TRANSREGIONAL COOPERATION IN THE AREAS OF EU-RUSSIA DIRECT NEIGHBORHOOD: THE CHANGED ROLES OF EUROPE'S MARGINS (THE KALININGRAD CASE STUDY)

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Abstract
The principal objective of this paper is to analyze the issues of trans-border cooperation as seen from the perspectives of different and sometimes competing interpretations of the nature of EU – Russia «overlapping margins». The geographical scope of research is limited to Kaliningrad oblast. Author's approach is based on constructivist methodology which serves as a good conceptual background for introducing the identity-based notions of exclusion and inclusion in regard to varied spatial representations of E.U.'s neighborhood policy. The paper offers some ideas concerning the possible contours of Kaliningrad's «marginality strategy» based on taking advantage of its «in-between» location.

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A demonstration ground, a contact territory, a vanguard of Russia’s rapprochement with Europe, an indicator and an interface of EU - Russia relations, a linking space, an experimental zone, a laboratory, Russia’s gate to Europe, a window of opportunity, a sleeping beauty, an outpost of strategic partnership, Russia's business card, a nodal link, trading/transit agent - what unites these metaphors is that all of them are extensively applied to Russia’s Baltic exclave, the Kaliningrad oblast (KO). On the other side, we see a different bunch of metaphorical images with quite negative connotation, like a «stepson» of Europe-Russia cooperation, a «double periphery», Russia's Soviet hellhole, a small analogue of the USSR, a cleavage site, a trouble spot, an adapting outsider, a bone of contention, unresolved anomaly from the World War II, a besieged fortress, an imperial bastion, a reservation inside Europe, an island of decay, a remote appendix to Russia, or post-imperial detached region. A number of rather neutral expressions are also in use, like a chain, a knot, a puzzle, an island in an enlarged Union, a discursive battlefield, a little Russia within the EU, and Russia's overseas territory.

Not so many regions of the Russian Federation may boast about having such an impressive collection of geo-cultural images. Some of them are clearly in conflict with each other, while others refer us to remote – in both spatial and temporal terms - semantic contexts that are reprocessed, transformed and saturated with a variety of new cultural, historical, and political meanings. The case of KO may corroborate the Russian scholar Dmitry Zamiatin’s idea of semiotic dynamics being stronger and denser at the margins which tend not merely to reproduce more or less fixed meta-images, but also to fill them with their own «sensualization», emotions and symbolism. In result, the regional space(s) born out of interaction between different cultural environments may be understood as «a networking surface of animated pictures», consisted of multiple fragments of interpretation that might intermesh, «meet» and «collide» with each other. It is also interesting that the Baltic region, with KO as its organic part, may fit into Zamiatin’s conception of «a-centric» space, that one which does not seek to acquire stringent hierarchical features and/or take certain position(s) vis-a-vis the center(s). A similar idea may be detected in Lyndelle Fairlie’s reference to the Baltic space as «a collection of regions without a center».

Being an «a-centric» unit, KO may also be called «a-geographic» one in a sense that, if we refer to another Russian scholar Andrey Dakhin, geo-cultural images «migrate» from one territory to another. Like clones, they might expand/proliferate and project their meanings onto a particular region. KO is a good illustration of this interesting phenomenon as it is extensively compared with Gibraltar, Aland Islands, Alaska, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Hawaii, Western Berlin (during the Cold War), Jerusalem, Panama, Karabakh, and Guantanamo. Perhaps these multiple «geographic wrappings» made Pertti Joenniemi and Jan Prawitz assume that KO may be «liberated from the constraints of territorial logic» and thus develop its own models of «a-geographic» proximity to the global world.

Yet the paradox is that, in a way, KO itself gained the reputation of, figuratively speaking, «a-national» region, in a sense that strong cultural identity of its own on the local level is missing. In the literature, KO is known as «a region in search for a past and a future», a region «living in the Russian present with a German past», or a region that lacks «of a
recognized past»10. From the very beginning, KO was an artificial territorial unit, a Soviet «trophy» of the Second World War that has to break away its historical and cultural affiliations due to Moscow's geopolitical and security considerations. KO's initial purpose – the military outpost of the great power – has lost its former relevance, yet the search for new, non-military roles proves to be extremely uneasy. In a way, as many tend to deem, the piece of land detached from Germany has never become Russian by its spirit, showing stronger predisposition to lean to European identity markers11.

In the mean time, as Pertti Joenniemi and Christopher Browning argue, it is true that in the aftermath of the USSR dissolution most Kaliningraders were unable to differentiate themselves from the rest of Russia, yet nevertheless the new identity is being formed nowadays, which is not one of making a choice between Europe and Russia, but of KO carving out its own space as an «in-between» and overlapping margin that is in a possession of dual heritage – Prussian and Soviet/Russian12. Russian author Vadim Shtepa supposes that the future of KO lays in developing a «more Russian – and in this sense genuinely European - conscience that that one of Moscow with all its centralization»13.

