

Aleksandr Yemelyanov
Aleksandra Stegniyeenko
Alexei Yashunsky

THE TERRITORIAL STRUCTURE AND APPEARANCE OF KALININGRAD



This article combines two approaches to the analysis of the appearance and territorial structure of Kaliningrad. One approach is based on the field study, the other — on the examination of documents. The former helped define a number of integral regions that were later considered from a historical point of view in order to figure out how the territorial structure and appearance of the city changed in the transition from the German to the Soviet and post-Soviet periods.

Key words: Kaliningrad, historical districts, city districts, division of a city.

Introduction

This article analyses the territorial structure and the appearance of Kaliningrad using two different approaches. On the one hand, the city is described in terms of integral districts demarcated as a result of a field study. On the other hand, the historical prerequisites of their formation are analysed for the districts defined.

Methodology

The field study of the city used the methodology of **Urban Space Differentiation** (USD) aimed to analyse the city as a complex spatial object. The development of the methodology was initiated by the Department of Social and Economic Geography of Foreign Countries at Moscow State University in 2008. It includes, firstly, the algorithm of the field study and, secondly, the ways to systematise and integrate the information gathered. Figuratively speaking, the field stage of the USD consists in gathering numerous pieces of the city's 'puzzle', which later form a bigger picture. When the puzzle is done, it can be interpreted as a whole: the result of such analytical interpretation is the demarcation of integral districts.

It is worth mentioning that the stage of information gathering may include 'non-field' sources but will never rely solely on them. Moreover, the USD can be carried out by means of solely field observations, which is, definitely, an advantage of the methodology.

A standard objection to the use of the USD methodology is the claim that the field study of a city cannot substitute a desktop study based on document sources. However, the target of USD is not to take into account the smallest details but rather to create a general 'picture' of the city. An argument in fa-

avour of the USD methodology is that the students who participated in the field study sometimes orient themselves better than local residents.

The territorial structure and the appearance of the city

At the preparatory stage, we expected something unusual. The city is very special in comparison to an average Russian city, if we can imagine one. Our expectations were met and confounded at the same time.

Speaking of the picture of the city, it is worth considering two aspects: the structure of the city and its appearance. In the case of Kaliningrad, both the structure and the appearance definitely display the traits of Königsberg, as it was called before acquiring the new name. As a result of the 1944 allied bombing and the 1945 Red Army assault, the city, having changed the name, started to take on a new appearance. The territorial structure of the city proved to be more resistant to all external impact: even today it resembles that of Königsberg. Of course, an important factor was high costs of structural changes against the background of the limited funds of the post-war years. At the same time, the analysis of the territorial structure hardly gives grounds for determining the German origin of the city. Probably, it can be explained by the fact that the structural features of a city, unlike its appearance, are of supranational — civilization — character.

The appearance of the city, as mentioned above, has undergone significant changes. The central part of the city, most affected by the military operations, is dominated by the Soviet housing of the 1960—1980s, among which buildings of the post-Soviet period occasionally emerge. Thus, the centre of Kaliningrad looks like most regional centres of the Russian Federation. The remains of German architecture resemble memorials rather than an integral part of the city. However, the farther from the centre, the more incorporated are the parts of old German housing into the city, sometimes giving the outskirts some unexpected features.

It is these two aspects — the stability of the structure and the interweaving of features of different epochs — that we will try to focus on when describing the integral districts of Kaliningrad delineated on the basis of the USD.

Unlike administrative districts demarcated in the city, integral districts imply, to a certain extent, internal integrity and homogeneity. As the 'basic unit' of district demarcation, we used a city quarter. The quarters underwent a procedure similar to clustering, which takes into account the terrain and planning, architectural, functional, and socioeconomic characteristics of quarters, as well as the 'mental' city districts and everyday toponymy.

Zoning resulted into the demarcation of 10 integral districts on the 'continuous' territory of Kaliningrad and 5 satellite settlements.

