



Alvydas Jokubaitis
Raimundas Lopata

**GEOPOLITICAL
TRANSFORMATION
OF THE KALININGRAD OBLAST
OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**



After the World War II, the part of East Prussia taken by the Soviet Union was transformed into a gigantic Soviet military base. It performed the functions of the outpost in the West on the one hand; and on the other hand, of the barrier which helped the USSR to ensure the dependence of the Eastern Baltics and domination in Poland. After the Cold War, Kaliningrad Oblast, a territory of 15,000 square metres with a population of nearly one million people, owned by the Russian Federation and located the farthest to the West, although on the Baltic Sea, ashore became isolated from the motherland and turned into an exclave. Gradually the exclave found itself first at the crossroads of different security structures and later — surrounded by one of them. Changes in the situation gave rise to the so-called Kaliningrad discourse, i. e. political decisions, academic discussions and research, influenced by the internal transformation in the USSR and the Russian Federation (RF) as well as slips in the international policies of Central and Eastern Europe.

Key words: Kaliningrad discourse, positivist approach, constructivist approach, philosophical approach, international institutions.

Kaliningrad discourse: stages of development

Academic literature development may be conveniently divided into three stages. At the end of the 80's and early 90's that tendency was reflected in texts modelling the future of Kaliningrad Oblast based on the Potsdam Tail and analysing the military threat the Oblast posed to the security of the Baltic Sea region. In the mid-90's, the idea of Kaliningrad Oblast as the "Baltic Hong Kong" started developing as an alternative to various internationalisation and demilitarisation proposals for the Oblast. It aimed at revealing the potential of the Oblast as a possible economic link between the East and the West. At the turn of the century, following practical steps to reduce the militarisation level of the exclave, the Kaliningrad topic became more focused on non-military threats. Increasing attention was paid to issues relating to the impact of the expansion of the European Union to the East on the socio-economic development of the Oblast, its lagging behind its neighbours and consequences of turning into a "double periphery".

Finally, a few years ago, after the Kaliningrad Oblast found itself surrounded by NATO and the EU, related tension was attributed to the practical and technical decisions concerning Russian passengers, goods, and military transit to/from Kaliningrad Oblast. Thus, Kaliningrad Oblast did not become

the factor which would block the development of Euro-Atlantic institutions, nor did it cause a military conflict as was sometimes forecasted, and eventually did not turn into a “black hole” in the so-called soft-security context, or a site of socio-economic destabilisation in the Baltic Sea region, which was also widely discussed and written about. In other words, it could be stated that the Kaliningrad wheel is moving forward, encouraging thoughts of progress with each cycle.

On the other hand, the optimistic scenario, which required unconventional solutions to the situation in place and outlined the principles of free trade, wide autonomy, and clear independence in the actions of the Oblast, did not come true either. Academic discussions as to whether the overlapping process of the West and the East structures seen in this part of the Baltic Sea region has essentially neutralised the “potential encoded threat” in the Oblast are still hot. In other words, the following question regarding the Oblast is still to be answered: “May the historical, cultural, socio-economic and geopolitical peculiarities bring about instability in the exclave or on the contrary?”, “Does the Oblast indeed have the potential to become a pilot region in the West-East partnership?” All this is indicative of a particular sensitivity of the Kaliningrad topic.

Positivist approach to the issue

At the first stage of the Kaliningrad issue, based on realism and theories of modern geopolitics, analysis viewed transformations in the subregions of the Eastern Baltic Sea and Central Europe as an emerging arena for the explicit, conflict-instigating competition for the re-distribution of power and influence. In this competition the specific nature of the Kaliningrad factor was labelled in a rather straightforward manner as “the second Cuba”, “another Karabakh”, “the Balkans of the Baltic Sea region”, “the Berlin during the Cold War”, etc. These views fed on a number of factors at the system, regional, and local levels. Parallels between Kaliningrad Oblast and international conflicts of the time were drawn due a number of reasons: efforts of Russian diplomacy to use actively the exclave as a factor seeking to retain the domination of the former USSR in the North-Western region as well as to create a neutral territory (geopolitical vacuum) in Central Europe; an impressive militarisation level of the Oblast as well as visions of Kaliningrad as a military outpost among the Russian political elite; power crises in Russia as well as international intellectual attempts, frequently with roots in Moscow, to internationalise the issue by raising the question of the political future of the exclave. In this context Kaliningrad Oblast was placed into the list of threats to the Baltic Sea region and to-date, has been seen as one of the factors in the balance of powers.

The second phase of research on the Kaliningrad issue coincided with the stage of West-East relations, referred to as the end of the period following the Cold War. It seemed that these relations became more stable upon entering the cooperation and competition phase characterized by the collabo-

ration in the spheres of shared national interests, and reconciliation or acknowledgement of the fact that interests may vary. In the specific instance of Kaliningrad Oblast of the Russian Federation this period coincided with the significant demilitarisation process of the exclave. In the meantime, research studies modelling solutions to the Russian exclave problem gained popularity.

