much later than in the mainland. In this regard, it would be worthwhile to highlight that the confrontation in Kaliningrad somewhat diverged from general Russian patterns. Furthermore, it would not

³⁴³ For more information see: Алина Клещенко reported in “Расстрел Белого дома в 1993 году. Хроника событий”, *Аргументы и факты*, 03.10.2013, Available at: http://www.aif.ru/dontknows/file/rasstrel_belogo_doma_v_1993_godu_hronika_sobytyi.

³⁴⁴ *История России с древнейших времен до начала XXI века*, In Леонид Милов (Ed.), (Москва: Эксмо, 2007), Т.3, 884.

³⁴⁵ For more information see: Katja Mann, “The Institutional Aspects of Russia-EU Relations”, *E-International Relations*, April 5, 2013, Available at: <http://www.e-ir.info/2013/04/05/the-institutional-aspects-of-russia-eu-relations/>.

³⁴⁶ Евгений Примаков, *Министерство иностранных дел Российской Федерации*, For more information see: http://www.mid.ru/about/professional_holiday/history/-/asset_publisher/8DMVoaXSrMPo/content/id/746880.

be superfluous to underscore the role of Moscow, its involvement and the impact it had on the balance of powers and the outcome of the competition between various forces involved.

8.1. The rise and fall of Yury Matochkin

First years of the post-Soviet transformation experienced by the Russian Federation witnessed an avalanche of secessionist movements (partly stimulated by infamous rhetorical escapades by Russian political heavyweights) that jeopardized territorial integrity of the Russian state. Yeltsin's strong desire to win the race for power stimulated centrifugal forces in the regions whose aspirations towards greater autonomy could not be easily suppressed. For instance, three subjects of the Russian Federation (namely, Chechnya, Tatarstan and Kaliningrad) openly initiated the bargaining process with Moscow trying to realign the state architecture and the "Center – periphery" relations. Moreover, Chechnya openly claimed its independence and started military preparations³⁴⁷. This coincided with detrimental consequences of economic liberalism and growing political populism that started to jeopardize political institutions: in the year 1993 LDPR (with its openly ultra nationalist and extremely populist agendas) became the largest political party in the Russian Parliament, which aroused many scholars who saw the issue of far-right radicalism in Russia³⁴⁸. Therefore, given an extremely high level of internal instability on the one hand and handsome promises of autonomy given by Yeltsin on the other the Kremlin faced an extremely challenging dilemma: how to reconcile the process of gradual "assembling of the Russian lands" with maintaining previously stated approach of federalization. In this regard, the prime goal appeared to be related with hammering out signing of the Federation Treaties from the most "vulnerable" parts of the Russian Federation such as North Caucasian republics, Tuva and Tatarstan. Needless to say, that only this formal procedure could effectively put these subjects within Russian legal domain and ensure the new lap of vertical state building process. On the other hand, mastering separatist sentiments via formation of both strong presidential and central

³⁴⁷For more information see: "Чеченский капкан", Фильм 1, Документальный фильм, *Рен ТВ*, (2004), Accessed 09.11.2014: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HZRhWJrOIEw>

³⁴⁸ Andreas Umland, "Vladimir Zhirinovskii in Russian Politics: Three Approaches to the Emergence of the Liberal-Democratic Party of Russia 1990-1993", PhD dissertation, (Berlin: Free University of Berlin, 1997).

power was deemed to be a key toward normalization of relations between margins and the federal centre. While accomplishing that goal the Russian government was using all means available that ranged from handsome promises to coercion and open threats.

Reflecting about Kaliningrad Oblast within indicated historical interim it should be imperative to accentuate that the region did not exhibit visible separatist aspirations (this point has been widely discussed in previous segments of research). Nonetheless, providing the oblast with greater economic and political autonomy taking into consideration its strategic importance and geographical location was not on the Kremlin`s agenda either. Thus, apparent similarities between Kaliningrad and Hong Kong (described previously) did not spur Moscow into following the example of China. As it has been stated before the first post-Soviet governor of the westernmost Russian region was an ardent supporter of this concept which however was not destined to materialize.

As the course of history would later reveal, Yeltsin desperately needed concrete evidences of subordination, loyalty and viable guarantees that Kaliningrad would not secede (or press Kremlin into concessions by maintaining separatist agendas) from the mainland. In this regard signing of the aforementioned documents was construed as the only conceivable solution that was to be achieved at any rate. Once attained the goal of federal center transcended to the dimension of stiffening the control over the region, marginalization of independency and sharp cuts on previously granted rights and freedoms.

Genuine attitude of the Kremlin became clear with ratification of the new Constitution (12 December 1993) that explicitly stipulated supremacy of executive branch of power over legislative.³⁴⁹ Beyond doubt, under these wholly new circumstances emergence/preservation of strong self-sufficient regions with broad autonomy was perceived as a challenge to the Kremlin`s first attempts to consolidate powers. For Kaliningrad it meant a dramatic transition of decision-making capabilities. Even though foreign ties did formally fall within the domain of federal powers, such vital prerogatives as coordination of foreign economic relations and implementations of treaties (concluded by the local authorities) became a matter of shared responsibility, which in fact profoundly abridged freedom of the local decision-making organs. In effect, given the

³⁴⁹ Source: Конституция Российской Федерации. Принята всенародным голосованием 12 декабря 1993 г. Available at: <http://constitution.kremlin.ru/>.

weight of Moscow it meant that this branch was regulated by Moscow with participation of the local actors, which shifted the balance of powers in a drastic manner.

Naturally, under these circumstances Kaliningrad could not possibly have counted on greater liberalization that implied expansion of foreign contacts and achieving greater independence. Incidentally, with changing image of the Russian Parliament (the vector started to shift in more conservative direction) regions with greater autonomy were started to be frowned upon by the majority of the government that took “hawkish” stance towards ideas and norms that previously had been declared as a high priority. Similarly, the State Parliament took extremely adverse stance towards forces that had promoted greater liberalization and intensification of a dialogue between Russia and the West.

The status of Kaliningrad was rethought again in the year 1994, when the state Duma issued a new portion of legislation changing its definition from initially prepared “On Raising the Status of the Kaliningrad Oblast” opting for the new one - “*On Strengthening the Sovereignty of the Russian Federation on the Territory of the Kaliningrad Oblast.*”³⁵⁰ The change in wording and parlance was crucial and may not be underestimated. For instance, the second definition was meant to underscore the inferiority of the Oblast to the Federal Center that was deliberately included in the new title. Under such circumstances even modest attempts of Y. Matochkin to conduct unilateral steps not previously discussed with Moscow would be construed as ones aimed at diminishing of the Kremlin`s sovereignty over its subject, which implied an acute conflict between federal and local powers.

Having achieved its strategic goals, the Kremlin started a campaign of dismantling of Kaliningrad Governor whose liberal ideas did not exactly comply with ones getting popularity within Russian political and intellectual elites. For this purpose, in the year 1994 political elites in Moscow in order to discriminate Matochkin and his vision of the region and its future started to accuse Kaliningrad administration of the attempt to “sow the seeds of separatism”. Incidentally, the issue of separatism would be increasingly exploited by Moscow while justifying abridgements in the domain of rights and privileges. For instance, Sergey Shakhrai (who had actually supported the idea of gradual granting more liberty to Kaliningrad explaining it by distinct geopolitical position occupied by the Oblast) launched a vigorous campaign accusing the “local separatists”

³⁵⁰ For more information see: Nezavisimaja Gazeta, 02.06.1994.

and their close ties with “creeping Western expansionism”³⁵¹. That was a clear warning to the local political and intellectual elites that their understanding of Kaliningrad, its place and frameworks it would be developing did not coincide with the ones elaborated in and championed by Moscow.

Incidentally, the verbal offence launched by the Kremlin would soon acquire quite palpable forms. For example, in the next year, Yeltsin nullified customs exemption designed for economic zone (according to the original idea it should have lasted for ten years) well in advance of the date of expiration.³⁵² The decision to undertake drastic transformation of local economic model via elimination of previously granted subsidies was construed as a retaliatory measure rather than a sign of well-planned economic calculations.

Nevertheless, even though custom exemptions would be given back to Kaliningrad in the year 1996, those were profoundly altered. For instance, instead of being a Free Economic Zone, Kaliningrad became Special Economic Zone in January 1996.³⁵³ Official explanation of this transformation was related to overall ineffectiveness of the previous economic model (even in spite of a very restricted chronological period of the experiment). Among other things it was claimed that original ideas and anticipations encapsulated in the FEZ had not been achieved (or were achieved only to a merger extent) which meant that the model was not working with required efficiency. In this context, the most crucial changes that were embedded in the document could be described in the following points:

1. Consolidation of control. It needs to be stated that in accordance with newly adopted legislation federal centre achieved substantial strengthening of its power over crucial domains of the local economy (amber, military industrial complex, energy production and transport) and other key areas of public life (mass media);

³⁵¹ This theme would subsequently acquire much more visible form following the outbreak of the Ukrainian crisis in the late 2013. For example, see: <https://jamestown.org/program/rock-hard-place-kaliningrad-become-special/>

³⁵² Леонид Вардомский, “Внешнеэкономические факторы и состояние экономики регионов России”, In *Внешняя торговля*, N12, (1995), 2-4.

³⁵³Source: Федеральный закон от 13 января 1996 года N 13-ФЗ "Об Особой экономической зоне в Калининградской области". For more information see: http://www.akc2s.ru/%D0%BE%D1%8D%D0%B7_kaliningrad/.

2. Economic consolidation. It was clearly stipulated that no other currency other than the official one in the Russian Federation was allowed to be used in any sorts of economic transactions and operations;

3. Clear supremacy of federal law over the local;

4. Restrictions on land purchase. According to the new regulation foreigners were denied to purchase land in the oblast - only leasing was allowed. Nevertheless, due to the fact that the time scope of such operation was not explicitly defined this became a significant created a huge hindrance to the attraction of prospective investors;

5. Changing economic conditions. New legislation stipulated changing mechanism of quotas to be granted for the oblast that were to be compatible with the central regulations only imposed from above.

These changes introduced by the new legislation created for Kaliningrad bitterly disagreed with position assumed by local elites within 1991 – 1996, whose main agendas were based on attaining of greater liberalization and intensification of external contacts. In the meantime, this evidenced changing balance of powers in the architecture of relations between Moscow and Kaliningrad. This signified the fact that Matochkin was rapidly losing initiative and the window of opportunity for reforms was inexorably dwindling.

The final blow came about in June 1996 when Yeltsin paid a visit to the westernmost point of the Russian Federation in scopes of his presidential campaign. Extremely populist in nature (it was accompanied with sound promises, money dispatching, frequent allusions to patriotism and other peculiar gestures) this event totally complied with historically based spirit of Russian patriarchal traditions. More importantly however was that Yeltsin implicitly accused the incumbent authorities for the course of development of Kaliningrad that was allegedly not being dealt with properly and required special involvement from the part of federal centre.

Those trends and tendencies revealed a deep rift between Matochkin and his cohorts (at least those who still remained in his team) on the one hand and the Kremlin on the other, whereby unequivocally stating that changes in Kaliningrad political architecture were underway. Prospective alternations within local political architecture were primarily connected with nascent alternative center of power that was represented by Leonid Gorbenko who was extensively supported by such conservative and influential politicians as Shakhrai, Alexander Lebed and Yury Luzhkov, yet the main agendas put forth were mostly populist in nature and could be compared to the “catch all party” model.

In the year 1996 Kaliningrad Oblast witnessed perhaps first and so far last genuine electoral campaign where the liberal powers (represented by Matochkin³⁵⁴) competed with the opposing candidate of very different ideological attitude and profoundly conflicting philosophy (Gorbenko). Moreover, it would not be an exaggeration to presume that the aforementioned campaign was an event of tremendous magnitude and indeed of pivotal historical meaning. It was much more than merely political race, yet a choice of future path for years to come.

Incidentally, in the first round the incumbent governor won receiving 31.4 percent of popular vote, yet in the second lap Gorbenko (who was unequivocally supported by Moscow) was able to win gaining 49.56 percent.³⁵⁵

Aside from the fact of Matochkin losing the elections to Gorbenko this race demonstrated yet another though significantly less visible aspect of changing Russia. Namely, the image of educated liberal prone toward knowledge transfer from the West was promptly losing its appeal being superseded by national populists. Having discarded from the Communist regime with all its deficiencies and negative experience the Russian population (even in the westernmost part of the Russian Federation) identified its drift towards undemocratic model.

Incidentally, the local electorate was neither appalled nor disgusted by Gorbenko`s background (which usually plays a major role in democratic systems): aside from a number of negative traits, in 1980s L. Gorbenko had been prosecuted several

³⁵⁴ “Губернатор, которого мы не знали”, *Дворник* № 536, 11.07.2006 - 18.07.2006, Available at: <http://dvornik.ru/issue/536/9813/>.

³⁵⁵ Дмитрий Камышев reported in "Крепкий хозяйственник" победил "партию власти", *Коммерсант*, №179, полоса 003, 22.10.1996, Available at: <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/241715>.

times, yet cases against him were subsequently closed due to the “lack of evidence”. Moreover, much later Gorbenko who openly boast that Joseph Stalin was his favorite political figure in Russian history – regretfully, even such a fact did not alert local community in spite of immeasurable human tragedy directly connected with highly debatable historical figure.

8.2. Leonid Gorbenko: from promise of stability to political chaos and economic disaster

Reflecting upon the period of Kaliningrad history that lasted from 1996 toward the beginning of new millennium it should be imperative to note that this period remains perhaps the most arduous and murky within past 25 years of post-Soviet transformation. To a significant extent this could be ascribed to the personality of the new governor of Kaliningrad – Leonid Gorbenko, who having defeated Matochkin became the second post-Soviet governor of Kaliningrad Oblast.

Taking into consideration distinctiveness of the local political and economic milieu it should be argued that the range of qualities wielded by the new governor as well as a very specific temper and perception of himself and his surrounding doomed his tenure to failure from the very beginning. Aside from the fact that Gorbenko did not have sufficient academic background he was also known as a straightforward person who was not capable (and did not want to learn this skill) of maintaining a proper balance between various interest groups within local political establishment. Moreover, Gorbenko openly despised his political adversaries in Kaliningrad Duma and was certain that the local opposition could only be “persuaded” through threats and coercion. Moreover, in spite of being elected as a strong and able manager (due to his antecedent professional activities) Gorbenko turned out to have very superficial knowledge of local economic environment and thereby could not effectively deal with challenges (both potential and actual) that the region was facing. For instance, the Law on Special Economic Zone ardently supported by Gorbenko crippled (even to a greater extent) such crucial branches of the local economy as manufacture and agriculture by stripping the local producers from some sort of a “protective belt” (which of course could not remain on a permanent basis though was

required during this arduous period), whereby exposing feeble local players to the external competition without any preparatory activities.³⁵⁶

On the other hand, reflecting about nascent political culture in the post-Soviet Russia one could not escape a visible similarity between the patterns of activities exhibited by Gorbenko who excessively relied on populism, coercion and threats and President Yeltsin who had also endeared such methods in regard to his opponents. Perhaps, it was populism that played the crucial role in success of the patterns that was established on both local and the national levels. In this regard, it would not be useless to mention the central points of Gorbenko`s electoral program and compare it to the actual results achieved within his tenure³⁵⁷:

- Developing of powerful economic zones on the territory of Kaliningrad Oblast;
- Creation of effective import substitution mechanisms (as the most indispensable element for resurrection of the local industrial capabilities);
- Turning Kaliningrad into the bridge between Europe and the Russian Federation;
- Proliferation of the local decision-making capabilities;
- Conduction of liberal and Western type reforms.

Being a patchwork of either completely or semi-realistic proclamations this plan could not have possibly worked out. Haphazardness of the new governor was additionally reflected in his oscillation between liberal inceptions that would frequently take utterly authoritarian course and end up in sound disappointments. For instance, in the year 1998 Gorbenko undertook one of the most extravagant steps in his entire career by hiring Yegor

³⁵⁶ Горбенко Леонид Петрович, Калининградская область: 1996-2000, *Виперсоны*, 08.04.2009. For more information see: <http://viperson.ru/wind.php?ID=553818>.

³⁵⁷ Александр Рыклин reported in “Калининградская путиница”, *Итоги*, №44 / 230, 31.10.2000, For more information see: <http://www.itogi.ru/archive/2000/44/115922.html>.

Gaidar³⁵⁸ as his economic advisor - author of the (in)famous “Shock Therapy” and one of the staunchest liberally oriented economists of the post-Soviet Russia.

In June of the same year responding to Sergey Kirienko`s unpopular reforms³⁵⁹ aimed to abridge the local privileges, the governor in alliance with local Duma and with a support of business community expressed a clear protest. Incidentally, this became the first and as it would turn out the last joint action when various local forces acting in an alliance with the governor bided for re-consideration of Moscow-prescribed policies. However, this marriage of convenience was not destined to last long. In the final analysis, blatant and unrestricted voluntarism coupled with openly dictatorial and dismissive tone of the governor would lead to the breakdown of a dialogue between Gorbenko and major actors representing local political and economic elite. This led to formation of what could be identified “alternative centre” that assembled forces disgruntled with activities of the governor.

As a result, by the year 2000 so-called Russia's Frontier (“Rubezh Rossii”) movement³⁶⁰ that was organized by three main political figures - Yurii Semenov (the co-chairman of the local branch of the Russian Popular Patriotic Union), Yurii Nikitin (State Duma Member) and Anatolii Khlopetskii (TransRailWest General Director) – decided to become the speaking tube of all the forces that did not share the line conducted by the governor and remnants of his team.

Later on this “triumvirate” was additionally strengthened by participation of Igor Kozhemiakin (the mayor of Kaliningrad within the period 1996 - 1998) and Yurii Sovenko (the next mayor). This powerful group demanded that the President himself should send his appointee to the region, whereby underscoring that the current governor is unable to perform his functions with the required efficiency.³⁶¹

Incidentally, the locally arising discontent would be supported in Moscow as well, which was based on growing assertiveness of Gorbenko that sharply contrasted with

³⁵⁸ Михаил Соколов reported in “Выборы-2000”, *Радио свобода*, 21.09.2000, For more information see: <http://archive.svoboda.org/programs/el/2000/el.092100.asp> .

³⁵⁹ “Сергей Кириенко сделал аппаратный ход”, *Коммерсант*, №188, 11.10.2016. Available at: <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/3112811>.

³⁶⁰ “Политическая палитра. Кто есть who”, *Калининградский журнал*, N1, 1999, 8-14.

³⁶¹ Yekaterina Vasil`eva, “New Group Seeks Appointment of Kaliningrad Governor”, In *East-West Institute Russian Regional Report*, Vol. 5, No. 9, (March 9, 2000).

internal course of development experienced by the Russian Federation at a time. For instance, Gorbenko presented an ultimatum to the Kremlin claiming that he would be willing to go ahead with judiciary complaint arguing that the local privileges could only be tempered with by the center if consulted with both the Oblast Duma and the governor. On the other hand, he did not drop the idea of the so-called “local economic zones” contending that Kaliningrad should have granted greater economic independence and tax liberalization legislature. Furthermore, Moscow was infuriated with a proposal put forth by the governor that aimed to alter the local legislature pertaining to the immovable property. Namely, it was suggested that existing land law was to have been changed in such a way as to allow foreigners to purchase, lease and rent land resources in Kaliningrad³⁶². In effect, this decree could have resulted in the oblast “opening up” for foreigners and external financial capital which was construed in Moscow as a sign of Kaliningrad drifting away from Russia. In December 1998 Gorbenko submitted his proposal to the local Duma and the new law was approved. Nevertheless, the most vital part thereof (the ability of foreigners to conduct operations with the local land resources) was most certainly too audacious and revolutionary (under existing circumstances even populist) to become fully operable, yet the governor was very anxious to pursue that idea. Undoubtedly, those aspirations were being frowned upon in Moscow where the ruling elites started to feel ill at ease with a prospect of “loosing Kaliningrad”. After all, Gorbenko had been supported and promoted to the post of governor under the shield of conservatism and obedience, yet not as a successor of liberal ideas emanating from his opponent Matochkin. The level of suspicion towards potential increase of foreign presence in Kaliningrad started to dominate (and even determine) the overall system of relations with Moscow. The Kremlin grew extremely suspicious with the West because of potential separatist tendencies: for Russian political and intellectual elites the war in Yugoslavia³⁶³ and the eastward expansion of NATO³⁶⁴ turned out to be a huge dissatisfaction and incentive to revision their perception of the West. On the other hand, the issue of separatism did not completely lose its strength (especially considering

³⁶² “Дума хочет построить всех в очередь за землей”, *Коммерсантъ*, №214, полоса 003, 10.12.1997, Available at: <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/189351>.

³⁶³ “6 лет натовским бомбардировкам Югославии”, 24.03.2005, Available at: <http://www.slobodan-memoria.narod.ru/st/war24-6.htm>.

³⁶⁴ Александр Коновалов, “Как Россия и США потеряли друг друга”, *В Мировая экономика и международные отношения*, №7, (2000), 3-14.

historical background and geographical location of Kaliningrad). Conversely, within the period 1991 – 1999 it was one of the most salient concerns of the ruling elites.

But revisionism in actions should not be solely ascribed to Moscow – it pertained to the local political environment as well. Even though having become a governor under conservative/patriotic slogans Gorbenko soon recognized that without reaching a broad understanding between the West and Russia on the matters regarding the status and functioning of Kaliningrad it would be impossible to achieve stabilization in vital domains of public life in the Russian enclave/exclave. From vantage point of view without European investments the task of reaching living standards comparable to those in adjacent states (primarily, Poland and Lithuania) was an impossible mission, whereas populism that could yield immediate results was powerless in a longer run. On the other hand, populism would still be extensively (sometimes even without clear account of it) employed by Gorbenko. His (in)famous phrase that positively assessed prospective for the Oblast to be “*sold sooner or later to Germany to cover the debts of both the Russian Federation and Kaliningrad*”³⁶⁵ produced a torrent of complaints and created the image of Russia losing the oblast to the West.

Incidentally, expanding external contacts significantly alarmed conservative circles in Moscow well before the advent of Evgeny Primakov (1996) or Vladimir Putin (1999/2000). In the year 1997 Gorbenko loaned 15 million of USD from German “Dresdner Bank” which was spent on modernization of the largest in the Oblast poultry production fabric³⁶⁶. That decision would result in criminal investigation initiated by Moscow which contained a kernel of ration though seemed to be dwarfed by the rest of criminal activities “omitted” by the federal centre. Similarly, the Kremlin was not particularly happy with Gorbenko unilaterally getting in touch with President of the Republic of Belarus Alexander Lukashenka for the purpose of intensification of economic ties between the oblast and Belarus (in spite of very close cooperation between Moscow and Minsk that resulted in emergence of so-called “Union State” in the year 1999). On the other hand, Gorbenko recognized that establishing close ties and normalization of dialogue with Vilnius would be extremely beneficial for Kaliningrad Oblast given its

³⁶⁵ Nezavisimaya gazeta, 9 December 1998.

³⁶⁶ For more information see: Вадим Смирнов reported in “Кредитная история”, *Время*, №208 09.11.2005, Retrieved from: <http://www.vremya.ru/2005/208/8/138508.html>; Валерий Громяк reported in “В Калининграде судят бывшего губернатора Леонида Горбенко”, *Правда.ру*, 17.04.2006, Retrieved from: <http://www.pravda.ru/districts/northwest/kaliningrad/17-04-2006/81875-sud-0/>.

territorial proximity to Lithuania. The apogee of “disobedience” and assertiveness was decision (without any prior consultations with Moscow) to create a division for foreign relations. This was proclaimed during a visit of Gorbenko to Brussels which aimed to initiate the dialogue between Kaliningrad Oblast and the EU (as a supranational body not on the level of individual member states).³⁶⁷

The rift between the governor of Kaliningrad Oblast and the Kremlin became particularly visible with the outbreak of global financial crisis that occurred in August of the year 1998. It severely hit Russian economy bringing the Russian Federation to the brink of financial collapse and endangered not only its international solvency yet the ability to effectively exercise its sovereignty over the most state budget dependent subjects. Under these circumstances, Gorbenko decided to take decisive steps aimed at expansion of his powers within the Oblast and somehow rearranging the architecture of relationships between Kaliningrad and Moscow. On 9 September 1998, Kaliningrad governor proclaimed a “state of emergency” justifying this step by rapidly aggravating socio-economic conditions in the Kaliningrad Oblast³⁶⁸. That act was a clear evidence of Gorbenko`s determination to significantly proliferate his independence from Moscow in terms of both political and economic domains. Among other things, that declaration implied suspension of tax payment from the local budget to Moscow stipulated by the fact that Kaliningrad had received only 1/3 of the regular subsidies. Moreover, when contacted by Igor Shabdurasulov (member of the Presidential Administration) who stated that only the President of the Russian Federation could exercise such authority the Governor firmly reiterated his unwillingness to provide federal budget with financial means derived from the local budget³⁶⁹. The conflict had reached its apex when ultraconservative Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov challenged behavior of Kaliningrad governor accusing him that such actions were incompatible with Russian Constitution (adopted in December 1993) and therefore violating supreme law of the state³⁷⁰. Being very well aware of what “violation of the Constitutional Treaty” meant Moscow came to consider situation in Kaliningrad to be extremely dangerous.

³⁶⁷ Baltic Institute, Ballad, News archive, 21 March, 4 and 23 May, 2 November 2000

³⁶⁸“Чрезвычайное положение в Калининградской области”, *Советская Белоруссия* 09.09.1998. For more information see: <http://leonidgorbenko.ru/index.php?id=618>

³⁶⁹ *Московские новости*, №37, 20-27 сентября 1998

³⁷⁰ *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 11 September 1998.

In addition to exasperation over Gorbenko from the side of Kremlin the level of support and popularity that the governor enjoyed in the Oblast was rapidly decreasing as well: his economic policy turned out to have had calamitous effect for the local businesses. Strong desire to hedge local producers resulted in the skyrocketing of prices (which affected ordinary consumers) and subsequent tax raises practically strangled local producers. On the other hand, Gorbenko`s tenure would be tainted with various corruption related scandals, proliferation of opaque financial deals and even greater decrease in living standards. For instance, by 1 January 1999 the real income dropped by 21%, whereas almost 218 large enterprises had financial liabilities.³⁷¹

In the end, two simultaneously developing processes – weakening of the incumbent governor and strengthening of the alternative center of power – resulted in the outbreak of an open conflict between two competing camps. This acute confrontation resulted in political impasse that was only resolved after direct involvement of Moscow that played a role of a mediator. Naturally, the very fact of external involvement in the internal crisis administered a severe blow to the authority of the incumbent governor and created a precedent for Moscow to meddle in a conflict.

In approaching Duma elections (December 1999) Gorbenko initially supported the “Russia`s Voice” Political Party, would later transcend to the “Fatherland – All Russia” (OVT), subsequently abandoning it for the “Unity” party. When Putin became a President of the Russian Federation, Gorbenko made a desperate attempt to somehow patch up relations with the Kremlin primarily because he had seriously considered participation in the next election cycle. He put forth the idea of establishment of a multifunctional macro company on the territory of Kaliningrad Oblast that was supposed to include the seaport, the airline facilities, the railway, the printing press, the amber extracting facilities as well as major fishery and ship building plants. However, the new Russian President (who from the very beginning had emphasized the idea of centralization and subordination to be main priorities of his first years) did not want to implicate himself with a Governor of such reputation which was additionally magnified

³⁷¹Source: “Калининградская область. Социально-экономическое и общественно-политическое положение. Взгляд из Москвы”, апрель 1999 года (из архива Л.Горбенко), *Леонид Горбенко*, For more information see: <http://leonidgorbenko.ru/index.php?id=1095>.

by personal despise from the side of Putin³⁷². Naturally, such project was not even discussed. Last weeks in the office of Gorbenko went under a shadow of a new scandal resulting from internal political conflict. The Governor tried to blatantly intimidate local mass media in order to suppress informational coverage of the rift. In fact, it made such an impact that it was heard well beyond Kaliningrad Oblast and even the Russian Federation.³⁷³

On 19 November 2000 in the second round of governor elections Gorbenko lost to Admiral Vladimir Yegorov (33.71% to 56.47% respectively). It would not be an exaggeration to contend that this event practically finished political career of the second governor of Kaliningrad Oblast. Nevertheless, this event ushered in a new epoch that (for good or worth) finalized the epoch of relative “independence” enjoyed by Kaliningrad within the period of “Time of troubles” experienced by the Russian Federation.

Judging from historical experience and overall course of development of Kaliningrad Oblast within first decade after disintegration of the Soviet Union, it would be safe to conclude that neither the local population (the micro level) nor Russian political environment as whole (the macro level) were ready for accept audacious and perhaps even foreign to the majority of Russians ideals presented by Matochkin as well as his style of policy making. Gorbenko on the other hand (“Yeltsin in miniature”) known for his authoritarianism, sporadic nature and brutality with political opponents became an embodiment of the 1990s. In some respect, he was destined to become some sort of an “intermediary figure” whose appearance corresponded to the state Russia found itself to be in.

By the beginning of new millennium, Kaliningrad was facing new challenges and directions that would be defined not by the winds of changes yet the iron arm of the Kremlin where politicians of new type were about to assume power. Concluding this period of local historical discourse, one might argue that two trends turned out to be fateful for Kaliningrad:

³⁷² “«ЧТО, МЕШАЮ?» — Спросил Путин. «Ага», — ответили ему”, *Новая Газета*, Выпуск № 56 от 07 Августа 2000. Available at: <http://www.novayagazeta.ru/society/10328.html>.

³⁷³ Patrick E. Tyler reported in “In a Russian Region Apart, Corruption Is King”, *New York Times*, April 5, 2000. For more information see: <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/04/05/world/in-a-russian-region-apart-corruption-is-king.html?pagewanted=all& r=0>.

1. **Internal.** Economic collapse of the year 1998 that shuttered each and every domain of the Russian Federation, bringing to Political Olympus actors of very different worldview and political philosophy;

2. **External.** The war in Yugoslavia, dramatic expansion of NATO and ever-growing criticism of Moscow in its dealing with internal matters (perhaps, the most evident example would be Chechnya) led to the growing sense of frustration and distrust to the West, which was additionally supplemented by economic hardships of the early 1990s. Furthermore, economic recuperation that was chiefly secured by growing process of natural resources (oil in particular) vested huge financial means in the hands of the Kremlin – an element that it could not rely within first post-Soviet decade.

Under these circumstances Kaliningrad Oblast – as the westernmost Russian region physically detached from the mainland – was started to be seen through a very different lens that greatly diverged from the position of powers that were about to coordinate future development of the Russian Federation.

Part 3. Kaliningrad on the verge of crucial changes (2000 – 2010): between great expectations and challenging reality

Profound changes within Russian political architecture that occurred in the end of 1999 and in the beginning of 2000th (primarily related to ascension of Putin and ensued restructuring of key mechanisms stipulating various domains of Russian political milieu) ushered in a new epoch for Kaliningrad Oblast as well. The new president (along with his cohort of advisers and the “inner circle” whose influence would be visible somewhat later) right from the very beginning of tenure in office identified the notion “centralization” as the most appropriate path that was to lead Russia to stable growth and development. On the other hand, the new leader criticized “liberal experiments” conducted in Russia/the Soviet Union at various stages of its development pointing out to the detrimental ends it allegedly had led Russia. Perhaps, his famous remark about disintegration of the Soviet Union as “the greatest geopolitical mistake of the twentieth century”³⁷⁴ could be seen as a succinct outline of political manifestation of the incumbent president and a brisk reflection of his philosophy as a person and a statesman.

In order to strengthen the executive branch in the Russian political architecture Putin conducted a range of reforms of which one of the most noticeable was administrative reform. According to the idea the fact that the locus of decision-making was to be transferred from local to central institutions should have been enough to eliminate the most dangerous forms of independence and insubordination to the federal centre.³⁷⁵

Furthermore, yet another crucial tendency should not be neither omitted nor disregarded (primarily because it would later be playing ever increasing role): the growing role of so-called “*siloviki*”³⁷⁶ (members of security services and those who had been tightly related to the Russian military structures) many of whom had developed close

³⁷⁴“Путин считает, что распад СССР стал трагедией для миллионов”, *РИА Новости*, 05.05.2005, Available at: <https://ria.ru/politics/20050505/39937603.html>.

³⁷⁵ Джамал Гиназов, 2017, “Полпред в России больше чем полпред”, *Эксперт*, Москва, 20.08.2017, http://expert.ru/ural/2001/08/08ur-polpol_72718/.

³⁷⁶ For more information see: Ian Bremmer, Samuel Charap, “The Siloviki in Putin's Russia: Who They Are and What They Want,” *The Washington Quarterly*, Volume 30, Number 1, (Winter 2006-07): 83-92. Available at: <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/207485>.

personal relations with Putin during his service in the KGB (“*Komitet gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosti*”) would become one of the most distinctive traits of “Putin’s Russia”.

Nonetheless, it would not be entirely correct to reduce changes experienced by the Russian Federation to merely administrative reforms or a personnel reshuffling. Within this period the Kremlin started to increasingly look for a common idea that was to unite Russian society formidably shaken by a decade of anarchy and clearly losing moral orientates that had yet to be replaced after demise of the Communist ideology. In this juncture, it was the ROC that acting in an alliance with the “throne” (civilian authorities) was to play a pivotal role in the process of “assembling of the Russian lands.”³⁷⁷ Interestingly enough, yet initiation of this policy underscored the continuity and traditions in Russian political thinking in the beginning of the new millennium: a set of policies conducted by Medieval Russian princes that is widely associated with re-creation of the Russian statehood and projected onto contemporary Russia. Needless to say, that a visible tendency toward greater centralization and unification produced a tremendous impact on Kaliningrad Oblast and its trajectory of development as well.

In this regard, conducting an analysis of the period of historical development of Kaliningrad within 2000 – 2010 (the second post-Soviet decade) it would be particularly valuable to to concentrate research effort on the following tasks:

1. Trace down evolution of the local political elites and the role of Moscow in this process;
2. Discuss changing relations between the oblast and the federal centre and the underplaying causes of this shift;
3. Take closer look at selective criteria (and their evolution over time) established for successive governors for the enclave/exclave;

³⁷⁷ Борис Рыбаков, *Киевская Русь и русские княжества XII-XIII вв.*, (Москва, 1982), 469.

4. Identify relationships between tendencies experienced by the Russian Federation and Kaliningrad Oblast as its subject and evolution of relations between the enclave/exclave and the EU.

Therefore, the main approach employed in this segment of the research will be based on a combination of chronological analysis of activities of Vladimir Yegorov (2000 – 2005) and Georgii Boos (2005 – 2010) and thematic one through which major topics related to the aforementioned historical interim shall be paid greater attention and discussed in depth.

Chapter 9. Political developments in Kaliningrad Oblast (2000 - 2010): trading stability for tranquility?

9.1. Vladimir Yegorov (2000 – 2005)

9.1.1. Accessing shortcoming of the “liberal model”

The “darkest period” that Kaliningrad Oblast was destined to face in the 1990s was primarily associated with two major factors: the period of transformations that - even though severely affecting Russia as a whole – hurt Kaliningrad in a particularly harsh manner and the figure of the second post-Soviet governor Leonid Gorbenko.