The capital question, however, is how different is KO as a part of the «Baltic ensemble». In this paper I am going to focus on the role of geo-cultural factors in KO evolution, with special attention paid to identity dimension. I will start with presenting my understanding of two discursive strategies that may be singled out, namely that ones of exclusion and inclusion. Then I will dwell upon the region's «cross-roads» actorship, having in mind its location at the intersection of different interpretation of what is Europe and what are its borders. Finally, I will draw some conclusions that might be relevant in terms of cross-border cooperation.

1. Identity at work: discursive strategies of inclusion and exclusion

A useful methodological tool for the analysis of KO as a part of the Baltic Sea region is to be found in different constructivist interpretations that emphasize the importance of normative structures, and the role of identity in regional projects. Normative ideas and ideational structures are seen as shaping regional actors’ identities and interests. In this sense, constructivists deem that shared ideas, beliefs and values are meaningful structural characteristics of all regional arrangements.

Through identity discourse we create differences. Exclusion is an intrinsic part of any social identification, yet its scale is specifically large when the issues of insecurity are at stake14. This is even more so in border regions, where discourses construct particular understandings of who are in are who are out and why; they operate on the basis of self/other dichotomy, where the 'other' is the opposite conflict party, portrayed as an existential threat to the 'self'.15

In this chapter my intention is to take a closer look at two different ways in which the identity may be used as a discursive concept with clear political connotations. One of them is centered around exclusion, which stipulates strong accent on «othering», bordering, distancing, isolation and securitization. The second scenario is conducive to the logic of inclusion, with se-securitization aboard and concomitant strategy of engaging/integrating Russia.

Identity and exclusion

Identity may be used as a legitimizing force for cultural alienation and further distancing of one regional actor from the other(s). That kind of identity discourse is largely framed by (geo)politically loaded ideas like control over territorial integrity, security and sovereignty.

The EU seems to have a number of reasons to recourse to the verbal «othering» of Russia. In cultural terms, as Sergei Medvedev argues, «the historical lack of an institutional relationship with the Orthodox East shapes a specific exclusive mentality within the EU, a subconscious reluctance to open up the integration project». The EU frequently adheres to

13 Vadim Shtepa. «Mezhdu Rossiei i Evropoi» (Between Russia and Europe), Inache Journal web site (2002), http://europe.inache.net/kalinov.html
15 Thomas Diez. «Roots of Conflict, Conflict Transformation and EU Influence». Summary of initial comment, European Commission workshop, Brussels (14 February 2003), www.euborderconf.bham.ac.uk
the argument of allegedly non-European pedigree of Russia: for example, having stated in 2000 that the intra-European split is over, the European Parliament has explicitly alluded to Russia's de-facto exclusion from what is considered to be an integrated Europe.

Politically speaking, the tendency in Brussels of treating the KO as an outsider may be explained by the EU's hesitance to accept the legitimacy of this region's key mission which may be formulated as «the Russian presence in Europe»17. Put it differently, the whole perspective of becoming a «host space» for «foreign body» within its future territory is taken in the EU rather cautiously if not skeptically. Being afraid of the «Trojan horse» effect, the EU tends to downplay the role of KO, which might also be a natural reaction to Russia's policy of elevating this issue at the very top of Moscow – Brussels agenda.

Another source for exclusion discourse may be found in discussing the technicalities. The main sources of tensions between Russia and the EU are believed to be found in the bad governance of KO, while the most typical arguments at this juncture are that local industries are inefficient, and the political class is corrupted.

The result is that the EU faces some difficulties in the extension of its peace policies to its nearby areas and has instead opted for fencing and measures of exclusion18. Moreover, «the Union as a whole was trying to evade responsibility, thus creating a ‘process without a subject' effects»19.

In Russia, in her turn, the EU is widely depicted as a power preventing Russia from its sovereign rights over the Kaliningrad region. The main ideological concepts articulated by this type of discourse are “dignity”, “respect”, “pride”, «honor» and “principles”. Russia's securitization of identity problematique inevitably leads «to a never ending process of constructing a boundary between ‘us’ and ‘them’, good and evil, and an acute fear that if this boundary is damaged, identity of the community will be destroyed… Needless to say, such discursive setting is hardly conducive to openness and de-bordering»20.

Some of the concepts used by the EU in its neighborhood strategy, resonate in Russia with different connotations. Russia apparently doesn't buy the EU's claim to speak on behalf of the Europe as such. This brings us to the discursive distinction between “false” and “true” Europe that has some roots in Russian intellectual tradition and reportedly shapes the contours of KO spatial whereabouts. «False Europe», as understood by Russian intellectuals, includes countries with strong anti-Russian sentiments and those having lost the «genuine European values», while the «true Europe» is populated by friendly to Russia nations. As Viacheslav Morozov points out, this confrontational strategy «was hardly successful internationally, but worked almost perfectly on the domestic political stage»21.