Extending the notion of international security through the application of the neorealist, structural analysis, attempts have been made to conceptualise strategies of alternative development for Kaliningrad Oblast. On the basis of assumptions on the integrity, indivisibility and complexity of security, the Kaliningrad factor has been analysed not only in the contexts of statism and clashes of inter-state interests, but also in the perspective of the peaceful co-existence of states. In other words, after the geopolitical changes in the Baltic Sea region, Russia's exclave came to be seen not so much as the main source of threat to the entire region, but rather as a challenge which opened vistas for new scenarios for the development of the region in general and Kaliningrad Oblast in particular. The most notable perspectives that have formed in the relevant research either view Kaliningrad as "the Baltic Hong Kong", or adapt crisis management schemes as a means to neutralise the scenario of the development of the exclave as "a double periphery", or project the role of the so-called civil societies.

At the turn of the century intensification of Euro-Atlantic integration and expansion into the East as well as tactical preferences of Russian foreign policy-makers for the "compensation" diplomacy were the circumstances which shaped the Kaliningrad paradox: they brought about the renewal of realism alongside accounting estimates of expenses and capital of the aforementioned development, further encouraged neorealist assessment of the dispersion of interests among system, regional and local actors, who had exerted the greatest influence on Kaliningrad Oblast; and finally, stipulated the popularity of the constructivist view, related primarily to the change in Barry Buzan's methodological approaches (the so-called Copenhagen school) to the interpretation of the Kaliningrad issue. [see 4; 11; 12; 14; 16; 19; 20].

Constructivist approach to the issue

The constructivist, or, in broader terms, the postmodern analysis of Russia's Kaliningrad Oblast, proceeded along several lines. In Kaliningrad-related studies the issue of national identity was reflected in comparability works devoted to geopolitical identities of Russia and the European Union. The predominant discourse question revolved around the relationship between the modern and the postmodern identification of the exclave as a periphery. These trends share a number of features: the critique of the notion of realist power, the focus on the neorealist principle of the indivisibility of security, the importance of intersubjective meanings emerging through the interaction of actors on the international arena, as well as practical recommendations to policy-makers in foreign policy issues.

In fact, relevant scholarly studies seek to establish how the modern and post-modern approaches to peripheries may influence the strategy of gaining benefit, resources and influence projected onto the periphery (selected by the exclave), viz. Kaliningrad Oblast of Russian Federation, in the research on the correlation between the strategy and the following three factors: regional subjectivity (identity, maturity of the elite), international and regional structure, its discursive role and historical narrative resources of the periphery. These studies are predominantly concerned with the modern analyses of the aforementioned paradigms of Kaliningrad Oblast as a military outpost and as the fourth Baltic State, and the postmodern analysis of Kaliningrad Oblast as a pilot experimental region.

Generalizing what has been said above, several aspects should be pointed out. In the case of realist (neorealist) studies on the Kaliningrad issue, the latter are clearly colored by political-practical engagement, revealed in the efforts to give practical recommendations to decision-makers (it must be mentioned in this respect that those interested in retaining the Kaliningrad issue on the political agenda have encouraged and supported scholarly research regardless the methodology selected by the researcher). The observable flexibility in the relevant studies allows one to maintain that, by selecting the framework of the realistic (neorealistic) critique, the authors thus acknowledge the limited nature of the constructivist approach to the Kaliningrad issue.

To elaborate on the first aspect one should mention that, with respect to the Kaliningrad issue, practical-political recommendations based on constructivism (postmodernism) share the suggestion that the geopolitical difference between Russia and the EU should be overcome by a dialogue which would rest upon the principles of the organization of a new political space: deterritorialisation, decrease of the significance of interstate borders and a qualitative change in their functions, as well as cross-border cooperation and international connectivity seeking to eliminate differences among neighbouring regions and promote interdependence between regional actors.

To illustrate the second aspect it may be stated that, hardly any discussion would be raised by a constructivist presumption that the exerted influence on Kaliningrad Oblast is largely based upon the identity of the residents of the separated region as well as the dynamics of relationships between the motherland and the province. The limits of the constructivist research on the Kaliningrad issue are clearly revealed by the prevailing answer to the question as to what paradigms (the outpost, the fourth republic, the pilot region, etc.) will be more favourable in allowing the marginal periphery to become a region characterized by a greater autonomy and potential power. The answer to this question depends on specific circumstances [see 4; 9; 12; 13; 14; 16; 19; 20].

Philosophical approach to the issue

Current debates on Kaliningrad's problems usually cope without philosophers. There is no doubt that different philosophies meet in these debates, but philosophers aren't directly participating. It is a big paradox of the

recent political debates about Kaliningrad: diverse philosophies clash in these debates, but without the direct participation of the philosophers. This paradox is particularly interesting, because no one has ever earned as much fame for Königsberg as Immanuel Kant did.

Is it really true, that Kant cannot contribute to the present discussion about so-called “Kaliningrad Puzzle”? If we admitted that, a paradoxical situation would occur: famous for his reasoning about international relations, Kant would suddenly become incapable of participating in the discussions about the fate of his native town. A more convincing answer seems to be the opposite — Kant actually can be a competent participant in the debates about the “Kaliningrad Puzzle.” His philosophical works may help to understand some important aspects of the puzzle.