In fact, the local elections that took place in the year 2000 were perceived by many as a mere formality (as opposed to the ones that had been held four years before) although this should not be seen as an unconditional wisdom. After all, Gorbenko seemed to have brought enough misery and made his utmost to destroy relations with both local and federal actors, so any opposing figure would be construed as an undisputed bliss. This disparity in images between opposing candidates was furthermore amplified by the candidature of his opponent – Admiral Vladimir Yegorov – who was known as an uncorrupted military person who had not been involved in any political or economic scandal. Moreover, the mere fact that Yegorov had never occupied any political post and

therefore could not be blamed for inefficiency or ill-calculated political decisions/actions appeared to be a visible strong point in comparison with his opponents. Also, the Admiral was a stalwart of the “United Russia” Political Party (“Edinstvo”) and Vladimir Putin (even though he was not a member of this party) – aspects that by then were perceived as a considerable advantage considering the level of popularity of Putin. Furthermore, it seemed that the would-be governor had become popular in the West even before he formally assumed his post.³⁷⁸

Therefore, it would not be difficult to understand why the victory of Yegorov over Gorbenko was achieved without any hindrances: in the end the challenger gained twice more votes than the incumbent governor³⁷⁹. Having easily defeated his opponent Yegorov became the new (third after the breakdown of the Soviet Union) governor of Kaliningrad Region³⁸⁰. Illustrious military career of the Admiral (who used to be the Commander of the Baltic Sea Fleet) might have been construed as a direct sign of potential exaltation of the military and greater control of the Kremlin over the oblast. On the other hand, departure of obstinate and uncooperative Gorbenko appeared to be an opportunity for greater liberalization via the return of former influential figures (such as Matochkin and certain members of his team) who knew local environment very well and ideas put forth almost a decade ago were commensurate with declarations of the Kremlin (for instance, the “pilot region” initiative). Perhaps, one might also presume that the figure of the new governor was chosen by Putin primarily due to his previous occupation which allegedly made him much more a docile and obedient in the eyes of Moscow – a person who knew very well what the notion “subordination” meant.

Nonetheless, as the time had shown this was a grave understatement from the side of the Kremlin since the image turned out to be very different from expectations that Moscow might have vested in the former Admiral. In effect, Yegorov was not ready to play the role of a “dumb tool” who would unconditionally accept decision taken for him and instead of him. The very first months in office explicitly displayed that Yegorov had come to office with ideas and agendas of his own that were not likely to be changed easily.

³⁷⁸ Владимир Жуков, “Кремль победил на западе России”, *Коммерсантъ*, 21.11.2000, <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/163709>

³⁷⁹ Михаил Логинов, Калининград: между Европой и «Янтарным Батькой», *Невское время*, http://www.nvspb.ru/stories/kaliningrad mezhdru evropoj_i /?version=print

³⁸⁰ “Командующий Балтфлотом Владимир Егоров избран губернатором Калининградской области,” *Lenta.ru*, 20.11.2000, Available at: <http://lenta.ru/vybory/2000/11/20/kaliningrad> .

This concerned understanding of his own posture as well as the role and stance of Kaliningrad in relations with the Kremlin and external actors.

The very first alarming signal was received by Moscow when Yegorov (who to a great amusement of the Kremlin reiterated points that had been previously identified by Matochkin) highlighted that in spite of the fact that Kaliningrad remained an integral part of the Russian Federation and its status may not be questioned neither by internal nor external actors it should nevertheless develop special ties with the European Union. He also specifically pointed out that being placed in “one of the most economically developed regions in the world” Kaliningrad should start its integration in it in order not to miss such a unique opportunity presented by history. Admiral also criticized “those who contend that our region does not have a chance as well as the fact that Russia is unlikely to receive any benefits because of its geographic location.”³⁸¹

Undoubtedly, this attitude (to be more precise the way how this information was delivered and unexpectedly excessive assertiveness of the newly elected functionary) could not possibly have been welcomed in the Kremlin. This was even truer taking into consideration that Moscow had just started to pursue policies aimed at establishing/imposing greater subordination and obedience on the regions. This effect was additionally amplified by the fact that Russian political elites were convinced that a broad agreement (some may be tempted to define it as “arrangement”) with Yegorov had been reached.

As it has already been argued candidature of Yegorov had been selected well in advance of the election that commenced in the year 2000, which must have convinced the federal centre that that Admiral had understood the reason of his promotion to the position of a governor. In this regard it would make sense to recall Sergey Ivanov (at the time secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation) that had visited Kaliningrad and during the meeting with the Admiral underscored instrumental meaning of the region in terms of security, whereby hinting that the military vertical would be supported by all means available³⁸². Apparently, what should have been met by Yegorov as a complement (due to his former occupation) did in fact become a matter of profound alert, since he did not seek to initiate pervasive militarization of the area instead opting for acceleration of

³⁸¹ Шаров Александр, “Владимир Егоров, губернатор Калининградской области: между нами три границы”, *ТКС*, 12 февраля 2001, <http://www.tks.ru/reviews/2001/02/12/02> .

³⁸² Ирина Холмская, Владимир Жуков, “Калининградская область”, *Коммерсантъ*, 31.10.2000, <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/17901> .

economic growth and promotion of external ties indispensable for successful development of the oblast.

Being in the sway of stereotypes Moscow had committed a severe blunder refusing to admit the fact that not every military person deciding to initiate political career would necessarily defend or praise militarization.

Instead the governor opted to concentrate economic revitalization of the oblast which was built on pursuing of a two-fold strategy:

1. Intensification of the dialogue with Moscow regarding allocation of additional financial means aimed at economic recuperation;
2. Launching a broader dialogue with the EU as a part of diversification strategy.

The second unpleasant signal was received by Moscow in January 2001 when a piece of legislation was adopted that practically nullified special tax and custom privileges that Kaliningrad was able to enjoy due to the existing SEZ³⁸³. In practice that meant a heavy (if sustainable at all) blow to the local economy that was excessively dependent on subsidies from federal centre. Sporadic local demonstrations (though to a very limited scale)³⁸⁴ were furthermore aggravated by a stance assumed by Yegorov who immediately flew to Moscow and presented his case to Putin arguing in favor of Kaliningrad, which led to the retreat of the Kremlin. In fact, during the session of the Russian Security Council (2001) Putin devoted the entire speech to the problems faced by this Russian territory. Namely, he specifically highlighted its exclave position and proximity to foreign countries as most distinctive traits of the region and a justification that it needs to receive more attention. Moreover, it was explicitly stated that effectiveness of reforms in Kaliningrad was construed as a matter of security not only of the North-Western region as such, yet of the entire state. In this regard it would be possible to

³⁸³“Прогнозы дня: Будут ли восстановлены льготы для СЭЗ?”, *ТКС*, 19 января 2001, <http://www.tks.ru/reviews/2001/01/19/02/print>

³⁸⁴ Гинзбург Соломон, “Владимир Путин и Калининград”, *Rugrad.EU*, 01.02.2012, http://rugrad.eu/communication/blogs/blog_Ginzburg/vladimir-putin-i-kaliningrad/

ascertain the following key points made by the Russian president concerning Kaliningrad³⁸⁵:

- Production rates experienced a huge decrease;
- Amber industry is utterly underdeveloped;
- Life quality lags behind Russian average by 1.4 times;
- Social malaises (tuberculosis, drug addition and HIV/AIDS) have not been defeated;
- The level of criminality extremely high (in particular in the domain of economic crimes).

Nevertheless, in spite of a broad range of challenges faced by the region Putin declared that the oblast had several advantages that should be used in order to reverse this by and large negative trend. In order to achieve this, a number of measures were to be tackled:

1. Turning disadvantages into advantages. Acting in scopes of “pilot region” initiative Kaliningrad should be turned into a place of cooperation with the EU as well as knowledge and technology transfer to the Russian Federation;

2. Optimization of efforts of bureaucratic institutions and respective ministries. In this regard, various sorts of incoherent actions should be eliminated. Incidentally, Putin put the blame for introduction of new custom tariffs in January (which sparked a wave of public discontent) on incoherent actions from the side of ministries responsible for economic development;

³⁸⁵ Министерство иностранных дел Российской Федерации, *Выступление Президента России В.В.Путина на заседании Совет Безопасности Российской Федерации 26 июля 2001 года*, Москва, Кремль, Available: http://www.mid.ru/mnogostoronnie-struktury-i-forumy/-/asset_publisher/KrRBY5EMiHC1/content/id/576206

3. Attraction of foreign capital.

4. Strict delineation of responsibilities between regional and federal branches of power. According to Putin this task was supposed to be performed by specially selected Presidential Appointee whose main responsibility was providing the president with a full and detailed analysis of tendencies experienced by Kaliningrad;

5. Achieving higher rates of energy security in the oblast. Indeed, it cannot be argued otherwise that the domain of energy is tightly bound with such crucial branches as transportation and industry.

Furthermore, another initiative for which credit should be given to the governor (since it became an offspring of his personal efforts and advocacy) was implementation of the “*Federal Program on development of Kaliningrad Oblast*” that would be accepted and approved on December 7, 2001.³⁸⁶

Nevertheless, it seemed that the federal centre was not particularly kin to follow any practical steps and was rather annoyed with Yegorov`s initiatives. This primarily revealed that the new governor would not be satisfied with doles for his (and his team) own benefit, yet was seriously concerned with economic progress in Kaliningrad and the way it ought to be achieved. On the other hand, Moscow would be alarmed to a much greater extent with expanding activities of the Kaliningrad administration in the domain of foreign contacts that largely remained an area of the Kremlin`s responsibility. Evidently, it primarily owed to the insistence of Yegorov that he would be ultimately included in the delegation of the Russian Federation in the Russia – EU Summit that took place in Brussels in 2002³⁸⁷ - an even of truly revolutionary scope and meaning.

A new lap of growing dissatisfaction with Yegorov in Moscow was related to his refusal to reach understanding with both Alexander Voloshin and Dmitry Medvedev who

³⁸⁶Председатель Правительства Российской Федерации М. Касьянов, *Постановление Правительства РФ "О Федеральной целевой программе развития Калининградской области на период до 2015 года"*, от 7 декабря 2001 г. N 866, <https://www.rosvyaz.ru/documents/resolutions/doc474.htm?print=1>

³⁸⁷ “Завершилось первое заседание РФ-ЕС”, *Вести.ru*, 11.11.2002, <http://www.vesti.ru/doc.html?id=14457&tid=8728>

would occupy a key position of Heads of Presidential Administration.³⁸⁸ In practical terms that meant the following: information about Kaliningrad Oblast (and its governance) delivered to Putin would bare a tint of personal attitude that was pointed against the incumbent governor. Within this period, it also became visible that the scenario of cooperation between the EU and Kaliningrad ardently promoted by Yegorov was not going to materialize since Moscow opted for more drastic/aggressive methods of dialogue. This was corroborated on July 15, 2002 when Putin appointed Dmitry Rogozin (who at a time served as the head of the Foreign Affairs Committee in the State Duma) as a Special Presidential Envoy on problems of Kaliningrad Oblast related to enlargement of the EU³⁸⁹. In this regard, it seems rather surprising that the overall beneficial international milieu for intensification of cooperation between Moscow and Brussels regarding topics related to Kaliningrad did not acquire appropriate pace. Instead, the dialogue was rapidly evolving into a debate over so-called visa-related issues spurred by the upcoming accession of Poland and Lithuania to the EU and the Schengen Area. Unfortunately, the cooperative compound was being overshadowed by destructive elements that could not possibly have delivered a solution. Regretfully, it would also be possible to mention a very small number of representatives of the European civil society and local liberally-thinking environment that produced certain attempts to analyze the situation from a multidimensional prospective. For instance, on March 27, 2003 in Kaliningrad Duma an outgoing session of the federal committee entitled “Russia in the united Europe” took place. It was carried out with presence of Yegorov and Vladimir Ryzhkov (at a time member of the Russian States Duma) it was also attended by a number of the most well-known European and Russian specialists. However, the results of the event should be primarily ascribed to the domain of proliferation of theoretical knowledge of existing problems, whereas the practical compound was barely tackled.

This period was also marked by a new trend in policies conducted by Moscow regarding the oblast and a broad range of challenges faced by it: practical effort aimed at solution of the “Kaliningrad puzzle” was being replaced by the “imitation of solution”. This had also to do with growing discontent with Kaliningrad ruling elites that were being perceived as a part of the problem.

³⁸⁸ Гинзбург Соломон, “Калининградские Губернаторы новой России”, *Rugrad.EU*, 05.03.2012, http://rugrad.eu/communication/blogs/blog_Ginzburg/kaliningradskie-gubernatory-novoy-rossii/

³⁸⁹ “Путин призвал Рогозина на защиту Калининграда”, *Russia in the world*, <http://www.riw.ru/russia2986.html>

Therefore, it would not be superfluous to recall that in the year 2003 (which in a way could be construed as watershed in Russian internal and external political development) Putin declared that the standards of living in Kaliningrad were to have reached those of its neighbors by the year 2010³⁹⁰. Without any doubt this declaration (having to do a very little in common with the reality for both objective and subjective reasons) was leveled at current local administration aiming to put the entire bulk of responsibility (if any shortcoming were to occur) directly on the governor and his cohorts.

On the other hand, the Kremlin organized and effectively orchestrated a powerful information campaign³⁹¹ that was directly related to the upcoming geopolitical changes. Namely, the strategy of Moscow was based on the following pillars³⁹²:

1. Cultivation of the image of the oblast as a “besieged fortress” and an area “encircled by unfriendly states” – which was to be primarily applied to the external Russian public (residing beyond Kaliningrad);
2. Justification of the “cooling” relations with the West as a direct result of a standstill over Kaliningrad;
3. Proliferation of anti-Western sentiments among residents of the Russian westernmost region;
4. Using the “Kaliningrad cause” as a means to blame Poland and Lithuania for the debacle in the relations between the West and Moscow and simultaneously driving a wedge between the “old” and so-called “new” Europe.

³⁹⁰ Игорь Балашов, Алексей Лященко, “Остров отчуждения”, *Красная Звезда*, 24 Апреля 2004 года, http://old.redstar.ru/2004/04/24_04/3_02.html.

³⁹¹ Sergey Sukhankin, “Kaliningrad and Baltic Sea region security,” In Nicolás De Pedro and Francis Ghilès, (eds.), *War in peacetime. Russia’s strategy on NATO’s Eastern and Southern Flanks*, CIDOB (11.2017). Available at: https://www.cidob.org/en/articulos/monografias/war_in_peacetime_russia_s_strategy_on_nato_s_eastern_and_southern_flanks/kaliningrad_and_baltic_sea_region_security.

³⁹² Sergey Sukhankin, “Kaliningrad in the “Mirror World”: From Soviet “Bastion” to Russian “Fortress,” *Notes Internacionales*, N 151, CIDOB (06.2016). Available at: https://www.cidob.org/es/publicaciones/serie_de_publicacion/notes_internacionales/n1_151/kaliningrad_in_the_mirror_world_from_soviet_bastion_to_russian_fortress.

Beyond any doubt, this should be viewed as an action with ulterior motive since the aforementioned transformations of Kaliningrad`s neighbors were clearly seen throughout 1990s yet were not dealt with seriously by Moscow – a conundrum that has been discussed even by Russian scientists on numerous occasions.³⁹³

In September 2003 Kaliningrad was visited by Igor Shuvalov (Presidential Counselor), which resulted in a number of sound proclamations³⁹⁴:

- Creation of affordable real estate market;
- Modernization of the education system (on primary, secondary and tertiary levels);
- Broad and coherent medical reform (converging with European standards);
- Military reform (broad array of actions aimed at structural reforms in the armed forces);
- Transformation of Kaliningrad into Free Economic Zone with substantial growth in GDP;
- All-encompassing development of Kaliningrad region (privileges for small and middle business).

It does seem surprising that such an ambitious proposal omitted such vital and rather challenging aspects of Kaliningrad routine as “gray economy”, the role/fate of SEZ (as well as other tools of economic activities that were to have stimulated internal development) and the extent of involvement of the EU in modernization of Kaliningrad – these elements were not discussed, whereby immensely reducing the real weight of the project.

In the meantime, so-called “Kaliningrad dilemma” was gaining attention and rapidly becoming one of the main flashpoints of Russian political life. Interestingly enough, yet

³⁹³ For more information see: Артоболовский С.С., “Калининградская область: уникальный регион и типичный центр”, *Балтийский регион*, (Калининград: Изд-во РГУ им. И. Канта, 2009). т.№ 2., 115-128.

³⁹⁴ Светлана Офитова, “Шесть элементов Шувалова”, *Независимая газета*, 30.09.2003, http://www.ng.ru/politics/2003-09-30/2_element.html .

the list of issues related to the westernmost part of the Russian Federation was being dealt with by various forces ranging from liberals (German Gref) to nationalist-conservative forces (Dmitry Rogozin).

Weakness of Yegorov`s position would be further visible in the development path of the “pilot region” project – a definition that had been coined before the initiation of his tenure, yet as it turned out the new governor was very much fond of the idea and did not consider it to be a mere façade.

On 19 April 2003 the Strategy of the Socioeconomic Development of the Kaliningrad Oblast as a Cooperation Region³⁹⁵ was adopted. Particular attention should be paid to the fact that this document became a direct product of wide consensus among various political, business and intellectual forces: it was signed by the Oblast Administration, the Duma, the city council of Kaliningrad, the Baltic Navy authorities, businesspeople and NGO`s.

This initiative included the following aspects:

- Turning Kaliningrad into the most substantial transport joint in the northwest of Russia;
- Providing sustainable energy supply to the Oblast;
- Paying greater attention to environment protection;
- Making Kaliningrad an export-oriented economy;
- Upgrading the Kaliningrad SEZ;
- Development of telecommunications and tourist-recreational industry;
- Attaining the level of economic development similar to Poland and Lithuania.

³⁹⁵ For more information see: “В Калининградской области намерены повысить уровень жизни к 2010 году”, *Новый Калининград.Ру*, 17 Сентября 2004г, <https://www.newkaliningrad.ru/news/others/21082-.html>; Оксана Майтакова, “«Полет стратегий»: проект стратегии социально-экономического развития области в ближайшем рассмотрении”, *Новый Калининград.Ру*, 30 Мая 2012г., <https://www.newkaliningrad.ru/news/economy/1589601-polet-strategiy-proekt-strategii-sotsialnoekonomicheskogo-razvitiya-oblasti-v-blizhayshe-rassmotren.html> .

In many ways this was an example of a broad consensus between various major players of the region.

However, by then the prevailing attitude regarding Yegorov was closer to the sense of exasperation and vexation. In this regard the outcomes of “Shuvalov Commission” were reassessed by Moscow in such a way as to construe the bulk of existing problems faced by Kaliningrad as a direct result of absence of competition. Indeed, this was true. Nonetheless, Moscow did not come up with a single project that was to deal with this shortcoming stipulated by the very history of Kaliningrad.

In November 2003 Yegorov visited Moscow and presented temps of economic development of Kaliningrad Oblast that constituted 8.9% of growth (whereas in Russia it was 5.9% and in Poland 5.1%) – this produced benevolent reaction from the side of Putin³⁹⁶ (at least on the surface) yet revealed quite an unexpected attitude of Russian political establishment in general.

Figure 6. Comparative analysis of economic growth in Kaliningrad Oblast, Poland, Lithuania, and the Russian Federation 2000 – 2004



³⁹⁶ “Президент Путин о Калининградской области: "Ваши 8,9 % ВВП в год опережают среднероссийский показатель - 5,9%", REGNUM, 11 ноября 2003, <https://regnum.ru/news/178644.html> .

For instance, Shakhray launched an offence accusing Kaliningrad for noncompliance with Russian system of laws and slow reaction to the existing challenges. According to the politician it was imperative for the president and the government of the Russian Federation to increase their power in the domain of decision-making processes in Kaliningrad.³⁹⁷ That was a dangerous warning, especially taking into account critical role of this politician in previous campaigns against “reoccurring Kaliningrad separatism”. Therefore, it would be adequate to ascertain that instead of stimuli engrained in the “pilot region” initiative Kaliningrad was facing greater centralization rather than allocation of resources it had been promised nether did it receive institutional changes that could have restructured certain atavisms inherited by previous epoch. Those developments produce a wave of dissatisfaction from the part of the most progressive segment of Kaliningrad society – it seemed quite clear that Moscow did not have a clear vision of the program of reforms for Kaliningrad and tried to replace it with stiffening of its grip over the region. On the other hand, it was evident that the “paper growth” in accordance to which the oblast was developing faster than its foreign neighbors had very little to do with the actual state of affairs. One of the most radical opinions that steamed from regional intellectual elites was an idea of transformation of Kaliningrad Oblast into an Associate Member of the EU, yet in the meantime remaining a part of the Russian Federation. Naturally, the Russian side would never have agreed to that, it was however an explicit evidence of the fact that the voices of discontent were becoming much more audible and Moscow`s views were not shared by certain elements in Kaliningrad.

Incidentally, it would not be a mistake to assume that topics related to Kaliningrad Oblast and its status on the geopolitical map of Europe as well as its fate after the upcoming enlargement of the EU that was bound to take place in 2004 started to be obfuscated (following the splash in interest within the antecedent three years) which painfully reminded the bitter true – the oblast had not managed to overcome its status of the “double periphery”. The most salient corroboration of this thesis could be found in the outcome of the EU – Russia Summit (November 6, 2003) that took place in Rome. Regretfully, in spite of the seriousness of the situation that Kaliningrad was facing

³⁹⁷“Сергей Шахрай: Необходимо принятие конституционного закона об изменении статуса Калининградской области”, *Росбалт*, 15 декабря 2003, <http://www.rosbalt.ru/main/2003/12/15/134838.html>

(primarily stemming from the aforementioned enlargement) the topic of the enclave/exclave was not even mentioned.

The year 2004 brought about new portion of tensions in relations between Kaliningrad and Moscow. On March 14, 2004 Putin was re-elected as Russian president, yet the hideous terrorist attack in Beslan (September 2004) produced a tremendous impact on the Russian society and incurred new set of changes in the state`s architecture. Aside from growing strength of security services Putin signed a decree that changed the mechanism of election of the heads of federal districts and regions, which from now on would be subordinated to presidential will (this was supplemented by a number of similar administrative reforms). Undoubtedly, this changing milieu meant tightening of control over Kaliningrad by Moscow, which was also reflected in economic expansion of huge businesses from the mainland acquiring shares in Kaliningrad economy. The flipside of this tendency was diluting positions of local business elites and simultaneous warding off foreign enterprises and small/medium-size businesses. Moreover, the lack of clarity in regulations and competition led to a substitution of FDI from Scandinavian countries for Russian financial capital from “safe heavens” such as the UK, the USA and Cyprus (incidentally a huge share of investments streaming to Kaliningrad Oblast in this period came from this country). This in turn leads toward marginalization of Kaliningrad in the eyes of true investors not interested in simple “money laundering”, which is an extremely gruesome trend since it did not facilitate improvement of the external image of Kaliningrad impaired by troubles brought with collapse of the USSR. Furthermore, in case such trend remained unaltered Kaliningrad risked being permanently backward since other actors enjoying high rates of external investments accelerated their development whereby widening already existing disparity in development between the oblast and its competitors.³⁹⁸

Needless to say, that this policy could only be carried out through manipulations with SEZ regime, where great discounts and financial stimuli were provided for big business and large financial capital. This scheme came to be known as “larger discounts for the large”. Naturally, this collided with interests of the local elites that started to appeal directly to the governor. Similarly, on numerous occasions Moscow was ready to allocate financial means for the regional projects that had no real purpose: for instance, the Ferry

³⁹⁸ For more information see: Наталия Смородинская, "Модернизация Калининградской области в режиме региона сотрудничества России и ЕС", *Pro et Contra*, т.8, №2, 2003; Европа, № 1, 2004.

Project whose main aim remained a mystery. Indeed, frequently ill-calculated allocation of resources did more harm than good: for example, the federal centre could not (or did not want to) provide required support for small and medium-size businesses that – taking into consideration local conditions – should have become the motor of economic development. Neither did existing infrastructure undergo profound improvement (which, as it has been underscored previously constituted one of the major hindrances to attraction of FDI) – in this regard it was claimed that there were not enough funds that Moscow could earmark for the accomplishing of this goal.

Therefore, part of the local elites started to wonder whether Moscow was interested in preserving unfavorable conditions in the Oblast, whereby staving off foreign investors to avoid “losing the Oblast to the European Union”³⁹⁹. At certain point those fears had taken pathologic forms and started to lose any connection with rational calculus. In addition, such actions of Yegorov as refusal to become a member of the “United Russia” and a tradition (implement since 2003) to address local Duma on permanent basis were frowned upon by Moscow as yet another example of growing assertiveness.

9.1.2. The approaching endgame

The year 2004 brought to light a number of conflicts between the Oblast Administration and the Kremlin. It should be recognized that the main bone of contention were topics related the SEZ regime and the extent of economic independence of the oblast. Interestingly enough, yet in this exchange of arguments with federal center Yegorov would again take the side of the local forces, which went totally in contrast with what had been expected from him in Moscow at the dawn of his tenure. In the final analysis, being aware of growing discontent with developments in the westernmost region (and his actions as well) the governor made an attempt to reverse this unfavorable trajectory.

In his annual address (30 June 2004)⁴⁰⁰ he came up with the following points:

³⁹⁹ Сергей Картунов, “Калининград как ворота в Большую Европу”, *Россия в глобальной политике*, 27 декабря 2004, http://www.globalaffairs.ru/number/n_4210

⁴⁰⁰ “Губернатор Калининградской области выступил с ежегодным посланием”, *REGNUM*, 30.06.2004, <https://regnum.ru/news/polit/285706.html> .

- Kaliningrad is the Russian outpost in the Baltic Sea region;
- Kaliningrad is facing a new lap of steady economic growth;
- Kaliningrad desperately needed revision and modernization of existing SEZ mechanism.

Unfortunately for Yegorov Moscow construed the last point being an open demarche and an accusation leveled at the Kremlin that was to be blamed for inefficiency of the regime. In this regard Moscow administered a number of heavy blows that would in the end lead to the downfall of Yegorov:

Blow №1: something is “rotten in Kaliningrad”

In his interview regarding the role of Kaliningrad in Russian political architecture I. Ivanov defined it as a “bridge able to help the development of cooperation between the EU and the Russian Federation”⁴⁰¹, which implied that Kaliningrad was no more perceived as a “laboratory” of cooperation or the “pilot project” where the models of cooperation were to be tested. On the other hand, the final destination of that bridge, its purpose and the mechanisms that were to stipulate its functioning remained largely unknown. Therefore, it could be possible to argue that this was an implicit accusation of the local administration that did not perform its functions properly. Moreover, this new lap of confrontation between Kaliningrad and Moscow was surrounded by a number of sound corruption related scandals that – even though did not tackle Yegorov personally – implied that his team and closest advisors were not only profoundly incompetent yet also deeply corrupt⁴⁰².

⁴⁰¹ “Интервью с И. Ивановым” *Калининградская правда*, 01.07.2004, In: Raimundas Lopata, *Anatomy of hostage: Kaliningrad Anniversary Case*, (Tartu:Baltic Defence College, 2006).

⁴⁰² For more information see: Валерий Громак, “Савва из палаты № 6”, *FLB.Ru*, 24.08.2004, <http://flb.ru/info/30588.html>; http://expert.ru/northwest/2004/30/30no-spovest1_50072/.

Blow №2: loyalty above all

This direction of anti- Yegorov campaign was chiefly related to the eradication of insubordination (by and large its imaginary compound). The other facet of this campaign had to do with proliferation of influence of the “United Russia” political party which was to be directly coordinated by Moscow.

Interestingly enough, yet the campaign on discreditation of the incumbent governor was peculiarly bind with the “pilot region” initiative and its visible collapse. For instance, in the year 2004 during the conference entitled “Russia in United Europe” (that took place in Vilnius)⁴⁰³ Yegorov was tacitly accused of failing to deliver promises regarding the “pilot region”, whereby putting it under jeopardy.

Blow №3: SEZ as an “old-new” bone of contention

The final lap of tensions between Kaliningrad and Moscow could be ascribed to January 2005 and pertained to the strife over the new SEZ. Within the period 31 January – 7 February Kaliningrad turned into a mantel of heated debates that convened various forces (the local Duma, the local Administration and large business). The final decision was to be coined out in such a way as to avoid the cut in privileges for the Oblast (naturally, that implied that certain machinations with statistical data were to be carried out as well).

Generally speaking, the local elites found themselves constrained by two major necessities:

- 1) Present the Oblast as a rapidly developing and successful entity worth investing more financial means (this image was to be used for the Kremlin)⁴⁰⁴;

⁴⁰³Владимир Водо, “В Литве проходит ежегодное собрание общественного комитета “Россия в объединенной Европе”, *РИА “Новости”*, 23.10.2004, <https://ria.ru/politics/20041023/714645.html>

⁴⁰⁴Андрей Горбунов, “Три папки Михаила Цикеля”, *Logistics.ru*, 07.02.2005, http://www.logistics.ru/9/16/i20_22222p0.htm

- 2) Continue portraying of Kaliningrad as an extremely economically weak and vulnerable to external threats territory.

However, further course of events revealed that the Kremlin was not going to critically consider ideas and suggestions steaming from the local circles.

In this regard even such a well-known liberal actor as G. Gref (who was said to have been the “person in charge” in Moscow regarding the matters pertaining to Kaliningrad’s economic development) expressed his deep and profound dissatisfaction with the SEZ regime that so far had advanced primarily in accretion of “gray economy” and made the oblast dependence on subsidies from federal center even greater. His concern was based on the fact that the local economy had transcended onto a simplified scheme that envisaged the following procedure: by adding required 15 - 30% to the imported goods the local producers had a right to declare them to have been produced locally, which enabled them to ship them to the mainland without any tax/duty surcharges.⁴⁰⁵ However, the local economists came up with somewhat different opinion, which however was not shared by the majority of both Russian and European experts.

In the final analysis the new law on SEZ was delayed, which simultaneously perplexed and worried Yegorov: after all, his extent of support was in many ways pinned to the economic well-being of the local community, which in its turn was dependent on privileges enjoyed by the local economy. That unpleasant turn of events made the governor to somehow alter his position and parlance while maintaining a dialogue with Moscow. Witnessing rapid deterioration of his bargaining position he was left with no other choice but to finally express his full and unconditional support for the Kremlin’s position on Kaliningrad (although this point remained somewhat fuzzy in not fully transparent for understanding). Nonetheless, it appeared to be evident that the fate of Yegorov had already been decided and Moscow was merely looking for a good timing to make it abundantly clear.

The final event that would have crucial meaning for Yegorov and Kaliningrad region coincided with preparations and celebrations of the 750th Anniversary of

⁴⁰⁵Sergey Sukhankin, “Kaliningrad: Russia’s stagnant enclave,” *ECFR*, Wider Europe Forum, 31.03.2016, http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_kaliningrad_russias_stagnant_enclave_6052.

Konigsberg/Kaliningrad. Nevertheless, prior to discussing those fateful issues, it would be adequate to address additional important aspect as well.

9.1.3. The fateful anniversary and Yegorov`s downfall

From the beginning of 2005 Yegorov was trying to re-convince Moscow in his loyalty and adherence to the “general line”. Trying not to put forth agendas that would produce acute reaction from the side of Kremlin, the governor would continually underscore his patriotic stance (which however had never been challenged anyway). This did not have desired effect on Moscow, which construed it as a sign of febleness, which spurred the Kremlin to demanded even greater loyalty and obedience.

Interestingly enough, yet effect of enlargement of the EU (2004) produced quite different and in a way rather contradictory effect on the position of Moscow regarding its attitude toward Kaliningrad. Surprisingly, yet before the act itself Russian stance on enlargement had been construed as a negative and in a way even detrimental act that would impair communication of Kaliningrad with the mainland and finalize “encirclement” of the westernmost region. Nevertheless, one the enlargement occurred Moscow did not react in a way it might have been hoped it would.

In this juncture particular attention ought to be paid to Ilya Klebanov, who claimed that Kaliningrad “should be granted special status of a foreign territory as a response to its physical separation from the motherland” did contain a fair share of conservatism and was primarily aimed at “preservation of Kaliningrad as a part of the Russian Federation”⁴⁰⁶. Undoubtedly, this statement could have been considered standing at the edge of separatism.

On the other hand, the local elites voiced their demands such as providing more financial stimuli, expansion of freedom of actions – this was construed as the only remedy against separatism.⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰⁶ И.Клебанов, “Калининградской области надо придать особый статус”, *РИА Новости*, 11.02.2005.

⁴⁰⁷ Валерий Бирюков, “Особый статус – лекарство от сепаратизма”, *Росбалт*, 18.02.2005. <http://www.rosbalt.ru/main/2005/02/18/197125.html>

Incidentally, in some way or another such an audacious claim was rapidly supported and even developed by the local intellectual and business community. Nevertheless, none of conceivable alteration of sovereignty of the Russian Federation over Kaliningrad was discussed. Actors that defended the aforementioned thesis appealed to the fact that successful implementation of the initiative would have promoted number of prescriptions and measures specifically aimed at:

- Attainment of sustainable economic growth;
- Successful development in the milieu of EU enlargement;
- Further development of Russia – EU dialogue and cooperation with Kaliningrad as a link between two actors.

Even though rather meager those claims did nevertheless produce a torrent of negative reaction emanating from various levels of Russian society. Incidentally, Gref again expressed his deep perplexity with the formula and claimed aforementioned ideas to be absolutely inappropriate⁴⁰⁸. Even widely considered to be liberal radio station “Echo of Moscow” conducted sociological poll of its own which (along with the editor of the Radio program) in categorical tones disapproved of these ideas. Far more important was reaction of the Russian Ministry for Foreign Affairs which explicitly claimed that any change of political status of Kaliningrad was inconceivable.⁴⁰⁹

Speaking about the beginning of Yegorov`s downfall numerous experts converge at the point that it had been preordained and had been prepared for several months before the 750th Anniversary of Kaliningrad/Konigsberg, which incidentally would usher in a new epoch in development of Kaliningrad Oblast. One of the first impulses that certain processes were underway became evident in the early 2004 when several key members

⁴⁰⁸ “Греф не понимает, что такое "заграничная территория - Калининград", *ИА REGNUM*, 11.02.2005. <http://www.regnum.ru/news/406151.html>

⁴⁰⁹ “МИД России: Изменения статуса Калининградской области не будет”, *ИА REGNUM*, 14.02.2005. <http://www.regnum.ru/news/407023.html>

of the governor's team abandoned him⁴¹⁰. On the other hand, the region experiences a new wave of corruption related scandals (which did to a considerable degree resemble circumstances of Gorberenko's downfall). Threads to the main figurants of scandals led to the Oblast Administration and to Yegorov's family⁴¹¹ (although personal integrity of the former Admiral was not questioned). In some way certain historical parallels between Kaliningrad governor and American President Ulysses Grant (1822-1885) whose reputation of a crystal-clear military and a patriot was largely tainted by his team notorious for corruption⁴¹² could be drawn.

In the meantime, within 2003 – 2004 Russian Clearing House initiated a series of investigations that were to ascertain successfulness of special programs aimed to improve economic conditions in Kaliningrad Oblast. As a result, the investigation claimed to have found “serious systemic shortcomings and unrealized potential”⁴¹³, which made it impossible for the local economy to achieve a genuine breakthrough. Furthermore, the local authorities were accused of not being able to fully use strong points wielded by the local SEZ.

Other key points that came up could be summed up in the following manner:

- 1) Detrimental effect of privileges that led to growing disparity between import and export dynamics;
- 2) The state of infrastructure was appalling, and no decisive progress was achieved in this direction;
- 3) Illicit smuggling of amber reserves had not been stopped, which severely affected

⁴¹⁰ „Чиновники бегут с корабля адмирала Егорова: Калининград за неделю“, *Новый Калининград*, 30.08.2004, <http://www.newkaliningrad.ru/news/politics/10280-.html>.

⁴¹¹ For more information see: “Пограничный губернатор: Владимир Григорьевич Егоров”, *Закс.ру*, 21.12.2004, <http://www.zaks.ru/new/archive/view/14265>; Александр Рябушев, “Губернатор Егоров распорядился предоставить сыну охотничьи угодья, находящиеся на пограничной территории, а также в национальном парке “Куршская коса”, *Компромат.Ру*, 19.09.2005, http://www.compromat.ru/page_17396.htm.

⁴¹²“Ulysses S. Grant”, *History*, <http://www.history.com/topics/us-presidents/ulysses-s-grant>

⁴¹³ “Егоров Владимир Григорьевич (Калининградская область: 2000-2005)”, *VIPERSON*, <http://viperson.ru/articles/egorov-vladimir-grigorievich-kaliningradskaya-oblast-2000-2005>.

local branch of amber manufacture;

4) Various corrupt schemes that used federal financial means to their benefit were concealed under the glacial of reported economic growth.