«Othering» of Europe makes Russia to take a defensive position on a number of identity-driven issues. The fact that certain policy makers in the presidential administration were rather skeptical about the whole idea of celebrating the 750- anniversary of Kenigsberg/Kaliningrad, testifies that Moscow still has some problems with the historical heritage of this renamed city. The attempts of restoring the historical name of this city are baptized as «a betrayal»22 by many of patriotically-minded pundits. What came out of this discourse is an awkward and somehow ironic celebration of «750 years of the city of Kaliningrad» finally approved and rubberstamped by President Putin. Kremlin not only has obviously put itself in self-defeating position, but – what is more important – has lost a chance to offer - through recovering the historical name of the city – a new compromise-ridden mixture of different conceptualizations of Russia's relations with Europe in wider historical perspective. Indeed, the comeback of Kenigsberg might get certainly different yet quite compatible readings by both «Westernizers» (aspiring for a new impulse for Russian – EU relationship) and «Slavophiles» (who might eventually concede that having the city with German name as a part of Russia is a good remembrance of the old days of Russian/Soviet military glory).

Identity and inclusion

20 Viacheslav Morozov. «Russia in the Baltic Sea Region: Desecuritization or Deregionalization?», Cooperation and Conflict, September 2004 (forthcoming).
21 Ibid..
22 Konstantin Zatulin. «Kaliningradsy ne budut brosheny» (The Kaliningraders won't be abandoned), www.zatulin.ru/index.php?&section=publications&id=71
Identity, by the same token, may become a source of integrative drive, and thus trigger de-securitization through perceptual changes in the societal attitudes and relationships. Identity, therefore, may create new social relations and modify ideational constructs.

De-securitization focuses on finding a compromise on specific problems that remain unsolved for quite a long time. With the increased amount of technical-"functional" issues in the policy agenda, there is a growing understanding that the military importance of KO is decreasing.

De-securitization has unleashed what could have been called the «issue discourse», which comes in two versions. Within inward-oriented issue discourse, the perspectives of KO are closely connected with the oblast’s economic progress. In vice prime minister Viktor Khristenko’s words, it is essential that in ten forthcoming years the living standards of Kaliningraders be tripled in order to equalize the incomes of KO residents with Lithuanians and Poles.

For this purpose, the federal government has drafted and adopted the Federal Targeted Program of Kaliningrad Regional Development, 2002-2010 which has identified a number of top priority areas such as development of transportation system, stabilization of energy supplies, improvement of telecommunication system, building tourist facilities, solving environmental problems, upgrading social sphere (education, health care, culture, etc.), fostering innovations in science and technology, raising attractiveness of investment climate and entrepreneurship. It is still unclear whether Russian government is intended “to level down” the exclave location of KO, or, on the contrary, to take as much advantages of its geographic location as possible. The first approach has always been more traditional – enough is to remind that the power-sharing Treaty between federal and regional authorities of 1996 has stipulated that Moscow has to “compensate additional losses incurring from KO exclave location”. The current Federal Targeted Program mentions both strategies in a row, yet between the lines one can discern the priority given to the strategy of taking advantage. President Putin himself has given some signs of de-securitized approach to KO – at his meeting in November 2003 with the governor Egorov the main issues were the state of transport infrastructure, ferry terminal construction, upgrading the airport, salary dynamics, and socio-demographic indicators of the quality of life.

The second part of the de-securitized issue discourse is outward-oriented. It presents the KO case as an intrinsic part of EU-Russia negotiations, which has to be tackled technically.

Mikhail Kasianov, the former head of the Russian government, has argued that Baltic integration has positively affected North West territories of Russia. He called KO the “home of million of Europeans”, yet rebuffed the illusions that its residents might be granted visa-free border crossing with EU accession countries. At the meantime, many of policy experts had recognized the right of Lithuania to switch to European energy networks, to cut off of the Russian energy system, and to establish its own tariffs. The issue was presented as having to deal with bureaucratic complexities, and the best option to avoid conflicts is simplification of this procedure.

Among the issues of major concern for Russian government were to keep visa-free regime at least until Polish and Lithuanian accession to the EU; to ensure that rail transit takes place without border checks, and that Russian planes be given permission to use the Lithuanian air corridor. In exchange, Russia was ready to consider introducing simplified rules of entry to the KO by citizens of Poland and Lithuania, and eventually for all EU travelers. All these measures necessitated special EU – Russia agreement favored by the bulk of expert community. However its core condition from the Russia’s side – freedom of transit to KO for all type of transportation - seemed to be very disputable. For a long time, Russian government was reluctant to acknowledge that it would be a violation of EU laws if Russia continues to transport military goods and personnel to KO through Lithuania after the EU enlargement. Other points of Moscow’s agenda – like stimulating friendly atmosphere for trans-border exchanges, taking into account the interests of Kaliningrad fishery companies in redistributing fishing quotas after EU enlargement, stable energy supply and extending to KO new forms of EU-sponsored technical assistance – were less strictly formulated and much more acceptable for all parties.

There are other de-securitizing signals as well. For example, immediately after receiving the EU’s negative answer to Kasianov’s memorandum on Kaliningrad, Moscow officials began putting the issue in a trans-regional context. Thus, in June 2002 president Putin called on the subjects of the federation of the North West Federal District to be more active in establishing horizontal links with Kaliningrad. He then tabled this issue before a Council of Baltic Sea States meeting.

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27 http://www.strana.ru/print/118954.html
28 http://www.ng.ru/print/economics/2002-03-07/3_gref.html
29 http://www.strana.ru/print/118491.html
30 http://www.strana.ru/print/147499.html
held in St. Petersburg31, while Kasianov, for the first time, has raised the Kaliningrad problem in a meeting with his Estonian counter-part32.