The interconnection of Kant and Kaliningrad topics is an intriguing idea [Williams 2006, p. 27—48]. However the implementation is confronted with a big problem: Kant didn't know the details of the present fate of his native town so the presentation of his attitude might easily turn into poorly reasoned speculations. Still it is not an impossible task. It is needed to sustain the discussion on the level of principles instead of historical details unknown to Kant. Similarly as the Constitution of the United States, which is two centuries old, though still helps to solve many problems of the present-day U. S. society; Kant's political philosophy also can be adapted to understand the new political reality unknown to this author.

Kaliningrad region is a unique phenomenon in the political map of present-day Europe. Its distinctiveness is determined by three main factors. Firstly, Kaliningrad region is a unique legal — political formation invoking particular discussions about the status of its international recognition to the Russian Federation. Secondly, after the fall of the Soviet Union, Kaliningrad region became an exclave (like East Prussia after the Treaty of Versailles) separated from the metropolis by a few hundred kilometres. Thirdly, as a subject of the Russian Federation, this region is compelled to prove constantly its distinctiveness to other territories of the country. This spawns a fair amount of tensions between the region and the central government.

Kant often is described as the creator of the idealistic theory of international relations and his work *Perpetual Peace* is introduced as a classical work of this theoretical paradigm. However Kant would dislike such approach to his work. It contradicts the main intentions of his critical philosophy. Kant was seeking to create a synthesis of empiricism and rationalism, not an idealistic theory. He was interested in something not only transcendently ideal, but also in something empirically real.

When speaking about present “Kaliningrad Puzzle” Kant would firstly say that everyone, who considers it to be only an empirical problem, is mistaken. In his point of view international relations ought not to be reduced to empirical things — the pursuit of profit, military and economical power. Far more important is the respect to the principles of morality and law. The main intention of Kant's political philosophy is well reflected in the distinction between a politician and a statesman, introduced by John Rawls: “the politician looks to the next election, the statesman to the next generation” [Rawls

1999, p. 97]. The politicians become statesmen only by consolidating the principles of legal and political cooperation that are important to the society of all nations.

Kant was convinced that the task of a real statesman was not to change the world's political map. His goal is much more modest and honourable — to take care of the principles of fair political justice, that help to establish a permanent peace between people. By following this viewpoint, Kant's adherent Rawls is arguing that Otto von Bismarck, Napoleon and Adolf Hitler weren't statesmen: they had changed the history of humanity, but they had not created moral and legal premises for a perpetual peace. Following this idea it could be said that by solving the question of Königsberg main actors of the conferences of Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam were only politicians, not statesmen.

It is easy to understand Kant's attitude to the decisions of the Potsdam conference that concern his home city. In the treatise *Perpetual Peace* he unambiguously says that a victorious war does not solve the question of justice [Kant 1991, p. 104]. Kant would severely criticise the decisions of the Potsdam conference. These decisions contradict his conception of international relations. Kant's political philosophy serves well not only for the criticism of unfair decisions of an international peace conference, but also helps to find a solution in complex situations, when the consequences of an unfair political decision has become a rule in everyday life. The analysts of Kant's work often overlook the proposed ways of implementation of the second *Preliminary article*, which is very important for the solutions of controversial problems of the international politics. In Kant's point of view the article that forbid occupation and war, if violated, should not be repaired immediately. Speaking about the implementation of the preliminary articles of perpetual peace he wrote:

All of the articles listed above, when regarded objectively or in relation to the intentions of those in power, are *prohibitive laws* (*leges prohibitivae*). Yet some of them are of the *strictest* sort (*leges strictae*), being valid irrespective of differing circumstances, and they require that the abuses they prohibit should be abolished *immediately* (Nos. 1, 5 and 6). Others (Nos. 2, 3, and 4), although they are not exceptions to the rule of justice, allow some *subjective* latitude according to the circumstances in which they are applied (*leges latae*). The latter need not necessarily be executed at once, so long as their ultimate purpose (e. g. *restoration* of freedom to certain states in accordance with the second article) is not lost sight of. But their execution may not be *put off* to a non — existent date (*ad calendas graecas*, as Augustus used to promise), for any delay is permitted only as a means of avoiding a premature implementation which might frustrate the whole purpose of the article [Kant 1991, p. 97].

This quote shows that Kant indeed would not demand a prompt decision on the Kaliningrad problem. He would agree to delay the implementation of the articles of peace and as some conservative would demand to consider the circumstances. This is flexibility worthy of praise from the advocates of *real*

politik. However Kant did not have even a slightest doubt for the necessity of correcting injustice of bad political decisions. In his opinion the restoration of justice cannot be delayed until doomsday, or as emperor Augustus used to say, *ad calendas Graecas*.