Another embarrassing (if not shocking) event occurred in the summer of 2004 when Kaliningrad Oblast arrived at a brink of insolvency as a result of re-launching of so-called „Dresdner Bank Affair” that had been dragging since the times of Gorbenko. However, Yegorov refused to pay for the arrears of his predecessor (incidentally, the deadline for payment was passed on February 12, 2003). Moreover, taking into consideration various fines the overall amount of debt reached staggering \$25 million (in comparison to \$10 million that should have been paid initially). The scandal turned out to be a matter of great humiliation since Kaliningrad Oblast had to sell the building of its legal representation on the territory of Lithuania⁴¹⁴, whose total value was approximately 670.000 EUR⁴¹⁵, which was of a minor relief but of great humiliation.

Aside from economic matters the governor found himself to be in the epicenter of the new scandal – perhaps the most shameful one he could possibly have been involved in. On April 16, 2004 Yegorov received an “award” entitled the “Golden Hammer” for which he had been nominated by the Union of the Committees of Soldiers' Mothers of Russia and its Kaliningrad branch⁴¹⁶. This was based on a story of a private Sergey who had been bitten, humiliated, intimidated and blackmailed during first several weeks of his service in Kaliningrad Oblast. This posed a number of acute questions regarding effectiveness and conditions of the Baltic Sea Fleet (BSF) that the governor used to be in charge of.

Another lap of scandals was initiated on August 9, 2004 when Savva Leonov (Yegorov`s deputy) – one of the most influential local politicians and a close ally of the

⁴¹⁴А. Рябов, “Кто и как душит Калининградскую область”, *Новые колеса*, http://www.rudnikov.com/article.php?ELEMENT_ID=20799

⁴¹⁵ “Чего лишилась Калининградская область”, *REGNUM*, 18.12.2006, <https://regnum.ru/news/economy/756959.html>

⁴¹⁶“Краткая история антиприза «Золотая Кувалда»”, *Общество и Армия*, <http://nis-army.org/ru/library/istoriya-antipriza-zolotaya-kuvalda>

governor - was arrested for a bribe that amounted \$150.000⁴¹⁷. The unraveling investigation revealed that the top functionary had been involved in corruption schemes that pertained to one of the most lucrative branches of local business – the car sails. He was also accused of extensive use of administrative resources for his culprit activities. Undoubtedly, such portion of unpleasant news put forth numerous questions regarding credibility of Vladimir Yegorov and ability to effectively control activities of his own team. The apex of discord was reached when Oleg Shlyk (one of top functionaries and also a member of the Yegorov`s team) accused the Administration of Kaliningrad Oblast for ineffective policies in the domain of local governance and huge financial arrears to the local energy sector⁴¹⁸. Furthermore, he stated about a strong desire to take part in the upcoming governors` elections. This move was construed by many as an action orchestrated by the Kremlin in order to deepen the rift within local political apparatus.

In this context event of crucial gravity became celebrations of the 750th Anniversary of Kaliningrad/Konigsberg. In this juncture it would be worthwhile to make division between two separate although inadvertently linked to each other goals pursued by Moscow in its policies related to Kaliningrad:

- **Internal** (directly pertaining to realigning of Kaliningrad political milieu);
- **External** (aimed at Western partners of the Russian Federation and the role of Kaliningrad in it).

Reflecting upon the first aspect, it ought to be recognized that the would-be changes conceived by Moscow were tested within few days of festivities, which does not have to lead one into the belief that these stemmed from any sort of spontaneity. On the contrary, deeper analysis suggests that this even had been thoroughly planned in advance.

In this regard, a number of steps are to be ascertained. First, the Anniversary was marked with arrival of Georgii Boos, a close associate of Putin, active member of the “United Russia” political party and a Vice Speaker of the Russian State Duma.

⁴¹⁷ “Дело заместителя губернатора Калининградской области передано в суд”, *Известия*, 15.07.2005, <http://izvestia.ru/news/304281>

⁴¹⁸ Ю. Сергеева, "С девочками в баню не хожу". Зато вице-губернатор Шлык может "дать в морду", если оскорбят его жену", *Новые колеса*, http://www.rudnikov.com/article.php?ELEMENT_ID=13264

This move was construed as a broad hint that suggested appearance of a new candidate in a bid for a position of the local governor. It ought to be admitted that in contrast with Yegorov, Boos had several crucial advantages of which the most substantial were pertinence to the Moscow political elites and personal loyalty to Putin (via membership in “United Russia”)⁴¹⁹. In this regard during the festivities Kaliningrad hosted the State Council convention (July 2, 2005) that decided on bestowing on the governor of substantial subsidies and privileges (both economic and political). For instance, it would be worthwhile to mention the following ones⁴²⁰:

- 80% or 114 powers (forestry, environmental protection, veterinary care, licensing, protection of historical and cultural monuments, education, science, land use, public utilities, etc.);
- The right to supervise certain federal institutions (divisions of the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Emergencies, the Ministry of Justice, etc. except for the Ministry of Defense and the Federal Security Service);
- The right to reject the candidates selected by Moscow for the positions of heads of those institutions twice;
- 80 billion rubles per year to insure implementation of regulations.

This decision did nevertheless have its flip side – allocation of substantial financial stimuli implied greater responsibility and accountability of local elites in their relationships with Moscow, which was a sign of greater centralization and an urge for unconditional loyalty. That initiative made certain experts to conclude that the Russian

⁴¹⁹ “Если Кремль всерьёз рассматривает этого политика в качестве очередного калининградского губернатора, то не грех уже сейчас изучить его жизненный путь.”, *Rugrad.eu*, 07.07.2005, <http://www.rugrad.eu/archive/1475/236556/>.

⁴²⁰ Lopata R. *Op cit.*, p. 136.

Federation experienced emergence of the new regional policy concept⁴²¹, which can be defined as “stability for tranquility”.

Most certainly, Yegorov who was losing support from the side of the Kremlin was not the person to enjoy those innovations. Apparently, those benefits were being prepared for the new person who would assume a position of the new governor. In many ways extremely indicative was Yegorov`s speech during the event, when he tried to question Putin who exemplified Polish achievements in agriculture. The incumbent governor tried to suggest that the progress should not be separated from the fact that the mentioned regions had received 400 EUR millions from the EU as a supportive measure, which made Kaliningrad unable to compete with its European neighbor. Reaction of the Russian President was acute: he interrupted the speech by saying that his words were not heard due to the problem with the loudspeakers, which incidentally would refuse to work until the end of the conference⁴²². It goes without saying that this act could also be construed as a firm replay to the letter sent by the governor to Putin, where he proclaimed his readiness to prolong his tenure and presumed that the oblast had been developing in a positive direction in spite of certain shortcomings and limitations.⁴²³

On the other hand, ornate and excessively posh celebrations of the event carried out on the former Prussian land had an extremely far-reaching agenda that Moscow pinned to it.

It ought to be mentioned that the celebration of the Anniversary was taking place during the time when the international system of relations was undergoing profound changes. Primarily it was related to the fact that the Russian Federation experienced a clear discord in relations with the US (over the war in Iraq that occurred in the year 2003) and tried to rearrange the global order by explicitly voicing its disappointment with shortcomings allegedly brought about by this *Modus vivendi*. According to Moscow the world had entered into the phase of “multipolarity”⁴²⁴ where Russia as a self-sufficient pole of international relations was acting much more assertive than in the first decade after the collapse of the Soviet Empire. In this regard, events that were being celebrated

⁴²¹ “Путин опрокинул вертикаль власти,” *Известия*, 04.07.2005. Available at: <http://izvestia.ru/news/303876>.

⁴²² *Известия*, 04.07.2005., *op. cit.*

⁴²³ “Адмирал “Черной дыры”, *Новый Калининград*, 01.07.2005, <https://www.newkaliningrad.ru/news/politics/48602-.html>

⁴²⁴ “Калининградскому госуниверситету присвоено имя Иммануила Канта”, *Росбалт*, 25.05.2005, <http://www.rosbalt.ru/main/2005/05/25/210154.html>; <http://docs.cntd.ru/document/901934404>.

in Kaliningrad (as the westernmost point of the Russian Federation and an area engrained in the EU) were to serve as a viable proof of the Russian readiness to start playing greater role not only in European but global affairs. Therefore, particular essence was made on “European” aspects of Kaliningrad history and related elements (history, culture, tradition and foreign contacts). European reception of Kaliningrad Anniversary festivities underscored a very high level of expectations of European leaders vested in the event. Among others, Kaliningrad was visited by T. Blair, J.M. Barroso as well as leaders of Germany and France (though it did not go without any frictions that largely owed to the fact that Polish and Lithuanian delegations had not received official invitation).

Another important decision of the Russian side was renaming of Kaliningrad State University into the Russian State University of Immanuel Kant, which was to underscore the German past of the city and adherence to traditions. Moreover, Putin himself suggested that in the future the entire region could acquire the name of brilliant German philosopher.

Celebrations were concluded by joint press conference of leaders of Russia, Germany and France⁴²⁵, which was clearly disavowed by Poland and the Baltic States, since emergence of the European triumvirate (with two members of which the most tragic historical chapters of the new members of the EU had been tightly related) did not accommodate planes of those actors. In this regard Kaliningrad was employed as a tool of newly accepted “divide and rule” strategy towards the EU – whereby creating a rift between the “old” and “new” members of the EU. Most certainly, this new capacity of Kaliningrad was not the best way of using its potential as a “bridge” or a “laboratory” in relations between Europe and the Russian Federation. Instead of turning it into the point of convergence of interests it steadily evolved into the tool of argument with neighbors. Moscow erroneously believed that trading Yegorov to a younger and a more devoted head of the region would change the overall path Kaliningrad was following. On the other hand, the Kremlin had not realized that preservation of status quo with simple financial injections would not be enough in the long run.

⁴²⁵ “Press Conference Following the Meeting with Federal Chancellor of Germany Gerhard Schroeder and President of France Jacques Chirac.”, July 3, 2005 Kaliningrad, *President of Russia*, Available at: <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/23075> .

Speaking in broader terms, one might be able to draw two crucial conclusions that emanated from the course of festivities:

- 1) The Kremlin started to perceive *Eurocontinentalism*⁴²⁶ as its main vector of foreign policy development in the mid-term prospective, which implied tightening of cooperation ties between Russia, Germany and France;
- 2) Political environment within Kaliningrad was to be altered by changing the governor and his team.

Taking into account changing angle of Russian foreign policy and general dissatisfaction with Yegorov, the Kremlin decided to end his tenure prior to its official expiration date. On 16 September the Oblast Duma voted for Boos (incidentally, his candidature was put forth by Putin) as a new governor of Kaliningrad region⁴²⁷. On November 19, 2005 Boos was officially inaugurated as a new governor, which ushered in a new epoch of Kaliningrad history.

9.1. Georgii Boos (2005 - 2010): a ruthless manager or a servant of two masters?

9.2.1 Internal shifts in Russian political environment and its implications for Kaliningrad (2005 – 2007)

A combination of internal economic exuberance and political stabilization experienced by the Russian Federation within the first years of the new millennium created a fertile ground for greater assertiveness exhibited by Moscow in scopes of the aforementioned historical interim. Incidentally, this transformation did not merely pertain to the realm of foreign policy (this aspect will be discussed in the forthcoming segments of the current research) but also translated into the initiation of the process of an active search for a “national idea” – an element that was practically lost within Yeltsin`s presidency. Thus, it would be particularly important to take a closer look at three major

⁴²⁶ For more information see: Александр Дугин, “Провал европейской конституции: шанс для России”, *Российская газета*, 16.06.2005, <https://rg.ru/2005/06/16/evrokonstitucia.html> .

⁴²⁷ For more information see: Александр Рябушев, “Двоевластие в Янтарном крае”, *Независимая газета*, 16.09.2005, http://www.ng.ru/regions/2005-09-16/4_dvoevlastie.html.

developments experienced by Russia within indicated interim and the impact thereof on the posture of Kaliningrad Oblast.

Perhaps, the best reflection of the changing policies could be the following statement „a nation cannot exist without ideology”⁴²⁸. Under these circumstances, it would be worthwhile to recall the concept of so-called “sovereign democracy” as a new pivot of Russian changing posture: both on the domestic front and in international affairs.

In Russian intellectual milieu the concept was first tackled by Vitalii Tretiakov in the year 2005, which was reflected in the original article “Sovereign democracy”. Among other things it stated: “According to its own free will Russia transcended from the Soviet system to a new stage of her development that is associated with creation of a democratic and simultaneously free and just society and state. This means that it is up to them – the state and society – to be able to determine chronological frameworks, stages, conditions and forms of its development. Sovereign (and just) Russian democracy – this is the logical and material formula of Putin`s philosophy.”⁴²⁹

The term „Sovereign democracy” and its key aspects were also tackled in 2005 by Dmitry Orlov who defined this notion as „democracy of the own way.”⁴³⁰

It should also be stated that in the course of formation of the “Sovereign democracy” concept the Kremlin firmly relied on such prominent political scientists and political thinkers as Vyacheslav Nikonov, Gleb Pavlovsky, Valery Fadeyev, Vitalij Tret`jakov, Andranik Migranyan, Aleksey Chadajev, Maksim Sokolov, Leonid Poliakov, Vitalij Ivanov, Leonid Radzikhovskiy and other well-known figures who were construed as proponents of political regime established by Vladimir Putin.

It would however be rather inaccurate to state that the concept was elaborated by Russian intellectual community. First reflections on the matter were conducted by illustrious philosopher *Jean-Jacques Rousseau in the 18th century and would later be developed by prominent Western intellectuals and politicians. For instance, in 2004*

⁴²⁸ Яков Пляйс, “«Суверенная демократия» - новый концепт партии власти”, *Перспективы, Власть*, 04.2008, http://www.perspektivy.info/book/suverennaja_demokratiya--novyj_koncept_partii_vlasti_2009-01-26.htm

⁴²⁹ Виталий Третьяков, “Суверенная демократия. О политической философии Владимира Путина”, *Российская газета - Федеральный выпуск №3757 (0)*, 28.04.2005, <https://rg.ru/2005/04/28/tretyakov.html>

⁴³⁰ Дмитрий Орлов, “Политическая доктрина суверенной демократии”, *Известия*, 30.11.2006, <https://archive.is/20120904223026/www.izvestia.ru/politic/article3098907/>

*Romano Prodi identified the EU as a “federation of sovereign democracies”, whereas US Vice-President Dick Cheney during a conference in the capital of Lithuania Vilnius in 2006 stated that the post-Soviet area is witnessing emergence of “communities of sovereign democracies.”*⁴³¹

This being said, it ought to be stated that the mature concept of „Sovereign democracy” appeared in Russia the year 2006 and is primarily related to the figure of Vladislav Surkov (at a time First Deputy-Director of Presidential Administration), who in November of this year used the concept for the first time in an article titled “Nationalization of the future”⁴³². Even the most superficial analysis of the doctrine leads to a belief that its main purpose was to chiefly concerned with elaboration of strategies that were to “safeguard” Russia against so-called “color revolutions”⁴³³ and simultaneously ensure continuity and tradition of political patterns established in the early 2000th. In fact, Surkov was quite explicit on this regard: “What threatens sovereignty as an integral part of our current and future model... soft engulfment by contemporary “orange technologies” coupled with decreasing national immunity toward external causes.”⁴³⁴

At this point, one should be able to recognize the fact that Surkov`s perception of the notion is closer to philosophical vision of Vasilii Kluchevskii who in his fundamental “Course of Russian History” juxtaposed Russian representative organs (so-called “*Sobory*”) with nascent European parliamentary democracy.⁴³⁵

In the final analysis, it was Russian President Putin who on September 14, 2007 during a session of the „Valdai” discussion club reiterated that Russia is entitled to have its own understanding and perception of democracy and shall be managing its internal and external affairs in accordance with norms and principles engrained in its cultural and historical traditions.

⁴³¹ “Cheney's Speech in Lithuania”, *The New York Times*, May 4, 2006,

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/05/04/world/europe/04cnd-cheney-text.html>.

⁴³² Сурков В., “Национализация будущего”, *Эксперт* № 43 (537). 20 ноября 2006.

⁴³³ Lincoln A. Mitchell, “The Color Revolutions”, *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2013 Issue,

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/reviews/capsule-review/color-revolutions>.

⁴³⁴ Сурков В., “Суверенитет – это политический синоним конкурентоспособности», Available at: <http://edinros.ru/news.html?id=111148>.

⁴³⁵ Ключевский В.О., *Курс русской истории*, Сочинения в 9 т., Т. 2. (М.: Мысль, 1988), Лекция 50, 328-347.

Second crucial development that became a genuine watershed between pre-2000 and post-2000 Russia was creation of so-called “Russkij Mir” Foundation and respective ideological model. In the end of the year 2006 Vladimir Putin used the term “Russkij Mir” simultaneously identifying key components thereof: “Russian word” and “Russian culture”. “Use this combination of words – “Russkij Mir” – on more frequent occasions” – this was the main idea of Putin.⁴³⁶

Indeed, the concept was not original: numerous Russian writers, philosophers and sociologists of different times – ranging from Alexander Ostrovsky in the mid-19th century to Vadim Tsymbulskii and Andrey Stoliarov in the beginning of the new millennium – praised the idea of Russia forming a cultural space of its own. In this regard, prominent Russian historian and social anthropologist Valery Tishkov presumed that “Russkij Mir” should be seen as a phenomenon of truly global scale thus following examples of Spain, Portugal, France, China and the UK.

Another way to construe this idea came from already mentioned Tsymbulskii for whom “Russkij Mir” was primarily attached to geopolitical pivot – a swath of land that separated Russia from so-called “Roman-Germanic Europe.”⁴³⁷

In 2007 Putin signed a decree⁴³⁸ that introduced the “Russkij Mir” Foundation whose prime function was concerned with promotion of Russian language and culture around the world. Nevertheless, it would soon become apparent that declarative goals did not exactly match the real purposes and tasks put behind the project. Rather, it should be construed as a sign of growing Russian assertiveness and a geopolitical (yet not exclusively cultural) project. Indeed, by giving a way to the “Russkij Mir” Moscow did in fact put forth for a claim on a sphere of influence of its own declaring itself to be not merely a country per se but a “special civilizational commonality”⁴³⁹.

Third and final element that pre-determined pivotal transformation of the Russian Federation was growing involvement of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) in the realm

⁴³⁶ Лидия Сычёва, “Русский язык, русская культура, русский мир”, *РФ сегодня*, № 4, 2007

⁴³⁷ Сергій Дацюк, “Война за Русский мир”, *Українська правда*, 28 травня 2014, <http://blogs.pravda.com.ua/authors/datsuk/53858ffc966fc/>.

⁴³⁸ Указ Президента РФ 21 июня 2007 г. № 796 “О создании фонда “Русский мир”, *ГАРАНТ.РУ*, 2 июля 2007, <http://www.garant.ru/products/ipo/prime/doc/6232379/>.

⁴³⁹ “Русского мира”, *Российская Цивилизация*, <http://рос-мир.рф/node/705>.

of Russian political milieu which was mainly related to the personality of the would-be Patriarch Kirill.

One of the most noticeable developments was re-formulation and exponential expansion of the “Russkij Mir” project that would not only be tackled from geopolitical or secular angles yet would be supplemented by “ecclesiastical” compound as well.⁴⁴⁰ In contrast to previously established notion the “new version” of the “Russkij Mir” was to be based on such components as Orthodoxy, Russian culture and language as well as common/collective historical memory – elements that not only expanded geography but served as precursor to justification of Russian involvement in internal affairs of other states on the basis of its moral right and even responsibility.

Undoubtedly, the combination of the aforementioned developments played instrumental role in transformations experienced by Kaliningrad: not only did the Kremlin shift its perception of its westernmost district but acceding of the ROC (with Kirill being one of the main advocates of the oblast) added a totally new dimension. With Russia growing in might and bidding for a position of superpower the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) – the cradle of Russian civilization and a source of “Europeanization of Russian elites” – appeared to be of existential meaning for Russian regional ambitions. Moreover, it was Kaliningrad Oblast (as a Russian territory engrained in the EU) that was being increasingly perceived as Russian stronghold in the region.

9.2.2. G. Boos: *between hammer and the anvil*

The forth governor of Kaliningrad Oblast, Boos became the first one to be appointed in line with the law adopted on 12 December 2004, which empowered the Russian President to personally conduct the appointment whereby escaping the necessity to conduct direct popular elections. Advance of the new governor handpicked by president Putin meant that for the following five years the Kremlin would directly control internal and external processes in Kaliningrad. In the meantime, for Moscow it was some sort of a gamble. On the one hand, in case positive improvements ensued Moscow`s

⁴⁴⁰ Sukhankin, Sergey, “The “Russkij mir” as Mission: Kaliningrad between the “altar” and the “throne” 2009-2015”, *Magazine Ortodoxia*, (University of Eastern Finland: 2016).

involvement would be perceived as the main factor of stabilization and a concrete justification of the reform that reduced popular involvement in the electoral processes. On the other hand, in case of absence of drastic improvement (notwithstanding the source of crisis) discontent of the local population would be pointed not only against new governor and his team, yet would be spearheaded against the Kremlin that had made a choice without consultation with the locals.

In this juncture it would be appropriate to ascertain the main motives that were put behind the Kremlin`s decision while appointing Boos:

1. **Image.** Boos was younger and much more socially active figure than his predecessor;
2. **Relations with Moscow-based elites.** The new governor vehemently supported main ideas and trends dominating in the Kremlin;
3. **High expectations.** The region was in fact developing along unacceptable trajectory, which led ruling political elites in Moscow into the belief that change of the authority would be an effective antidote against the imminent crisis;
4. **“Foreignness”.** Boos was not implicated with local politicians and did not share responsibility for negative trends and developments that got out of control during the last years of Yegorov tenure;
5. **Economic programme.** Even prior to his official appointment, Boos proclaimed development of small and medium size businesses as his priority – this was to be engrained in the new SEZ law⁴⁴¹;

⁴⁴¹“Морозов: Закон об ОЭЗ в Калининградской области примут до конца года”, *Росбалт*, 11.10.2005, <http://www.rosbalt.ru/main/2005/10/11/230147.html>.

6. **Composition of the team**, which would become an alloy of both external and local figures that was supposed to ensure the adequate level of competition and an image of transparency;
7. **Big promises**. Somewhat populist (yet extremely attractive) motto claiming dramatic increase of living standards exceeding those in Poland and Lithuania.⁴⁴²

Naturally, first steps of the new governor were clearly oriented on achieving immediate results in very confined time scope in order to bring about palliative effect and somehow mitigate crisis.

Thus, initial activities of the newly appointed head of the region could be identified as the following:

1. **Launching of anticorruption campaign** that was intertwined with adoption of certain legislative acts that empowered the new governor to form a new regional government, which clearly expanded his powers and upgraded his personal responsibility for the ultimate outcome⁴⁴³;
2. **Personnel reshuffling** that introduced 12 new ministries and 7 special agencies assembled in three large blocks aimed at tackling of specific issues (manufacture and industry, transportation, health care, education, sport, economy and financial sectors) were created. Those new structures were to be supervised by deputy prime ministers directly responsible to Boos⁴⁴⁴;
3. **Reduction of the number of departments** (from 34 to 24) and staff personnel (from 1200 to 600) which was to have tackled the issue of the “red tape”⁴⁴⁵;
4. Measures aimed at **democratization and equalization of public servants** and the rest of Kaliningrad inhabitants (salaries to be tight up to the minimum wages;

⁴⁴² „Через 5 лет калининградцы будут жить не хуже, чем литовцы и поляки – Боос”, *REGNUM*, 16.09.2005, <http://www.regnum.ru/news/513865.html>.

⁴⁴³ „Георгий Боос-Главным акционером компании КД авиа - не надо переводить стрелки на правительство области,” *Klops.ru*, 20.07.2009. Available at: <https://klops.ru/news/obschestvo/11671-georgiy-boos-glavnym-aktsioneram-kompanii-kd-avia-ne-nado-perevodit-strelki-na-pravitelstvo-oblasti>.

⁴⁴⁴ Сергей Иванов, “Георгий Боос начал с административной реформы”, *Коммерсантъ*, 30.09.2005, <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/613700>

⁴⁴⁵ “Аппарат калининградского правительства будет сокращен с 1,2 тыс. до 600 человек”, *REGNUM*, 11.10.2005, <http://www.regnum.ru/news/526589.html>

forfeiture of personal bonuses; privileges for former members of the local government were to be made void);

5. Clear orientation on **cooperation with the EU** (though under strict control from the center).

It needs to be underscored that inception of Boose's tenure was met very enthusiastically both within the local elites and abroad⁴⁴⁶. For instance, assessing ideas and intentions of the new governor, Klebanov revealed that "I have never seen such audacious - at least in our Federal region - programs... that are totally suit for Kaliningrad that is now a "mini-state"⁴⁴⁷.

Incidentally, ambitions of the new governor did spread far beyond economic and socio-politician terms encroaching upon geopolitical categories as well. Interestingly enough, yet it was Boos who reanimated the idea of close cooperation between Russia and the EU, where Kaliningrad was to have played the role of "Russian window to Europe"⁴⁴⁸ - international image of Kaliningrad was to be changed once and for all and the converging of Russian and European businesses was to have been achieved on Kaliningrad soil. For this purpose special socio-economic program was drafted, among others it included the following points:

- Establishment of transparent and clear financial system (compatible with international requirements);
- Full public access to the budget and associated financial procedures;
- Doubling of the region energy capacities;
- Upgrading of the local infrastructure;

⁴⁴⁶ Вадим Смирнов, "Боос, который построит всех", *Время*, №186 07 октября 2005, <http://www.vremya.ru/2005/186/4/136045.html>

⁴⁴⁷ "Новая программа развития Калининградской области сделана под мини-государство: Клебанов", *REGNUM*, 18.10.2005, <https://regnum.ru/news/530461.html>.

⁴⁴⁸ Тамара Шкель, "Как простой гражданин. Георгий Боос едет в Калининград", *Российская газета - Федеральный выпуск*, №3861 (0), 31.08.2005, <https://rg.ru/2005/08/31/boos.html>; Марина Фихте, "Боос въехал с трудом", *Газету.Ру*, 02.09.2005, https://www.gazeta.ru/2005/09/02/oa_169431.shtml.

- Realigning of the SEZ law taking into account local particularities and in order to attract large financial capital both from the EU and the Russian mainland;
- Doubling of the population of Kaliningrad within 5 upcoming years.

The last point needs to be addressed with particular attention primarily because the aforementioned accretion was to have been made at the expense of Russian compatriots abroad (including the Baltic Sea states), which was equally ambitious and unrealistic. Nevertheless, this idea seemed to have found its target group in Moscow – according to various circles the Kremlin allocated \$ 6 billion for that purpose (the so-called “Barbarossa Plan”⁴⁴⁹). Overwhelmed with explicit support from Moscow Boos claimed that the Oblast could easily absorb up to 5 million residents. In certain respect the model of attraction of new citizens to Kaliningrad resembled the one carried out by the Soviet Union that aimed to saturate its distance outskirts with ethnic Russians as a counterweight to the local indigenous people.

Initial period of the tenure was also marked with intensification of foreign policy contacts. However, in contrast to his predecessors Boos did not skip the most crucial element - to constantly maintain the “Russia – first” approach in dealing with European/external partners. For instance, during his meeting with Putin that commenced on 7 November, the governor stated that the main priority for Kaliningrad would be to preserve the Oblast as “the Russian exclave in Europe” and to “maintain constant ties between the Oblast and the rest of Russia”⁴⁵⁰. His main argument boiled down to the point that the region ought to be tight to the mainland as the main precondition of successful cooperation not only with European partners, yet between Russia and the West as a whole.

However, oscillating between necessity of foster external ties, preserving unconditional docility in dialogue with Moscow and attempting to reconcile liberalization with already visible trends toward authoritarian style of governance produced little but a patchwork of ideas amply saturated with populist rhetoric.

⁴⁴⁹Владислав Урбанс, “План "Барбаросса" Георгия Бооса”, *Компромата.LV*, <http://www.kompromat.lv/item.php?docid=readn&id=1908> .

⁴⁵⁰“Путин и Боос обсудили проблемы Калининградской области”, *Новый Калининград*, 07.10.2005, <http://www.newkaliningrad.ru/news/politics/69978-.html> .

Reputation of Boos as a person capable of reforms and widening of the area of contacts between the EU and the Russian Federation via Kaliningrad was initially acclaimed by international mass media and portrayed in significantly much brighter colors than it actually was⁴⁵¹. For instance, on 11 October 2005 he met with impressive at its scope delegation of the European Parliament. The meeting had mostly symbolic meaning (the idea was to set up a “Club of the Kaliningrad Oblast’s Friends in Europe”⁴⁵²), yet it vested hopes in both European partners of the Oblast and local liberal circles. Nonetheless, the resilience would be suppressed by actual nullification of negotiations that implicitly came with the fact that a memorandum that was to have summed up the results of the visit was not signed (it was only available in Russian which made its international recognition void)⁴⁵³.

On October 19 of the same year Sergey Lavrov (the Foreign Minister of Russia who assumed his post in 2004) approved the decision of the governor to merge the International Relations Agency of the local government with representative office of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Kaliningrad⁴⁵⁴. Official explanation of this move was related to a necessity to make the decision-making process regarding foreign ties between the oblast and its external partners more expeditious. Unfortunately, this initiative was not destined to materialize in the format it was presented. The underlying cause must have been related to the fear of Kaliningrad developing closer ties with European countries unilaterally – without Moscow playing essential role in this process. On the other hand, judging by most recent historical experience it was obvious that without developing ties with European countries the future development of Kaliningrad Oblast was questionable.

Representatives of Kaliningrad liberal elites (for instance, Solomon Ginzburg who was a member of the local Duma) argued that one of the main foreign policy priorities of

⁴⁵¹Stephen Castle, “Kaliningrad: from Russian relic to Baltic boom town”, *The Independent*, 23 March 2006, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/kaliningrad-from-russian-relic-to-baltic-boom-town-470983.html>

⁴⁵²“Завершение визита рабочей группы Комитета парламентского сотрудничества Россия-Европейский союз”, *Правительство Калининградской области*, 11.10.2005, https://gov39.ru/news/atk/?PAGEN_1=976&SIZEN_1=20

⁴⁵³“Депутаты Европарламента отказались подписывать меморандум по итогам визита в Калининград”, *REGNUM*, 11.10.2005, <http://regnum.ru/news/526500.html>

⁴⁵⁴“Боос объединил в Калининграде международное управление с представительством МИД”, *REGNUM*, 19.10.2005, <https://regnum.ru/news/531316.html>

Boos was so-called “Lithuanian factor”, which was eloquently described by Boos as a “direction of strategic friendship”⁴⁵⁵. According to the governor the main pivot of the dialogue should be based on economic ties that were expanding. For instance, it was estimated that the trade volume between Kaliningrad Oblast and Lithuania within the period 2004 – 2005 grew by 18.2 percent, whereas the Lithuanian investments in the local economy amounted to 22.5 percent subsequently making this country the second largest investor. Furthermore, on January 1, 2007 as many as 670 firms and businesses with participation of Lithuanian financial capital were registered on the territory of the oblast. It was also noted that capacities of the so-called „Lithuanian business club” (established in 2001) could and should be used to a much greater extent in order to ensure consultative aspect of cooperation between two sides.

Speaking in retrospective, it ought to be mentioned that within last months of his tenure the governor paid greater attention to the voice of local opposition that claimed that implementation of laws aimed at simplification of interaction between the EU member states and the Oblast (via abolition of visa regime to the EU citizens) was an imperative precondition for economic development of Kaliningrad though it was too little and way too late. Nevertheless, these ideas did not find proper understanding being largely affected by growing frictions between Moscow and its Western counterparts as well as the advent of the global financial crisis of 2008.

Reflecting upon foreign policy activities conducted by the new governor, it ought to be mentioned that the very promising initial actions would be significantly curtailed and redirected in unproductive populist mottoes that had no practical sense⁴⁵⁶. Retreat in the domain of foreign policy initiatives was mostly related to two main aspects. First, Boos clearly recognized that encroaching upon the “red flags” in the domain of independent foreign policy actions might have been frowned upon by Moscow and could cause problems with the Kremlin (especially taking into account the turn that relations between the West and Russia were taking). Secondly, internal forces had formed and presented their disapproval of expansion of foreign policy contacts that were deemed unnecessary and even harmful to the region. Even prior to official inauguration of Boos as a new governor Admiral Nikolay Valuyev bluntly stated that the Baltic Navy was not supportive

⁴⁵⁵“Георгий Боос: «Литовское направление для нас – это направление стратегической дружбы»”, *Правительство Калининградской области*, 12.10.2007, <https://www.gov39.ru/news/101/26541/>

⁴⁵⁶Вадим Смирнов, “Разрешите обратиться”, *Время*, 24.04.2009, <http://www.vremya.ru/2009/71/4/227835.html>.

of any efforts aimed at improving economic and cultural cooperation between the Kaliningrad Oblast and foreign countries. This was based on the assumption that proliferation of such contacts would inevitably lead to non-violent separation of Kaliningrad from Russia⁴⁵⁷. Taking into consideration historical role of military in Kaliningrad it seemed to be much more prudent for Boos not to engage in a conflict/argument with representatives of conservative circles within the oblast. On the other hand, this declaration appeared to be a serious warning signal to those forces that tried to speculate on potential increase of the extent of openness that could be enjoyed by the oblast. In the final analysis, cooperation between the EU member states (with Germany, Lithuania and Poland) and Kaliningrad Oblast mostly consisted of economic interactions, where the share of Kaliningrad export was stipulated by oil/petroleum products (approximately 70% of the overall bulk of exports)⁴⁵⁸. Naturally, this trend did not correspond to former statement regarding technological cooperation, innovations and transformation of Kaliningrad into a center of education, science and technological achievements. Moreover, the majority of experts argued that even the domain of economic cooperation was not used the way it could or should have. Unfortunately, such a mode of interactions profoundly simplified patterns of economic development of the Oblast and pegging it to external stimuli and global price for energy, which exposed local economy to external shocks to even greater extent.

On the other hand, internal developments experienced by the oblast seriously affected the extent of external cooperation as well. Despite initial liberal rhetoric Boos would soon prove to be a stalwart of so-called “authoritarian” mode of governance. It would not be a mistake to note that the model that the governor attempted to install in Kaliningrad bitterly reminded the one promoted by Putin, where centralization and obedience were the most venerable qualities. On the other hand, he demonstrated intractability and obstinacy that to certain extent reminded methods upheld by Gorbenko. Therefore, it would not be a mistake to claim that from the very beginning Boos assumed “top-down” position in respect to the local political and business elites. For instance, by July 2006 he had practically abandoned all initiatives previously introduced by Yegorov.

⁴⁵⁷ “Поссорит ли командующий Балтфлотом Путина со Шредером?: Калининград за неделю”,

REGNUM, 04 09 2005, <http://www.regnum.ru/news/506957.html>

⁴⁵⁸“Губернатор Георгий Боос в Берлине – диалог политический и экономический”, *Rugrad.eu*, 18.10.2007, http://rugrad.eu/news_release/region_gov/13355/.

He also ceased to attend work of the local Duma tending to consult with Moscow instead. This was construed as a sign of disrespect and complete ignorance of local opinions.