Starting from 2001 the federal government of Russia has recognized the importance of positive information coverage of the plethora of Kaliningrad-related matters. Frequent visits of high level members of the Russian government had manifested the first steps in what the journalists have called “advertising campaign” to promote positive image of Russia’s western exclave worldwide33.

Equally, the Center for Strategic Design “North – West” argues in its “Doctrine of Russia’s North West Development” for more inclusive intellectual processes. It is claimed, in this vein, that the KO’s neighborhood with Western Europe is an important source of inspiration for adjacent parts of Russia. Notably, the Doctrine gives priority to using mobile and flexible resources driven by the spirit of innovation in the sphere of ‘humanitarian communications’ (that is human-capital-based and knowledge-driven processes).34

2. KO at the intersection of different «Europes»

The issues discussed above imply that securitized identity fosters the logic of exclusion, while the identity in its de-securitized version is conducive to proliferation of inclusive practices. Having analytically distinguished between the two contexts in which the concept of identity may play a role for KO, I then ought to acknowledge that in the Baltic region both of them are intertwined and mixed up. Each of the different spatial images that circulate here is based on a peculiar combination of securitization and de-securitization, exclusiveness and inclusiveness, involvement and disengagement.

Having joined the Baltic Sea region, Kaliningrad oblast has found itself in a very controversial though stimulating and rewarding environment, under multiple and sometimes conflicting external influences. In religious terms, the Baltic region is located at the crossroads of Orthodox, Protestant and Catholic branches of Christianity. In ethnic terms, it crosscuts the Nordic, Slavic, and German/Prussian identities35. In wider geo-cultural terms, it is the terrain where the Nordic and Baltic worlds meet not only with each other but also with the Central Europe as exemplified by the «Eastern Dimension» recently announced by Poland.

By the virtue of its location KO is destined to find its identity niches in a complex system of different spatial orders. It may not only distinguish itself from those spaces where KO does not seem to belong, but also adopt the best of «new geometries of regionalism». The constructivist message for Russia in general and for the KO in particular is that it is time to stop perceiving Europe as a single and unified civilizational block. The spatial orders to be addressed further are being formed without any overall plan or superior authority, and even with no strict criteria for membership, which might make KO’s voice – provided that there is one indeed - stronger in policy moulding.

There are several types of spatial representations that I will make use of in my analysis.

Northern and Eastern Dimensions

First of all, KO is situated at the crossroads of the Northern and the Eastern Dimensions (ND and ED, correspondingly) of the EU, the fact that opens new opportunities for this Russia's region. There are some parallels between Finland and Poland who have become the two proponents of European «dimensionalism» with strong repercussions for KO: both countries at certain historical junctures lost their nationhood due to geopolitical ambitions of their neighbors, both went through their own Cold War compromises allowing each of them to survive and preserve certain degree of autonomy vis-a-vis dominating powers, both are relative latecomers to the EU family, and both share marginal (in-between) location.

Hiski Haukkala is one of those authors who share the opinion that there is a certain degree of exclusion in both the ND and the ED. His vision is based on the understanding of «dimensionalism» as a by-product of the successive rounds of the EU enlargement: «the emergence of new dimensions is in a sense an (unintended?) external manifestation of the limits of expansions»36. The appearance in the ND agenda of issues of security, nuclear safety, exploitation of oil and

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31 http://www.strana.ru/print/147615.html
32 http://www.strana.ru/print/147700.html
33 http://www.strana.ru/print/987507689.html
gas, seems to confirm his reasoning\(^{37}\). Yet the alternative reading is also possible: the ND is comprehended by many in Europe as "an imagined empty space"\(^{38}\) which ought to be filled with concrete initiatives and projects. That is why this pattern of "dimensionalist" mindset implies options and alternatives, signaling that either of them is only one of possible variants/types/models of spatial interaction between numerous actors involved. Another important asset of the ND is its potential of ironing out the distinction(s) between the united part of Europe\(^{39}\) and what is called the neighborhood area. "The underlying idea of the ND is inclusiveness by countering marginalization. In a way it is almost a replica of the Council of Baltic Sea States"\(^{40}\).

Poland offers its own version of EU policy towards its margins. With clear assistance from the US, Poland has elevated to the position of forerunner and is keen to improve its centrality in terms of European relations\(^{41}\). On its way to self-assertion, this country allowed itself a great deal of self-minded interpretations, and some of them are quite in tune with the philosophy of "dimensionalism". The Polish goal is believed to consist of demonstrating to the EU countries the diversity of the area lying in the immediate neighborhood of the enlarged EU, together with the resulting necessity to conduct a differentiated policy in that area\(^{42}\). Yet what kind of diversity is at stake and what role(s) Poland ought to perform in East-West communications (an intermediary, a transmitter of reforms, or somewhat else) – this are the main interpretative questions pertaining to Polish stand on KO. The whole debate is about interpretation of what exactly should be meant by the policy of acknowledging the diversity among the EU neighbouring countries, and what kind of differentiation – as a "key element in the future implementation of the neighborhood policy"\(^{43}\) – is in the agenda.