Kant is sometimes presented as the one who philosophically based the idea of the European Union. However that is questionable interpretation of this author's philosophy. Kant wanted much less, than the creators of the present-day European Union. He proposed a federation of states, more resembling contemporary United Nations than the European Union. The later would appear for him like a huge challenge to the sovereignty of the state. In this point of view one has to agree with Habermas, who states, that the idea of the sovereignty was a sacred thing for Kant and that he was talking just about a federation of states, not some political union with a more extensive authority [Habermas 1999, p. 180].

The fall of the Soviet Union created a new situation — closed till 1991 Kaliningrad region today already confronts with what Kant called the “cosmopolitan right” (*Weltbürgerrecht*). Kant believed that “The peoples on the earth have thus entered in varying degrees into a universal community, and it has developed to the point where a violation of rights in one part of the world is felt *everywhere*.” (Kant 1991, p. 107—8) The Kaliningrad region presently is between two cultural and political environments varying in their pace of modernising — The Russian Federation and the European Union. One can try to guess that Kant would suggest the European way to modernisation. However the main question still remains without an answer — would Russia, which is considered by Samuel Huntington a different civilization to its neighbours, want to choose this way [Huntington 1997, p. 99].

Speaking about perpetual peace Kant demanded that “the constitution of every state shall be republican” [Kant 1991, p. 99]. That is a belief not easily compatible with the ideas of true liberalism. True liberal cannot demand the all world to live by his concept of morality and politics. Yet this point of view is acceptable by many people in the present-day European Union. Therefore it is possible to tell that the European future of Kaliningrad region is mostly resting upon the ability of its population to solidify the political principles made by Kant — freedom of citizenry, the supremacy and rule of law. That is probably the most important lesson by Kant to the contemporary citizens of his native town. The creation of a strong civil society is the most important item in the solution of “Kaliningrad Puzzle.”

Kant assumed that the decisions of government must depend on the will and choice of the people. Present-day Kaliningrad region belies some serious demands by the civil society. It is more like a hostage to the central government than a free association of citizens. The citizens that are really free start to treat the affairs as their own. By holding this view of Kant's political philosophy it can be stated that the Kaliningrad region so far did not seize the opportunity to become an association of free citizens. It is possibly the only reliable way for this hostage of the 20th century international policy to become a part of the uniting Europe's cultural and political life.

Strategic capacity of Russia's Government and the need to rule over the exclave

After the Cold War the value of the exclave territory was determined by a combination of several symbolic and strategic reasons. The symbolic reasons were formally reflected in the Russian political rhetoric regarding Kaliningrad/Konigsberg as a World War II trophy that had justly come to belong to Russia. However, such rhetoric rooted in the complications in the status of Kaliningrad Oblast from the standpoint of international law and, as a direct consequence, the impact of the so-called Potsdam Tail.

The strategic reasons were revealed in Moscow's efforts to use up the geopolitical significance of the region, i. e., either to retain the exclave as a military outpost against the West, or to turn it into the window which would enable Russia's structural integration with the West, or to prepare grounds for it to become Russia's geopolitical platform ("a passing pawn") in the European Union. It is noteworthy that any practical implementation of the geopolitical significance of the Oblast was inseparable not only from Moscow attempts at legitimising the World War II gain, but also from attempts at effective governing, i. e., enhancing an institutional base that would warrant political, legal, and economic stability of the exclave [see 3; 7; 11; 14; 16; 17; 19; 20].

a) Legitimation of Judicial Dependence on Russia

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the exclave position of Kaliningrad Oblast brought about specific political, economic, and psychological tensions. The situation was particularly complicated by the fact that geopolitical changes provoked the debate not only over the unique nature of the state fragment, but also over the status of international recognition thereof to Russia.

In the latter case it was claimed that the ties between Kaliningrad Oblast and Russia historically shared a very limited context. The former East Prussia and Konigsberg were annexed to the Soviet Union after the World War II as a tool ensuring the dependence of the Eastern Baltics on the Soviet Union. Otherwise, Moscow had no historical rights to the territory. In other words, it was maintained that the issue of Kaliningrad Oblast was inseparable from the issue of the political future of the Oblast given the fact that the judicial dependence of the Oblast on the Russian Federation was non-final and fixed-term (there was no sovereignty, since at the Potsdam Conference part of East Prussia was annexed to the USSR for temporary administration until peace had been established).

After the "iron curtain" fell down, these explanations were reflected in miscellaneous internationalisation (divisions, condominiums, exterritoriality, decolonisation, autonomisation, independence, etc.) plans emerging in the West and neighbouring countries.

On the other hand, the debates were accompanied by Moscow's conscious attempts at initiating and agitating such discussions. European states

were provoked to restrain officially from internationalisation plans. Neighbouring (intermediate) states, primarily Lithuania, signed contracts and agreements to provide guarantees relating to conditions to secure the sustenance (Rus. — *zhizneobespechenie*) of Kaliningrad Oblast, at the same time documenting “the special interest” in the development of the exclave. In this way the motherland sought to enhance the political argument concerning the organic link of the Oblast with continental Russia, and to substitute the problem of the political future of the Oblast for “technical” issues dealing with the economic and social development of the region.