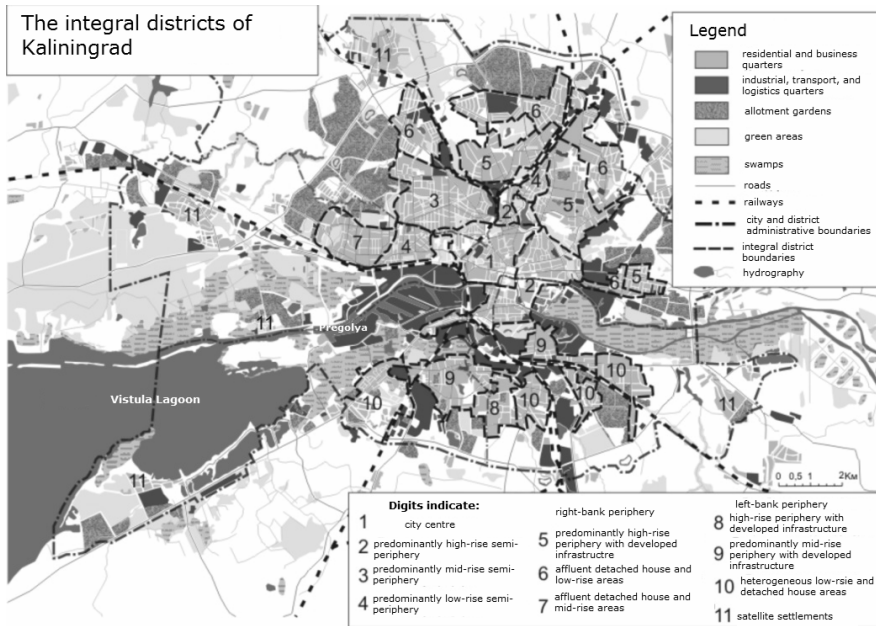


Fig. The integral districts of Kaliningrad

City centre

Although it is rather unusual for a city with ancient history, the 'Central' integral district (marked 1 on the map) is not contingent on the location of any historical architectural sites. The interview of Kaliningraders (524 respondents), which we conducted from January 29 to February 2010, shows that the residents consider the Cathedral on Kant Island (24%), the King's gate (10%), the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour (10%) the most beautiful building in the city. Only one of the three buildings — the King's gate — can be genuinely called historic, but it is situated beyond the 'Central' integral region. The restored Cathedral is located at the site of the historic centre but lies at the border of the 'Central' integral region. Finally, the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, situated in the 'Centre', can hardly be called a historic building considering the time of its construction.

However, the tendency towards the 'sprawl' of the centre to the North from Kant Island (Kneiphof) started as early as the pre-war period according to the maps from the 1930s, which clearly delineate the city centre and the relocation of the City Hall from Kneiphof to Hansaplatz (Pobedy Square) in 1927. The destruction of the remains of the Königsberg Castle in 1968 deprived the historic centre of one of the last centrepieces, which could not be replaced by the unfinished House of Soviets and, probably, indicated the final shift of the centre from the historic 'cradle' of the city. Today, surveys show that Kaliningraders consider Pobedy square the centre of the city

(69%). Pobedy square (45%) and, surprisingly, Marshal Vasilevsky square (36%) are referred to as the main squares of the city.

It is remarkable that the city centre was planned to be moved further to the north-west. This unsuccessful attempt of a change in urban planning, made in 1952, is reflected in the name of the "Central district", which does not coincide with the integral district of the same name.

Thus, the boundaries of the "Central" integral district are predominantly determined by its function rather than by the historic features. The centre is, first of all, the concentration of social and trade infrastructure and transport "hubs". In particular, the "centrality" of Vassilevsky square mentioned by the residents is explained by its "hub" function for periphery districts and the vicinity of a tourist attraction — the Amber Museum.

Semi-peripheral districts

Several districts, which border immediately on the "Central" district (2—4 on the map), can be grouped under the term "Semi-periphery". Historically, those districts are mostly the non-central districts of Königsberg; however, today they are close to the "Centre" not only geographically, but also functionally and often also appearancewise. Like the centre, a considerable part of this territory was ruined at the end of the war and was later rebuilt with standard multi-storey houses.

There is a striking difference between the appearances of the north-western (3, former Hufen) and the western (4, former Amalienau) parts of the semi-periphery, which were least affected by the bombing. There are intact quarters of antebellum German villas. A few buildings erected in the 1970—80s in those districts are low-rise and do not compromise the architectural integrity. The island of low-rise periphery in the North (4) along Thälmann and Leningradskaya streets is the result of the contemporary city development. Despite the modern appearance (which, in some cases, emulates the style of antebellum buildings), one can say that the district is a "successor" to the pre-war district of Maraunenhof, only German villas were replaced by modern ones.