The idea of "dimensionalism" (either in its "Northern" or "Eastern" formats), as applicable to the areas of EU-Russia direct touch, has much to do with the idea of Europe as consisting of a set of "Olympic rings" (i.e. more horizontal, network-oriented, and region-specific). The EU seems to be interested in using both "dimensionalist" and "Olympic rings" frameworks to transform Russia in a way that may be beneficial for the EU. "Dimensionalism" thus becomes a new type of policy of accommodation and reformation of the "Euro-East" to the extent that it could become acceptable partner of the "European core".

**"Old" vs. "New" Europe**

Secondly, KO is the terrain where the "Old" and "New" Europe – as drawn by U.S. Secretary of State Donald Rumsfeld – meet and juxtapose\(^{44}\). The "Old" vs. "New" Europe conceptualization gives a hard time to KO since Russia does not seem to belong to either of them. In global issues Russia is politically close to Paris – Berlin nexus, but as far as KO is concerned one has to keep in mind Moscow's alarmist reaction to all possible elements of German presence in this exclave.

Two KO neighbors - Lithuania and Poland – are parts of the "New Europe" since, in terms of Realpolitik, these countries are allegiance to the US leadership and regard Washington as a model of good society and of neo-liberal economic policy\(^{45}\). The "New" Europe, however, seems to be a rather competitive space. Following Poland's announcement of the ED initiative, Lithuania has started to think about presenting itself as the political leader of the Baltic Sea region. The Lithuanian quest for leadership is underwritten by the functioning of the "Vilnius – 10 group", "Northern Baltic 8" caucus, and the "3 plus 3" initiative that is aimed at establishing institutional links with the


\(^{39}\) Richard Right. "V dvukh shagakh ot Bol'shoi Evropy" (Two steps from the Big Europe), Nezavisimaya gazeta (September 29, 2003).


\(^{43}\) "Wider Europe / Eastern and Southern Neighbours: Food for thought". Note from Presidency 8395/03, Council of the European Union. Brussels (10 April 2003).

\(^{44}\) Joenniemi 2004.

\(^{45}\) Report of Seminar / Workshop. «A Laboratory in the Margins? The EU's and Russia's Policies in Northern Europe» at the Danish Institute of International Affairs in Copenhagen (September 26-27, 2003).
Caucasian republics. What is revealing is that, at least in Grazina Miniotaite's interpretation, «neither Estonia nor Latvia could attain the role of the region's leader because of their complicated relations with Russia».

One of possible impacts of the «Old» - «New» discursive divide on KO is that Russia's orientation towards the biggest European countries is paralleled by its relatively weak relations with two KO's direct neighbors. Some of Russian policy makers tend to treat them as «tiny» countries with however significant negative potential. In 2003 Sergey Glaziev and Dmitry Rogozin, the two leaders of "Rodina" party, in highly indicative manner suggested that Russia has to threaten Lithuania by raising territorial claims and refusing to ratify the bilateral border treaty.

Another repercussion that the «Old» - «New» rhetoric might have for KO is confined to the question of the nature and the scale of US involvement in the Baltic Sea region in general. Presumably, decreasing US commitments will signify less chances for KO in terms of financial opportunities, business promotion and civil society development.

«White» - «Grey» - «Black» zones

Thirdly, KO, speaking in the language of colored metaphors, is a part of what could have been called «the gray zone», which lies somewhere in between the «white» (which, in a figurative sense, equates with the Western democracy) and the «black» zones (area of despotism and all kind of illegal activities). This approach is used by many authors who treat the «gray zone» as an «interim space saturated with crisis and doubts»

Of course, the triadic palette given above is a discursive construct and thus is context-dependent. For example, it is known that apart from Kaliningrad, at least three other cities along EU eastern borders - Brest, Lvov and Swinoujscie - are known as major centers of gambling, sex industry and criminality. Again, we may turn to Zamiatin who was very explicit in postulating that the dynamics of the image-building is consciously designed and molded by the media, the academic community and the policy- and opinion-makers.

3. Playing with the kaleidoscope of spatial images

Due to their discursively constructed nature, the conceptualizations given above do overlap. As I have mentioned earlier, the ND is very much in tune with the Olympic Rings idea, while the ED could have been inscribed into the «Old» - «New» problematization of Europe. All patterns of spatial ordering are about creating differences and identities, and determining the rules of belonging and exclusion, of contact / separation. In result, the space that

51 Dmitry Zamiatin. «Strategii interpretatsii istoriko-geograficheskikh obrazov Rossii» (Strategies of interpreting the historic-geographical images of Russia), Otechestvennye zapiski (N 6, 2000).
53 Дмитрий Замятин. «Strategii interpretatsii istoriko-geograficheskikh obrazov Rossii» (Strategies of interpreting the historic-geographical images of Russia), Otechestvennye zapiski (N 6, 2000).
surrounds KO resembles a multi-tier patchwork “with varying degrees of Europeanness and Eastness”\textsuperscript{55}, often seen from the maturity and immaturity lenses. This patchwork challenges both Russia as a federal state and its KO.