Furthermore, Boos turned out to be an admirer of a blatant mayor of Moscow Yury Luzhkov (who incidentally was a godfather of the governor's daughter), trying to copy his methods of governance in the Russian capital. Apparently, the so-called YUKOS affair (2003) had had a certain effect on Boos as well: right from the beginning he chose the lingua of harsh ultimatums and threats⁴⁵⁹. On the other hand, big external businesses (mainly from the capital) were given an upper hand in the domain of conducting entrepreneurial activities in Kaliningrad. For instance, during his meeting with heads of large commodity chains of Kaliningrad the governor straightforwardly stated that he did not “care who would be the main supplier of staple products: you or external players... if you accept my rules you will receive financial and legal support, if not – the soil will be burning under you heels”⁴⁶⁰. From the very beginning of his path in Kaliningrad Boos gained an image of a firm politician (although frequently it was rather difficult to find a fringe between the actual firmness and a tint of populism) who was ready to fight corruption, punish top officials known for bribery and corruption and even aspiring to wage a crusade against “offspring of illicitly conducted privatization campaign” of the 1990s⁴⁶¹. One of the first legislations promoted by the new governor was abrogation of the act of privatization of two large enterprises – confectionary fabric and a shipyard. Undoubtedly, being very well aware of the unpopularity of privatization (according to various estimates 74 – 90 % of Russians felt ill at ease with this initiative⁴⁶²) these steps ought to be seen as a well-calculated initiative aimed at expansion of support and popularity of the new governor among local community and ordinary Kaliningraders. Later on, Boos hinted that the largest poultry factory and the House of Soviets would be dealt with accordingly. Nevertheless, making these statements Boos had to follow the line

⁴⁵⁹ “В госиздательстве "Янтарный сказ" смещен с поста директор (Калининград)”, *REGNUM*, 13.10.2005, <https://regnum.ru/news/klnggrad/528140.html>

⁴⁶⁰ “Кого Боос назначит местным Ходорковским?”, *Комсомольская правда*, 14.10.2005, <http://www.kaliningrad.kp.ru/daily/23595.4/266505/>

⁴⁶¹ “Боос наступил на больное”, *Новый Калининград*, 24.10.2005, <https://www.newkaliningrad.ru/news/economy/67460-.html>

⁴⁶² Ростислав Капелюшников, “Собственность без легитимности?”, *Полит.ру*, 27.03.2008, available at: <http://polit.ru/article/2008/03/27/sobstv/>; Наталия Зоркая, “Приватизация и частная собственность в общественном мнении в 1990—2000-е годы”, *Отечественные записки*, № 1 (21), 2005, available at: <http://www.strana-oz.ru/2005/1/privatizaciya-i-chastnaya-sobstvennost-v-obshchestvennom-mnenii-v-1990-2000-e-gody>; Подберезкин А. И., Стреляев С. П., Хохлов О. А., Ястребов Я. И. *Секреты российской приватизации*, (М: Ступени, 2004).

indicated by President Putin (as well as the lower chamber of the Russian Parliament) who categorically refused to reconsider results of privatization⁴⁶³.

Aside from absolutely fantastic initiatives related to dramatic accretion of the local population in a desperate attempt to “catch up and outdo”⁴⁶⁴ geographical neighbors of Kaliningrad Oblast and prove himself to be an able manager Boos entered in the local history as a person who came up with the most tremendous infrastructural projects of which the following ones deserve mentioning in the following table⁴⁶⁵:

Table 3.1. Projects by Boos (expectations and the outcome)⁴⁶⁶

Year	Project	Result
2006	Promised to build a still mill along with other plants and large factories that were supposed to set up a solid base for construction business as a new lucrative branch of local economy.	The project was frozen and did not receive further impetus.
2009	Boos pledged to build a hippodrome, golf facilities and the authordom for „Formula-1” races.	Construction works were not initiated.
2009	To open an international amber bourse in Kaliningrad	Was not opened

⁴⁶³“Госдума отказалась пересматривать итоги приватизации,” *Lenta.ru*, 12.09.2003, (accessed 10.01.2017) <https://lenta.ru/news/2003/09/12/deprivatisation/>.

⁴⁶⁴ Which was a famous motto put forth by Nikita Khrushchev regarding the competition between the USSR and the US. For more information see: Пихоя Рудольф, "О недостатках в проведении уборки и продажи хлеба государству..." In *Почему Хрущев потерял власть*, Международный исторический журнал N8, март-апрель 2000, <http://ricolor.org/history/rsv/aft/hr/1/>

⁴⁶⁵ “Что обещал Боос”, *Коммерсантъ*, 23.08.2010, <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/1489658>

⁴⁶⁶ Information summarized by the author.

2009	Promised to erect a nuclear power plant	Was not initiated
2009	Pledged to build 40 hotels and 17 casinos	Construction works were not started
2009	One of the most ambitious infrastructural projects envisioned creation of a high-speed highway so-called the „Promorskoye Ring” that was supposed to link Kaliningrad with Baltic Sea resorts	This point was fulfilled only in part since in October 2009 the first portion of the highway between Kaliningrad and Zelenogradsk was opened.

The aforementioned examples were merely a part of the overall picture and therefore cannot possibly fully reflect the extent and unfeasibility of these plans. In the end, sporadic and on numerous occasions filled with voluntarism (not backed by any tangible breakthrough in either area and coupled with the outbreak of the global financial crisis) created a fertile ground for proliferation of “anti-Boos sentiments”⁴⁶⁷. As it became clear the authoritarian model of governance (even though initially acclaimed by the Kremlin) turned out to have a number of grave flaws and would in the final analysis lead to the fall of Boos. The reasons of this outcome will be looked at closely in the forthcoming segment of research, yet it should be underscored that the local opposition that started to raise its head starting from the year 2006 would include a broad range of diverse forces, whereby proving the aforementioned thesis.

Besides, Boos proved to be an adept of non-conformist approach in relations with political and ideological opponents. The advent of the new governor produced a wave of pressure on local mass media: in particular a vehement campaign was initiated against editor-in-chief of the opposition newspaper the “New Wheals” Igor Rudnikov who was one of the founding fathers of the “Popular Party”. This step was construed as a direct threat to the existing status quo in the domain of local political environment. In the end,

⁴⁶⁷“Калининград предвыборный: новый губернатор Георгий Боос и его критики”, *Новый Калининград*, 07.03.2006, <https://www.newkaliningrad.ru/news/politics/91939.html>

Rudnikov was imprisoned (he spent 80 days behind the bars) and his newspaper was closed down (subsequently it would change its name to “New Wheels of Rudnikov” although initially it was impossible to acquire it)⁴⁶⁸.

However, the “Rudnikov case” was by no means the only one in a long series of similar scandals. For instance, editor-in-chief of one of the most illustrious local newspaper “Kaliningradskaya Pravda” Tamara Zamiatina was fired after having published documents about astronomical expenditures of selected members of local government primarily assembled from Moscow⁴⁶⁹. On the other hand, being unable to unilaterally deal with the largest local media company “Kaskad” the governor had to rely on support of powerful Moscow-based politician Alexander *Khinshtein*⁴⁷⁰. Undoubtedly, conspicuous reliance on Moscow and inability/unwillingness to maintain a dialogue with local elites as well as pursuing of “double standards” policy led to significant weakening of positions of Georgii Boos who was being increasingly perceived (and portrayed) as a “foreigner” and a “varangian” who had no real interest in local affairs.

9.2.3. *The “Belarusian Project” of Boos⁴⁷¹: diversification or despair?*

Reflecting about historical interim occupied by governorship of Boos, one should take into account that this stage of local historical development witnessed certain negative trends in relations between Moscow and its Western partners, which had particular implications for Kaliningrad Oblast. Under these circumstances the governor of Kaliningrad produced more efforts along the path of strengthening economic ties with the political ally of the Russian Federation – the Republic of Belarus – that had been a member of the so-called Union State since 1999. According to the estimations of Boos Kaliningrad was meant to become some sort of a “window” for goods produced in Belarus

⁴⁶⁸ “Как устранить политического конкурента”, *Новый Калининград*, 29.06.2007, <https://www.newkaliningrad.ru/news/community/261082-.html>

⁴⁶⁹ “Тамара Замятина: Губернатор Георгий Боос добился “красивой картинки”, *Новый Калининград*, 24.01.2006, <https://www.newkaliningrad.ru/news/politics/82834-.html>

⁴⁷⁰ Михаил Костяев, “Бизнес большого Бооса”, *Агентство Политических Новостей Северо-Запад*, 17.07.2008, <http://www.apn-spb.ru/publications/article3622.htm>

⁴⁷¹ Bartosz Musiałowicz, “Kaliningrad – pilot rosyjskiej polityki wobec UE?”, *Raporty i Analizy*, 8/05 (Centrum Stosunkow Miedzynarodowych: Warszawa), pp.86-87

(which did not have a direct access to the Baltic Sea and at a time was subjected to international sanctions)⁴⁷².

Even though the initiative was not acclaimed by the majority of experts and representatives of European business community (chiefly due to the visible superiority of Ventspils and Klaipeda to Kaliningrad in terms of cargo delivery/transportation capacities) the governor persevered with his vision of diversification of foreign ties of the oblast. On December 13, 2005 during a meeting with Alexander Lukashenka governor Boos indicated the following venues of joint economic activities⁴⁷³:

1. Transportation;
2. Agriculture;
3. Nuclear energy projects;
4. Pharmaceuticals.

In May 2006 during his visit to Kaliningrad Oblast Belarusian Premier Sergey Sidorskii once again reiterated interested of Belarus to use Kaliningrad as a transportation hub for exporting of goods produced in Belarus. In December of the same year Boos would once again urge Minsk to intensify economic cooperation with Kaliningrad. In fact, the very first resident of the newly created SEZ became a joint Russo-Belarusian venture specializing in production of various fertilizers, whereas Belarusian businesses found it indeed lucrative to use opportunities offered by Kaliningrad to work in various projects ranging from agriculture and construction business to value-added products. Nevertheless, the genuine breakthrough did not ensue due to a complex combination of various factors:

1. Subjective (political). President of Belarus was not interested in abridging his sovereignty actively insisting on preserving equality between Moscow and Minsk.

⁴⁷²Александр Заковряшин, Павел Арабов, “Боос заманивает стивидоров“, *Гудок*, 24.08.2008, <http://www.gudok.ru/newspaper/?ID=745410>

⁴⁷³“Сотрудничество Беларуси и Калининградской области выгодно обеим сторонам“, *Пресс-служба Президента Республики Беларусь*, 13.12.2005, http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/sotrudnichestvo-belarusi-i-kaliningradskoj-oblasti-vygodno-obeim-storonam-2278/

Moreover, the period in question went under the shadow of various economic conflicts (that naturally had a political compound) between Russia and Belarus, which made Lukashenka to assume much more a stiffer stance in dialogue with his Russian counterparts;

2. Objective (economic). Many potential investors got discouraged with conditions in the domain of infrastructure they had to face while planning to initiate entrepreneurial activities on the territory of Kaliningrad Oblast. It became clear that the regional authorities did not have sufficient funds and therefore could not cover expenses related to improvement of infrastructure, as a result the incoming entrepreneurs had to use up to a quarter of their investments for infrastructure-related purposes⁴⁷⁴. On the other hand, it needs to be stated that economically Belarus was unable to become a large scale investor due to its own economic predicaments and dependence on Russia. In competition with Lithuania, Latvia and Poland (countries that by that time had acceded to the EU and therefore became eligible for various economic programs) neither party could boast with any advantage. Moreover, within a very brief period (the end of 2008 - 2009) the economic cooperation between Kaliningrad and Belarus collapsed to the rates of 2007, whereby practically abrogating a large bulk of progress achieved up to date.

In the end, it would not be superfluous to underscore that the idea of strengthening of relations with the Republic of Belarus continued to preoccupy the mind of governor Boos practically until the end of his tenure which was prematurely terminated by public protests in 2009 – 2010. During his last official meeting with representatives of Belarusian delegates that commenced in March 2010⁴⁷⁵ Boos would push forth with projects encompassing such a patchwork of initiatives as cooperation between representatives of youth movement to infrastructural mega projects (so-called “2K” initiative⁴⁷⁶ that was supposed to foster cooperation between Kaliningrad and Klaipeda).

⁴⁷⁴ Вера Башканова, “Боос зазывает инвесторов“, *Российская Бизнес-газета*, №584 (0), 12.12.2006, <https://rg.ru/2006/12/12/boos.html>

⁴⁷⁵ “Георгий Боос: «Есть серьёзные предпосылки для увеличения товарооборота между Калининградской областью и Беларусью»“, *Правительство Калининградской области*, 03.03.2010, <https://gov39.ru/news/101/30176/>

⁴⁷⁶ “Литва утвердила Соглашение о сотрудничестве с Россией по осуществлению проекта "2K", *Виртуальная таможня*, 30.09.2005, http://vch.ru/event/view.html?alias=litva_utverдила_soglaschenie_o_sotrudnichestve_s_rossiei_po_osuschestvleniyu_proekta_2k

Chapter 10. “Colossus on the clay legs” (2000 - 2010): rising from ashes or falling for self-deception?

10.1. Matching expectations with the reality (2000 - 2005)

Historical interim that started from ascension of Putin as a president of the Russian Federation and the outbreak of the global financial crisis of the year 2008 is widely considered as perhaps the most successful period of its post-Soviet history in terms of economic progress. Within this period annual economic growth amounted to 9-12%⁴⁷⁷, which was indeed an outstanding achievement that facilitated Russian economic transformation. One of the key reasons that stood behind such an astounding progress was the skyrocketing price of natural commodities and growing consumption demonstrated by both domestic and external customers.

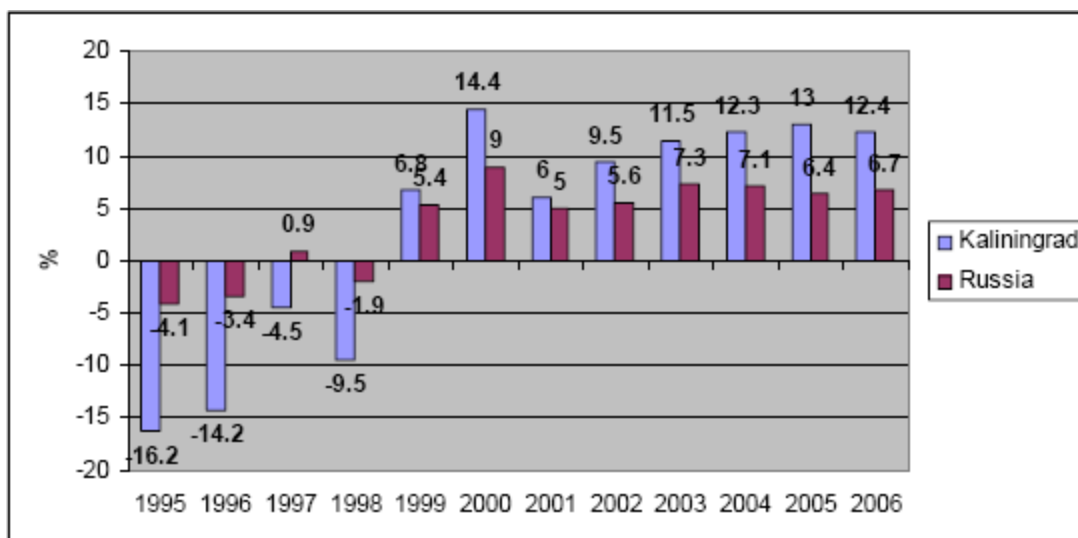
Taking into consideration the fact that one of the main distinctive traits of economic development of Kaliningrad Oblast has been its dependency on economic performance of the mainland (incidentally, the breakdown of the USSR only strengthened this aspect), it would be worthwhile to trace down evolution of this trend within the above-mentioned period. Thus, it is quite easily explicable why positive temps of economic growth in the Russian Federation coincided with same tendency in the westernmost Russian region. According to Russian sources Gross Regional Product (GRP) grew by 6.8% in 1999, 14.4% in 2000, 6.4% in 2001 and 10.1% in 2002, which was construed as a matter of great success⁴⁷⁸. The following graph aims to show the scope of economic improvement within the period 2000 – 2005:

⁴⁷⁷ “Динамика реального объема произведенного ВВП в % к предыдущему году“, Федеральная служба государственной статистики,

http://www.gks.ru/bgd/free/b01_19/IssWWW.exe/Stg/d000/i000640r.htm

⁴⁷⁸ Vinokurov (2007).

Figure 7. Comparative analysis of economic growth (Kaliningrad Oblast and the Russian Federation) 1995 – 2006



In practical terms this primarily was reflected in the process of acceleration of industrial growth (which was an undisputed success from both economic and moral point of view). In fact, within this period, manufacture tended to comprise almost 90% of the local industrial output. However, this undeniably positive trend could not be possibly identified as an unconditional and irreversible success, since the local economy was extremely vulnerable to external shocks and increasingly relied on resources and raw materials from abroad. On the other hand, such economic model could not function in self-supporting manner, which was even more visible in growing gap between local transportation capabilities and other players on the Baltic Sea⁴⁷⁹.

From her point of view Russian economist N. Smorodinskaya assessed the nature of economic successes of Kaliningrad within the aforementioned interim as not being based on intensification of production and increasing level of competitiveness. In fact, the scholar argued that the trend had a palliative effect and had actually very little in common with genuine improvement of local economic environment. Her position could be summed up by mentioning the following pillars:

⁴⁷⁹ Елена Степура, “За избавление от догм”, *Эксперт Северо-Запад*, №18 (271), 2006, <http://expert.ru/northwest/2006/18/vlasenko/>

1) **The first pillar** is the notorious Special Economic Zone (SEZ) regime, based on a right for tax-free trading that was supposed to maintain an economic link between Kaliningrad and the mainland, allowing locally-based producers to be exempted from all duties. Incidentally, such a practice went against both the Russian Customs and Tax Codes and explicitly contradicted international practice in the domain of free/special economic zones;

2) **The second pillar** – exclusive price subsidies for railway cargo transit that was granted to the region in the year 2002. This special regime guaranteed duty-free transit of oil-related products. As a result, the local ports declared dramatic increase in volumes of transpirations;

3) **The third pillar** – granting more privileges and compensations to the enclave taking into consideration its physical separation that were reflected in an astounding difference in prices between energy resources in Russia and European countries.

These examples have led some scholars to a belief that Kaliningrad should be construed as the most outstanding regional case of “*politically created rents*”, an instance where allocation of financial means was clearly stipulated by political motives of the federal centre.

In this juncture, it would not be a mistake to suggest that the discussed period did to some extent lead to the change of the local trade model that would be primarily based on re-exporting of manufactured goods to the Russian Federation and transactions with the Russian oil. It has been estimated that the revenues obtained from the latter source constituted 9- 11% of the overall output of the oblast being tantamount to 70-85% of the revenues⁴⁸⁰. Therefore, it would be adequate to mention that the local economy was developing along the lines somewhat similar to the ones in the mainland – oil related revenues started to determine the huge share of their respective economic performances.

The following table aims to present the patterns of economic activities of Kaliningrad within 2000 – 2005 taking trade transactions as a key component.

⁴⁸⁰ For more information see: N. Smorodinskaya. “Kaliningrad on its crooked way to economic modernization. The 6th EU Framework programme”, *UNDEUNIS project*, Moscow (2007).

*Table 3.2. Data depicting various sides of economic development of Kaliningrad 2000
- 2005*

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Trade transactions, US\$ m						
Foreign trade turnover	1,345	1,542	2,203	2,691	4,308	5,903
Total exports (inc. transit flows)	519	508	547	556	1,175	1,826
Total imports (inc. transit flows)	826	1,034	1,656	2,135	3,133	4,077
Total trade balance	-307	-526	-1109	-1,540	- 1,958	- 2,251
Deliveries to mainland Russia	432	619	759	1,118	1,802	2,295
Trade transactions as share of GRP, %						
GRP at official exchange rate, US\$ M	874	1,100	1,270	1,666	2,043	2,877
Foreign trade turnover	154	140	173	162	211	205
Total exports	52	46	43	33	58	63
Total imports	94	94	130	128	153	142
Total trade balance	-50	-48	-87	-95	-96	-78
Deliveries to mainland Russia	49	56	60	67	88	80
Trade transactions: ratios and cleared figures						
Exports proper, US\$ m	250	250	270	280	557	822

as share of total exports, %	48	49	49	50	47	45
as share of GRP, %	29	23	21	17	27	29
Imports proper, US\$ m	826	1,034	1,656	2,135	3,133	4,077
as share of Russia's imports, %	1.8	1.9	2.7	2.8	3.2	3.3
Cleared trade balance, US\$ m	- 576	- 784	- 1,386	- 1,855	- 2,576	- 3,255
As share of GRP, %	-50	-71	-109	-111	- 126	-113
Total coverage ratio (exports: imports), %	51.0	39.7	25.9	26.0	37.0	44.8
Cleared coverage ratio ports proper: imports proper), %	30.3	24.2	16.3	13.1	17.8	20.2

Closer look at this table gives a somewhat discouraging perception of true patterns of the trade balance. If considered without oil transactions the picture of trade relations appears to be much less cheerful than presented by official Russian sources. In many respects this historical interim witnessed continued disfigurement of the local economic model, where illegal smuggling (discussed in previous chapter) would be superseded by very similar model which was approved from above as a means to maintain the local economy afloat. This had brought about largely palliative and, in many ways, indeed detrimental effect: instead of conducting far-reaching economic reforms and adjusting Kaliningrad to the rapidly developing neighboring countries Moscow opted to merely satisfy local needs by pumping up the local budget with financial means derived through either direct financial support or the system of subsidies and privileges. This also enables one to presume that had it not been for oil the local economy would have shrunk

dramatically (or even come to a brink of collapse, although this opinion is usually shared by liberally-thinking scholars). On the other hand, any changes related to the right of duty-free and tax-free shipping and re-exporting of goods could bring about irreparable damage to the local economy leading to huge predicaments consequences of which would be patched up only with application of central resources.

Another distinctive character of external trade of Kaliningrad Oblast in the aforementioned period was a visible deficit of the local budget that by the year 2007 reached a critical threshold \$3 billion, which should be seen as an astronomic figure taking into consideration size of the local economy. To some extent this could be explained by outspoken economic profligacy and unconditional belief in support from the side of Moscow. Nonetheless, a number of scholars tend to believe that this negative trend should not be assessed on a separate basis, yet ought to be tackled in a conjuncture with processes experienced by the Russian economy as a whole, since Kaliningrad is merely a small part of the greater economic entity⁴⁸¹.

In this regard, it would also be quite worthwhile to take closer look at Kaliningrad trade relations in terms of geography⁴⁸².

Table 3.3. Foreign trade of Kaliningrad Oblast 2000 – 2007

Country	External trade		Export		Import	
	\$ million	%	\$ million	%	\$ million	%
Totally	13071,7	100,0	5119,5	100,0	7952,2	100,0
Countries as CIS, totally	375,6	2,9	156,6	3,1	219,0	2,8
Also including:						
Ukraine	173,8	1,3	55,9	1,1	117,9	1,5
Belarus	150,2	1,1	61,4	1,2	88,8	1,1

⁴⁸¹ *Внешиэкономическая деятельность предприятий и организаций Калининградской области за 2000—2007 гг.: статистический сборник*, (Калининград: 2008).

⁴⁸² For more information see: Юрий Зверев, “Внешняя торговля Калининградской области: основные тенденции,” *Вестник Балтийского федерального университета им. И. Канта. Серия: Гуманитарные и общественные науки*, (2009). Available at: <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/vneshnyaya-torgovlya-kaliningradskoy-oblasti-osnovnyie-tendentsii>.

EU countries totally	7858,2	60,1	4174,3	81,5	3683,9	46,3
Also including:						
Netherland	1763,8	13,5	1561,4	30,5	202,5	2,5
Germany	1539,5	11,8	482,3	9,4	1057,2	13,3
Latvia	855,5	6,5	805,2	15,7	50,3	0,6
Poland	770,5	5,9	103,6	2,0	666,9	8,4
Lithuania	512,8	3,9	195,9	3,8	316,9	4,0
The PRC	1519,2	11,6	13,3	0,3	1505,9	18,9
The Republic of Korea	669,3	5,1	0,2	0,0	669,1	8,4
The USA	495,6	3,8	11,2	0,2	484,4	6,1

The aforementioned analysis reveals that the overall share of China, Germany, Poland, the Republic of Korea and the US approximates to 55.1%, whereas the Netherlands, Latvia, Germany, Finland and Lithuania constitute 2/3 of the local exports. In many ways it would not be a mistake to claim that the enlargement of the EU that commenced on May 1, 2004 would make Kaliningrad to face new challenges and opportunities related to such a drastic shift in European geopolitics. Unfortunately, being very well aware of the upcoming transformations Moscow had not undertaken appropriate actions in order to facilitate the effect of changes for its westernmost region. One of the most immediate initiatives could have become establishment (as a result of broad and comprehensive agreement with Brussels) of a special center that would have enabled local producers to acquire certifications and licenses for exporting locally produced goods to the EU. Nonetheless, this idea did not receive any practical implementation whatsoever.

Another import aspect that deserves special attention was the matter of local budget, which had been chronically unstable and maintained a huge deficit in the previous period. By the year 2005 Kaliningrad was able to change this depressing tendency, which became a matter of great exhilaration from both internal and external actors. In this regard

it would be worthwhile to present a visual image of the improvement within 2001-2005 (RUR millions)⁴⁸³:

Table 3.4. Economic development of Kaliningrad 2001 – 2005

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Revenues	5,460	7,781	9,190	11,236	15,145
Expenditures	5,431	7,917	9,627	11,505	15,164
Fiscal balance	29	- 137	- 437	- 269	- 19
as share of expenditures, %	0.5	- 1.7	- 4.5	- 2.5	- 0.1
as share of revenues, %	0.5	- 1.8	- 4.8	- 2.4	- 0.1

Nevertheless, it would be appropriate to ascertain the main sources that did bring about the improvement:

- Dramatic increase in oil earnings (due to the skyrocketing of oil prices on international market);
- Introduction of the new property tax after initiation of the TETS-2 power plant;
- Significant increase of federal monetary assistance steaming from federal center as well as increased presence of foreign currency;
- The approaching 750th anniversary of Kaliningrad/Konigsberg and increasing amount of monetary assistance from the center.

This dichotomy created a somewhat inaccurate impression of changes experienced by Kaliningrad. With the budget growing the trade deficit was also experiencing growth, whereas taxpaying capabilities were decreasing. Statistical data depicted rapid economic growth (where the share of industrial growth exceeded 15.5%) that overtook the Russian

⁴⁸³ Ibidem.

average – this made a false impression of effectiveness of the SEZ and approaching “economic miracle” that the Region was going to experience.

In addition to the above indicated facts, the productivity of labor in Kaliningrad was extremely low – it substantially lagged behind similar data indicated by neighboring countries (Poland and Lithuania). It was not yet obvious (primarily thanks to the beneficial international economic environment and high prices on energy materials) yet the very structure and the principles of functioning of the local economy implied that in case of unexpected aggravation of global financial environment Moscow would have to prop up Kaliningrad economy with additional financial stimuli. In this context, it would be appropriate to come up with the example of sudden abolishment of the export duties (aimed at Russian market) – this practically paralyzed 80% of the local businesses (of various scales).

Kaliningrad was also seriously lagging behind in terms of self-sufficiency in agro-industrial complex that was being severely affected by duty-free imports of goods (cheaper and less expensive) from Poland and Lithuania.

Another vital aspect that characterized effectiveness and dynamism of Kaliningrad economy could be found within its profound unattractiveness of the region in terms of Foreign Direct Investments (FDI). For instance, by the year 2005 Kaliningrad had enjoyed \$ 68 million (although, taking into account the outgoing capital, this sum approximated to mere \$36 millions). This record miniscule compared to Kaliningrad neighbors: Latvia (3 times), Lithuania (44 times) and Estonia (116 times)⁴⁸⁴. It is a well-known fact that the volume of FDI is bound to the investment climate to be encountered by the would-be investors. In accordance with the ranking issued by Russian information agency “Expert” that assessed investment climate in various Russian regions within 2005 – 2006 Kaliningrad was described as a region with “lower potential and moderate risk”.

The main criteria applied were the following ones:

1. Political and social stability;
2. Dynamism in economic development;

⁴⁸⁴ Юрий Зверев, “Трансграничное экономическое сотрудничество: внешняя торговля,” In *Российская Балтика: приграничное сотрудничество*, А. П. Клемешева (ed.), (Калининград, 2004), 17–28.

3. The state of infrastructure, banking system, telecommunication;

4. Abundance/scarcity of qualified workforce.

In spite of strengthening of political control over Kaliningrad Oblast and initiation of implementation of such high-profile initiatives as Special Economic Zone (2006) Kaliningrad lost 6 points in comparison with the previous period (2004 - 05). It was estimated that these tendencies made it highly complicated for the region to compete with its geographical neighbors that had by then started to pursue programs aimed at standardization with the requirements of the EU.

As a result, transparent economic activities aimed at greater application of foreign experience and innovations became unnecessary in Kaliningrad – substantial financial profits were available even without necessity to conduct painful economic reforms and adjustments to the level of European neighbors. Figuratively speaking the mechanism of business operations in Kaliningrad could be reflected by the following formula: “*shortages – federal subsidies – growth – shortages – extra federal aid*”. Therefore, it would not be an exaggeration to suggest that by and large by the year 2008 (with the turbulence of the global financial crisis that would strike Kaliningrad with particular severity) despite visible achievements economic model established in Kaliningrad was incompatible with requirements of market economy⁴⁸⁵. In spite of allegedly high rates of industrial production the cornerstone of Kaliningrad economy primarily consisted of the following items: oil and petroleum products (approximately 73.8 percent of the total bulk of exports⁴⁸⁶), cellulose, liquors and tobacco products.

Unfavorable internal conditions and visible dichotomy between development of Kaliningrad Oblast and its neighbors initiated vigorous debates within business and intellectual circles of Kaliningrad regarding the models of further development. Numerous projects and assumption on this regard could be systematized in the following points:

⁴⁸⁵ Sergey Sukhankin, “A Bridge that Was Not Built, a Hong Kong that Did Not Prosper: Kaliningrad at the Cross-road of History,” *RIAC*, February 6, 2018. Available at: <http://russiancouncil.ru/en/blogs/sergey-sukhankin/a-bridge-that-was-not-built-a-hong-kong-that-did-not-prosper-kaliningr/> .

⁴⁸⁶ *Внешиэкономическая деятельность предприятий и организаций Калининградской области за 2006 год*, (Калининград, 2007).

- Kaliningrad as a zone of tourist and recreation activities;
- Kaliningrad as a region of naval and fishery industries;
- Kaliningrad as a zone of innovative and nano-technologies based on intellectual potential and potentially beneficial geopolitical location (proximity of the EU);
- Kaliningrad as a zone of export/re-export production “Europe – Kaliningrad – Europe” on the basis of boosting of export capabilities and European certifications of production;
- Kaliningrad as a “manufacture” of Europe (due to lesser wages and additional costs);
- Kaliningrad as an off-shore zone with privileges for large financial operations (the “tax heaven” model);
- Kaliningrad as a major transportation link (auto, railways, navy, air);
- Kaliningrad as a zone of clear priority for information and telecommunication technologies, organization of international fares;
- Kaliningrad as a military and navy fort post of the Russian Federation. This implied accretion of military personnel, huge infrastructural projects specifically aimed at implementation of this scenario. This was to be supported by additional monetary injections from federal center and achieving of greater isolation and seclusion of the Oblast.

In any event, by the advent of the global economic crisis Kaliningrad had not definitely chosen its path of economic development – the model intact was primarily based on privileges encapsulated in SEZ and financial stimuli from Moscow. Therefore, the most relevant question to be answered remained: whether it was Moscow that did not provide adequate financial means and independence in actions for Kaliningrad to initiate reform-oriented vector of development, or it were the local authorities and business elites that discarded the path chosen by the Baltic States and Poland, fully falling back on Moscow in terms of financial matters.

Considering the above-mentioned points, it would be relevant to claim that within the discussed period Kaliningrad economy acquired the following very specific traits:

- Large-sized as well as medium-sized companies tended to willingly split into small business primarily due to the system of privileges aimed to boost small businesses in Russia – this led to formation of institutional structure that on the paper was far more successful than if judging by its budget contributions;

- The larger local companies tended to provide their financial operations via the offshore banks and financial institutions, which led to expansion of the gray economy (which was said to have reached up to 95% of officially indicated GDP⁴⁸⁷). This had threefold consequences. Firstly, the entire economy of Kaliningrad region took the form of a “bubble economy” which could blow n case of encounter with reduction of financial injections from the Federal Center. Secondly, distortion of the price structure was evident, which resulted in the local prices matching those in the capital.

In the final analysis, accessing the nature of transformation of the local economic model one might presume that Kaliningrad Oblast had contracted the Dutch Disease⁴⁸⁸. This term was came up with in the year 1977 and was related to the discovery of vast natural gas reserves in the Netherlands, whose economy after initially positive growth would later be severely affected by the soaring exports and ensued huge financial benefits obtained by the state`s budget. Many economists primarily related the Dutch Disease with

⁴⁸⁷ Sergey Sukhankin, “Kaliningrad – the troubled man of Europe,” *New Eastern Europe*, 29.07.2016, Available at: <http://neweasterneurope.eu/2016/07/29/kaliningrad-the-troubled-man-of-europe/>.

⁴⁸⁸ "The Dutch Disease", *The Economist*, November 26, 1977, 82-83.

revenues from gas/oil exports. Nonetheless, it is a well-known fact that the phenomenon itself could be triggered by sudden and massive inflow of FDI or other external monetary assistance. Taking into account the fact that Kaliningrad Oblast is physically separated from the mainland and its economy was bind to the neighboring countries, some scientists came up with the idea that the local economy might have contracted the Dutch Disease in the process of transformation within 2000-2005 which was primarily related to the growing financial injections from the side of Moscow⁴⁸⁹. Indeed, the system of privileges and subsidies appeared to highly irrational leading toward distortion of the local economy into non-market-based pattern of development and relations between Kaliningrad and Moscow, whereby simultaneously diluting local economic capabilities and artificially keeping the highly dependent on external support economy afloat. On the other hand, this pattern of development did not drastically deflect from the one demonstrated by the mainland, where the overwhelming share of trade and budget revenues were accrued by energy-related economic transactions.

10.2. The SEZ of 2006 and its essence

In order to facilitate transformation and adjustment of Kaliningrad to changing geopolitical environment and ensued economic alterations in the region as well as to ensure a running start for the new governor and his team the Kremlin introduced a new initiative pertaining to the SEZ regime. Starting from January 2006 the local SEZ mechanism (established in 1996 and working since this period) would be changed in certain way though preserving previously established tax/duty privileges for legal residents registered prior to April 1, 2006⁴⁹⁰. This move became a major Moscow-inspired campaign that was meant to promote the system of SEZ on the territory of the Russian Federation: starting from January 1, 2006 in addition to Kaliningrad six other territories

⁴⁸⁹ Hanne-Margret Birckenbach, Christian Wellmann, *The Kaliningrad Challenge: Options and Recommendations*. Münster: Lit; Piscataway, NJ: Distributed in North America by Transaction Publishers, 2003.

⁴⁹⁰ Федеральный закон от 10.01.2006 N 16-ФЗ (ред. от 11.03.2016), "Об Особой экономической зоне в Калининградской области и о внесении изменений в некоторые законодательные акты", 10.01.2006, *Konsultant-Plus*, available at: <http://base.consultant.ru/cons/cgi/online.cgi?req=doc;base=LAW;n=149711>

of this sort were established that included: Dubno and Zelenograd (Moscow Oblast), Sankt-Petersburg and Tomsk as well as Tatarstan and Lipetsk⁴⁹¹.

Reflecting about Kaliningrad SEZ it would be instrumental to outline the following crucial details embedded in the project⁴⁹²:

1. Advantages. Each legal entity (resident) officially registered before indicted date was to be included in a special common register of residents.

- Residents were to be subjected to a special system of taxation (art. 288.1, 385.1). Namely, starting from the day of registration and within forthcoming 6 years the tax rate would be 0%; within next 7 to 12 years the rate would not exceed 50% of the rate established by the law;
- The rest of taxes and duties were to be defrayed in accordance with the Russian law.

Furthermore, the Federal law code implied the following benefits:

- **Facilitation of visa regime**, which concerned citizens of foreign states willing to invest in Kaliningrad SEZ (including representatives of residents, investors, persons invited for cooperation);
- **Guarantees** for residents conducting activities on the territory of Kaliningrad Oblast;
- **Interim period** for those residents that were conducting their activities in accordance with the Federal law (1996).