On the whole, the "Semi-periphery" is characterised, first of all, by the vicinity to the "Centre" and, as a result, the extension of the functions of the centre to this territory. Nevertheless, the socioeconomic infrastructure is often associated with main streets and its concentration reduces as the distance from the centre decreases. The territory between the main roads can take on both "Soviet" (2) and "German" (3 and 4) appearance.

A fundamental but not deliberate change occurred in terms of the city structure: once independent environs of Königsberg turned into upmarket and, most importantly, central districts of Kaliningrad. The reason is, apparently, the acquisition of the city district status by villages, which became a part of the city in the first half of the 20th century. Under the pressure of the new periphery, former Hufen and Amalienau almost turned into the city centre while still retaining the suburban appearance.

In the South and East the "Semi-periphery" boundary almost coincided with the "inner city" border — the line of fortifications of the second half of the 19th century. Industrial areas, which have the same function today, emerged behind that border dividing the semi-periphery and periphery districts of Kaliningrad.

Periphery areas

The periphery areas of Kaliningrad are remarkably diverse. There, one can find everything: German houses falling into pieces and huts in allotment gardens, modern blocks of flats and townhouse communities. The "Periphery" includes the outskirts and sometimes the suburbs of Königsberg. Once the "dormitory towns" in the environs of Königsberg, they retained this function in Kaliningrad. Structurewise, these changes are insignificant.

In terms of its appearance, as mentioned above, the "Periphery" spans almost the whole spectrum of residential housing. One of the main criteria for the demarcation of integral districts was the height of buildings. But if the high- and mid-rise "Periphery" districts do look relatively homogeneous, the low-rise districts are an incredible mixture of private housing of unequal comfort and architectural value.

A notable exception to the high-rise "Periphery" districts is the Yuzhny microdistrict (8) distinguished from the neighbouring areas by a number of characteristics. It is one of the few typical 'dormitory' districts in Kaliningrad. The standard multi-storey housing is peculiar to the right bank (5), but there the boundaries are not so clearly seen and lower-rise housing is a common sight. In general, the high-rise districts of the Kaliningrad "Periphery" mostly resemble typical 'dormitory' districts of Russian cities and, unlike other periphery integral districts, lack German features in their appearance.

The southern mid-rise periphery (9) consists, in fact, of two similar parts divided by the railways. A more charismatic part is the western one situated at the site of the Königsberg industrial outskirts called Ponarth. It is this territory that became the core of the now restructured Baltic district (called Balton or Baltraion by the locals). A vivid example of the structural stability of the city is that, apart from numerous mid-rise buildings, the Baltic district inherited from Ponarth the reputation of troubled proletarian outskirts with the highest crime rate in Kaliningrad. And, what is even more surprising, it inherited the local patriotism: a local resident mentioning that they would proudly wear a T-shirt with an "I'm from the Baltic district" print is an immediate successor to the fighters for the autonomy of Ponarth. The district almost did not attain its German appearance: the German "economy-class" blocks of flats alternate with mid- and high-rise post-war building, the blank space between houses can be occupied by allotment gardens, which resembles the private allotments of the left bank districts (10).

The right-bank "reflection" of the mid-rise Baltic region is the Mendeleevo, Vozdushny and other districts (70). The development of these dis-

districts started not long before the war, thus, the German features do not dominate their appearance but mingle with the features of later low- and mid-rise buildings. Unlike the Baltic district, these districts do not have a criminal reputation and, surprisingly, lack local identity. Despite the residents' high opinion of the affluence of the district, no local name of the quarters has developed yet.

If there is a difference between the mid-rise housing of the right and left banks, the low-rise and private housing hardly show any difference at all. The corresponding integral regions (6 and 10) have similar characteristics and the perception of the left-bank districts as less safe is explained, first of all, by the aura of the Baltic district. Although allotment garden communities are not included into integral districts, in reality it is sometimes rather difficult to distinguish them from the private sector: the diffusion processes are taking place on their borders; as a result, permanent private housing appears on the territory of allotment gardens.

Like the northern districts, the southern ones are home to a large number of standard German detached houses. In some places, whole streets retained their pre-war appearance. An example is the settlement of Suvorovo, which not only retained the German architecture and landscape planning but also unofficially bears the old German name — Spandienen. It is even more widespread than the official ones, which is highly uncharacteristic of Kaliningrad¹. However, in most cases, standard German houses are supplemented by numerous extensions so that their appearance is radically altered, but a rare house owner would take down a German building and build something from scratch.