**Federal Center dilemmas**

As far as Russia as a whole is concerned, it tends to suspect the «New Europe» countries in undermining the Russian positions. Moscow feels rather unhappy to see that Poland’s foreign policy departs from the assumption that the main stimuli for all ex-socialist countries bordering on Russia is to “ultimately separate them from the post-Soviet space”\textsuperscript{56}. There exists a wide spread feeling that Poland is reluctant to accept the common «rules of the game» offered by the EU to all its adjacent countries and is eager to distinguish Ukraine (and potentially Moldova and Belarus) from all eastern neighbors\textsuperscript{57}.

Polish commentators also suggest that relations with Russia should not dominate the EU foreign policy agenda and develop in direct dependence upon Russia’s approximation of its political and legal norms to that ones of the EU. Polish experts, therefore, seem to be extremely selective in offering partnership arrangements to the eastern countries. Some of the authors in Warsaw even try to make the procedure of “granting the EU’s neighbor state” status dependent upon a list of normative criteria\textsuperscript{58}. From the Russian part, Mark Urnov, Chairman of the Center for Political Technologies, pinpointed Warsaw’s reluctance to accept the idea of transit “corridors” - accused Poland (”a small country”, in his judgment) of being swayed too much by the “foolish myths and prejudices of the crowd”\textsuperscript{59}.

Therefore, it comes as no surprise that most of Russian policy analysts choose the «Wider Europe» concept over the «Eastern Dimension». In Filip Kazin’s reasoning, «both projects offer us a participation in a contest. The Poles, however, are prone to strictly fix the ‘weight categories’ and put one of players (Russia. – A.M.) beyond the competition, while the EU bureaucraty wants to place everybody in the same stadium, have a training exercise and see what comes out of it»\textsuperscript{60}. Many Russian experts – like Stanislav Belkovskii, Yuri Borko\textsuperscript{61} or Vladimir Shmyatavenkov – think that Russia has to negotiate cases like Kaliningrad with the “Old Europe”. Their reasoning is quite compelling – indeed, these are basically Germany, France and Italy that are inclined to frame the EU – Russia relations strategically, with long-term commitments from both sides.

Russia, as we have seen above, perceives itself not at the periphery of EU-led integration exercise, but as another core, a self-sufficient one and capable of conduction a foreign policy of its own\textsuperscript{62}. This worldview is a good match to the “Europe of Two Empires” concept developed from the Western side by Michael Emerson, Alexander Rahr and other experts. Russian officials seem to share the basic assumptions of this approach claiming for example that «the great powers rarely join others’ unions, they tend to form alliances of their own» to safeguard freedom and autonomy\textsuperscript{63}. The «imperial» version of Russian international subjectivity in 2003 has spread even among the right-wing / pro-Western groups within elites, as evidenced by the «liberal empire» slogan advanced by Anatoly Chubais. Should the «two Empires» scenario come into force, the most acute question would be to keep at peace the areas where the interests of the two cores intersect. KO is undoubtedly one of these «overlapping margins».

This approach however may be challenged by the fact that at certain occurrences (Kaliningrad included) Warsaw and Vilnius take more pro-Russian stand(s) than other EU members and the EU itself. At some point the Polish spokesmen


\textsuperscript{56} Joanna Hyndle and Miryna Kutytsz. *Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia’s aspirations to integrate with NATO and the EU in the context of these countries’ relations with Russia*. CES Studies, N 4, May. Warsaw: Centre for Eastern Studies, 2002: 48.


\textsuperscript{58} Jacek Cichocki, Marek Cichocki, and Pawel Kowal. «Poland and the EU’s “Eastern Dimension”. In Pawel Kowal (ed.), *The EU’s “Eastern Dimension” – An Opportunity for or Idee Fixe of Poland’s Policy*. Warsaw: Centre for International Relations, 2002..

\textsuperscript{59} http://www.strana.ru/print/147360.html

\textsuperscript{60} Kazin 2003.

\textsuperscript{61} Stanislav Belkovskii. «V otnosheniakh novoi Evropy Rossia dolzhna delat’ stavku na staruyu Evropu» (In relations with the New Europe Russia is to rely upon the Old Europe), 2003, http://www.kreml.org/decisions/37858012/37933775

\textsuperscript{62} Olga Vlasova. «Pochemu nas razliubila Evropa» (Why Europe ceased to love us), *Ekspert*, N 7 (410) (February 23, 2004).

\textsuperscript{63} Ivan Ivanov. «Raschishiat’ puti k zreelomu partniorstvu Rossii i Evrosoyuza» (To clean up the roads to mature EU – Russia partnership), *Sovremennaya Evropa* (N 2, 2001), www.ieras.ru/journal/journal2.2000/1.htm
forecast that the ED will be even of larger scope and more multilateral than the ND:\textsuperscript{64} Thus, the experts from Warsaw made it clear that the enactment of the Schengen \textit{acquis} may have a detrimental effect on the relationships of the candidate countries with their immediate eastern neighbors... The enforcement of visas will not be a barrier for organized crime but may potentially become an insurmountable obstacle for thousands of ordinary citizens:\textsuperscript{65} In the opinion of influential Polish experts, Europe needs immigrants at a growing pace, up to 500,000 per year. As far as Poland itself in concerned, this country «should promote the inflow of foreigners... and take advantage of» their integration into the Polish society:\textsuperscript{66} Polish authorities hope that incoming labour force from the East would become a substitution to these citizens of Poland that have left the country in search for better jobs in the West.