2. Demands and requirements for candidates

Any legal entity that complied with the following requirements could be eligible for becoming a resident:

- Must have obtained legal personality commensurate with Russian legislation;

⁴⁹¹ “Госдума сделала Калининград беспощинной зоной”, *Lenta.ru*, 23.12.2005, <https://lenta.ru/news/2005/12/23/zone/>

⁴⁹² “Особая экономическая зона в Калининградской области”, *Министерство экономики Калининградской области*, <http://www.economy.gov39.ru/departament-investitsiy-innovatsiy-razvitiya-konkurentsii-i-chastno-gosudarstvennogo-partnerstva-/oez/>

- The registration process must have taken place on the territory of Kaliningrad Oblast;
- All manufacture activities to be carried out exclusively on the territory of the oblast;
- Investment activities conducted by legal entities to be carried out on the territory of Kaliningrad Oblast;
- Residents could be legal entities operating within Russian tax code;
- Financial organizations and institutions (including credit and insurance organizations and players on financial markets) could become residents.

The following additional requirements were to be met:

- All investment projects were to be fulfilled on the territory of Kaliningrad Oblast;
- Investment projects could not be implemented in such domain that concerned: oil and natural gas extraction; production of alcohol, tobacco products and other items stipulated by Decree of the Russian Government (№ 185 March 31, 2006); financial activities;
- Investment activities via capital transactions;
- The sum of investment must not be less than 150 million of rubles;
- The sum must be transferred to Kaliningrad within first three years upon becoming a resident.

In the meantime, new mechanism established in Kaliningrad did not fully comply with both international and even Russian domestic practice especially in the domain of custom-related details. First, the law draws an explicit line between new residents and those who had become ones prior to the amendment. Secondly, the custom regime established in Kaliningrad SEZ greatly diverged from the law “About Special Economic Zones in the Russian Federation”, which created a visible dichotomy and to some extent even the conflict of interests.

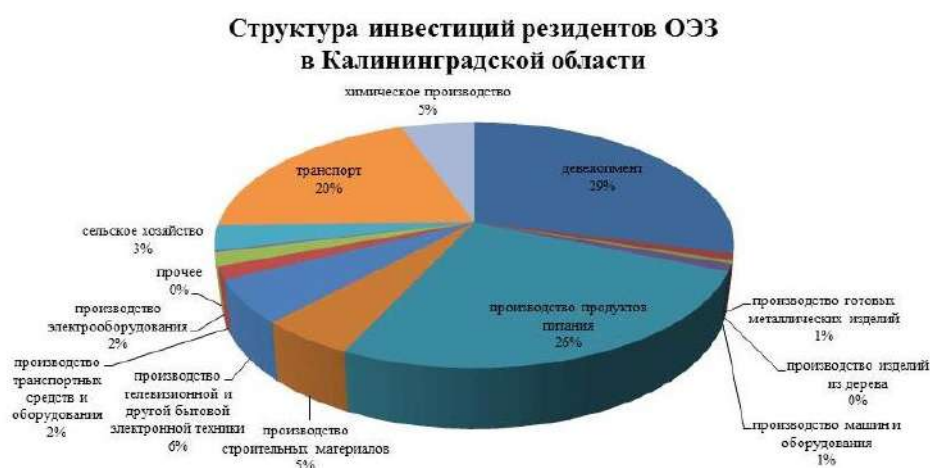
On the other hand, according to Vinokurov the main principles embedded in the new version of SEZ should be classified in the following manner:

- 1) Fostering compatibility of the SEZ regime with common international practices (in this juncture Russian potential accession to the WTO was the main motif);
- 2) Achieving the process of continuity between current and new mechanisms;
- 3) Attaining an alteration of priorities: from customs to tax preferences;
- 4) Moving closer toward maximum removal of administrative barriers hindering business/entrepreneurial activities in the enclave.

Setting aside declaratively ambitious goals and hopes vested in the new economic model, one should be able to distinguish several alarming issues that had not been given proper attention and would potentially have utterly negative impact on the functioning of the mechanism:

1. **The target group.** The project was primarily designed in such a way as to attract large investors, whereby effectively hindering an access for small and medium-sized enterprises and businesses. Unfortunately, this trend reflected general pattern experienced by the rest of Russia – insufficient attention to the needs of this group. This was even greater emphasized in case of Kaliningrad, since scarcity of local resources and financial capital pre-disposed the region toward small and medium sized enterprises. This could also be deduced by taking a closer look at the following graph that exhibits the main areas of investment in the local SEZ (this data was collected in 2015 in order to present the picture in retrospect).

Figure 8. Structure of FDI brought in by foreign residents to Kaliningrad Oblast



The image shows that the main areas of investment did not concern areas that had lagged behind and desperately required involvement of external players.

2. **Efficiency.** The overall experience of SEZ in the Russian Federation made it quite doubtful that the project was going to work as planned. Locally-based researchers Gareev, Zhdanov and Fedorov⁴⁹³ argued that even such drastic measures as an interim of full exemption from various taxes would not become a driver powerful enough to outweigh other factors.

3. **Potential vs. reality.** In spite of optimism and willingness to provide beneficial conditions for entrepreneurial activities in Kaliningrad, it still could offer very constrained opportunities for potential investors. Moreover, since the enclave was not in the legal field of the EU, it could not operate on par with its neighbors. On the other hand, prospective accession to the WTO would most certainly incur devastating effect on the locally established economic model;

4. **The wrong emphasis.** Judging by the fact that the mechanism tilted to the property tax preferences it would not be a mistake to gather that the emphasis was made on large industrial projects over services. This mode of operation could have artificially elevated one branch over others following the footsteps of the Soviet period which witnessed excessive development of heavy industry and practical negligence of other vital branches of economy.

Other specialists went even further arguing that the SEZ mechanism was not only doomed to failure from the very beginning yet contained a detrimental kernel. The real outcome of the new SEZ would be: growing tax evasion and insurmountable expansion of Moscow`s sway over Kaliningrad:

1. The SEZ regime was to hinder cooperation between the EU member-states and ensure loyalty of the local elite to Moscow. This regime was not only meant to attract large Russian investors but also thwart entering of external actors. Even at the cost of deteriorating local business environment and even greater strangulation of competition the Kremlin was ready to go ahead with its initiative. This point was mainly reflected in

⁴⁹³ For more information see: *Гареев Т. Р., Жданов В. П., Федоров Г. М., "Новая экономика Калининградской об- ласти", Вопросы экономики, № 2 (2005), 23—39.*

abridging opportunities for small and medium-sized businesses which became a part of grand strategy;

2. It appeared that the prime objective to be reached by SEZ was concerned with changes that were to ensue in 2007, not genuine and profound transformation of the local economic model;

3. The legislation does not contain tangible and concrete mode of action leveled against “shadow economy”. For instance, closer analysis of such notion as “import substitution” gives an impression that the process of “substitution” itself had very little in common with local industrial activities as such.

Therefore, it seemed quite dubious that the goal of drastic modernization and attraction of large financial capital from abroad would be feasible. Without admitting pivotal role of competition as an essential particle of contemporary market-oriented economy such initiatives as Kaliningrad SEZ 2006 was unlikely to yield pivotal change of trajectory in development and result in dramatic improvement of economic situation. Furthermore, while reflecting about the framework of the new SEZ one should also not dismiss the role of globalization and its inadvertent impact that might have fatal consequences for artificially-supported mechanism. In the final analysis, by creating a semi-artificial mechanism that was to erect a hedge against external competition the oblast was risking to face a very similar scenario to the one that occurred in the year 1991. That being said, it should be reiterated once again that not taking into consideration the local conditions and distinctive traits could only lead to greater (and largely unnecessary) expenditures earmarked for the local economy as the only means to keep it afloat. In this juncture such remarks claiming that the new mechanism would stimulate establishment of new capital-intensive industries in several sectors of the regional economy previously not stimulated by the customs-free regime should be seen as overoptimistic and failing to capture the real state of affairs in Kaliningrad.

10.3. Economic development within 2006 – 2008

The period discussed in this segment represents an overlapping of two major period of economic history of post-Soviet Kaliningrad: fourth and fifth, respectively. Speaking in advance, it would be worthwhile to underscore visible symmetry in two diametrically opposed interims. The immediate effect of SEZ mechanism coupled with

drastic changes on the global energy market and growing consumption demand in the Russian mainland secured what seemed at a time genuinely breathtaking rates of economic growth experienced by Kaliningrad. Furthermore, the oblast received additional boosting with the discovery of D-6 oil deposit situated in the shelf zone⁴⁹⁴. It would not be an exaggeration to suggest that the period from 2006 to 2008 became perhaps the most prosperous period of local history (in addition to the early 1980s) after the year 1945⁴⁹⁵.

In this context it would make sense to provide brief background information regarding chosen branches of the local economy and their respective performance within the period in question⁴⁹⁶:

1. GRP growth (in comparison with Russian average).

Year	2006	2007	2008
GRP in Kaliningrad Oblast	127,6	119,9	109,7
GDP in Russia	107,4	108,1	105,6

As it is clearly seen within this period Russian average rates were inferior to the commensurate data demonstrated by Kaliningrad Oblast.

2. Industrial production.

Region	2005	2006	2007	2008
Kaliningrad Oblast	127,4	166,6	134,8	102,5
Russia	105,1	106,3	106,3	102,1

⁴⁹⁴ “Кравцовское месторождение,” *Petrodigest.ru*, accessed 28.12.2017,

<https://petrodigest.ru/dir/oilfields/rus-of/kaliningradskaya-oblast-of/kravcovskoe-mestorozhdenie>.

⁴⁹⁵ Анастасия Кузнецова, “Калининградская область проходит годы наибольшего вызова и сложно добываемых успехов”, *Клопс.ру*, 21.01.2014. <https://klops.ru/interview/intervyu/85019-kaliningradskaya-oblast-prohudit-gody-naibolshego-vyzova-i-slozhno-dobyvaemyh-uspehov>

⁴⁹⁶ В.И. Куликова, А.Г. Мнацаканян, “Взаимосвязь социально-экономического развития и правоохранительной деятельности”, *Экономика и управление государственными расходами в системе территориальных подразделений органов внут-ренних дел (на примере УВД Калининградской области): Монография*, (Калининград: Балтийский институт эконо-мики и финансов, 2009). <http://finlit.online/osnovyi-finansov-ekonomika/vzaimosvyaz-sotsialno-ekonomicheskogo-26479.html>

Visible growth in industrial production was primarily stipulated by dynamic development of processing industries, which in the year 2007 reached 193.7% (whereas Russian average score was 109.3%). Such branches of the local economy as: “production of means of transportation and engines”, “production of non-metallic mineral products” and “processing of timber and production timber-related items” constituted the backbone of revitalization of local industrial capabilities.

On the other hand, prior to the outbreak of the global financial crisis in the year 2008 Kaliningrad could boast with production of no less than 75% of the Russian TV set production (the Telebalt, Baltmixt, and Radioimport-R companies, the Polar (Televolna factory) and Rolsen Electronics (Tovary Buduschego factory), the PKiV company group). This was also supplemented by visible growth in the number various home appliances (for instance, microwave ovens, DVD-players) and vacuum cleaners that were being produced locally: according to various estimates in the year 2006 Kaliningrad produced 84% of the overall bulk of national goods in this category⁴⁹⁷.

Speaking about rates of industrial output it would not be possible to omit development of motor car industry and its largest producer Avtotor that by the year 2007 produced 106.700 cars becoming the largest actor in the domain of car production in the Russian Federation⁴⁹⁸. However, this by and large lucrative period was witnessed emergence of strife between various lobbying groups as a result of exponential growth in popularity by inexpensive cars (Kia, Chery, Yuejin and Chevrolet) that started to be perceived as a rival to the Russian ones⁴⁹⁹ – this factor became of the fist most visible drawbacks. On the other hand, the local producers continued to relay on strategic raw materials from abroad, which made the established model to be dependent on the state of political relations between Moscow and its European partners.

In the final analysis, yet another emerging branch of local economy should be discussed: namely, the furniture production. As a result of dynamic growth stipulated by a number of privileges offered by the SEZ regime the oblast assumed one of the leading

⁴⁹⁷ Отчет о результатах функционирования Особой экономической зоны в Калининградской области в 2006 году, *Министерство экономического развития Российской Федерации*, (2007).

⁴⁹⁸ Ibidem.

⁴⁹⁹ Николай Демидов, “«Автотор» не Карфаген”, *Эксперт Северо-Запад*, №15 (363), (2008).
<http://expert.ru/northwest/2008/15/avtoprom/>

positions within the *Northwestern Federal District* whose share of output constituted 10% of the overall production⁵⁰⁰.

Another interesting particularity of this branch of local economy was a combination of large (“Lazurit”, “Nimax”, “Mann-grupp”, “Dallas”, “Dedal” and “Maksik”) and small- and medium-size businesses. Incidentally, within 2004 – 2007 the number of workforce employed in furniture industry grew almost twice.

In spite of visible progress, the industry was facing a number of daunting challenges that jeopardized further progress if not dealt accordingly:

1. Lack of raw materials and a necessity to acquire these from abroad;
2. Scarcity of qualified workforce, technological weakness and practical absence of special education facilities that could be used in order to foster necessary cadres;
3. Weak exporting capabilities;
4. Inadequate level of marketing and advertising stipulated by relatively low creativity in comparison with geographical neighbors;
5. The advent of the global financial crisis and decreasing support from Federal Centre.

As it is clearly seen from the above-mentioned arguments the local manufacture was able to overcome the shock of 1990s and achieved certain level of positive growth. On the other hand, it was facing a number of systemic challenges that could not be overcome either by simple allocation of financial means or granting more privileges yet required joint political actions from the side of Moscow and its European partners. Another distinctive feature of local manufacture was that approximately 80% of locally

⁵⁰⁰М.Н. Лисогор, “Проблемы развития малых предприятий мебельной отрасли в условиях особой экономической зоны”, *Вестник Балтийского федерального университета им. И. Канта*, Вып. 9. (2011), p. 169.

produced goods would be shipped to the Russian mainland⁵⁰¹, which in many ways created a steady link between consumption demand in the mainland and the export capabilities of Kaliningrad.

3. Construction works (in thousands of square meters).

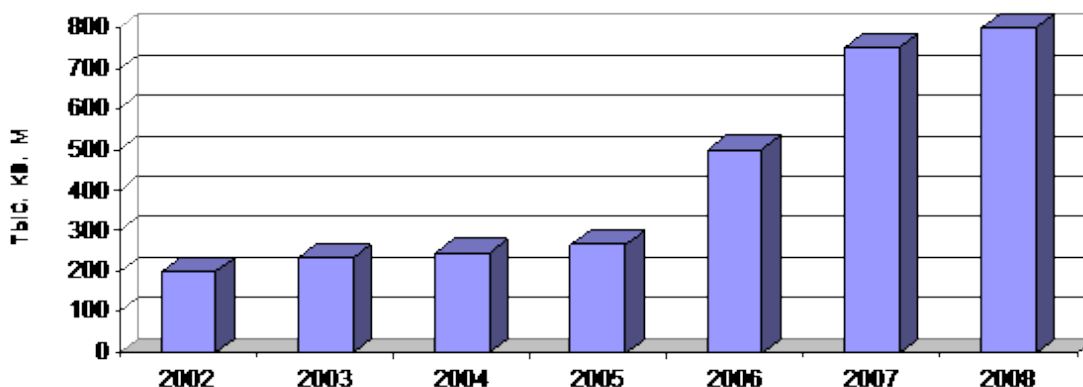


Figure 9. Construction works (in thousands of square meters)

Improving economic situation did have positive effect on the construction branch of the local economy, which effectively turned Kaliningrad in one of the most rapidly developing markets in the Russian Federation. Aside from purely economic reasons skyrocketing interest to the local construction business (especially among residents of Moscow) was inflamed by rumors that Kaliningrad would be given a visa-free regime with the EU: this resulted in (in many ways artificial) growth in prices of local immovable property that came close to 1000 – 1200 EU for a square meter, whereas in the area of sea resorts the price was reaching astronomic 3000 - 3500 EUR⁵⁰².

The growth was abruptly thwarted by the outbreak of the global financial crisis in 2008. In fact, this year appeared to be the most successful one since 1989. Nevertheless, starting from the second half of 2009 consequences of crisis became visible and rather discouraging for prospective investors.

⁵⁰¹“Экономика, промышленность Калининградской области”, *Инфоарена*, 03.12.2009, <http://infoarena.ru/node/33398>

⁵⁰² “Недвижимость на российском берегу Балтийского моря, которая пользовалась бешеным спросом в начале и середине 2000-х годов, сейчас практически невозможно продать”, *Калининградские сливки*, 28.07.11, <http://kalgorod.ru/node/4191>

4. Agriculture – was one of the most hoped-for areas of the local economy. After the shock of 1990s it was presumed that the advent of financial stimuli from the Federal Centre would suffice for the task of revitalization of this domain and narrowing the gap between the region and its neighbors⁵⁰³.

5. Internal consumption rates.

Consumer market of Kaliningrad Oblast before the outbreak of the global financial crisis was developing along in line with the trend experienced by the Russian mainland largely replicating dynamism of other regions. However, as it is visible from the above-indicated data economic hardships did not have a dramatic effect on this domain.

6. FDI rate.

Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) is a vehicle of economic policy that is usually considered to be instrumental in terms of fostering dynamic economic development via transfer of managerial experience, technologies and ideas as a contrast to mere financial injections. Moreover, it would not be a mistake to state that the FDI mechanism is one of the key means that ensure and stimulate sustainable economic growth⁵⁰⁴. That being said, one should be rather cautious in assessing the sources of these investments. In case of Kaliningrad by the beginning of the year 2008 the oblast had been able to attract \$724 million, where the US accounted for 25%, Denmark 14% and Cyprus 13% respectively. Needless to say, this information gives numerous doubts pertaining to the main motives of investors.

⁵⁰³ Ирина Никифорова, “Импортная продовольственная зависимость как угроза продовольственной безопасности Калининградской области”, *Вестник Балтийского федерального университета им. И. Канта. Серия: Гуманитарные и общественные науки*, Вып. 3 (2015), p. 85.

⁵⁰⁴ For more information see: Kjetil Bjorvatn, Hans Jarle Kind, Hildegunn Kyvik Nordås, “The Role of FDI in Economic Development”, *Nordic Journal of Political Economy*, Volume 28, (2002). Pp. 109-126.

7. Quality of life.

In the year 2008 (the apex finalizing most successful period of local development) average wages in Kaliningrad reached 12.470 rubles (approximately 312 EUR), which nonetheless revealed that gap between the oblast and the Russian mainland remained (80% of the average Russian). In spite of worsening economic conditions in the second half of 2008 and the beginning of 2009 within 1991 – 2009 the westernmost Russian region was able to attain visible progress in elimination of poverty (from 39% to 15%) and temps of growing wages (16-27% annual growth). In this juncture, it is worth noting that the overwhelming bulk of financial means was spent on covering the bills and expenditures on basic commodities, which corroborates the thesis of relative economic underdevelopment of the local economy.

8. Crime and safety.

Experience of the post-Soviet transformation in the Russian Federation⁵⁰⁵ and the post-Soviet area revealed a direct correlation between worsening economic conditions and growing criminalization of public life. In this regard, it would be valuable to trace down experience of Kaliningrad in this domain.

The overall number of crimes committed on the territory of Kaliningrad Oblast reached its apex during the 1990s and would subsequently subside. However, this trend was mainly pertinent to violent crimes and smuggling whereas other branches of illegal activities continued to play detrimental role whereby harming the image of the region and warding off potential foreign investors. For instance, the rate of drug dealing experienced growth by 14% within 2005 – 2007, as well as the economic crimes that soared within the same interim by 64%.

⁵⁰⁵ Ed. Азалия Долгова, “Характеристики преступности в России”, *Криминология: Учебник для вузов*, 3-d Ed., (М.: Норма, 2005); Юрий Латов, “Организованная преступность постсоветской России – государство в государстве?”, *Теневая экономика в советском и постсоветском обществах*, Часть 1. Рефераты, *Экономическая теория преступлений и наказаний*, №4. Available at: <http://corruption.rsuh.ru/magazine/4-2/n4-04.html> .

In the end, concluding these reflections one should be able to admit that in spite of the visible positive trends in the domain of economic growth and improving welfare conditions, the following disturbing signs need to be underscored:

- Extremely low level of VAT (18% of the Russian average);
- Inadequate level of the productivity of labor (78% of the Russian average);
- Very low level of innovation;
- Inadmissibly high rates of shadow economy;
- Absence of the mechanism of capitalization of profits;
- The lack of abroad political agreement with the West as well as hardening rhetoric and actions. In May 2008 Russian Government accepted a law that restricted an access of foreign companies to the key sectors of Russian industry. Along with some other decisions, these actions had produced discouraging effect on foreign businesses⁵⁰⁶.

As a response to the approaching crisis the local intellectual community came up with a proposal that envisaged the following high-profile reforms⁵⁰⁷:

1. Stimulation of the import-substitution trajectory, upgrading the VAT, maintaining a balance between Russian market and export-oriented strategies;
2. Establishing, developing and promoting ties between various businesses and enterprises situated on the territory of Kaliningrad Oblast; formation of various joint clusters and complexes;
3. Creation and development of vertically integrated structures (agro-industrial, fishery, and locally extracted raw materials);

⁵⁰⁶ Кари Лиухто, “Политические риски в России для иностранных инвесторов”, *Балтийский регион*, (2010)

⁵⁰⁷ Д.Г. Федоров, “Типология регионов в едином экономическом пространстве”, *Вестник Балтийского федерального университета им. И. Канта. Серия: Гуманитарные и общественные науки*, (2007) p. 62.

4. Upgrading innovative compound of the local economy by putting additional emphasis on establishment of technological, innovative parks and business incubators;
5. Developing of various branches of infrastructure (transport, oil/gas, telecommunication);
6. Support for branches of social sphere in „National Projects”.

Nonetheless, the advent of the global financial crisis hindered implementation of the focal points of this program simultaneously exposing to public scrutiny numerous weaknesses and shortcomings of the model established in Kaliningrad.

10.4. Global financial crisis of 2008 and its impact on Kaliningrad: tackling the economic compound

In the beginning of 2008 the local economy continued an upward trend, though as it turned out this should not be overestimated, since the trend had primarily to do with so-called “inertia growth” that had been visible before. That is why the real state of affairs diverged with statistical data presented by Russian official sources.

In fact, the downward trajectory was visible in the majority of domains, ranging from export operations (that were said to have decreased by 75 percent in comparison with the previous year) that hit with particular severity local trade balance⁵⁰⁸.

Second crucial indicator was soared in the year 2009, whereby by 18.3 percent overcoming the national average. Aggravating local economic environment also led to the fact that large external businesses opted for partial/complete withdrawal from the local market. For instance, in 2009 such important players as Sony and Panasonic abandoned the oblast which resulted in a partial paralysis of the TV-assembling branch of local economy. On the other hand, the above-mentioned domain was not the only one severely hit by crisis. Starting from early spring 2008 the largest local car-assembling factory

⁵⁰⁸ Евгений Винокуров, “Мирохозяйственные связи Калининградской области: экономическое развитие в условиях анклавности”, (PhD dissertation, Отдел глобальных экономических проблем и внешнеэкономической политики Института мировой экономики и международных отношений Российской академии наук, Москва: 2008).

Avtotor discontinued assembling of Chery (the Chinese make of car) and certain models of AvtoVAZ cars. In spite of the fact that Avtotor managed to preserve the leading position in production of foreign cars in the Russian Federation, the number of vehicles produced dropped from 107.000 (demonstrated within the period 2007 – 2009) to merely 60.000 in the year 2009⁵⁰⁹.

Aside from above-mentioned indicators it would be worthwhile to take into consideration other crucial aspects of local economic performance as well. Officially presented statistical calculations claim that the local agriculture not only sustained the blow administered by the global financial crisis, yet indicated signs of growth, which was also traceable in the domain of local metallurgy⁵¹⁰.

Reflecting about the nature of economic crisis and its impact on Kaliningrad it would be worthwhile to underscore that it had a somewhat so-called „delayed effect” in comparison with the rest of Russian regions. This was primarily stipulated by specific traits of local economy. Namely, the oblast did not have huge fabrics on its territory. Moreover, due to the fact that the oblast was granted a special program on „Support of small and middle size entrepreneurship for 2009 – 2013”⁵¹¹ brought about visible relief. Furthermore, in 2009 (amidst the crisis) it was supplemented by the following four major areas⁵¹²:

1. Grants designed for local entrepreneurs;
2. Various subsidies;
3. Establishment of the Guarantee Fund.

Moreover, in the year 2009 a special Council on strategic planning, economic policy and entrepreneurship was established. Its activities were to be directly coordinated

⁵⁰⁹ “Плюс "Опель"”, *Мотор*, 28.10.2009, <https://motor.ru/reports/opelavtotor.htm>; “Производство иномарок в России. Справка”, *PIA Новости*, 12.01.2009, <https://ria.ru/economy/20090112/158988295.html>.

⁵¹⁰ “В Калининградской области подвели неутешительные экономические итоги 2009 года”, *Калининградские сливки*, <http://kalgorod.ru/node/2367>

⁵¹¹ “Малое и среднее предпринимательство”, *Правительство Калининградской области*, <http://www.gov39.ru/biznesu/predprinimatelstvo/maloe-i-srednee-predprinimatelstvo.php>

⁵¹² Александра Смирнова, “О минимизации последствий экономического кризиса”, *Советник Президента*, http://www.sovetnikprezidenta.ru/81/1_krizis.html

by the governor of Kaliningrad Oblast. The main tasks to be performed by the Council could be summarized in the following points:

- Consolidation of public and private activities aimed at development of Kaliningrad Oblast;
- Close analysis of the key problems hindering sustainable economic growth of the oblast and working out remedies to overcome existing challenges;
- Analysis of existing investment potential of the oblast and preparation of initiatives aimed at improvement of the investment climate;
- Forecasting and analysis of various crisis-related situations as well as preparation of recommendation aimed at overcoming unfavorable conditions.

As a reaction to the unfolding economic crisis and worsening economic conditions local intellectual community also worked out a number of measures that were supposed to facilitate overcoming consequences of the crisis⁵¹³:

1. The region should have been granted the right of simplified export of locally produced goods, which was supposed to be hinged to elimination of all restrictive mechanisms (with the exception of those stipulated by international law);
2. Correcting of rules and regulations pertaining to the custom administration procedures;
3. Formation of effective legal basis and testing technologies enabling transit of goods via territory of the oblast to the third countries and from third countries to the Russian Federation. This was to have turned Kaliningrad into a major regional transportation hub.

⁵¹³ “Перспективы развития Калининградской области”, *Региональный форум*, (2011).

Regretfully, these prescriptions were not extensively tackled by local administration or by the federal center due to the fact that this complex of measures required a serious analysis and extensive work.

Two main predicaments: first, the system established in Kaliningrad that did not facilitate initiative and creativity; secondly, the lack of agreement between Moscow and Brussels on Kaliningrad. The former could be rectified only by the Russian Federation, whereas the latter should have become a matter of multilateral talks possibility of which would be severely curtailed by worsening the lack of dialogue and worsening perception of each other by both parties.

Chapter 11. Destiny of the “pilot region” initiative: new role for Kaliningrad in light of external factors

11.1. NATO eastward expansion and Russian concerns

The end of 1990s became a crucial period in relationships between Moscow and its external partners. This did not only have to do with internal transformations experienced by the Russian Federation yet was simultaneously stipulated by crucial shifts brought about by external factors. Perhaps, it would not be an exaggeration to suggest that eastward expansion of NATO was a factor that triggered numerous tendencies that have not lost relevance up until now.

On March 12, 1999 - Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic acceded to NATO. On March 29, 2004 - Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Rumania, Slovakia, Estonia joined the alliance. The fact of accession of the former members of the Warsaw Pact to the camp of the former arch-enemy led to a dramatic change of balance of powers in East-Central Europe bringing the North Atlantic Alliance to the Russian borders. To be more precise, it was Kaliningrad Oblast that appeared to be completely “surrounded” by new members of NATO.

Furthermore, given an extremely high level of incredulity and uneasy relations between Moscow on the one hand and Warsaw and Vilnius (countries that sandwiched the oblast) on the other the aforementioned transformation boded crucial changes for Kaliningrad as well.

Rapid accession of the former members of the Socialist Camp to the opposing side was construed by the Kremlin as a sign of growing anti-Russian moods in Europe that had been instigated by “external players”. Namely, reflecting about these processes prominent Russian journalist and political scientist Fedor Lukyanov presumed that the velocity of accession suggested that the Alliance (aka Washington) had certain ulterior motives: “The previous time after accepting the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary almost immediately followed the NATO-led military operation in Yugoslavia... instead of peace and tranquility the newcomers – primarily the Hungarians - received a war in a dangerous proximity to their borders... Later – Kosovo, Afghanistan and now Iraq, where contingents from Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary are receiving combat and political practice on a day-to-day basis in the conditions of the real war”⁵¹⁴. Taking into account the fact that Poland is the most proximate to Kaliningrad country this became a matter of great concern for the Russian officials.

On the other hand, another moment that worried Moscow was concerned with a prospect of re-location of American military bases from Germany to the territories of the new NATO members⁵¹⁵.

This stir in Russian intellectual community would be further developed by a high-profile “*Izvestia*” newspaper that pertained to Georgia and Ukraine preparing to accede to both the EU and NATO. According to the tabloid acceptance of these countries might have created the “domino effect” dragging Azerbaijan, Moldavia and even Armenia into the sphere of western influence⁵¹⁶. Simultaneously, Russian public started to be convinced that the eastward expansion of NATO is nothing more but a “stab in the back” from the side of Russia’s western partners. Namely, the vice-president of the Academy of Geopolitical Problems Major-General Leonid Ivashev blatantly stated that the US and its allies tried to outmaneuver Moscow after 9/11 when President Putin allegedly “asked leaders of Central Asian states to agree on letting NATO bases on their respective territories as a part of counter-terrorist operation”⁵¹⁷.

⁵¹⁴ Федор Лукьянов, “Ушли на базы”, *Российская газета*, 06.04.2004. Available at: <https://rg.ru/2004/04/06/NATO.html>.

⁵¹⁵ “Расширение НАТО”, *Партия Яблоко*, № 15, 04-06, 2004, http://www.yabloko.ru/Themes/Defence/2004/OMB2004_15/omb15_ar29.html

⁵¹⁶ Наталья Ратиани, “Как сделать НАТО не страшным”, *Известия*, 08.05.2004. Available at: <https://iz.ru/news/288891>.

⁵¹⁷ Леонид Ивашов, “Welcome, NATO!”, *Независимая газета*, 09.04.2004. Available at: http://www.ng.ru/politics/2004-04-09/2_nato.html.

Russian official response to the enlargement was first voiced by Army General Yury Baluyevsky during a special press conference. Among other aspects he stated that “we are carefully monitoring processes within NATO and much will depend on the structure it is going to evolve into – political or military”⁵¹⁸. In the meantime, in spite of reconciliatory tone chosen by official representatives of NATO (for instance, reference to the Member Action Plan that explicitly stated that a prospect of accession was a rather distant prospective) the Russian side nonetheless felt ill at ease apparently not fully siding with arguments presented by opposing side. For this reason, a diplomatic demarche by Russia, China, France, Germany and Spain aimed against the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 fully demonstrated that the state of relations between Russia and leading NATO players would be worsened to even greater extent. Under these circumstances, it was the Kaliningrad Oblast that could have been used as a venue for retaliation for allegedly “unfriendly” gestures and policies carried out by western countries.

11.2. The Orange Revolution and the EU enlargements

Another set of upsetting news was received by the Kremlin in the year 2004. Namely, the EU so-called “Big Bang” enlargement and the outbreak of the Orange Revolution in Ukraine – these developments exponentially increased suspicions of “American involvement” in the “Russian near abroad” and vested ideas of Russia losing its former zones of influence to both the EU and NATO. On the other hand, accession of the former members of the Soviet Camp into the European superstructure meant that Russian regional positions were rapidly eroding. On May 1, 2004 along with other countries Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia became full-fledge members of the EU. This meant that Russia was not only confronted by the largest in the world cumulative economic might presented by the European common market, yet also it signified the fact that the gap between Russia and Kaliningrad Oblast was to become even wider. The Russian side immediately identified this transformation as “one of the most prominent challenges for Russia”. Incidentally, this

⁵¹⁸ Юрий Гаврилов, “Она нам НАТО?”, *Российская газета*, Федеральный выпуск №3455 (0), 15.042004. Available at: <https://rg.ru/2004/04/15/Baluyevsky.html> .

was one of the first instances of Russia actually seriously considering a possibility of a sanction war with the EU⁵¹⁹.

In the meantime, the Russian side identified its unwillingness to work on most crucial aspects pertaining to Kaliningrad Oblast and its post-2004 status with Brussels, instead declaring that the aforementioned issues ought to be dealt with on bi-lateral basis between Moscow and Vilnius⁵²⁰.

On the other hand, the outbreak of Orange Revolution⁵²¹ (which started in Kiev and later speeded well beyond the Ukrainian capital) that was construed and presented by Russian mass media as a blatant demonstration of anti-Russian moods and an “American pet-project”⁵²² in many ways dealt a severe blow to the state of affairs between Moscow and its European and North American partners. On the other hand, this event translated into key shifts and transformations experienced by the Russian Federation as well⁵²³.

These events did in many ways preordain the overall trajectory of development of Kaliningrad Oblast as both an independent unit and the Russian region transforming it from the “pilot region” it was once hoped for into the “zone of alienation” and a new (at this point ideological) “area of confrontation”.

11.3. Russian media portrayal of Kaliningrad prior to the EU enlargement (2004) and beyond

The role of mass media and propaganda as a tool of forming/influencing of public opinion in the Russian Federation has been irreversibly increasing since the beginning of the early 2000th. As it has been noted previously, the greatest share of interest with Kaliningrad from the side of Russian media came about in the year 2002/3 that was mostly

⁵¹⁹ Д. Бабич, “Лекарство от Европы,” *Время новостей*, №75, 29.04.2004. Available at: <http://www.vremya.ru/2004/75/13/97575.html>.

⁵²⁰ “Вступление новых членов в Евросоюз”, *Партия Яблоко*, № 15, 04-06, 2004, http://www.yabloko.ru/Themes/Defence/2004/OMB2004_15/omb15_ar30.html

⁵²¹ Андреас Умланд, “«Оранжевая революция» как постсоветский водораздел: демократический прорыв в Украине, реставрационный импульс в России”, *Континент*, 2009, № 142.

⁵²² Sergey Sukhankin, Alla Hurska, “Russian informational and propaganda campaign against Ukraine prior to the Euromaidan (2013 – 2014): denying sovereignty”, *Securitologia*, No 1/2015, (Warsaw – Cracow: 2015), 35 – 59.

⁵²³ Андреас Умланд, “Новый “особый путь” России после “оранжевой революции” радикальное антизападничество и паратоталитарный неоавторитаризм”, *Русский Журнал*, <http://www.russ.ru/Mirovaya-povestka/Novyj-osobyj-put-Rossii-posle-oranzhevoj-revolyuicii>

related to the approaching EU and NATO enlargements. The upcoming events spurred active debate within Russian intellectual circles and mass media. Previously Kaliningrad “earned” the status of “smuggler’s capital” and a “perpetual problem” of the Russian Federation⁵²⁴, the upcoming transformations significantly changed this approach, where the Oblast started to be perceived as an “island” with a very vivid prospective of being “cut off”/“left behind”⁵²⁵ from the rest of Russia. In this regard, issues related to Kaliningrad acquired additional meaning –Moscow received a powerful tool to be used both internally and in dealing with its external opponents. On the other hand, Kaliningrad became a matter of prestige for the Kremlin that could not possibly have succumbed to rapidly changing geopolitical environment in the Baltic region. In this juncture, it would be adequate to recall personality of Dmitry Rogozin who (frequently in very aggressive and bellicose manner) tended to use populism on the large scale. This politician that was “appointed” as a person “responsible” for affairs in Kaliningrad Oblast⁵²⁶ provocatively argued the solution to the existing “Kaliningrad problem” could have been easily solved via granting all Kaliningrad citizens visa free rights, which “would not have brought any harm to the EU⁵²⁷”.

Interestingly enough, yet potential threats to Kaliningrad economy and security were ascribed solely to the EU enlargement, yet not the model developing in Kaliningrad (with huge role of Moscow in this process): such terms as “blockade”⁵²⁸, “siege”, “sealing of external borders”, “isolation” and even a dire prospect of “losing Kaliningrad” started to dominate Russian mass-media.