It should be pointed out that Moscow viewed the issue of the future of Kaliningrad Oblast not only in terms of the influence of the Potsdam Tail in relations with the West, but also in terms of the case of the dependence of the Kurile Islands in relations with Japan, as well as the influence of this case on Russia’s strategy in the Far East in general. In other words, Russia realizes that the absolute territorial legitimacy is unattainable as in the Kuriles, as, possibly to a lesser extent, in Kaliningrad Oblast. Moscow hopes to resolve this problem by creating a favourable balance: it tries to offset the claims related to the legitimacy of its eastern borders, which are harboured by Japan (USA), by the Chinese card, whereas the dependence of Kaliningrad Oblast by that of West European states. By doing so, the Kremlin seeks not only to maintain the status quo in the western and the eastern flanks, but also to keep open the way to its gains in politics, diplomacy, and spheres of influence, including the territorial ones [see 5; 6; 9; 10; 11; 14; 16].

b) Efficiency of Governing

From the standpoint of international law attempts to neutralize the controversy of the status of the Oblast by means of power balance combinations have had direct influence on Moscow’s standpoint on the practical side of the manageability of the exclave.

The Kremlin sought to create the image of Kaliningrad Oblast as an independent subject of the Russian Federation. Although practical implementations of such image varied (governor Yuri Matochkin and the FEZ “Yantar” in 1991—1995, governor Leonid Gorbenko and SEZ in 1996—2000, governor ex-Admiral Vladimir Yegorov, and “the pilot region” in 2000—2005, and the present, “appointed” governor Georgi Boos and “mini-state” plans), however those forms revealed Moscow’s strategy: by imitating the possible independence of the Oblast to convince the local political elite that the federal centre has a plan of development of the Oblast and oversees internal and external levers of its implementation.

Seeking to maintain the Oblast and in the course of time use it as a tool to influence Eurointegration processes, the Kremlin opted for only those ways and decisions which would ensure the implementation of the selected strategy, regardless of whether they corresponded to or contradicted the vital interests of the Oblast. On the other hand, to ensure legitimacy of its actions the motherland was forced to consider their practical side, since absence of efforts directed at the stimulation of the development of the Oblast with its specific situation could result in strengthening of anti-federal moods. This is

why state documents have always emphasized the objective to ensure the development of the Oblast as an inalienable part of the Russian Federation while the federal centre regularly did its best to resolve problems of the Oblast together with local politicians. This was done to extenuate the circumstance that the constant attention to the province was coincidental with Moscow resolving one or another strategic issue. This statement may be illustrated by both the peripeteia concerning the fate of the specific economic regime of the Oblast and by issues of Russian transit, as well as the role of the military elite of the Oblast [see 9; 16; 18; 19; 20].

c) *Military Function of the Exclave*

From the formal standpoint this function aims at enhancing the guarantee of the dependence of Kaliningrad Oblast on the Russian Federation in terms of both the internal and the external aspects.

Speaking of the internal aspect, the remaining degree of militarisation of the Oblast assists Moscow in overseeing the behaviour of the region's political elite. For example, in 1994—1995, the restriction and abolition of the FEZ regime in the Oblast was accompanied by the establishment of a special defence region under the supervision of Russia's Navy Baltic Fleet, directly answerable to the Ministry of Defence and the General Headquarters. During the governor's elections in 2000 the Kremlin almost openly supported Russia's Navy Baltic Fleet Commander, Admiral Vladimir Yegorov, popular in the circles of local political elite and personally loyal to Vladimir Putin (besides, he has been the only admiral-governor throughout the history of the Russian Federation). In late 2005 chiefs of Russia's Navy Baltic Fleet headed by Admiral Vladimir Valuyev unambiguously warned the new governor Boos of the fact that the military elite of the Oblast disapproves of the efforts to enhance economic and cultural cooperation between the Oblast and foreign countries on the grounds that they would facilitate non-violent secession of Kaliningrad Oblast from the Russian Federation.

Meanwhile, speaking of the external aspect it should be pointed out that the military potential of the Oblast is a tool used by the Kremlin in the dialogue with Western Europe (and the USA) concerning maintaining the balance of forces. With respect to that the suppressing function of the Russian military factor eventually goes beyond the borders of the Oblast and embraces at least the Eastern Baltic region. For example, in 1993—1995 as well as spring 2001 Moscow sought to exploit the issue of the Russian military transit to/from Kaliningrad via Lithuanian territory in pursuit of not only to hinder the process of the Lithuania's integration into NATO but also, through political agreements necessary to legitimise this transit, hoping to retain Lithuania within its zone of influence, and on a broader scale, to control the process of expansion of Western structures into the East, coincidentally exerting influence on the geopolitical situation of Central and Eastern Europe. It should be pointed out that during the relevant periods France, and Germany in particular, symptomatically took the non-interference position and even expressed favourable attitude towards Russia with respect to these tendencies [see 9; 10; 11; 16; 18; 19; 20].