\textit{New openings for Kaliningrad}

Now, turning to KO, one may notice that spatial conceptualizations discussed above may give some positive effects for this Russian exclave. For Russia's North West in general, the ND may become an alternative «magnet» for integration with Europe, which has clear bearing on KO positioning in the Baltic/Nordic region. The same is true for Poland's role. It does not consider itself to be a transit country, «since there are no economic or humanitarian reasons to use Polish territory for traffic between different parts of Russia»:\textsuperscript{67} Yet in practice, Warsaw is eager to present itself as a source of innovative approaches offering such solutions as extending the practice of visa issuance on the border, introducing multiple single day entry visas and the 'delimited territory Schengen visas'. At this juncture the interests of KO might be well served, which makes this region loose if Poland «will punch below its weight in EU policy-making»:\textsuperscript{68} Polish authors claim that for the EU newcomers the problem of KO will be ranked higher than for the EU founding fathers. In particular, Jakub Swecincki suggests that because of the position to be taken by Poland and the ex-Soviet Baltic countries the EU might more easily strike a visa-free deal with Russia, and will be more inclined to consider the individual approach to specific situations. The criticism of the EU is also a part of Polish discourse: it is widely argued that Poland and Lithuania were forced to introduce the visa requirements for the inhabitants of KO:\textsuperscript{69}

Another potentially beneficial for KO frame of discussion concerns the representation of the EU spatial order as enveloping the center (the core group countries), the insiders (who participate in practically all sectors of common policy), semi-insiders (some of whom have voluntarily remained outside certain policy arrangements), semi-outsiders (like KO), and close outsiders (federal Russia as a whole). This scheme offered by Pami Alto demonstrates that KO might be housed in a different (and hopefully a closer to the EU) grouping than Russia as a whole:\textsuperscript{70}, some reasons for what will be discussed below.

\textbf{4. The Art of being «in» and «out»: practicalities of governability}

\textit{Centrality or marginality}

In discursive battle for its identity KO officials are repeatedly – and apparently with purpose - defining the region as located in Europe’s center. One may note that many of KO public figures try to find appropriate (yet, frankly, not always convincing even in pure geographical terms) arguments for placing KO at the center of European territorial and mental maps. This political narrative resembles to a certain extent the interpretation of the Northern Dimension as a key component of Finland's attempt to shift from the periphery to the core and strengthen its central position in Europe in order to avoid being swept off:\textsuperscript{71}

The «strategy of centrality», as all constructs of this sort, has to be perceived in wider discursive context and compared with different articulations of space. In particular I may refer to the theory of marginality developed, in particular, by Noel Parker as a part of post-structuralist conceptualizations of territoriality. In his reading, being on the margin

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{64} Wojciech Kononczuk. «Vostochnoe izmerenie ES: pol'skaya pozitsia» (The EU's Eastern Dimension: the Polish Standpoint). \textit{Sodruzhestvo} Portal (November 25, 2003), www.mpa.ru:8081/analytics/issue.php?id=244
  \item \textsuperscript{66} Kryftyna Iglicka. \textit{Priorities and Developmental Directions of Polish Migration Policy}. Warsaw: The Institute of Public Affairs. Analysis & Opinions (N 13, 2003).
  \item \textsuperscript{67} Communication from the Commission (2002).
  \item \textsuperscript{68} Heather Grabbe. «Poland: The EU's New Awkward Partner», 2003, www.cer.org.uk/articles/34_grabbe.html.
  \item \textsuperscript{70} Alto 2004.
  \item \textsuperscript{71} Alexander Zanosov and Vadim Kononenko. \textit{How to remain at the core (Finnish concept of Northern Dimension)}. Helsinki: Finnish Institute of International Affairs, UI Working Paper (draft), June 2002: 5-6.
\end{itemize}
underwrites some peculiar potential of having an impact upon neighboring areas. Marginal territory may enjoy greater freedom because the mere possibility that it might exist outside the center’s sphere of influence is an argument to be exploited. Tensions between centers and margins are inevitable, but what is most important for my analysis is that marginal position might turn into advantage through a variety of ways, including rent-seeking, charging the center in return for remaining inside, and so on. Margins always have a choice to make, and the cores are not rare to compete with each other to gain their loyalty.

It is true that most of pervious attempts to institutionalize the projects based on the philosophy of being at the same time “in” and “out” have not succeeded to a satisfactory degree. Historically, the «in-between» location was associated with unsuccessful experiences of countries like Ukraine or Belarus destined to lay in the «gray zone» and play the role of the buffer territories. As for more contemporary examples, one can recall President Yeltsin’s failed proposal of joint patrolling the Russian – Finnish border, and the idea of “Baltic Schengen” promoted by prime minister Viktor Chernomyrdin. The lack of visible success suggests that new models of «in-between» paradigm have to be thought of.