Another stream of Russian mass media (that stood on more liberal principles) tended to make references to possibilities for Kaliningrad that could become a perfect venue for both European and Russian entrepreneurs. Conservative part of the Russian political and intellectual elites (especially, Eurasianists, Communists and the Liberal Democrats) being aware of eventual expansion of the EU and NATO put forth ideas of using Kaliningrad as a hindrance to both Poland and Lithuania (to a much greater extent)

⁵²⁴ “Для многих жителей Калининградской Области контрабанда превратилась в единственный источник существования”, *НТВ*, 21.01.2002.

⁵²⁵ Евгений Арсюхин, Алексей Балиев, “Обиженный анклав”. *Российская газета*, 23.05.2002, С 8.

⁵²⁶ Sergey Sukhankin, “Kaliningrad in the “Mirror World”: From Soviet “Bastion” to Russian “Fortress”, *Notes Internacionals*, 151, 06.2016, (Barcelona: CIDOB).

⁵²⁷ Ibidem.

⁵²⁸ Александр Рябушев, “Янтарному краю угрожает электрическая блокада”. *Независимая газета*, 10.04.2002, accessed 12.01.2017 http://www.ng.ru/regions/2002-04-10/4_blokada.html.

to thwarting their respective accession to the Euro Atlantic structures. In any event, visa related issues as well as EU enlargement were primarily used by various groups to artificially inflate fears and speculations regarding Kaliningrad prospects (on micro level) and further course of development of EU – Russian relations (the macro level).

On the other hand, escalation of issues and themes related to Kaliningrad Oblast vested a powerful tool in the hands of Russian political elites who exercised this situation in order to upgrade their internal image. The main anthem of certain groups of the Russian establishment in these years could be summed up as follows: “we will do our best not to betray Kaliningrad!”⁵²⁹ Conservatives and populists tried to exploit the topic of Kaliningrad on various levels (from State Duma to the local level), whereby substantially improving respective careers (especially this was relevant regarding Rogozin whose hour of triumph coincided with events surrounding Kaliningrad). In certain respect, Kaliningrad was started to be portrayed as a “fortress in siege” and a “new battle ground” between Russia and the West. Incidentally, this perfectly accommodated growing reference to the Great Patriotic War (1941 – 1945) as a link between heroic past and new reviving Russia. Similarly, the issue of Kaliningrad upgraded Russian positions in diplomatic games with the EU. On the other hand, the wave of discontent related with the angle of the Kremlin`s policy regarding Kaliningrad became evident⁵³⁰.

Aside from the majority that supported the Kremlin`s vision regarding Kaliningrad, it would be adequate to ascertain two major minority groups:

Group 1. Liberal minority.

Representatives of this stream criticized Moscow for inflating the situation with visa regime and potential repercussions of the EU enlargement for Kaliningrad⁵³¹. Naturally, taking into account national- patriotic turn that Russian society was taking by the end of V. Putin`s first presidential tenure ideas presented by the aforementioned stream did not enjoy massive support and popularity. Rather, this stream reflected ideas expressed by marginal segment of the Russian society.

⁵²⁹ Анатолий Анисимов, “Горячие новости,” *Парламентская газета*, 29.08.2002, С. 7.

⁵³⁰ Ирина Кобринская, “При чем здесь визы. Проблемы Калининградской области запретами не решить,” *Московские новости*, 02.07.2002, с. 14.

⁵³¹ Павел Фельгенгауэр, “О проблеме Калининградской области,” *Эхо Москвы*, 03.06.2002.

Group 2. National- patriotic minority.

Traditionally, national patriotic anthems in both foreign and domestic policies in Russia have been represented by the Communists, the Liberal Democrats (LDPR) and the nationalists (RNE and organizations of similar ideological orientation). Rhetoric emanating from this camp was distinct for its radicalism and constant allusions to the past Russian historical experience as well as clear rejection of compromise with the West, where Kaliningrad was to become a flashpoint of new escalation of tensions and an example of noncommittal stance of Russian political leadership⁵³². Even though projecting certain critique in regard to the Kremlin`s activities, this group stood much closer to Moscow.

In the end, it would be adequate to conclude this passage with supposition that the populist (such as for instance, rhetorical escapades of Rogozin⁵³³) and radical (the one, presented by the Communists regarding the Molotov – Ribbentrop Pact) approaches prevailed in Russian political vision of dialogue on the matter of Kaliningrad (at least prior to the year 2004), of which visible proof came with V. Putin`s decision to appoint D. Rogozin as his special envoy in Kaliningrad⁵³⁴.

Influential Russian mass media and intellectuals presented genuinely apocalyptic pictures of the post-2007 Kaliningrad that (after Poland and Lithuania had joined the Schengen Area) would be completely isolated from the rest of Russia and the ability to conduct business communication with its closest neighbors would be

⁵³² For more information see: “В Госдуме разрабатывается проект документа, который может спровоцировать территориальный спор между Литвой и Польшей, и вызвать международный скандал,” *Телеканал НТВ, телепередача Сегодня*, 17.06.2002.

⁵³³ „Я думаю, что, во-первых, мы не пациенты, а Европа не стоматолог, чтобы нас пломбировать в вагонах,” (Интервью со специальным представителем президента по проблемам Калининградской области Дмитрием Рогозиным, Ведущий Юлий Семенов), *Радиостанция Маяк, Народ и власть*, 03.08.2002.

⁵³⁴ “Рогозин, Дмитрий Заместитель председателя правительства РФ”, *Lenta.ru*, <http://lenta.ru/lib/14159797/>.

significantly abridged⁵³⁵. This was in turn presented as a first step toward complete destruction of ties between “Big Russia” and its “island” situated in Europe.

Under these circumstances common sense and pragmatic calculations that might have led to proper conclusions were being rapidly replaced by such provocative notions as “dignity”, “national pride”, “honor” and increasing allusions to patriotism and Russian national interests. Moreover, Russian official rhetoric went as far as to openly accuse the EU (with particular emphasis on selected members) of having assumed “openly unfriendly position” frequently making extensive (and rather inapt) allusions to the status of Russian national minorities in the Baltic States⁵³⁶ - an issue to which Russian wide public had developed particularly sentimental attachment primarily due to the fact that the narrative was based on the Great Motherland War discourse which remained perhaps the only visible cord still connecting the USSR and its post-1991 incarnation. Regretfully, such arguments were not reduced to nationalist, reactionary or openly pro-governmental structures and institutions, even usually moderate mass media. For instance, titles akin to “Germany did not resign itself to the loss of Eastern Prussia”⁵³⁷, “Finland wishes to use Kaliningrad’s wicket-gate to get access to the energy resources of Russia’s North West”⁵³⁸ became a commonplace. Furthermore, Russian media coverage of the so-called “Kaliningrad problem” acquired a visible anti-Lithuanian tilt⁵³⁹.

Perhaps, the most unexpected position was taken by one of the most staunchest Kaliningrad liberal politicians Solomon Ginzburg (at a time served as a director of the “Regional Strategy” Foundation in Kaliningrad) who also implicitly accused the EU of taking a position that did not take into close account needs of the local community and jeopardized local economic development⁵⁴⁰.

⁵³⁵ Гарий Чмыхов, “Назревшие проблемы Калининграда”, *Россия в глобальной политике*, 12.09.2009, http://www.globalaffairs.ru/book/n_13640

⁵³⁶ Никита Иванов, Модест Колеров, Глеб Павловский, “Проектный комитет: Эффективно ли защищает правительство России национальные интересы? Необходимость и потенциал активных действий в Прибалтике”, *ИА REGNUM*, 17.03.2003. <https://regnum.ru/news/96738.html>

⁵³⁷ Александр Рябушев, Сергей Сергиевский, “Калининград в блокаде,” *Независимая газета*, 17.05.2002, http://www.ng.ru/politics/2002-05-17/1_kaliningrad.html .

⁵³⁸ Валерия Сычева, “Остров Калининград,” *Итоги*, №19 / 309, 14.05.2002, <http://www.itogi.ru/archive/2002/19/95549.html> .

⁵³⁹ “ Недоступная Литва,” *Новая газета*, N 7 (840), 30.01.2003, 4. <https://www.novayagazeta.ru/articles/2003/01/30/19595-nedostupnaya-litva> .

⁵⁴⁰ “Россия и Европа: взгляд из Калининграда,” *Русская служба Би-би-си*, 26.04.2004, accessed 10.10.2016 http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/russian/programmes/newsid_3660000/3660507.stm;

“Калининградцы в Евросоюзе - "пассажиры из тамбура"?” *Росбалт*, 09.03.2004, accessed 01.09.2016 <https://m.rosbalt.ru/main/2004/03/09/148157.html>.

However, these moods and sentiments were furthermore contrasted by “we-will-do-whatever-we-want” in regard to Kaliningrad Oblast. Namely, such an approach was maintained by one of the leading Russian political technologists Gleb Pavlovskii (head of the Foundation for Effective Politics). The argument was premised on the idea that Kaliningrad was an integral part of the Russian Federation.

This being said, it ought to be stated that such sentiments did not fully cover the entire spectrum of ideas pertaining to Kaliningrad Oblast within the mentioned chronological interim. Prominent Russian political scientist Sergey Kortunov pervasively argued that in dealing with Kaliningrad Moscow did not appear to have elaborated any concrete “road map” for actions, neither was it able to boast with understanding of the conundrum it was facing⁵⁴¹. The author therefore argued that concerns and uncertainties demonstrated by the EU could be understood since key European players did not have clear idea of Kremlin`s position on Kaliningrad. In this juncture, Kortunov suggested that the best solution for Kaliningrad was development of the “pilot region” initiative and some sort of “rearranging responsibilities” between Brussels and Moscow on issues related to the westernmost Russian region. As it has been stated before in scopes of current research the local economy could not effectively operate under existing conditions. Undoubtedly, being physically separated from the mainland and unable to fully cooperate with its neighbors (due to European legal regulations) Kaliningrad required massive financial investments as a key toward success⁵⁴² - this however did not ensue.

Chapter 12. Fading illusions: Kaliningrad returning back to “normal” (2005 - 2010)

12.1. “Militaryization 2.0”: back to the “fortress” project?

Perhaps, one would not be entirely incorrect to presume that the extent of militarization was one of the most distinctive features of the pre-1991 Kaliningrad: in

⁵⁴¹ Сергей Кортунув, “Калининград как ворота в Большую Европу”, *Россия в глобальной политике*, №6, 2004 г., 27.12.2004, http://www.globalaffairs.ru/number/n_4210.

⁵⁴² Sergey Sukhankin, “Special no more: Kaliningrad on life support”, *European Council on Foreign Relations*, November 7, 2016, http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_special_no_more_kaliningrad_on_life_support_7169.

fact, the first part of the research allocated significant attention to this process and its implications for the regional economy, status and development of very specific group identity. Undoubtedly, this was stipulated by numerous frequently tightly intertwined factors. On the other hand, it was rapid and frequently unnecessary accretion of military potential that had in many respects shaped pace, scope and direction of the local development incurring profound footprint on various spheres and domains of public life in the region. Reflecting upon interrelation between positive and negative outcomes of pervasive militarization conducted in Kaliningrad within the period 1945 – 1990, it would profoundly depend on intellectual school of thought one allies him/herself with. While underscoring profound role of security-related aspects (particularly elevated by the Soviet ideology) one should be able to identify numerous weaknesses and even perils posed by such a system.

In this regard, it should be deemed pivotal how post-Soviet Kaliningrad, its elite, ordinary citizens and military would react on the crucial transformations in the post-1991 Europe. On the other hand, it would be worthwhile to trace down changing actions of the Kremlin in the light rapidly altering geopolitical milieu and relations with its western counterparts.

12.1.1. From collapse of the USSR toward key geopolitical shifts (1991 - 2001)

The collapse of the USSR led to the overwhelming decrease in military capabilities of the oblast. The abrupt diminishing of financial means allocated to the Military Industrial Complex resulted in a practical collapse of one of the most essential pillars and prides of the former USSR – its armed forces. On the other hand, conditions of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE)⁵⁴³ that was signed in the year 1990 and ratified only in 1992 (after collapse of the USSR) obliged Moscow to conduct de-militarization of the Kaliningrad Oblast, which was by and large accomplished leading to a drastic decrease of Russian military might in the oblast⁵⁴⁴.

⁵⁴³“Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE),” *U.S. State Department*. Available at: <https://www.state.gov/t/avc/cca/cfe/index.htm>.

⁵⁴⁴ Sergey Sukhankin, “Kaliningrad, Putin’s Russia and Count Valuev,” *New Eastern Europe*, 20.10.2016. Available at: <http://neweasterneurope.eu/2016/10/20/kaliningrad-putin-s-russia-and-count-valuev/>.

Doubtless, that due to its geographical position and physical separation from the mainland as well as general scarcity of resources Kaliningrad (that used to be the “impregnable Soviet fortress” on the Baltic) one of the most severely affected. Some scholars even tended to define it as a “liability” (which Russia would have difficulties to defend) rather than an “advantage”⁵⁴⁵.

Indeed, by the end of the 1995 the overall potential of armed forces and the navy stationed in Kaliningrad Oblast had decreased exponentially in both qualitative and quantitative terms. Thus, by 1993 the number of vessels attached to the Baltic Sea Fleet (BSF) had decreased by three times, whereas the number of staff – by 40 percent. Also, within merely three years the BSF personnel and regiments of the 11th Guard Army was disbanded. In addition to that the military airdrome situated on the Vistula Spit was liquidated. These facts were widely discussed by international (especially the Danish mass media) information outlets⁵⁴⁶. Nonetheless, in spite of cheerful and frequently exorbitantly optimistic prognosis Moscow could not possibly allow further demilitarization process especially taking into consideration rather dangerous developments that were underway in the fringes of the Russian Federation.

In the year 1994 Kaliningrad was proclaimed a special defense district⁵⁴⁷, which signified an attempt of the Kremlin to ease the burden of responsibility in accordance with the principle of territorial division.

On the other hand, Moscow was facing yet another rather tough challenge: according to the unofficial data approximately 10 percent of the local population had certain ties with the military, whereas as much as 40 percent of the local economy was attached to the Military Industrial Complex. In case of improper handling of the situation Kaliningrad was destined to face austere consequences.

Moreover, it appeared that reportedly pro-western policies conducted by the early Yeltsin and Kozyrev (so-called Liberal Institutionalism) did not match with the

⁵⁴⁵ For more information see: Nicolás De Pedro, Panagiota Manoli, Sergey Sukhankin, Theodoros Tsakiris, *Facing Russia's Strategic Challenge: Security Developments from the Baltic to the Black Sea*, European Parliament, Think Tank, (17.11.2017). Available at: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EXPO_STU\(2017\)603853](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EXPO_STU(2017)603853).

⁵⁴⁶ Kim Wiesener, "On the Border with the New NATO," *Berlingske Tidende* (Copenhagen), July 3, 1997.

⁵⁴⁷ Михаил Победенный, “Особенности геополитического положения Калининградской области и проявляемые угрозы пограничной безопасности Российской Федерации”, *Материалы научно-практических конференций Московского военного института ФПС России*, Сборник научных статей № 9, available at: <http://voenprav.ru/doc-3549-7.htm>.

worldview of more conservative forces. For instance, Colonel Sergei Glotov deputy of the Russian State Duma expressed his discontent with the fact that while Kaliningrad was diluting its military potential its neighbors (primarily Poland and Lithuania) were simultaneously increasing their military forces.⁵⁴⁸

In similar vein spoke other top rank Russian military officials. One of the most interesting opinions on the matter was expressed by Admiral F.N. Gromov the commander of the Russian Navy⁵⁴⁹. As early as in the year 1995 he contended that Kaliningrad Oblast and military and naval forces stationed there became isolated from the rest of Russia. He also maintained an idea of “special” meaning of Kaliningrad for both internal and foreign policies of the Russian Federation, which required creation of the Kaliningrad Special District (KSD) for the following reasons:

- To forestall any threats on the North-Western borders of the Russian Federation;
- Preventing the breakdown of existing balance in the region;
- Securing economic and political ties with other regional players;
- Preserving solid political, economic and military connections between Kaliningrad Oblast and the Russian Federation.

The Admiral also underscored instrumental role of the BSF as one of the key tools that are also to secure Russian national interests and its status of the Baltic power. He also warned that demilitarization of the Baltic Sea region (to be more precise Kaliningrad Oblast) as a chief pre-condition to stabilization of relations between local actors and the Russian Federation is a dangerous prospect that could lead toward forfeiture by Moscow of its regional positions and gradual decreasing of military capabilities of the BSF. In a

⁵⁴⁸ Anatoliy Yurkin, "Poland, Lithuania Concentrate Forces in Kaliningrad Area," *ITAR-TASS*, May 20, 1997.

⁵⁴⁹ Феликс Громов, “Значение Калининградского особого района для обороноспособности Российской Федерации,” *Военная Мысль*, № 4, 1995, стр. 9-13. <http://militaryarticle.ru/voennaya-mysl/1995-vm/8707-znachenie-kaliningradskogo-osobogo-rajona-dlja>.

more distant prospective such an outcome jeopardized functioning of the Kaliningrad Oblast as such.

In the meantime, rhetoric pertaining to security-related issues and Kaliningrad appeared to start unfolding. For instance, in the year 1995 marginal forces in Russian political milieu started to preach for placing tactical nuclear weapons to Kaliningrad⁵⁵⁰, which became first but by no means last escapade of this sort.

By the same token, the Russian political elite did not shy away from using local electorate by exploiting the idea of the westernmost Russian region as a defective shield of the country. In 1996 in scopes his presidential electoral campaign Yeltsin visited Baltiysk (headquarter of the BSF since 1956) and stressed its importance for the Russian Federation and the Russian security architecture. On the other hand, aside from sound rhetorical proclamations practical steps aimed at upgrading local military capabilities had been undertaken. According to Alexander Sergunin by the year 1997 military personnel stationed in Kaliningrad may have reached 30.000 in both rank and file⁵⁵¹. Indeed, such a dramatic increase might have had to do with the withdrawal of the Russian armed forces from the Eastern and Central Europe which made Kaliningrad some sort of a transit venue. Nonetheless, the mere fact of increasing armed forces led toward conspicuous alarm from the side of neighboring states. Undoubtedly, tendencies pertaining to militarization of Kaliningrad had spurred Poland and Lithuania into further intensification of talks regarding their membership in the NATO. In its turn, such attempts were frowned upon by the Russian side that construed them as an apparent sign of unfriendliness. In this regard, it would not be redundant to quote Col. Gen. Igor Rodionov (at a time Russia's defense minister) who blatantly spoke on this regard in September 1996: "The expansion of the NATO zone of responsibility to the East will create a situation similar to what we had during the Cold War, when the confronting groups of forces were deployed against each other and were maintained at a high level of combat readiness for attack"⁵⁵².

⁵⁵⁰"Kaliningrad Region July 1999–March 2000. Background Information," *Institute of International Relations and Political Science, Vilnius University*, (Palanga, 2–4 June 2000).

⁵⁵¹ Alexander Sergounin, "Russia and the European Union: The Case of Kaliningrad," *The Center for Strategic and International Studies: PONARS Policy Memo 172* (October 2000).

⁵⁵² Stanley Kober, "Kaliningrad," *CATO Foreign Policy Briefing No. 46*, 11 February 1998.

Regretfully, such tendencies did persevere even in spite of other positive signs such as a goodwill visit of President Yeltsin to Stockholm in 1997, when the President pledged to reduce military potential of the Russian North-West by 40 percents and proliferation of communication between Moscow and NATO on the basis of the “Russia – NATO Council” that was set up in the year 1997 on a permanent basis.

First sound reaction of Moscow on the changing geopolitical environment in the region that stressed huge military and strategic importance of Kaliningrad came about in the year 1999, when so-called “Zapad-99” war games were initiated. Approximately 10.000 military men were involved in a joint military exercise (Russia and Belarus took part in the action) of which a part was conducted on the territory of Kaliningrad Oblast signified a new stage of military integration between Moscow and Minsk.

In accordance with the Military Balance (2000) issued by the International Institute of Strategic Studies in London, estimated the number of ground forces in the Kaliningrad region reached 12.700 men by the beginning of the new millennium (which approximated slightly less than ten times decrease in comparison with the year 1993)⁵⁵³. However, western partners of the Russian Federation seemingly felt uneasy with the developments that surrounded Kaliningrad and overall (largely still present) atmosphere of secrecy that surrounded the Russian westernmost region. In June 2000 the US issued an intelligence report stating that Russia had placed tactical nuclear missiles to Kaliningrad⁵⁵⁴. Perhaps, it was not the report itself yet the reaction of Moscow that alarmed all regional players. On the one hand, the Kremlin reluctantly denied all accusation, yet simultaneously brushed off all proposals to conduct international inspection in order to clarify the matter⁵⁵⁵. Moreover, international observers were discouraged by visible incongruity between various reports and the overall opaqueness pertaining to the number of military personnel station in Kaliningrad. This was additionally stressed by declaration of the newly elected local governor Admiral V.

⁵⁵³ “The Military Balance 1993–94,” International Institute of Strategic Studies, (London), p.104; “The Military Balance 2000–2001,” International Institute of Strategic Studies, (London), p. 124.

⁵⁵⁴ Philipp C. Bleek, “Moscow Reportedly Moves Tactical Nuclear Arms to Baltics,” *Arms Control Association*, January/February 2001, available at: <https://www.armscontrol.org/print/800> .

⁵⁵⁵ Bill Gertz, “Satellites Pinpoint Russian Nuclear Arms in Baltics,” *Washington Times*, February 15, 2001.

Yegorov who promised to reduce local military forces from 25.000 to 16.500 within forthcoming three years.

Out of the broad range of factors that in many respects resulted in growing tensions between the parties concerned causing intensification of international frictions over Kaliningrad:

1. Numerous phobias and low level of mutual trust. In fact, such countries as Poland and Lithuania construed any security-related moves conducted by Moscow in Kaliningrad as a solid evidence of growing threat to their respective national securities. Undoubtedly, such fears were stipulated by both more distant historical experience as well as growing military cooperation between Russia and Belarus. A vivid example could be found in the following quotation extracted from Polish media source:

Thus, the Russians speak of reinforcing their troops on the Western border, aiming nuclear missiles at the [future] new member countries of NATO, deploying nuclear weapons in Kaliningrad Oblast, and breaking off talks on conventional and strategic disarmaments. It is hardly conceivable that planning by the Russian military, who are mentally accustomed to treat NATO as the main enemy, does not provide for carrying out some of these threats. I think that we should consider the possibility of becoming a target of Russian missiles with nuclear warheads, owing not so much to our automatically becoming one of potential military enemies as to the current weakness of the conventional armed forces of the Russian Federation. . . . The status of Kaliningrad still remains unclear. . . . But any plan for turning Kaliningrad into a significant [conventional] military factor in Europe will remain unrealistic so long as military transports to that enclave run across sovereign countries, which moreover aspire to membership in NATO (Lithuania). In this situation, the only way of turning Kaliningrad into a territory that matters, given the prospects for extending NATO to Poland, is to deploy nuclear weapons there. Such weapons had anyhow been deployed there during the cold war era (short- and medium-range missiles of the Baltic Fleet, mounted on submarines and missile cruisers). It is noteworthy that such a measure does not entail substantial financial

*outlays, in contrast with the attempts to deploy troops in the western military districts of the Russian Federation*⁵⁵⁶.

2. NATO eastward expansion. Not only did this tendency lead toward growing nationalist rhetoric emphasizing grave peril coming from the west as well as an explicit condemnation of “docile liberals” yet the issue also concerned Kaliningrad. Peter Swartz (the first U.S. ambassador to Belarus) referring to the NATO expansion wittingly stated that “Russia has a real big problem as NATO expands... Its Kaliningrad enclave becomes ever more isolated. One result of the NATO expansion is certain to [be] greater pressure by Russia on Lithuania for access to Kaliningrad”⁵⁵⁷.

3. Yugoslavia and Chechnya. The war in the “brotherly” Yugoslavia had had a profound impact not only on the Russian society, yet on the perception of the US. The Russian public sentiments run staunchly against the NATO-led military operations (even though the public opinion was primarily formed by the state-sponsored mass media that tended to allude other important details). Undoubtedly, NATO approaching to the borders of the Russian Federation must have had quite negative impact on the population of the westernmost region especially taking into account its physical separation from the mainland. On the other hand, the first war in Chechnya and the outbreak of the second one (with instances of terrorism) severely criticized by the West and largely approved domestically (especially the second one) did first saw the seeds of incredulity and later distrust to the real goals of the West regarding the Russian Federation. For many security-related issues started to occupy a prominent place in the range of immediate tasks to be coped with.

In the final analysis, it would not be an exaggeration to presume that within a very brief historical interim (1991 – 2000/1) the level of hopes initially vested in development of Kaliningrad as a de-militarized zone on the Baltic did not materialized. Moreover, it would not be an understatement to suggest that the aforementioned decade raised more

⁵⁵⁶ Jacek Chelmski, “Once the Cards Are Dealt: What Will Poland's Relations with Its Eastern Neighbors Be After It Joins NATO?” *Sztandar*, Warsaw: December 30, 1996.

⁵⁵⁷ Ed Warner, “NATO Moves East, Russia Moves West,” *Voice of America Background Report* 5-36607, June 6, 1997.

questions than provided answers to both old and emerging aspects of the Baltic Sea security and the role of Kaliningrad in it.

12.1.2 Between “Berlin-2001” and “Munich-2007”: where does Kaliningrad stand?

The overall worsening of relations between the Russian Federation and its western partners that attained most visible forms within 1998 – 2000 would be somehow mitigated by the tragedy that occurred in New York and Washington in the year 2001 (so-called “9/11”). Taking into consideration that the horrible terrorist attack was carried out by Al Qaeda (at the time perhaps the most powerful group comprising Islamic terrorists from all around the globe) many in Russia would be prone to speculate that once terrorism has struck the US it would assume much more favorable position toward Moscow and its mode of operations on the Northern Caucasus. Numerous hopes were also pinned to an assumption that it was the threat of the global terrorism that would help reconciliation of worsening relations between Russia and the West.

Furthermore, President Putin who due to his life experience was known as a staunch proponent of development of closer politic and economic ties with the Federal Republic of Germany⁵⁵⁸ assumed that the time had come for Russia and Germany to expand their ties and to upgrade the nature of relations between two countries in a drastic manner.

In this regard, the speech pronounced by the Russian leader in Bundestag (German Parliament)⁵⁵⁹ became both a unique historical event and a sign of the advent of the new era (at least it was deemed to be such within this period) in relations between two most powerful European players. The key point underscored by Putin boiled down to the acute necessity of establishing a genuinely strategic partnership between Russia and Germany. On the other hand, it was underscored that since the US is an overseas power it should be deemed as a pivotal element of global security architecture, whereas Germany and the Russian Federation are two essential pillars of the Eurasian security and prosperity. In

⁵⁵⁸Marek Menkiszak, “Greater Europe. Putin’s vision of European (Dis)integration,” *OSW Studies*, N 46 Warsaw, (October 2013). https://www.osw.waw.pl/sites/default/files/greater_europe_net.pdf.

⁵⁵⁹В.Путин, “Выступление в бундестаге ФРГ,” *Официальные сетевые ресурсы Президента России*, 25.09.2001, available at: <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/21340>.

spite of friendly and reconciliatory tone of the speech, one should not be deceived by its overall tone. In effect, it contained certain elements of anti-American sentiments and presented highly idealistic vision of the new Europe that was to be dominated by Russia and Germany.

The impact of the event in Berlin was heard significantly beyond the European continent as such. The leading international information agencies hastened to discuss the subject⁵⁶⁰. BBC stated that the speech was a revelation for many European and (in particular German) politicians. For instance, one of German ministers hastened into proclaiming Vladimir Putin to be a “man of Europe”. Some sources even presumed that the impact was so huge that Gerhard Schroder (German Chancellor at a time) started to seriously ponder over slackening of the harsh rhetoric about Russian actions in Chechnya.

From its side CNN claimed that the speech itself became a pinnacle of previous quite cordial personal relations between German Chancellor and Russian President and a very good knowledge of German language by the latter, which only added positive traits to the already positive image. The outlet also presumed that this move of Putin would have far-reaching consequences in German-Russian relations.

For Kaliningrad these developments were unequivocally positive: it was hoped that Germany would not only be able to increase its investments but also would be willing to undertake efforts aimed to mitigate effects of the would-be accession of Poland and Lithuania to the European Union. On the other hand, the Kremlin must have noticed some resentment from the side of Berlin of the “American dictate”, which could have influenced policies related to the NATO eastward expansion. Furthermore, the ad-hoc coalition that formed after initiation of American military operation in Iraq in 2003 profoundly influenced Russian understanding of Germany, its role in Europe and perception of the United States: the Russian side largely misconstrued German motives. In fact, reflecting about the future of German-Russian relation German political scientists and an apologist of strengthening Russo-German ties Alexandr Rar noted that German-

⁵⁶⁰Василий Сергеев, “Западная пресса о выступлении Путина в бундестаге,” *Газета.Ru*, 26.09.2001, available at: <http://www.gazeta.ru/2001/09/26/zapadnaapres.shtml>.

Russian relations could attain new heights only if they are not based on anti-American platform: after all Schroder needed not anti-American but pro-European Russia⁵⁶¹.

Apparently, German stance and perception of Russia were misread and profoundly misconstrued by the Kremlin that aspired to drive a wedge between so-called “old” and “new” Europe. In this regard, it would be worthwhile to once again note another distinctive element of the 750th anniversary of Kaliningrad/Konigsberg: namely, one could recall the overall stance and treatment of Poland and Lithuania (countries that are bind with Kaliningrad by a myriad of ties) that did not even receive official invitation, whereas leaders of France and Germany were welcomed with fanfare. Incidentally, this demarche of the Russian side was unwelcomed by both Chirac and Schroder – to a great displeasure and surprise of Moscow - and simultaneously a matter of profound vexation for smaller countries. Even though incomparable with Polish support of the Orange Revolution or Lithuanian criticism of Russian foreign policy this episode demonstrated how Kaliningrad could be used as an ideological weapon in Russian ideological frictions with its neighbors. On the other hand, Moscow was infuriated with developments that occurred in 2004 and the advent of the “NATO to Russian borders”, which effectively made Murmansk, Karelia as well as Leningrad and Pskov Oblasts to be directly bordered by NATO member-states. Undoubtedly, Kaliningrad that was physically separated from Russia not only with borders of sovereign countries but (after 1999 and 2004) the EU and NATO was deemed to be particularly endangered.

Aside from military and security-related factors it should be instrumental to explore yet another area of breakdown – ideological compound. The second half of the 2000th was marked by speedy raise of Alexander Dugin who used to occupy marginal positions in Russian intellectual community, yet with the advent of neo-Eurasian ideology (whose proponent was Russian Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov) would rapidly become a noticeable figure.

The concept of neo-Eurasianism signified gradual alienation of the Russian Federation from the “liberal” path of development. Permeated with strong nationalist and authoritarian Orthodox sentiments it provided an alternative vision of Russian historical

⁵⁶¹ Александр Рар, “Почему Шредеру нравится Россия,” *Полит.ру*, 18.08.2004, available at: <http://polit.ru/article/2004/08/18/rar/>.

mission. In this regard, the Soviet legacy somehow reconciled with the “pivot to the East” would be deemed as the only suitable alternative to the “European choice”⁵⁶².

It would not be an exaggeration to claim that by 2006 Dugin became fully integrated in Russian political establishment⁵⁶³. Moreover, in 2008 he was appointed as a Professor of Moscow State University and assumed a position of a supervisor of so-called Center for Conservative Studies.

The creeping advent of “conservatism” into Russian political dictionary meant stiffening of control over the westernmost Russian region, whereas growing tensions between Russia and its Euro-Atlantic partners put under immediate jeopardy numerous joint initiatives. On the other hand, resurgent Russia being able to capitalize on skyrocketing prices of energy resources could divert huge means to the purposes pertaining to the upgrading of its military capabilities and defensive strength. Under these circumstances Kaliningrad would be viewed as an effective deterrent.

February 2007 was marked by an event that came to be known as a “breeze of Cold War”⁵⁶⁴ – such was the effect of (in)famous speech pronounced by President Putin in Munich⁵⁶⁵. Within merely six years Russia had undergone profound evolution from a country that was (at least on declaratory level) ready to enter in a broad alliance with the West to a state openly challenging mono-polar global system dominated by the US and its allies. While contending that the Russian Federation is a powerful independent player with foreign policy of its own, Putin also stated that the mono-polar world had come to an end and ominously warned the West about dangerous repercussions of further eastward steps by NATO⁵⁶⁶. Furthermore, for the second time in the post-Soviet Russian history the issue of nuclear weapons on the territory of Kaliningrad Oblast would be tackled.

⁵⁶² Алексей Арбатов, “Угрозы реальные и мнимые: Военная сила в мировой политике начала XXI века,” Московский Центр Карнеги, 03.03.2013, available at: <http://carnegie.ru/publications/?fa=51160> .

⁵⁶³ Андреас Умланд, “Фашистские тенденции в русской политической элите. Подъём Международного Евразийского Движения,” *Переводика*, 22.05.2009, available at: <http://perevodika.ru/articles/11648.html> .

⁵⁶⁴ “About the MSC,” *Munich Security Conference (MSC)*, available at: <https://www.securityconference.de/en/about/munich-moments/a-breeze-of-cold-war/> .

⁵⁶⁵ “Выступление В. Путина на Мюнхенской конференции (2007г.),” *Youtube*, Published on Dec 19, 2011. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PkyjYKVYIWo>.

⁵⁶⁶ “Putin's Prepared Remarks at 43rd Munich Conference on Security Policy,” *The Washington post*, February 12, 2007, available at: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpdyn/content/article/2007/02/12/AR2007021200555.html> .

Namely, speaking about so-called Euro-AMS he hinted that Russia had weapons that could neutralize this system.

Assessing the results of the Munich speech illustrious Russian political scientist Sergey Karaganov (one of the main proponents of stiffening anti-American actions and one of chief architects of the so-called “pivot to the East”) succinctly defined the ensued reality as “Cold Peace”⁵⁶⁷. On the other hand, Dugin praised performance of the Russian president in Munich simultaneously underscoring influence of his geopolitical concepts on Putin`s speech⁵⁶⁸.

12.1.3 The “cold peace” and its impact on Kaliningrad (2008 - 2010)

The year 2008 incurred a profound impact on the state of relations between the Russian Federation and its European and North American partners simultaneously changing the course of development of Kaliningrad Oblast in a drastic manner as well. In this regard, three aspects should be highlighted:

1. The Bucharest Summit of NATO that commenced in April 2008 that discussed potential accession of Ukraine and Georgia to NATO;

2. The “Five-day war”⁵⁶⁹ (the Russo-Georgian military conflict) in August 2008 that became a loud manifestation of Russian “sphere-of-influence” approach in the post Soviet area. This event also explicitly demonstrated Kremlin`s readiness to employ all means and tools available in order to forestall any activities of NATO on the territory of the former Soviet Union deemed to be adverse by the Russian side. Moreover, it paved the

⁵⁶⁷Сергей Караганов, “Караганов: Путин констатировал начало “холодного мира”,” *Национальный исследовательский университет Высшая школа экономики*, 02.03.2007, available at: <https://www.hse.ru/news/1163627/1141361.html>.

⁵⁶⁸Александр Дугин, “Эхо «мюнхенской речи»,” *Евразия*, 10.02.2014, available at: <http://evrazia.org/article/22>.

⁵⁶⁹Charles King, “The Five-Day War,” *Foreignaffairs*, November/December 2008 Issue, available at: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russia-fsu/2008-11-01/five-day-war>.

way toward appearance of the so-called “Medvedev Doctrine”⁵⁷⁰ that signified emergence of a solid foreign policy concept that would be later developed by the Kremlin.

3. Inception of the “Iskander Diplomacy”⁵⁷¹ – an act that manifested profound alteration of actions of Moscow against NATO-led/inspired actions in Poland and the Czech Republic as well as readiness to employ Kaliningrad as a bastion against such actions.