The role of other countries and international institutions in the Kaliningrad issue

After the end of the Cold War, a number of Western countries turned their attention to the Kaliningrad issue. It must be noted that neither of them reminded Russia of the complicated legal and political aspects of Kaliningrad Oblast and chose not to raise suspicions about the escalation of separatist tendencies toward the Oblast. Independently from such Western standpoint, which can be understood as an attempt not to alienate, but rather, in the course of time to connect structurally Russia with the West, this position gave Moscow the opportunity of free balancing in the western flank, allowed to substitute the political and legal problem of the exclave for “technical” issues regarding the socio-economic development of the Oblast and to ensure that the attitude of Western states as well as the EU toward Kaliningrad Oblast would be manifested only upon informing Moscow. Finally the “humble” behaviour of the West enabled Russia, which at the time was drawing a direct geopolitical line between Moscow and Kaliningrad, to use it as a tool to hinder the development and integration of Western structures (for instance, by demanding specific decisions regarding the viability of the Oblast as part of the Russian Federation), in other words, turning the exclave into a geopolitical hostage in the relations between the East and the West.

Neighbouring (intermediate) countries, Lithuania and Poland, tried to question such formula of Kaliningrad geopolitics, as they were significantly engaged in the issue of Kaliningrad Oblast, particularly in the times of their own decision-making and its practical implementation regarding gravitation toward the West. They repeatedly tried to draw the attention of the West to Russian foreign policy aimed at the revision of ratio of powers formed under the influence of the Euro-Atlantic integration relying on the concert model of the of large countries and complained that this was being done at the expense of the interests of intermediary states and that the Kaliningrad issue might be exploited in this respect.

As a result, in 1993—1995, Lithuania was supported by the USA and Great Britain in withstanding Russia’s pressure to legitimise military transit through Lithuanian territory. In 2001, the official paradigm “to turn the issue of Kaliningrad Oblast into a priority”, formulated in Vilnius in 1998, was approved by the European Commission and several states of Northern Europe. It must be noted with this respect that initially Moscow had no objections to this paradigm, as it viewed Lithuania’s membership in the EU as a distant perspective and was more concerned with driving a wedge between the USA and Europe as well as fostering mutual relations with the large EU states.

However, having realized the mistake made in the assessment of the scope and rate of Euro-Atlantic Integration, as well as lacking means to stop the process on the one hand, and on the other hand, hoping that the West would fail to integrate those new member states, Moscow proceeded to

openly balance the conflict. Arguing that, since from the standpoint of Kaliningrad Oblast the EU expansion was an external issue, Brussels was responsible for the adaptation of this region of the Russian Federation as well as communication with continental Russia, it sought to modify the structure of the dialogue on the development of Kaliningrad Oblast by eliminating “intermediaries” and negotiating the exclave-relating issues directly with the large EU states and Brussels.

Seeking to neutralize the influence of the Russian factor on the national interests of Euro-Atlantic Integration, Poland and Lithuania tended to reduce their engagement in this dialogue. Upon announcing themselves as “non-transit” states, they in fact enabled Russia to focus on one target — the territory of Lithuanian Republic.

Alongside other preferences for the Russian factor in Lithuanian territory, Moscow demanded an extraterritorial corridor, compromising Vilnius as an obstacle to the normal development of the exclave. Russia simultaneously used mutual relations with the large EU states and, seeking to receive privileges and compensations to all residents of the Russian Federation, exerted pressure on and even overtly blackmailed the European Commission. After the expansion of the EU Russia demanded that a special negotiations format be designed for Kaliningrad-related issues.

The diplomatic relations between the EU and Russia revealed that formally the former accepted the rules of relations posed by the latter. Brussels refused to assume political responsibility for the development of the Oblast and agreed to focus only on those problems which came as a direct consequence of the procedure format of the EU expansion, and did not object to opening European funds to the economic growth of the exclave, basically in accordance with Russia’s terms (the new SEZ law, redistribution of the European financial aid to Kaliningrad Oblast in Moscow, and the allocation of that aid to objects / economic subjects in the exclave as defined by Moscow).

Nevertheless, the essentially new perspective of Kaliningrad Oblast which did not allow for distancing the exclave from the motherland and projected onto it the function of an active Russian geopolitical filling in the space of Eurointegration was made possible thanks to Moscow’s direct strategic contact with the West, specifically, with the most important counteragent in this respect, Berlin. Specific manifestations of this contact may be observed both in the project on North European Gas Pipeline through the Baltic Sea as well as in the new air transport routes: the former direct flights to Moscow and Saint-Petersburg in 2006 were supplemented with the direct flights between Kaliningrad and Berlin (we will just add in this respect that several more routes connecting the exclave and Hamburg and Frankfurt are to appear in the near future). On the other hand, such EU steps may be regarded as attempts to involve Russia in strategic partnership (without rejecting the eventual structural transformation of the latter) by using the factor of Kaliningrad Oblast.