KO’s in-between position implies that it cannot be completely integrated nor separated from the EU. Indeed, from the geographical point of view, KO is located outside EU but is surrounded by it. Thus, it ought not to be addressed in either – or manner. Yet KO has a long way to go to give an example of a marginal region in most positive sense of this word, a piece of land where post-sovereign patterns of territoriality prove their vigor.

What I would like to emphasize is that the cognitive and discursive sources of regionalism triggers the appearance of material and/or organizational practices. Therefore it would be logical to beg a fairly practical question: how does the model of de-bordered KO may hypothetically look like? Since all three visions of Europe addressed in the chapter 2 are based on different combinations of exclusion and inclusion mechanisms, the ideal variant for KO would be to design its future strategy in such a way that would skip the zones of exclusion and, vice versa, take maximum advantage of the inclusion-based policies. This strategy may contain a number of arrangements that by and large match the ideas of «trans-boundary networking communities» and the “islands of ex-territoriality”:

- Deeper involvement of European business in regional economy, including proliferation of trade marks, commercial brands, banks, insurance companies, consulting firms. There are good reasons to support the ideas of allowing the foreign financial and economic actors to operate in KO skipping the procedure of opening their branches or affiliated structures, and Euro to circulate in KO’s cash-free operations.
- Developing joint trans-border programs aimed at creating new jobs in order to compensate the lost of revenues in the so called «informal» / «shadow» sector of cross-border trade;
- Media “spill over”, i.e. trans-border circulation of regional media outlets and TV/radio programs. There is little doubt that KO may offer the information and entertainment product that could find its readers/viewers/listeners in both Lithuania and Poland.
- Fostering cross-border educational exchanges. For example, it might be useful to introduce the practice of spending at least one semester abroad (in either of neighboring countries) for graduate students, at least those mastering in certain disciplines. This proposal fits perfectly into the spirit of Bologna process;
- Supporting human exchanges, especially those families that include relatives living on the other side of the border.

The European experience (for example, the cases of Tornio-Haparanda or Valka-Vlaga) has clearly shown that neither ethnic nor linguistic cleavages represent an insurmountable problem provided that the border management is effective and competent. Against this background, the KO case seems to fit into the larger debate on «governance» which usually focus on a variety of governing agencies beyond the state, modeled on the partnership relations among private actors, and connotes a more inclusive, participatory and voluntary orientation in contrast to the ‘top-down’ and ‘coercive’ state government. Some authors prefer to speak about the emerging patterns of «soft governance» having in mind the

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76 Sergei Prozorov. «Three Theses on 'Governance' and the Political>. The paper presented at «Global Tensions and Their Challenges to Governance of the International Community>, conference sponsored by the International Studies
tendency of making institutional boundaries less rigid so as to allow for flexible commitments and different types of integrative arrangements77.

**Restrains**

Of course, there are many factors that impede the implementation of the «in-between» model. One of them is excessive reliance of KO authorities upon the goodwill of the federal bureaucracy. Yet it has to be kept in mind that Russian federal center is more strongly motivated by using the KO case as a test for molding the perspectives of strategic partnership with the EU than by getting involved in the regional “web of interdependence”. Russian interests in KO seem to be structured around the issues of identity and power – two tenets that may embody Russia's self-minded attitudes and concomitant policies leaving much of the freedom of choice. “Being in Europe” spells a strong sense of power politics, implying that Russia is eager to get equal political treatment by EU regardless of domestic developments. Pami Alto presumes that for the federal center Kaliningrad has lost some of its capacity to symbolize Russia’s interests78, which might fuel further disengagement of Moscow from KO.

Another big issue is underestimation of the roles that might be played by NGOs in a plethora of matters related to KO. Unfortunately there is no much progress in this direction. For instance, the Preparatory Committee created by the Russian government to celebrate the 750 years of Kaliningrad includes only three representatives of non-state organizations (out of 39).

Finally, it has to be taken into account that the European and the Russian discourses on Kaliningrad are still very much different. A number of meaningful problems are mainly debated within Europe, with rather scant resonance in Russia. These topics include the «in-between» problematique with strong linkages with the networking ideas and «insider-outsider» categorization, as well as the «recognition / acceptance» debate stimulated by a group of Nordic authors.

**Concluding remarks**

What stems from the previous analysis is that KO borders tend to evolve from separating lines to contact zones, from physical divisions to cultural interactions. Fortunately, a new understanding of Russia’s Europeanization is emerging, that one shifting Russia’s policies from phobias or damage limitation to cooperation, from semi-isolationist and frequently unilateral options to multilateral solutions79. Russia's “European choice” is thus interpreted as the policy of re-building of Russian internal rules, of steadily accepting the “dimensionalist” philosophy as a tool for self-engagement. KO may benefit very much should this de-securitized and inclusive understanding prevail in the forthcoming future. This is exactly where the analysis of the «pilot region» phenomenon has to depart from.

The capabilities of both the EU and Russia to become a driving force of the conflict transformation are strained. Moreover, the two poles (Brussels and Moscow) find themselves under growing influence coming from those actors which are interested and able to «play on the margin», or develop their own marginality strategies. Kaliningrad oblast itself, along with Poland and Lithuania, are these regional subjects that are in a possession of strong innovative potential to be exploited further.

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78 Alto 2004: 33.


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