The year 2008 confirmed the rumors that had been actively circulated in both domestic and foreign mass media since 2007. In November 2008 during his address to the State Council Russian President Dmitry Medvedev (elected in 2008) stated that tactical nuclear missiles might be deployed on the territory of Kaliningrad Oblast in case anti-missile systems were to be stationed in the aforementioned countries⁵⁷².

As a means of response, the Russian side identified its readiness to deploy the 9K720 „Iskander” missile complexes (first publicly displayed in 1999 and subsequently put into operation in 2006) on the territory of Kaliningrad Oblast. This formidable weapon (that has a capacity of carrying missiles with nuclear war heads) with a killing range close to 500 kilometers (so-called “Iskander-M” that was designed specifically for the Russian Armed forces and cannot be sold abroad) is said to be invincible for all types of contemporary anti-missile defense equipment thus being able drastically change status quo in the Baltic Sea Region⁵⁷³.

The statement of the Russian President was met with a fair share of alarm not only within Western intellectual milieu – signs of uncertainty regarding such a gesture were expressed even locally. For instance, the former mayor of Kaliningrad Yurii Savenko stated that this step could result in a partial return to the situation of pre-1991 when Kaliningrad Oblast was closed to foreign visitors, which in contemporary times could

⁵⁷⁰“Доктрина Медведева,” *Взгляд*, 15.07.2008, available at: <http://vz.ru/politics/2008/7/15/187046.html>.

⁵⁷¹ Sergey Sukhankin, “Kaliningrad Oblast and Challenges to the Baltic Sea Region,” *Council for European Studies (CES)*, December 6, 2017. Available at: <https://www.europenowjournal.org/2017/12/05/kaliningrad-oblast-and-challenges-to-the-baltic-sea-region/>.

⁵⁷² ““Искандеры” и туризм, мягко говоря, друг друга не дополняют”: обзор калининградских СМИ,” *REGNUM*, 9.11.2008, available at: <https://regnum.ru/news/polit/1080794.html>.

⁵⁷³ Антон Иванов, “Ужас по имени «Искандер»,” *ВПК.name*, 18.03.2015, available at: http://vpk.name/news/128495_uzhas_po_imeni_iskander.html.

endanger local tourist and recreation potential⁵⁷⁴. However, this opinion did not reflect the overall tone in sentiments present both locally and in Moscow. Nonetheless, this signified a new dangerous development and a reality that was to be somehow reconciled with: Moscow was ready to use Kaliningrad as a pawn in its confrontation with the West, which also implied a possibility of both intensification of militarization processes and using the “missile card” as one of the main leverages in negotiations on topics deemed crucial for the Russian side. On the other hand, at this point it appeared that Moscow did not want to be the first one to break the balance: it intended to use Kaliningrad in the aforementioned capacity as a reaction to American activities in Poland and the Czech Republic. This became visible after a statement by Sergey Ivanov who claimed that the Russian Federation would follow the suit and deploy “Iskander-M” missiles in Kaliningrad Oblast if the US would make the first move⁵⁷⁵, whereby by and large reiterating previous statement made by Medvedev.

Here however a crucial distinction should be made: if hypothetical speculations about deployment of Russian missiles on the territory of the oblast were meant to dissuade the West from undertaking a military buildup in the region, than such activities as upgrading military capabilities of the enclave/exclave turned out to be rather palpable and was not based on any immediate needs or threats emanating from opposing party.

Within September 8 – 29, 2009 Kaliningrad Oblast (jointly with Belarus) was hosting the largest war games since the Soviet period – “Zapad-2009” (attended by President Medvedev). According to official data the exercises involved 12.500 men, 30 battleships, 30 fighting jets and helicopters, 30 tanks, 100 armored vehicles and 40 self-propelled guns⁵⁷⁶. The most alarming distinctive feature of the games was its legend according to which Russian troops were to fight “certain forces” that had encroached beyond the territory of Lithuania, which meant that a scenario of Russo-Lithuanian military conflict was being tested. Furthermore, “Zapad-2009” exercises assembled forces of three fleets: the Baltic, the Northern and the Black Sea.

⁵⁷⁴ Степан Городов, “На ПРО США Россия ответила 'Искандером',” *ИноСМИ.RU*, 17.11.2008, available at: <http://inosmi.ru/world/20081117/245400.html> .

⁵⁷⁵ “Иванов: “Искандеров” в Калининграде не будет, если не будет ПРО в Европе,” *Грани.Ру*, available at: <http://graniru.org/Politics/Russia/m.147301.html>.

⁵⁷⁶ “Оперативно-стратегические учения «Запад-2009»,” *Официальные сетевые ресурсы Президента России*, 28.09.2009, available at: <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/5598>.

The next year (2010) brought new developments in and fictitious tendencies that once again demonstrated the role of Kaliningrad in Russian security-related schemes. These tendencies could be summed up in the following way:

1. Accretion of military potential. In the year 2010 Western Military District (WMD) was formed via the merger of Moscow and Leningrad Military Districts⁵⁷⁷.

According to the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation the cumulative number of troops is as high as 400.000 men which constitute roughly 40 percent of the overall number of Russian troops. Furthermore, the newly created district had in its possession three most powerful Russian naval bases – in Murmansk, Kronstadt and Baltiysk. On the other hand, it was stated that the WMD was to additionally receive a number of battle submarines capable to carry nuclear weapons which signified an attempt to increase nuclear potential of North-Western flank of the Russian Federation.

Needless to say, that speedy development of military potential became one of the most visible concerns of Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Sweden, Finland and even Denmark – these countries would be the first and perhaps most affected ones in case of military confrontation. Moreover, the aforementioned countries were largely annoyed with incessant flights above their territories carried out by Russian aviation since the year 2007. Incidentally, during such raids Russian fighting jets would on numerous occasions “accidentally” encroach beyond air spaces of the countries concerned.

2. Continuing discussion about nuclear missiles in Kaliningrad. In spite of the fact that the new START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) was signed by Medvedev and President of the United States Barack Obama in April 2010 the issue of missiles in Kaliningrad did not fully disappear. In fact, this year ushered in a new lap of the debate pertaining to this highly sensitive topic. In the summer of the same year “Iskander” missiles were deployed in Leningrad Oblast (close to Estonian national border)⁵⁷⁸,

⁵⁷⁷ “Указ Президента Российской Федерации от 20.09.2010 г. № 1144,” *Официальные сетевые ресурсы Президента России*, available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/31761>.

⁵⁷⁸ Николай Донсков, “Империя готовит ответный удар,” *Новая газета*, 19.12.2011, available at: <http://www.novayagazeta.ru/comments/50162.html>; <http://www.rbc.ru/politics/17/07/2010/437297.shtml>.

whereas talks about an acute necessity to transfer this monstrous weapon to Kaliningrad gained additional impetus⁵⁷⁹.

In the final analysis it ought to be noted that by the year 2010 due to the accelerated and rather vigorous militarization campaign supplemented by growing discord between Moscow and its Euro-Atlantic partners Kaliningrad had acquired certain traits and qualities of its pre-1991 development. Its outstanding geopolitical location would be chiefly used for security-related tasks, whereby reiterating certain aspects that stipulated its development within 1945 – 1990. Undoubtedly, such a mode of operation has had profound influence on the local economy and other spheres of public life. On the other hand, this way of development did in many ways alienate Kaliningrad from its geographical neighbors and natural economic partners. Nevertheless, as it turned for Moscow - disgruntled with the West and aspiring to build geopolitical projects of its own - Kaliningrad would be primarily deemed as a “fort-post” (not necessarily military, at least at this point of local historical development) yet not a bridge between two civilizations as it was once deemed to become⁵⁸⁰.

12.2. Kaliningrad and the “tangerine spring”: time for changes or time to change?

Events that occurred in Kaliningrad Oblast within October 2009 – March 2010 produced a huge resonance well beyond the region itself. Aside from the fact that the westernmost Russian region had never been construed as a one with high protest potential it was the nature of discontent that came as a genuine shock for the ruling elites in Moscow. In spite of acuteness of the topic, it has not received adequate coverage by neither Russian nor external experts and scientists. Perhaps, the issue has been most thoroughly addressed by Karine Clément⁵⁸¹ - a research paper that managed to reconcile both theoretical and practical aspects of the movement whereby presenting a solid basis for future research.

⁵⁷⁹ “Россия не исключает возможности появления «Искандеров» в Калининграде,” *Новый Калининград*, 19.02.2010, available at: <https://www.newkaliningrad.ru/news/politics/1030597-rossiya-ne-isklyuchaet-vozmozhnosti-poyavleniya-quotiskanderovquot-v-kaliningrade-.html>

⁵⁸⁰ Sergey Sukhankin, “The Baltic Sea Region: A New ‘Powder Keg?’”, *EDM, Jamestown*, 09.05.2016. <https://jamestown.org/program/the-baltic-sea-region-a-new-powder-keg/>.

⁵⁸¹ Clément, K., “From “local” to “political”: The Kaliningrad Mass Protest Movement of 2009–2010 in Russia,” in *Urban Movements and Grassroots Activism in Central and Eastern Europe* (Taylor & Francis, 2015), 163-194.

Aside from this it would be valuable to recall an analysis jointly written by Jadwiga Rogoża, Iwona Wiśniewska and Agata Wierzbowska-Miazga,⁵⁸² which however tackled the issue only in the context of other regional developments. The topic was also briefly mentioned in works of Richard Sakwa⁵⁸³ in a context of reflections about the vicissitudes of the Russian opposition movement as well as Alfred Evans Jr.⁵⁸⁴ who used protests in the westernmost Russian region in order to exemplify the fates of Russian opposition movement in “Putin’s Russia”. In this juncture it should be noted that topic has been clearly understudied and did not receive commensurate attention from the side of Russian intellectuals, which however may have stemmed from acuteness of the topic and strengthening of state’s control over independent research.

It needs to be highlighted that the framework of current Doctoral research does aim to extensively cover this topic. Rather, it appears to be more prudent to merely tackle crucial details pertaining to the above-mentioned phenomenon, whereby integrating results of analysis into the line of the research question identified in the initial segment of current PhD. Namely, it ought to be deemed critical to ascertain the link between mass street protests that struck Kaliningrad within relatively brief and rather intermittent interim (from October 2009 to March/October 2010) and their impact on various aspects of local development. Moreover, one should be able to recognize the fact that these signs of public unrest simultaneously appeared to be a “maturity test” that was supposed to exhibit general direction of transformations experienced by post-Soviet Kaliningrad Oblast and its population.

Reflecting about so-called “tangerine spring” it should be highlighted that the main causes of ensued public protests were based on two major pillars: results of the global financial crisis that struck Kaliningrad in 2008 and excessively authoritarian style of governance assumed by the local governor Boos who tried to deal with mounting economic problems through stiffening his grip over local business and most vital economic areas that secured well-being of significant portion of local population.

⁵⁸²Jadwiga RogożaAgata Wierzbowska-MiazgaIwona Wiśniewska, “A captive island: Kaliningrad between Moscow and the EU,” *OSW STUDIES*, 25.07.2017. Available at: <https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/osw-studies/2012-07-25/a-captive-island-kaliningrad-between-moscow-and-eu>.

⁵⁸³ Richard Sakwa, “Whatever Happened to the Russian Opposition?” *Russia and Eurasia Programme*, Chatham House, May 2014, available at: https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/field/field_document/20140523SakwaFinal.pdf.

⁵⁸⁴ Alfred Evans Jr., “Protests under a Semi-Authoritarian Regime in Russia,” *California State University*, April 1, 2011.

Moreover, trying to safe positive balance of the budget the governor pursued some kind of “austerity policy” cutting various social benefits and privileges previously enjoyed by local car dealers. This however did not yield desirable results leading to even greater economic losses, skyrocketing prices for utilities and other commodities. Nevertheless, the most unexpected and thus particularly loathed became the decision of the local administration to end tax advantages for the importing of used cars from Europe.

This was met with particular sense of rejection taking into consideration privileges and benefits enjoyed by other republics (especially Chechnya and Dagestan). This spurred emergence of the “movement of car drivers” that would soon acquire considerable popularity. The main tactics boiled down to regular rallies in the vicinity of customs posts, blocking federal highways, initiation of massive petition and picketing campaigns.

Furthermore, initial stage of the protest movement was spurred by growing frustration from the side of doctors, medical personnel and patients of the so-called Fishermen’s Hospital (Medical Unit No. 1, previously reserved for employees of the fishing industry) which was expected to be shut down. The campaign transformed from a very limited one into one of the most well-known among the locals primarily due to the fact that the issue of public health and expenditures for this purpose had for years been one of the most acute aspects of local development. It such the “hospital affair” itself would soon be largely eclipsed by matters pertaining to the healthcare budget, quality of medical services and general availability of qualified medicine in Kaliningrad. The matter was further aggravated with the local civilian air company KD Avia which was expected to be closed down thus breaking the promise of available air communication with the rest of Russia and European countries.

Incidentally, at this point the public discontent could be summarized in the following slogan: “Putin is responsible for Boos!”

However, later on with protests assembling more and more people (approximately 15.000 protesters took part at the hay-day of public discontent)⁵⁸⁵ presenting various paths of political affiliations (from Communists and Liberal Democrats to “Solidarity”, “Yabloko” and the biker movement) the protests proved to be of greater and much more

⁵⁸⁵Ярослав Загорец, “Одноразовая дубина,” *Lenta.ru*, 01.02.2010, available at: <https://lenta.ru/articles/2010/02/01/meeting/>.

complex nature than might have seemed from the first glance. Incidentally, *Ilya Yashin* (social activist, representative of Russian liberal opposition and one of the main leaders of political party RPR-PARNAS) rushed into comparing leader of Kaliningrad protests Konstantin Doroshek with *Lech Wałęsa* and naming Kaliningrad as “Russian Gdansk”⁵⁸⁶. The allusion was meant to underscore alleged similarity between events in Kaliningrad and the protest movement in the Polish city in the beginning of 1980s which gave a way to creation of anti-Communist platform known as “Solidarity” movement (“Solidarność”) that was destined to dismantle the Communist dictatorship in Poland and introduce democracy and pursuit toward European future.

As a result of growing anti-governmental moods (during the final stage of protests the overall moods were markedly pointed not only against G. Boos, yet also accused the “United Russia Political Party” and even Vladimir Putin for having imposed a “foreigner” to Kaliningrad⁵⁸⁷) Putin decided not to prolong tenure of Boos and relive him from duties.

This news was largely welcomed by liberally-oriented Russian community. For instance, Russian liberal politician *Boris Nemtsov* (assassinated on 27 February, 2015) stated that the very fact that “Boos was removed is a victory of democracy”⁵⁸⁸, which would be once again reiterated by I.Yashin.

Nonetheless, as impressive as the image of public protests might have appeared from a cursory glance, it was the abrupt finalization of the action of civil disobedience that signified a huge gap between local community and Europeans. In effect, it took Moscow very little (returning Boos to the capital, rejection of previously introduced cuts on local privileges and a promise of a new portion of subsidies) to extinguish the rebellious spark. As it turned out, the essence of protests was mainly related to economic claims, whereas political demands were nothing more than a “folding screen” and an instrument meant to attract attention of the centre: once the former were satisfied – the letter would be dropped completely. Interestingly enough, yet very similar strategies

⁵⁸⁶Илья Яшин. “Калининград - протестная столица, русский Гданьск,” Livejournal, 30.01.2010, <http://yashin.livejournal.com/871744.html>

⁵⁸⁷Sergey Sukhankin, “The ‘Prussian Curse’ on Kaliningrad Governors Remains Unbroken,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Volume: 13 Issue: 155, (September 27, 2016), Jamestown, <https://jamestown.org/program/the-prussian-curse-on-kaliningrad-governors-remains-unbroken/>.

⁵⁸⁸Михаил Соколов, “Что означает конец губернаторской карьеры Георгия Бооса? Отступает ли Кремль под напором народного недовольства? Дискутируют депутат Калининградской областной думы Соломон Гинзбург, член Политсовета партии "Правое дело" Борис Надеждин, историк и публицист Дмитрий Шушарин,” *Радио Свобода*, 17.08.2010, available at: <http://www.svoboda.org/content/transcript/2130824.html>.

(such as manipulations with history and geopolitical location) that used to be employed by the local authorities within the Soviet period as a justification for more subsidies will be used by local actors in the course of post-Soviet development of Kaliningrad. Unfortunately, this partial retreat to previously established historical patterns of development was a sound reiteration of numerous flaws that did not allow Kaliningrad to undertake a decisive leap toward progress and breaking up with Soviet traditions. On the other hand, public discontent drastically altered Kremlin`s stance on Kaliningrad. The fact that the westernmost Russian region (that even during the tumultuous 1990s did not express visible signs of secessionism) was capable of quite drastic anti-governmental actions convinced Moscow that the grip over the region was to be tightened in order to forestall similar actions in the future.

12.3. Kaliningrad as an emerging “ideological battlefield” between Russia and the West

Perhaps, the most salient example of flawed and largely incomplete departure of Kaliningrad Oblast away from patterns established by Soviet Union to a totally new framework was visible in the light of growing ideological discord between Russia and the West, where Kaliningrad turned out to be one of the main “battlefields”. Speaking in retrospect, it would be worthwhile to mention that the most active phase of this ideological conflict came about in the year 2013 and its aftermath⁵⁸⁹, which however does not mean that tendencies that would lead to this discouraging outcome were not evident previously.

In effect, the screech-own of approaching ideological debacle came about in the form of so-called “creeping Germanization” of Kaliningrad Oblast. In spite of generally good relations between the FRG and the Russian Federation after advent of Vladimir Putin certain conservative and nationalist groups within Russian political milieu still harbored fears related to alleged existence of irredentist moods in German society. This belief received additional impetus when in November 2004 Udo Voigt (a German

⁵⁸⁹“Почему в Калининграде социолог Анна Алимпиева испугалась журналистов?” *Vesti Kaliningrad*, 29.11.2017, <http://vesti-kaliningrad.ru/pochemu-v-kaliningrade-sociolog-anna-alimpieva-ispugalas-zhurnalistov/>; “Смотрите прямо сейчас! Фильм-расследование «Кёнигсберг — Вывих»,” *Vesti Kaliningrad*, 30.03.2017, <http://vesti-kaliningrad.ru/kyonigsberg-vyvix/>.

politician for the far-right National Democratic Party of Germany) and additional 71 MP's initiated a piece of legislation that questioned rightfulness of status of Kaliningrad Oblast as a Russian region. Instead, German nationalists proposed to create a new Euroregion "Prussia" on the territory of the oblast (that should have held a popular referendum on accession to Germany).

The Russian side was particularly alarmed with the following statement that pertained to Kaliningrad: "The question on return of Kaliningrad Oblast to Germany has been a matter of protracted discussions in governmental circles of the FRG. This is our historical territory. This is a unique territory which is dilapidating because of the local government. Such legacy of German science – as was I. Kant – was left on the territory of the oblast. His house is a state of dilapidation. The city itself contains ruins of hundreds of architectural sites which are not being dealt with"⁵⁹⁰.

In this regard, it was the matter of restoration of the Royal Castle that became a turning point in a campaign against alleged "Germanization" of Kaliningrad. The campaign was initiated as a response to initiative put forth by the local governor G. Boos to conduct a public referendum on the issue of reconstruction of the Royal Castle which was voiced for the first time in 2009⁵⁹¹. As a response to this "threat" a movement against "Germanization of the region"⁵⁹² was initiated – it was created under the umbrella of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation and was initiated on June 22, 2009 (the day when the Nazi Germany attacked the USSR, whereby breaching the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939). Leader of the local Communists Igor Revin during the meeting stated the following: "Yesterday, on June 22 on the day of our national memory and grief we decided to launch a movement against Germanization of Kaliningrad Oblast. We are perplexed with statements of certain local functionaries about renaming of Kaliningrad into Konigsberg and renaming of certain streets... and of course reconstruction of the

⁵⁹⁰«Пруссия наша!»: в Бундестаге хотят провести в Калининграде референдум о выходе из РФ," *Joinfo*, 01.04.2015, available at: http://joinfo.ua/politic/1081431_Prussiya-nasha-Bundestage-hotyat-provesti.html.

⁵⁹¹Кирилл Синьковский, "В Калининграде спорят о восстановлении прусского замка," *BBC Русская служба*, 30.09.2015, available at: http://www.bbc.com/russian/russia/2015/09/150929_kaliningrad_castle.

⁵⁹²"Коммунисты поднимают калининградцев на борьбу против германизации области," КПРФ, 24.06.2009, <https://kprf.ru/actions/68157.html>.

Royal Castle”. Revin also defined the latter idea as “stupidity” stating that it “would be better to build additional 50 kindergartens instead of a Prussian Castle”⁵⁹³.

Interestingly enough, but the local “vigilantes” spotted a sign of “Gemannization” even in a brand of the new cognac named “The Teutonic Order”⁵⁹⁴, which was vehemently opposed by various forces ranging from the Communist to local intellectuals.

Even though the majority of local intellectuals straightforwardly dismissed the danger of “Germnaization” of Kaliningrad pointing out its artificial nature and referring to statistical data on ethnic composition of the oblast⁵⁹⁵, it seemed that topics related to local separatism was rapidly becoming a taboo thus identifying deeply flawed nature of actions conducted by Moscow in the course of coping with other, much more relevant issues⁵⁹⁶. Undoubtedly, for the Kremlin that had started a policy of “assembling of Russian lands” domestic separatism (or even an image of it) appeared to be a matter of great inconsistency and even embarrassment. Nonetheless, an attempt to somehow replace the issue of “separatism” with such a notion as “special identity” did not work out instantly. On the other hand, measures taken against “Germanization” underscored an extremely complex and largely disturbing trend: the future of Kaliningrad Oblast as bridge between Europe and Russia was largely doomed to failure. Secondly, a broad alliance that assembled various forces ranging from military to the ROC and the Communists was eager to turn Kaliningrad into a closed bastion and a stronghold of Russian on the Baltic using the pre-text of alleged “Germanization” as a scarecrow⁵⁹⁷ thus once again reiterating arguments present by certain interest groups during the Soviet sway over the region.

⁵⁹³“В Калининградской области создано движение против германизации региона,” Klops.ru, 23.06.2009, available at: <https://klops.ru/news/obschestvo/11258-v-kaliningradskoy-oblasti-sozdano-dvizhenie-protiv-germanizatsii-regiona>.

⁵⁹⁴“Калининградцев онемечивают коньяком,” *Известия*, 11.08.2009, available at: <http://izvestia.ru/news/351761>.

⁵⁹⁵ “Угроза "двойной периферии",” *Время новостей*, 18.01.2010, available at: <http://www.vremya.ru/2010/5/4/245478.html>.

⁵⁹⁶ Василий Щипков, “Калининградский регионализм как ресурс политического протеста,” *Religare*, 24.06.2016, available at: http://www.religare.ru/2_109272.html.

⁵⁹⁷ Александр Рябушев, “Тильзитский мир Георгия Бооса,” *Независимая газета*, 25.03.2010, available at: http://www.ng.ru/regions/2010-03-25/1_tilzit.html?mthree=9.

Conclusions

The interim that started in the end of 2009 and came to its conclusion in 2010 brought about remarkable developments that opened up a new chapter in the history of Russian “island” in Europe. The tempest of public wrath that swiped away the governor handpicked by the Kremlin might be seen as a logical conclusion of one and birth of another cycle in the arduous journey undertaken by Kaliningrad and its population in distant 1945. Transformations that were launched in the aftermath of 2010, resulted in Kaliningrad partly (re)turning back to the mission it was granted at the time of transition from East Prussia to a part of the Soviet Union. Now it seems rather clear that the year 2010 was destined to become this pivotal watershed that bid the final farewell to the idea of Kaliningrad becoming the “Baltic Hong Kong”, a “corridor of development” or a “pilot project” connecting Europe with Russia simultaneously becoming a testing ground for new patterns of dialogue and cooperation, and bringing economic prosperity to its citizens.

In effect, mass public protests did in many ways underscore the fact that previously established mechanism of dealing with Kaliningrad (1991 - 2009) pursued by Moscow no longer corresponded to the bulk of mounting challenges that the region was facing. On the other hand, Russia’s changing self-perception (and vision of the future world architecture) has had a dramatic effect on development of the westernmost region. Both the global financial crisis (2008) and souring relations with the West, where the US plans on the deployment of the anti-missile components to the East-Central Europe posed an existential question: what Kaliningrad is and how its potential should be used in the future. It was rather clear that the task of transforming the oblast into economically vibrant entity suffered a defeat, whereas enlargement of the EU and NATO to some extent did cut off the oblast from the mainland. This triggered a set of debates in Russian political leadership, where the main theme boiled down to a perpetual Russian dilemma between who is responsible⁵⁹⁸ and what is to be done?⁵⁹⁹

⁵⁹⁸ Александр Герцен, *Кто виноват?*, (Москва: ОГИЗ Гослитиздат, 1948).

⁵⁹⁹ Пётр Николаев, “Революционный роман,” In Николай Чернышевский, *Что делать?*, (Москва: Художественная литература, 1985), 5-23.

Partly, the high level of current uncertainty related to Kaliningrad is hardly separable from its historic “curse” that is traceable to the early post-1945, when Kaliningrad remained frequently evaded topic. The lead was picked up by Russian political leadership after the collapse of the USSR as well. Apparently, it was much easier to obfuscate, neglect or simply hush down issues related to this – in many ways foreign – part of the USSR/Russian Federation rather than conduct decisive actions. Yet it may also be mentioned that on numerous occasions the West followed the suit staying away from this rather acute subject (this of course rested on a number of factors, among which probably the most important one was the lack of desire to trigger Russian discontent). If one concurs with Churchill’s definition of Russia a “riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma”⁶⁰⁰ than Kaliningrad Oblast appears to be even more complicated a phenomenon.

Indeed, reflecting upon key chapters of local historical development, crucial and in many ways genuinely sweeping transformations experienced by the oblast within relatively brief historical interim one should be able to recognize that this story was neither an easy nor a trivial one. This path has been filled with contradictions⁶⁰¹, complete change of local sociological portrait (re-settlement of the Germans and emergence of the new Kaliningraders⁶⁰²), barbaric destruction of local historical-cultural legacy as well as unwitting attempts to erase certain pages of local history that did not fit into the Soviet dialectics. But at the same time, it might seem rather ironic that neither the advent, nor the departure of the Soviet regime was not destined to result in a drastic change of historical mission of Kaliningrad. On the contrary, Königsberg that had been widely blamed by the Soviet propaganda for being a perpetual source of anti-Slavic aggression posed by “German militarism” was destined to play a role of the military bulwark now pointed against the West after 1945 with scopes of militarization exceeding those of the antecedent period. In many ways, it was massive militarization coupled with virtual physical isolation and artificially erected ideological fence that hedged Kaliningrad from its neighbors and thereby profoundly affecting its model of development for decades to

⁶⁰⁰ For more information see: Winston Churchill, „The Russian Enigma,” *The Churchill Society London*, Broadcast, 1st October 1939. Available at: <http://www.churchill-society-london.org.uk/RusnEnig.html>.

⁶⁰¹ Екатерина Манюк, “Советское градостроительство в бывшей Восточной Пруссии (Калининград и Клайпеда в 1945 – 1950-е гг.)” (PhD diss., Балтийский федеральный университет имени И. Канта 2015).

⁶⁰² Among first settlers were the author’s grandparents who travelled from Russian rear to Königsberg to start their lives from scratch.

come. Aside from disfigurement of patterns of local economy and incurring substantial damage to the regional ecology this path created so-called “Kaliningrad Identity” that became a peculiar combination of Soviet ideology and various regional traits.

This being said, it should be mentioned that many researchers and scientists are still wondering how did Kaliningrad that was situated in the westernmost part of the USSR refuse to follow the path of its geographic neighbors (or other examples of “success stories” that could be met well beyond the European continent). In spite of drastic and in many respects fateful events occurring in Poland and Lithuania, Kaliningrad Oblast failed to undergo somewhat similar transformation. What is however even more remarkable is that Moscow facing a viable prospect of dissolution of the Russian Federation and near economic collapse refused to slacken its grip over Kaliningrad, whereby reiterating its long-lasting strategic interest in the Baltic Sea Region and instrument role of the oblast in it. In greater sense, it would be appropriate to suggest that Kaliningrad did become a reflection of Russian general posture in regional affairs and a much-discussed topic of regionalism⁶⁰³. The breath of changes for Kaliningrad that loomed in the beginning of Vladimir Putin’s first presidency was largely misconstrued by both domestic liberals and external experts and politicians.

In this regard, it would be worthwhile to provide succinct remarks that are to address questions posed in the very beginning of this Doctoral thesis, at the same time adding some new aspects that have arisen in scopes of relevant research activities.

First, *Kaliningrad remains strategically important to Moscow. Its value has not been undermined neither by geopolitical shocks, nor economic hardships.*

Indeed, transformations brought about by the collapse by the USSR produced a major geopolitical earthquake, consequences of which are still affecting international politics. Taking closer look at historical experience of centralized Russian state, it would be possible to recall three major shocks: the Time of Troubles (1589 – 1613/18), the collapse of the Romanov Empire and ensued Civil War (1917 - 1923), and the collapse of the USSR (1991). Curiously, the loss of previous positions (military, economy, territory) did not persuade Russia to abandon its aspirations and accept the role of a second-rate power. The best recent proof of this thesis – the Yeltsin’s Russia (1991 –

⁶⁰³ Sergey Sukhankin, “Russian Regionalism in Action: The Case of the Northwestern Federal District,” *Journal of Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies*, No. 1, Columbia University Press (2018) (forthcoming).

1999) – ended up with the comeback of neo-imperial sentiments that were already visible from 1996 onward and were tightly related to the personality of Primakov.

Instrumentally important at this juncture was the Baltic Sea region. Initially deemed to be an area of cooperation and dialogue, it deteriorated into a zone of confrontation: initially, ideological and later to be supplemented by the unravelling militarization. It has to be noted that this region entered the orbit of interests of Russian imperial expansionism in the last quarter of the 16th century and this course has been largely preserved until nowadays.

There is little doubt that tools and means that could be (and are in fact) employed by Moscow in the course of pursuing of its regional goals and strategies especially after the year 2000 vary greatly: numerous Russian-speaking Diaspora primarily residing in Latvia and Estonia⁶⁰⁴ secure effective activities of the “Russian World” ideology, whereas visible economic ties and dependency of these countries (including Lithuania) on Russian natural resources provided Moscow with another powerful fulcrum.

Nonetheless, since these sovereign countries are members of both the EU and NATO and their political leadership do not share vision of Moscow on many crucial issues the range of activities that could be employed by the Kremlin is rather limited. In practical terms this means that it is Kaliningrad Oblast – an integral part of the Russian Federation, populated by ethnic Russians – that remains one of very few (if not the only) fort-posts whose importance has grown considerably after the forfeiture of other territories. In effect, this status has been reiterated by different Russian top-rank officials within various periods and on numerous occasions. This became especially visible after the change of paradigms in the realm of foreign policy that took a concrete shape after the departure of Russian Foreign Ministry Andrey Kozyrev (who was known as one of the main proponents of Liberal Institutionalism) and his replacement by a political heavyweight Primakov who was a known stalwart of Eurasionism (in its contemporary form)⁶⁰⁵ primarily concerned with maintaining of Russian national interests and proliferation of contacts with Beijing and New Delhi as a pivot of Russian foreign policy priorities.

⁶⁰⁴ Андрей Солопенко, “Русские Прибалтики – сколько их осталось и что с ними будет,” *NewsBalt*, 03.10.2013. Available at: <http://newsbalt.ru/analytics/2013/10/andrey-solopenko-russkie-pribaltiki/>; Мурадов Г. Л., Полоскова Т. В., Затулин К. Ф. и др. *Справочник российского соотечественника*, (М.: Русский мир, 2006. 2-е издание), 97-106.

⁶⁰⁵ Евгений Примаков, *Мир без России? К чему ведёт политическая близорукость*, (Москва: Российская газета, 2009).

Within this period, it became rather obvious (especially taking into account emerging confrontation between NATO and the Russian Federation) that Kaliningrad would not be easily allowed to receive more independency in actions. The second and perhaps even more vital pivot was associated with the advent of the “Russian World” ideology (later to be supplemented by an “ecclesiastical” compound that affected the essence of the concept to most profound extent possible) that would finally enable Vladimir Putin to openly state that “Russia national borders do not have limits.”⁶⁰⁶ These transformations had a profound impact on internal development of Kaliningrad and its perception by Moscow that was about to initiate a quest for “assembling of Russian lands”.⁶⁰⁷

Furthermore, stagnating relations between Russia and its Western counterparts that started from 2003 (being chiefly related to the outbreak of the US-led invasion in Iraq) and deteriorating to even a greater extent after 2007 (when Putin pronounced his “Munich Speech”) made Kaliningrad Oblast most optimal venue to provide an “adequate response” to those who disagreed with political course chosen by the Kremlin. This period witnessed emergence of “Iskander diplomacy” (this notion is explained in greater detail in the Third Part of this dissertation) where the oblast was allocated instrumental role. Even though the topic and chronological scopes of this PhD thesis do not encroach beyond the year 2010, it still needs to be mentioned that the outbreak of the Ukrainian crisis (November 2013) and ensued military hostilities on the Ukrainian Southeast that led to an almost complete breakdown of political ties between Russia and the West have once again re-iterated crucial geopolitical value of Kaliningrad in terms of Russian security-related initiatives effectively making the “island” a pawn and a matter of pressure in political standstill with the West.

This explicit turn away from Institutionalism and Liberal ideology toward traditions of Political Realism (which is quite commensurate with Russian political culture⁶⁰⁸) opens up a number of venues for further research and reflections on Kaliningrad from an angle that primarily rests on security-related aspects as well as pertinence to already existing “powder kegs” and “frozen conflicts” in the post-Soviet area. Second crucial aspect that so far has escaped attention of international intellectual

⁶⁰⁶ “В.В. Путин обозначил границы России - Границ у России нет!” *Youtube*, Nov 25, 2016.

Available at: <http://newsrbk.ru/news/3810336-putin-u-rossii-net-granic.html>

⁶⁰⁷ This notion was initially associated with foreign policy of first rulers of the Moscow Rus in their pursuit of political centralization in the 15th century.

⁶⁰⁸ Alexandra Denton, “Russian Political Culture Since 1985,” *Geohistory*, 20.10.2006. Available at: http://www.sras.org/russian_political_culture_since_1985.

community is pinned to the role of Kaliningrad in the Baltic Sea regional security through the lens of its implications for the Transatlantic ties especially taking into consideration the tendency in relations between Moscow and Western capitals.

Secondly, *patterns set by previous historical experience should be neither ignored, nor omitted while looking into future scenarios.*

Closer look at trajectory of development of Kaliningrad Oblast within 1945 – 2010 brings to light a number of regularities and commonalities. Namely, one could argue that the model rooted within the Soviet period was persevered after the year 1991 and during so-called “liberal experiment” and boomed after 2004.

Indeed, relative weakness of Federal Centre resulting from the collapse of the USSR and the ensued havoc might have given Kaliningrad a unique and to some extent historic change to change its trajectory of development. This however would have been a slippery road: the outcome could have led to the development of the model resembling Tatarstan that enjoys a broad range of privileges and great autonomy in comparison with other Russian regions; yet, one cannot rule out a possibility of the “Chechen scenario” (in any form), which could have led to genuinely dramatic consequences. Neither scenario materialized. Instead, Kaliningrad followed so-called “path dependency” option, which implied full (and as has been demonstrated, in many ways unconditional) reliance on protection and subsidies from the side of Moscow. In many respects, this was an effective continuation of the pre-1991 model.

Needless to say, this course was/is inseparable from the fact of physical separation of the oblast from the mainland. Undoubtedly, this factor should be seen as a key pillar in terms of the post-1991 Kaliningrad. The mixture of “isolationism”, security-related concerns and economic dependence on the centre – these distinctive features cultivated prior to the year 1991, transpired into the post-Communist Russia and have now been profoundly strengthened with the outbreak of the ideological confrontation between the West and the Russian Federation.