Securing the link between the exclave and the Motherland

Seeking to avoid isolation of the exclave from the territory of continental Russia, to ensure additional safeguards to guarantee the dependence of the Oblast, and to increase influence on the EU integration processes, Russia has employed other means as well. Manipulating the idea of the exclave as "the pilot region", it began to strengthen the mechanisms of the control of the centre over the Oblast: it initiated a new law on SEZ which welcomed the large capital from the motherland and injected investments from abroad, and brought about changes in the political leadership of the Oblast. Boos, the newly appointed governor, undertook radical reconstruction in the administration of the exclave, developed specific projects on the socio-economic transformation and received the Kremlin's approval of the non-conventional modernisation plans of the Oblast. Recently threatening forecasts have been voiced that upon the implementation of these initiatives the concentration of the large Russian capital in the exclave will enable Moscow to attract one more tool in interfering into the economic life of neighbouring countries, while the mechanic increase of the number of the population might affect the formation of the unique residents' identity by making this territory in demographic terms larger than those of Estonia and Latvia and ultimately intensifying the transit routes through Lithuanian territory.

Bearing in mind that, after the end of the Cold War many of the forecasts regarding Kaliningrad Oblasts remained unfulfilled and Russian miscellaneous modernisation plans did not come to be implemented due to a number of reasons, it may be expected that, in order to increase the region's dependence, Moscow will choose to rely on traditional measures, primarily by strengthening the link between the exclave and the motherland.

Traditionally Russia has sought to ensure this link involving the Lithuanian territory, by means of military, passenger, and cargo transit issues. The issue of the Russian military transit to/from Kaliningrad Oblast through the Lithuanian territory was the most sensitive one, raising noticeable pressure between Moscow and Vilnius. The essence of the problem is that Russia sought for specific conditions for its military transit through the Lithuanian territory and tried to legitimise this transit essentially by providing it with the settlement status. Meanwhile Lithuania regarded these endeavours of Russia's foreign policy as a threat to its sovereignty and integration into NATO. As a result, at the beginning of 1995, a compromise on the issue was reached, which while retaining Moscow's possibility to use the transit territory preserved Lithuania's sovereignty. The established procedure of the Russian military transit did not hinder Lithuania's integration into North-Atlantic structures.

As Lithuania was integrating into the EU, a question arose regarding the transit of citizens of the Russian Federation to/from Kaliningrad Oblast. It was resolved in a compromise way and attracted the participation of not only Lithuania and Russia, but also that of the EU. Despite Russia's efforts to institutionalise the issue of cargo transit to/from Kaliningrad Oblast in a specific way, decisions regarding Russian transit of this kind revolve around technical matters. It is noteworthy to point out in this respect that Moscow

puts a lot of efforts to link all the three types of transit. It thus seeks to start applying the specific passenger transit regime to the cargo transit and eventually, to the military transit to/from Kaliningrad Oblast through the Lithuanian territory [see 4; 11; 15; 16; 18; 20].

Programme for further research

Despite the number of studies on the Kaliningrad subject there are just as many questions that await an answer. Perhaps the most paradoxical question can be formulated as follows: *Why has Russia not objected to and even encouraged this exclave territory to be treated as a specific region yet has not permitted this specificity to reveal itself in practice?* It is noteworthy that this paradox cannot be explained exclusively in terms of Russia's subjective goals to play a double game, although one may encounter elements of this game reflecting an inert reaction of the motherland toward the challenges of the geopolitical transformations in the Baltic Sea region.

Further research should be based upon the three trends of analysis. The first trend is an analysis of the geopolitical environment in the Baltic Sea Region, with special attention to trends in the Western policy towards Russia. The second trend is an analysis of Russia's tendencies in foreign and domestic policy. The third trend deals with monitoring the political and socio-economic development of Kaliningrad Oblast. All these trends could explain the further transformation of Kaliningrad Oblast as a geopolitical hostage of The Russian Federation.

Bibliography

1. *Habermas J.* The Inclusion of the Other: Studies in Political Theory Cambridge, Massachusetts, The MIT Press, 1999.
2. *Huntington S.* The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order. A Touchstone Book, 1997.
3. *Kant I.* Political Writings. Cambridge, New York, Port Chester, Melbourne, Sydney, Cambridge University Press, 1999.
4. *Lopata R.* Lithuanian Card in Russian Policy, 1914—1917 // *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 1994. №42. See also in *Lithuanian: R. Lopata. Lietuvių korta Rusijos politikoje (1914—1917 m. slaptasis karas) // Darbai ir dienos: acta et commentationes Universitatis Vytauti Magni*, 1995. №1 (10). P. 43—57.
5. *Lopata R. Žalys V.* Lietuvos geopolitinis kodas // *Politologija*, 1995. №1 (6). P. 13—21.
6. *Lopata R. Sirutavičius V.* Lithuania and Kaliningrad Oblast: a Clearer Frame for Cooperation // *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*, 1999. №3. P. 51—66; *Lithuanian Political Science Yearbook* 1999. Vilnius, 2000. P. 266—276.
7. *Lopata R. Joenniemi P. Sirutavičius V. Vilpišauskas R.* Impact Assesment of Lithuania's Integration into the EU on Relations between Lithuania and Kaliningrad Oblast of the The Russian Federation // *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*. 2000. №2 (6). P. 133—178.
8. *Lopata R.* Die heutige Bedeutung Königsbergs. *Annaberger Annalen // Jahrbuch über Lituaen und Deutsch-Litauische Beziehungen*. 2001. №9. P. 183—189.
9. *Lopata R.* Vis dar užmirštas užkampis: Kaliningrado srities ateitis // *Skaitiniai apie nacionalinį saugumą. D. 2.* Vilnius, 2001. P. 48—52.