Contemporary detached house quarters seldom spread to the districts of standard German houses; nevertheless, the number of the detached houses is increasing. Moreover, the townhouse community at the west end of Yemelyanova Street can be considered as an attempt at a structural change: the establishment of an upmarket district on the left bank does not violate the old Königsberg structure. However, it is early to analyse the results of this experiment.

The integral districts of the private sector periphery of Kaliningrad are characterised by poorly developed infrastructure and landscape planning and limited vehicular access: transport routes run only through the main streets. Despite all later architectural developments, the appearance of these districts is mostly determined by the standard pre-war housing style.

Satellite settlements

Satellite settlements (11), integrated into Kaliningrad or Königsberg, deserve a special overview. These are the Alexander Kosmodemyansky settlement, Pribrezhny, Bolshoye Borisovo, Maloye Borisovo, Chkalovsk, and Pregolsky.

¹ According to our survey, Spandienen is the second most well-known in the city German toponym after Kneiphof.

The settlement of Pribrezhny in the south-west of the city is situated at the site of the villages of Heide and Waldburg, where an aristocratic manor was built in the second half of the 19th century. The "backbone" factory manufacturing construction materials was established there only in the 1930s; it retained its specialisation after the restoration in the 1950s becoming a reinforced concrete production plant. There is no trace of the then manor: now Pribrezhny is a worker's settlement with standard housing, basic infrastructure and weak connection to the city. The last factor is the main reason to distinguish Pribrezhny as a separate integral district.

Bolshoye and Maloye Borisovo are direct heirs to the village of Krausen. Military units were stationed there as early as the 1930s. And today, Borisovo is, in fact, a military town: since the 1995 its "backbone" institution is the Kaliningrad Military Institute of the Border Service. The housing stock of Bolshoye Borisovo is standard mid-rise buildings; Maloye Borisovo is dominated by low-rise pre-war blocks of houses. The moderately developed but pronounced infrastructure of Bolshoye Borisovo gives grounds to characterise it as a satellite settlement rather than a distant peripheral district.

Another "military" suburb is Chkalovsk (former Tannenwald). The district was integrated into Königsberg in 1939. Chkalovsk maintained not only the general military function but also the specialisation — a settlement at an airfield. Although this statement seems controversial, Chkalovsk apparently inherited the general affluence of Tannenwalde. In comparison to Borisovo, it has new housing, a more developed infrastructure and more comfortable transport connections to the city centre.

The Aleksandr Kosmodemyansky settlement, earlier Metgethen, has been a part of the city since 1928. Prior to the war, it was an upmarket district, easily accessible by train. Today, bus routes link the settlement to the city centre, but the trip takes twice as much time as by train — 40 minutes. The settlement can no longer be considered an upmarket one; however, it retained some German features. Two parts can be distinguished within the settlement: the one with the mid-rise standard housing of the Brezhnev era and the low rise one dominated by the pre-war detached houses.

The settlement of Pregolsky is the one that resembles a developed satellite settlement most. Instead of the settlement of Holstein, which was integrated into Königsberg in 1928, the area is occupied by a private housing with a poorly developed infrastructure and is famous for transport problems rather than the castle of Holstein, which remembers Peter the Great (however, the castle almost lost its initial appearance due to the reconstructions).

Conclusions

The descriptions of the districts given above suggest that, despite the considerable damage inflicted in the transition from the "German" to the "Soviet" period, the city retained its initial territorial structure. The cases where the established structure determined the development of the district outnumbers those where the structure changed independently or due to external influence.

Having analysed the appearance of different parts of the city, we arrived at the conclusion that Kaliningrad experienced almost total replacement of the "German historical" city centre with a "standard Soviet" one. Today, due to the construction of the Cathedral and modern shopping malls in the main square of the city, the city increasingly acquires the features of an ordinary Russian city. At the same time, the transition was smoother for the outskirts. And as a result, certain German features are still maintained in the appearance of the city and are sometimes seen in the new housing.

We would like to thank all participants of the 2010 expedition of the Student research society (T. Achkasova, A. Vitkovsky, D. Yelmanov, K. Gavdifattova, R. Goncharov, Ye. Gorokhova, A. Zavarukhin, I. Kuritsyn, T. Lebedkova, O. Merkusheva, P. Sapanov, S. Tarkhov, I. Chistyakov, A. Hegai) and our Kaliningrad colleagues for their help in gathering and processing the factual material used in this article.