Thirdly, *sustainable growth cannot be guaranteed by subsidies, privileges, and economic “life support” initiatives.*

One of the largest mistakes committed by the Kremlin in a desire to eliminate numerous economic difficulties and limitations faced by Kaliningrad Oblast found its

reflection in the new edition of Special Economic Zone (2006) that was to boost local economy and provide the new governor with necessary financial resources⁶⁰⁹. The final outcome was a constellation of contradictions. On the one hand, if tackled on a separate basis Kaliningrad economy did relatively well. However, if experience of geographic neighbors (especially a Lithuanian town-port Klaipeda) is to be taken into consideration, successfulness of results should be deemed as total failure. Moreover, the growing bulk of financial aid and simplification of custom/tax regulations were fully discredited by the advent of the global financial crisis that exposed this model to the new challenge (incidentally, Polish economy overcame the crisis easily).

This aspect of historical development of Kaliningrad after 1991 explicitly shows that in the age of market economy (even the Peoples Republic of China is frequently seen as a “Socialism with a capitalist face”⁶¹⁰) artificial protection of unprofitable and ill-conceived projects bring nothing but greater expenditures from the side of Federal Centre simultaneously crippling local economy making it profoundly much more brittle to external shocks and challenges posed by globalization⁶¹¹.

In fact, acute fear of competition and a powerful drive toward collectivism nurtured by the Soviet ideology have become one of the most acute and severe challenges faced by Kaliningrad in terms of economic development (stepping well beyond this domain as such).

Fourthly, Kaliningrad has failed to become a “bridge” between the EU and the Russian Federation.

The year 2007, and ensued campaign on militarization of the oblast dispelled numerous beliefs associated with the idea of ultimate transformation of the oblast into some version of a “bridge” via which communication and dialogue between two parties could have been established. Nonetheless, it would not be entirely correct to put the entire brunt of responsibility for this failure on souring of relations between Russia and the West. Namely, the period of alleged stabilization on political relations between two

⁶⁰⁹ Sergey Sukhankin, “Special no more: Kaliningrad on life support,” *ECFR*, Wider Europe, 07.11.2016. Available at:

http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_special_no_more_kaliningrad_on_life_support_7169.

⁶¹⁰ More on this: Цзян Цзэминь, *О социализме с китайской спецификой*, Том 2, (М., ИД «Памятники исторической мысли», 2004); Вадим Росман, “Китайский капитализм,” *Вестник Европы*, 12.2004. Available at: <http://magazines.russ.ru/vestnik/2004/12/ro7.html>.

⁶¹¹ Sergey Sukhankin, “Kaliningrad: Russia’s stagnant enclave,” *ECFR*, Wider Europe, 31.03.2016. Available at: http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_kaliningrad_russias_stagnant_enclave_6052.

parties also failed to integrate Kaliningrad into the “Baltic Sea Rim”. In this juncture, one might be inclined to presume that the reconciliatory rhetoric (and even emergence of some joint projects/initiatives) may have been dictated by the desire of both parties to preserve the atmosphere of cooperation and avoid inevitable bottlenecks that might have been caused by tackling of such an acute topic as Kaliningrad Oblast. Regretfully, one might presume that this discouraging outcome was rather predictable: Russia’s grand strategy related to security-related issues and geopolitical calculations has for a very long time perceived so-called “national outskirts” (especially, in the North-Western part) as a source of perpetual danger and jeopardy⁶¹² – not an area of cooperation. The post-1991 period was also not destined to become an exception: following its pre-1991 historical path Kaliningrad has been turned into Russia’s “militarized bastion”, having transformed after 2016 into an Anti-Access/Area-Denial “bubble”⁶¹³.

Fifthly, *Kaliningrad has undergone a profound transformation from periphery but the “avant-garde”.*

Initial exhilaration over the collapse of Communism on Central and Eastern Europe that bode exceptionally bright future would soon be replaced by the sense of disappointment. Rapidly accelerating Poland and Lithuania economically soon became no match to deteriorating Kaliningrad. This caused many domestic and foreign scholars and practitioners to depart from previously entertained ideas about possible economic miracle in the oblast. Instead, the theme of “double periphery” (or in some way “triple periphery”⁶¹⁴) started to dominate intellectual discourse. However, the course of President Putin’s presidency introduced a number of key shifts in this trajectory, altering both the status and the mission of Russia’s westernmost territory.

This came to be particularly visible after 2007 – 2009 interim, when due to various factors the oblast started to depart from the “periphery” into something new. It would

⁶¹²“The Geopolitics of Russia: Permanent Struggle,” *Stratfor*, Apr 15, 2012.

<https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/geopolitics-russia-permanent-struggle>

⁶¹³ For more information see: Sergey Sukhankin, “Kaliningrad oblast – Russia’s formidable A2/AD bubble,” *New Eastern Europe*, August 2, 2017, <http://neweasterneurope.eu/2017/08/02/kaliningrad-oblast-russia-s-formidable-a2-ad-bubble/>; <https://corporalfrisk.com/2016/08/11/kaliningrad-and-the-suwalki-gap-a-look-from-the-other-side/>; Sergey Sukhankin, “From ‘Bridge of Cooperation’ to A2/AD ‘Bubble’: The Dangerous Transformation of Kaliningrad Oblast,” *Journal The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, Volume 31, 2018 - Issue 1, 15-36.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/RBBXE9ajSWR9ZeEzdtTe/full>.

⁶¹⁴ Sergey Sukhankin, “The “Russkij mir” as Mission: Kaliningrad between the “altar” and the “throne” 2009-2015,” *Ortodoksia* N56, (2016).

however be imprecise to associate the role change exclusively with the military dimension, even though it naturally played an essential role. Military capacity of Kaliningrad was profoundly influenced by its geopolitical location and previous historical experience, rendering this “island” to be an ideal spot to turn to an impregnable fortified bastion. On the other hand, distinguished first by the Russian Orthodox Church as a would-be “spiritual bastion” and a “shield” against “Western debauchery” and corrupt ideology, the oblast would soon be spotted by Russian propagandist forces. This process in many ways was triggered by the outbreak of the Euromaidan in Kyiv (late 2013), which subsequently outgrew into an open ideological confrontation between Russia and the West. Kaliningrad has been allocated an instrumental role in this process⁶¹⁵. In many ways, this transformation has been profoundly facilitated by “Kaliningrad identity”⁶¹⁶.

In the final analysis, reflecting upon the nature and causes of by and large unsuccessful transformation of Kaliningrad Oblast one needs to be able to assess this outcome as a matter of shared responsibility. The reason that the oblast did not become a bridge connecting two very distinct yet in the meantime historically bind to one another civilization types should not be solely vested on a single party. Speaking in retrospect, one can argue that the collapse of the USSR did not eliminate the atmosphere of distrust between the former adversaries. Thus, what seemed to have been the main obstacle (existence of the adverse Soviet ideology), turned out to be rather a cause, not the inner root of rivalry.

Speaking about Kaliningrad in particular, one might only regret that historical chance that was given to the oblast with the advent of Matochkin was misconstrued both in Moscow (as a sign of potential separatism) and key European players (especially Germany) that did not want to jeopardize its relations with young Russian state and resurrect fears related to alleged “German irredentism”.

And still, accessing historical path of Kaliningrad within 1945 – 2010 that started from the ruins of the Third Reich up to emergence of trading malls signifying the advent of globalization it seems quite dubious that the events could have taken different turn for Kaliningrad. An offspring of the Second World War and the brainchild of Joseph Stalin’s

⁶¹⁵ For more information see: „NATO’s eastern flank: A new battleground,” In *Who Said What? The Security Challenges of Modern Disinformation*, Highlights from the workshop (February 2018) 31-41.

⁶¹⁶ “Социолог Ефим Фидря: «Отдельная калининградская идентичность — это миф»,” *Newkaliningrad*, 02.12.2016. Available at: <https://www.newkaliningrad.ru/news/community/11797648-sotsiolog-efim-fidrya-otdelnaya-kaliningradsкая-identichnost-eto-mif.html>.

realpolitik the oblast was conceived as a “fortress”, not a “bridge”. Moreover, vestiges of the past (starting from above-discussed patterns of development to the name of this city) do not seem to have allowed Kaliningrad to break up with the past and look into future. Unfortunately, path that has been chosen *for* Kaliningrad from above does not take into close consideration local conditions. Neither does it offer any concrete plan for overcoming difficulties, merely offering palliative solutions instead of dealing with the roots of problems.

Currently, deepening conflict between the Kremlin and its Western partners (taking especially acute forms after 2014) leads the oblast nowhere, dragging Kaliningrad into the abyss of confrontation. The only loser here is the oblast with its close to a million population that has once again become a toy in the hands of powerful policy makers.

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ГАРФ - Государственный архив Российской Федерации.

РГАСПИ - Российский государственный архив социально-политической истории.

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Калининградский комсомолец (archive)

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ANNEX

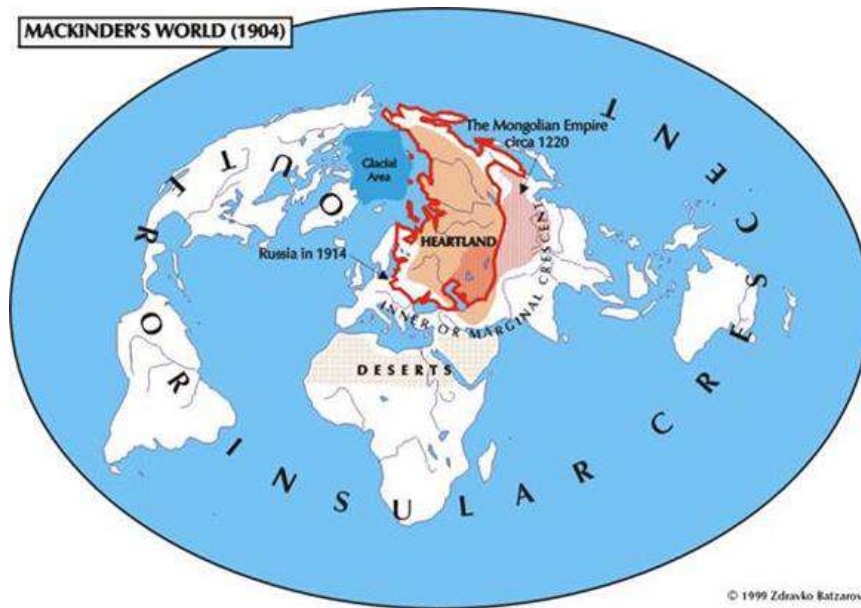


Image 1. Halford Mackinder's 'Heartland' theory (1904). Source: <http://threeman.org/?p=107>.



Image 2. A map of Russia's current borders. Source: <http://historum.com/european-history/88845-1918-treaty-brest-litovsk-too-harsh-towards-russia.html>.



Image 3. Eastern Europe after Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact, 1939-1945. Source: <http://www.wv2inprague.com/ /rsrc/1341249447044/articles/ribbentrop---molotov-pact/map%20ribentrop-molotov.gif?height=210&width=320>.



Image 4. The text of "The German–Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Demarcation," September 28, 1939 and a map of partition of the territory of Poland between the USSR and Germany published in Soviet press. Source: <http://rossiyanavsegda.ru/read/2256/>



Image 5. The map of East Prussia 1939. Source: <http://gillesenlettonie.blogspot.com.es/2015/04/des-prisonniers-francais-de-prusse.html>.



Image 6. German territorial losses (1919 – 1945). Source: <http://www.vividmaps.com/2016/08/german-territorial-losses-1919-1945.html>.



Image 7. The Curzon Line. Source: <http://polishgreatness.com/curzonline.html>.



Image 8. The Allied Occupation Zones of Germany since 1945. Source: <http://freesweden.net/strange.html>.

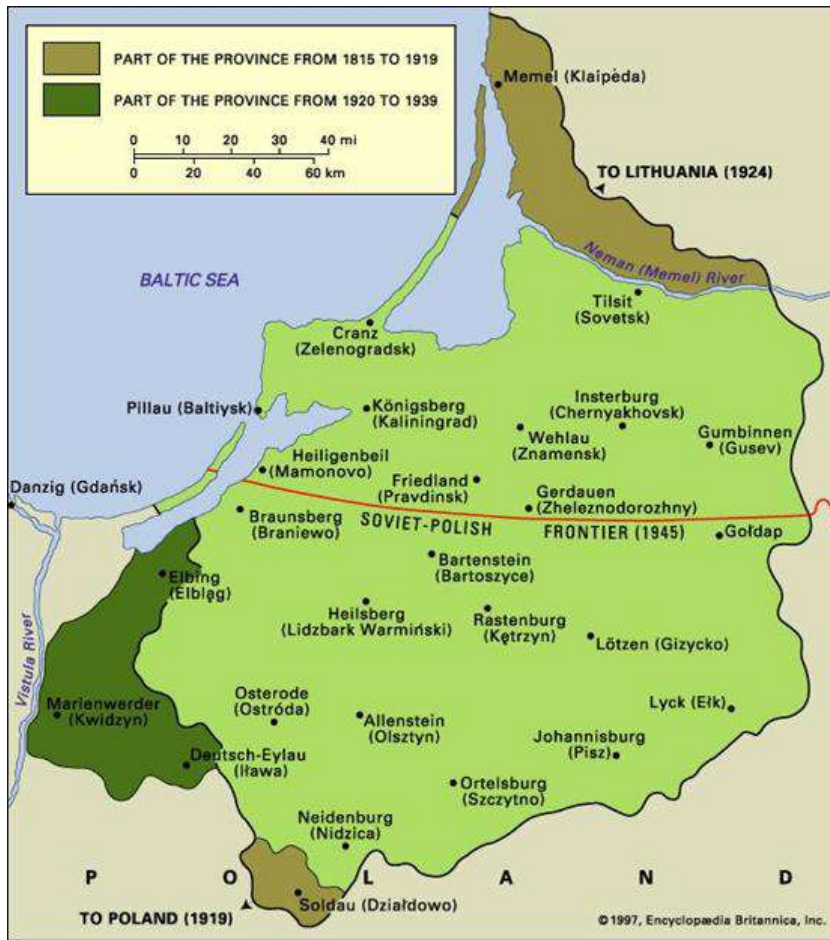


Image 9. East Prussia Former Province, Germany. Post-World War I and post-World War II boundary changes of the area of former East Prussia and its major towns. Source: Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.



Image 10. “Russians Cut East Prussia Off From Germany; Tanks at Brandenburg Border,” *The Johnstown Tribune*, January 26, 1945.



Image 11. Soviet *regulirovshchiki* near the poster "Here it is, damn Germany!". East Prussia. Source: <http://waralbum.ru/229598/>.

У Б Е Й!

Вот отрывки из трех писем, найденных на убитых немцах:

Управляющий Рейнгадт пишет лейтенанту Отто фон Шираху:

«Французов от нас забрали на завод. Я выбрал шесть русских из Минского округа. Они гораздо выносливее французов. Только один из них умер, остальные продолжают работать в поле и на ферме. Содержание их ничего не стоит и мы не должны страдать от того, что эти звери, дети которых может быть убивают наших солдат, едят немецкий хлеб. Вчера я подверг легкой экзекуции двух русских беснй, которые тайком пожрали снятое молоко, предназначавшееся для свиных маток...»

Матаас Цвилех пишет своему брату ефрейтору Генриху Цвилеху:

«В Лейдово имеется лагерь для русских, там можно их видеть. Оружия они не боятся, но мы с ними разговариваем хорошей плетью...»

Некто Отто Эссман пишет лейтенанту Гельмуту Вейганду:

«У вас здесь есть пленные русские. Эти типы пожирают кождевых червей на площадке аэродрома, они кидаются на помойное ведро. Я видел, как они ели сорную траву. И подумать, что это — люди...»

Рабовладельцы, они хотят превратить наш народ в рабов. Они вывозят русских к себе, надеваются, доводят их голодом до безумья, до того, что, умирая, люди едят траву и червей а поганый немец с тухлой сигарой в зубах философствует: «Разве это люди?...»

Мы знаем все. Мы помним все. Мы поняли: немцы не люди. Отныне слово «немец» для нас самое страшное проклятье. Отныне слово «немец» разряжает ружье. Не будем говорить. Не будем возмущаться. Будем убивать. Если ты не убил за день хотя бы одного немца, твой день пропал. Если ты думаешь, что за тебя немца убьет твой сосед, ты не понял угрозы. Если ты не убьешь немца, немец убьет тебя. Он возьмет твоих и будет мучать их в своей окаянной Германии. Если ты не можешь убить немца пулей, убей немца штыком. Если на твоём участке затышь, если ты ждёшь боя, убей немца до боя. Если ты оставишь немца жить, немец повесит русского человека и опозорит русскую женщину. Если ты убил одного немца, убей другого — нет для нас ничего веселее немецких трупов. Не считай зней. Не считай верст. Считай олов: убитых тобою немцев. Убей немца! — это просит старуха-мать. Убей немца! — это молит тебя ятя. Убей немца! — это кричит родная земля. Не промахнись. Не пропусти. Убей!

Илья ЭРЕНБУРГ.

Image 12. Ilya Ehrenburg, "Kill!", *Krasnaya Zvezda*. Source: <http://www.propagandahistory.ru/648/Ubey-nemtsa-v-sovetskoy-propagande/>.



Image 13, 14. Faces of the Soviet era 1947-1950. The life of immigrants in Kaliningrad. Source: <http://humus.livejournal.com/5075917.html>.

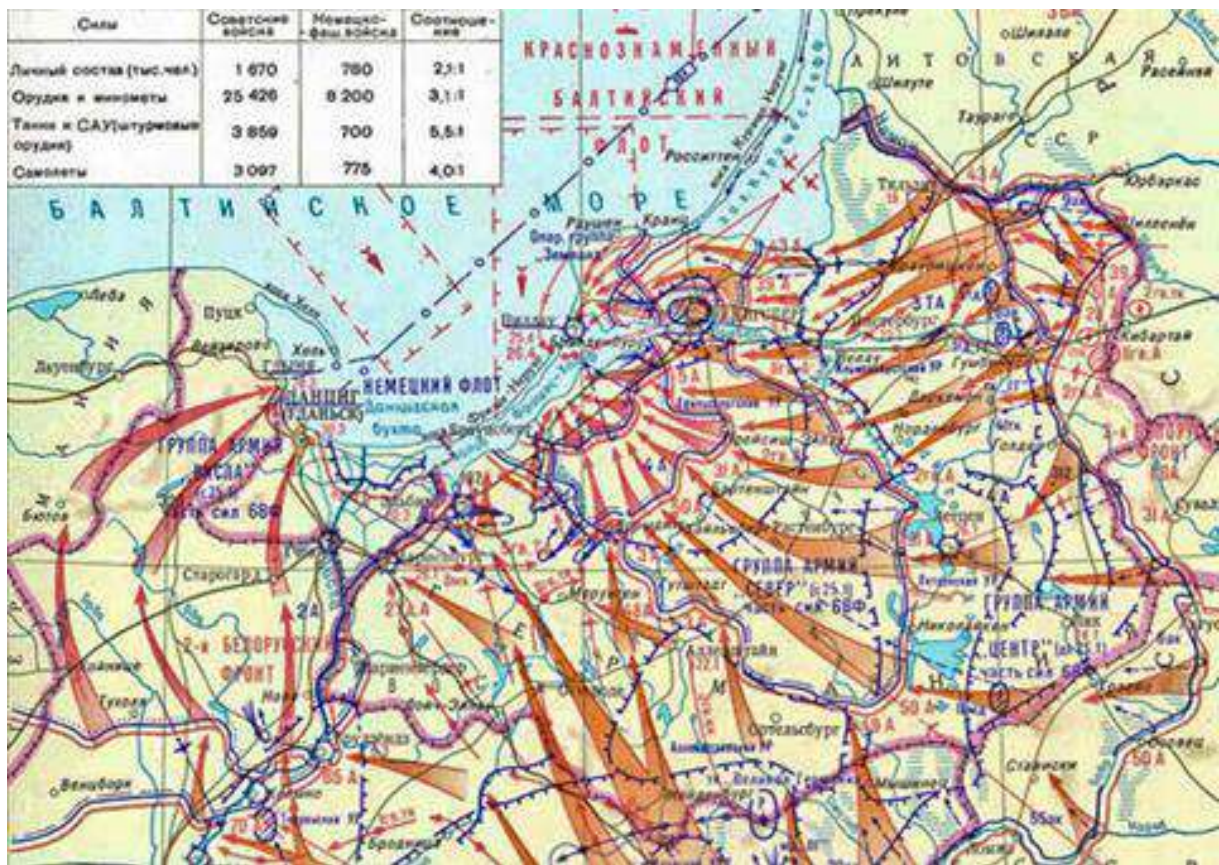


Image 15. The defeat of the East Prussian group (January 13 – April 25, 1945). Source: http://stat.mil.ru/winner_may/history/more.htm?id=12006377@cmsArticle.



Image 16. Map of the Kaliningrad oblast. Source: <http://www.km.ru/turizm/encyclopedia/baltiisk>.

39 11

А. Шверник
А. Горький
И. Сталин
Я. Чапаев

У К А З

ПРЕЗИДИУМ ВЕРХОВНОГО СОВЕТА СССР

переименовании города Кенигсберга в
город Калининград и Кенигсбергской об-
ласти в Калининградскую область.

Переименовать город Кенигсберг в город Калининград и
Кенигсбергскую область в Калининградскую область.

Председатель Президиума
Верховного Совета СССР

Шверник (Н. Шверник)

Секретарь Президиума
Верховного Совета СССР

Горький (А. Горький)

4 июля 1946 г.
Москва, Кремль.
д. № 195.

Председатель
Совета Министров Союза ССР

Сталин (И. Сталин)

Управляющий Делами
Совета Министров СССР

Чапаев (Я. Чапаев)

Image 17. Copy of the original of the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, July 4, 1946 "On the renaming of the city of Konigsberg into the city of Kaliningrad" (State Archives of the Russian Federation, Fund T-7523, inventory 36, file 25, sheet 11). Source:

http://www.klgd.ru/city/history/almanac/a5_4.php?print=Y.



Image 18. Mikhail Ivanovich Kalinin. He served as head of state of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic and later of the Soviet Union from 1919 to 1946. From 1926, he was a member of the Politburo of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The former East-Prussian city Königsberg was renamed Kaliningrad after Kalinin. Source: <http://www.bankgorodov.ru/famous-person/Kalinin-Mihail-Ivanovich>.





Image 19, 20. The Königsberg Castle (German: Königsberger Schloss, Russian: Кёнигсбергский замок). Source: <http://museum-guide.livejournal.com/5122.html>.



Image 21. The Königsberg Castle after bombing (1945). Source: <http://museum-guide.livejournal.com/5122.html>.

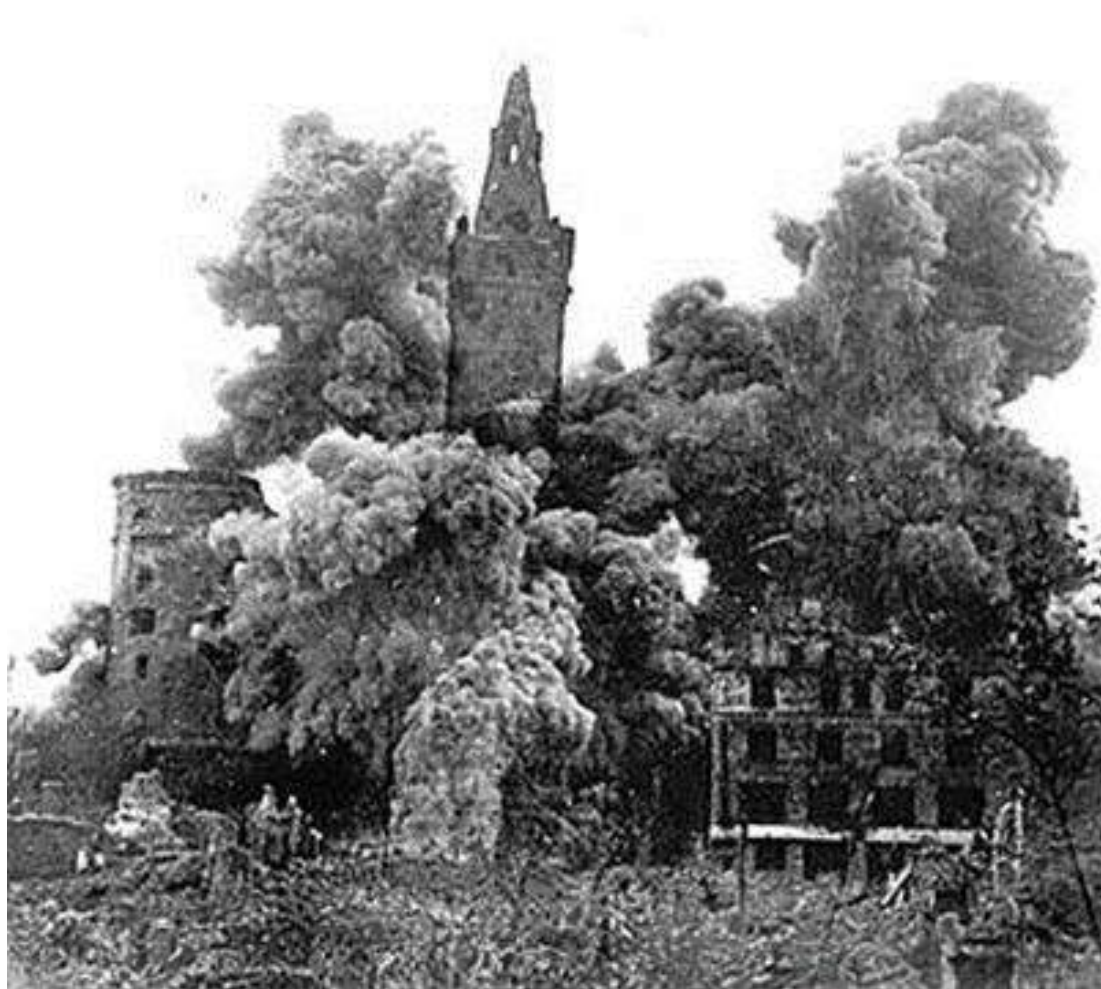




Image 22,23. The blown up of the ruins of the Königsberg Castle, 1968. Source: <https://regnum.ru/news/polit/603919.html>.



Image 24, 25. The House of Soviets, 2014. Source: http://freekaliningrad.ru/contrary-to-the-opinion-tsukanova-council-house-in-kaliningrad-to-demolish-not-recommended_articles/.



Image 26. A map highlighting Kaliningrad in red. Source: <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Kaliningrad/@54.1808003,25.4507782,6z/data=!4m2!3m1!1s0x46e33d8d4b7c21a9:0x5050960016126ed3>.



Image 27. The small exclave of Kaliningrad is located between Lithuania and Poland, separated from Mother Russia by 225 miles (362 km). Source: <https://voices.nationalgeographic.com/2014/07/25/geography-in-the-news-kaliningrad/>.



Image 28. East Prussia. Source: <http://nemet-sorstragedia.lorincz-veger.hu/nemet-sorstragedia-en/menekules-ostpreussen-en.html>.



Image 29. Large location map of Hong Kong. Source: <http://www.maps-of-the-world.net/maps-of-asia/maps-of-hong-kong/>.



Image 30. Location of Singapore in World. Source: <http://www.worldmap1.com/map/singapore/singapore-map.asp>.



Image 31. Map of Comecon member states.

Source: <http://biombohistorico.blogspot.com.es/2014/05/la-guerra-fria-2-los-inicios.html>.



Image. 32. Map of the World Showing Major Amber and Copal Localities. Source: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/340936634265468169/>.



Image 33. Königsberg Cathedral, a Brick Gothic-style monument in Kaliningrad. Source: <http://www.kartinki24.ru/kartinki/kaliningad/11375.html>.



Image 34. Karelia, the map of Finland-Russia border. Source: <http://exborealux.isd-network.org/border-regions>.

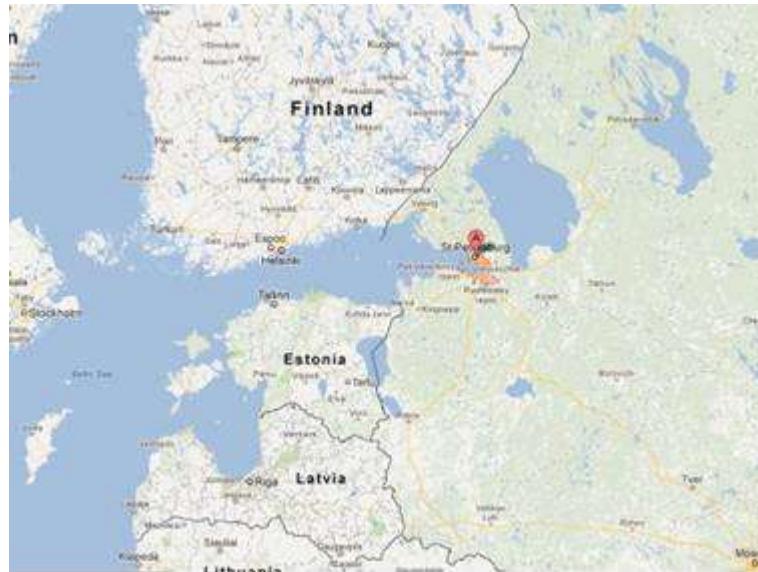


Image 34. „Alternative centrality.” The map of the city of Saint Petersburg situated in the North-western Federal District. Source: <http://www.businessinsider.com/russia-china-europe-vladivostok-2012-6>.



Image 35. Poly-periphery. Georgia, Poland and Ukraine could be allocated to this category.



Image 36. TEN-T Core Network Corridors. Source: http://ec.europa.eu/transport/infrastructure/tentec/tentec-portal/site/index_en.htm.



Image 37. An example of “irredentism”, which is a radical form of separatism. Azerbaijan and Armenia have been locked in a conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh for years. Source: <http://www.payvand.com/news/16/apr/1014.html>.



Image 38. The Polish Corridor after WWI. Source: <http://subversify.com/2012/02/10/did-hitler-deliberately-lose-the-war/>.



Image 39. Königsberg in Europe - the main political purpose of the Baltic Republican Party.



Image 40. Sergei Pasko, the leader of The Baltic Republican Party (BRP). Source: <http://koenigsberg-eu-russian.blogspot.com.es/>.



Image 41. Lithuania Minor and the other historical ethnographic regions of Lithuania. Source: <http://folkcostume.blogspot.com.es/2011/08/costume-and-embroidery-of-lithuania.html>.



Image 42. Euroregion Neman covers Grodno Oblast in Belarus, 49 self-governance units of PodlyasskiVoivodeship, members of Association Euroregion Neman in Poland, 12 self-governance units of Marjampole and Alytus in Lithuania, members of the Association Bureau of Euroregion Neman”, Chernyakhovsk, Krasnoznamensk, Oziorsk and Gusevsk regions of Kaliningrad Oblast. Source: <http://neman.grsu.by/ru/>.



Image 43. Northern Dimension Map. Source: http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/delegations/russia/eu_russia/fields_cooperation/regional_issues/northern_dimension/index_en.htm.



Image 44. Patriarch of Moscow and all Rus' in Kaliningrad. Source: <http://exclav.ru/sobyitiya/fotootchetyi/vizit-patriarha-moskovskogo-i-vseya-rusi-kirilla-v-kalini.html>.



Image 45. The map of the transport corridors of Kaliningrad. Source: <http://www.myshared.ru/slide/149196/>.



Image 46. Map of the Special Economic Zones in RF. Source: <http://neftegaz.ru/analysis/view/8434-Osobye-ekonomicheskie-zony-kak-instrument-povysheniya-konkurentosposobnosti>.

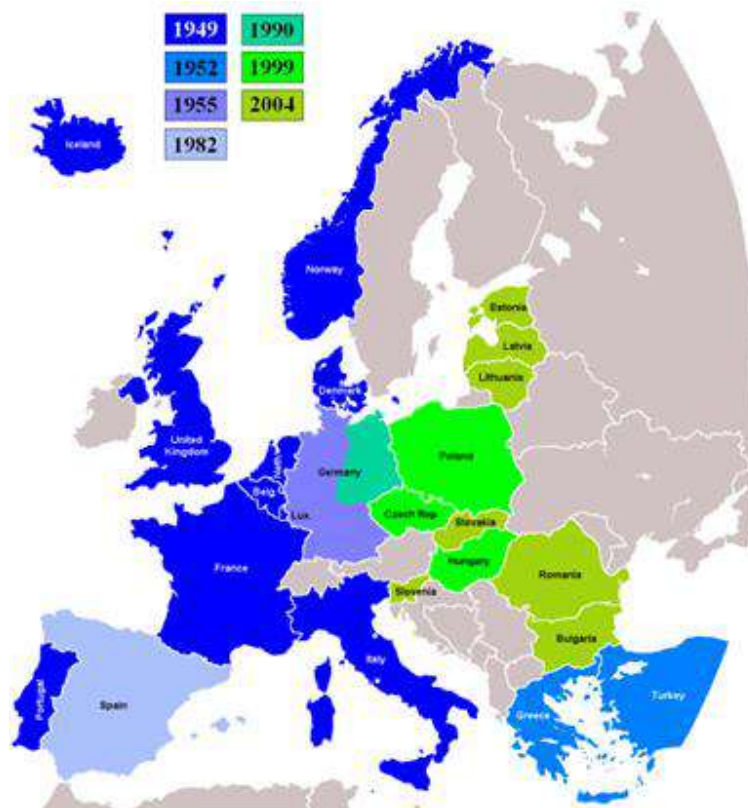


Image 47. Map of the enlargement of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Source: <http://saitawut.blogspot.com.es/2014/10/can-post-soviet-russia-foreign.html>.

Iskander (SS-26 Stone) tactical missile system and its target coverage in Europe



"Russia will deploy Iskander missile systems in its exclave of Kaliningrad to neutralize if necessary the anti-ballistic missile system in Europe"

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev
His first state of the nation address to parliament

Technical characteristics

	Iskander-E	Iskander-K
Number of missiles:	2	2
Missile type:	9M723K1 "quasi-ballistic," guided missile	И-500 cruise missile
Range:	200 km (173 miles)	500 km (310 miles)

9M723K1 missile

- Single-stage
- Solid propellant
- Flight trajectory - up to 50 km (30 miles)
- Launch preparation time: 4-16 minutes depending on alert status
- Delay time between firing 1st and 2nd missile: less than a minute

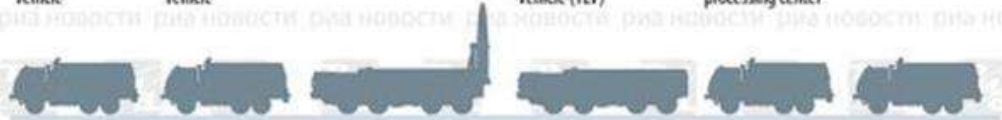


Transporter Erector Launcher (TEL):

- Based on the new BAZ6909 eight-wheeled chassis truck.
- Weight with two missiles: 40 tons
- Missile weight: 3.8 tons
- Warhead: 480 kg
- Maximum vehicle speed: 70 km/h
- Crew: 3

The system comprises:

Command and staff vehicle Life support vehicle TEL with two missiles Transporter Loader Vehicle (TLV) Mobile data processing center Maintenance vehicle



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Image 48. Iskander SS- 26 Stone. Source:

<https://4threvolutionarywar.wordpress.com/2016/05/06/cruise-missile-launch-from-an-iskander-m-tactical-complex-video/>.

Russia's regional military commands

By December 1, 2010, the number of military districts in Russia will be cut from six to four. Unified strategic commands will be set up on their basis



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Image 49. Russian Military Districts. Source:

<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/russia/mo-md.htm>.



Image 50, 51. "Tangerine spring" public protests in Kaliningrad (2009-2010). Sources:

<http://echo.msk.ru/blog/sergeymuritz/archive/6.html> ,

<https://www.newkaliningrad.ru/news/politics/5577911-mandarinovaya-vesna-telemiting-eksgubernatora-boosa-5-let-spustya.html>.



Image 52. “Putin is responsible for Boos!” Source:
<https://www.newkaliningrad.ru/news/foto/1017368-v-otstavku-fotovideoreportazh-novogo-kaliningradaru.html>.