10. *Lopata R. Laurinavičius Č.* Karinė reforma Rusijoje: politinės trajektorijos // *Politologija*. 2001. №3 (23). P. 3—20. See also in English: *Russia's Military Reform: Political Trajectories // Lithuanian Political Science Yearbook 2000*. Vilnius, 2001. P. 197—210; *Baltic Defence Review*, 2001. №6. P. 99—110.

11. *Lopata R.* Proč se vynořuji kaliningradske otázky? // *Miezinárodní Polityka*. 2002. R. XXVI, №3. P. 10—11.

12. *Lopata R.* Relations with Russia; Lithuania's Promotion of Regional Security / *R. Lopata, Č. Laurinavičius, E. Nekrašas* et al. Lithuania's Security and Foreign Policy Strategy, CSIS Eastern Europe Project. Washington D.C., CSIS, 2002. P. 34—37, 56—59. See also: *Lithuanian Political Science Yearbook 2001*. Vilnius, 2002. P. 206—208, 222—225.

13. *Lopata R.* Lithuania and the Promotion of Regional Security // *The Great Debate*. Vilnius: Ogamas, 2002. P. 55—66.

14. *Lopata R. Laurinavičius Č. Širutavičius V.* Rusijos Federacijos karinis tranzitas į/iš Kaliningrado srities per Lietuvos teritoriją. *Politologija*. 2002. №4 (28). P. 3—35. See also in English: *Military Transit of the The Russian Federation through the Territory of the Republic of Lithuania*. Lithuanian Political Science Yearbook 2001. Vilnius, 2002. P. 131—158.

15. *Lopata R.* Naujausios Kaliningradistikos apžvalga // *Politologija*. 2002. №1 (25). P. 96—104. See also in English: *Review of the Recent Publications on Kaliningrad*. Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review. 2002. №2 (10). P. 81—88.

16. *Lopata R.* Euroregions: Making the Idea Work // H.M. Birckenbach, Ch. Wellman (eds.). *The Kaliningrad Challenge: Options and Recommendations*. Münster: LIT Verlag, SCHIFF. 2003. Bd. 10. P. 247—256.

17. *Lopata R.* Potsdamo šleifas — “Kaliningrado galvosūkiu” raktas? [rec. kn.: V. Landsbergis. *Karaliaučius ir Lietuva. Nuostatos ir idėjos*. Vilnius: Demokratinės politikos institutas, 2003. 321 p.] // *Politologija*. 2003. №4 (32). P. 117—124.

18. *Lopata R.* The Transit of Russian Citizens to and from Kaliningrad Oblast through Lithuania's Territory / *Kaliningrad in Europe: a study commissioned by the Council of Europe*. Strasbourg, 2003. P. 103—114. See also in Russian: *Lopata R.* Tranzit rossijskich grazhdan iz Kaliningradskoj oblasti i v Kaliningradskuju oblast cherez teritoriju Litvy. *Kaliningrad v Jevrope: issledovanie podgotovleno po zakazu Soveta Evropy*. Strasbourg, 2003. P. 115—127.

19. *Lopata R.* Geopolitinis įkaitas: Rusijos Federacijos Kaliningrado (Karaliaučiaus) srities atvejis // *Lietuvos metinė strateginė apžvalga 2003*. Vilnius, 2004. P. 177—192. See also in English: *R. Lopata. Geopolitical Hostage: the Case of Kaliningrad Oblast of the the Russian Federation // Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review 2003*. Vilnius, 2004. P. 203—220.

20. *Lopata R. Statkus N.* Empires, the World Order and Small States // *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*, 2005. №1—2 (13—14). P. 17—52.

21. *Lopata R.* Kaliningrad Anniversary: the First Steps of Georgy Boos // *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*. 2005. №1—2 (13—14). P. 127—152.

22. *Lopata R.* Kaliningrad otage géopolitique de la Russie: un point de vue lituanien. // *Le courrier des pays de l'Est*, 2005. №1048. P. 30—39; *Lopata R.* Geopolitical Hostage: The Case of Kaliningrad Oblast in the the Russian Federation // *Rindzevičiute E.* (ed.). *Contemporary Change in Kaliningrad: A Window to Europe?* (Baltic & East European Studies 6). Huddinge: Center for Baltic & East European Studies, 2006. P. 35—54.

23. *Rawls J.* *The Law of Peoples with „The Idea of Public Reason Revisited“*. Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, England, Harvard University Press, 1999.

24. *Williams H.* Back from the USSR: Kant, Kaliningrad and World Peace // *International Relations*. 2006. №20. P. 27—48.