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RUSSIA and its KALININGRAD MIRROR:

A geopolitical THEORIZATION of ULTRA-PERIPHERAL RUSSIA.

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Created between 1945 and 1946, the small Oblast' of Kaliningrad is an ethnically Russian autonomous entity of the Russian Federation but locked from the Russian mainland since the end of the USSR between Poland, Lithuania and the Baltic. A very strategic territory since its birth, it has become again a hot spot in the context of East-West new rivalry since 2014 and remains the symbol of Russian Victory over the IIIrd Reich. But it also claims the legacy of German East Prussia along with its Polish and Baltic history. Is this enclave then an exception within Russia as might show its situation on the map, its size, its isolation, its apparent youth and its non-Russian old history, or isn't it the archetype of an ultra-peripheral ethnically Russian Russia, the archetype of what we shall call « Peri-russia » ? After an overview of the region within Russia (Question I). The author considers first the self-perception of the federal territory in the Russian culture and the territorial and maritime traditional perceptions of Kaliningrad inherited from its seamen (Question II), then the federal policy of uniformizing identity-building and the Kd regionalist identification (Question III), finally the perception by Moscow and NATO of Kd as a front-line and the very ambiguous interrelations between the Oblast' and its present-day or former neighbours (Question IV). He shows that the case of Kd is an extreme one but does belong to a peculiar type of Russian region to be compared with the other furthestmost peripheries of Russian.

Keywords : Russia, geopolitics, ultra-periphery, East Prussia, regionalism, identity formation, NATO, Lithuania, Poland, Germany, Belarus.

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Introduction: the enigma called Kaliningrad

What is the oblast' of Kaliningard (hereafter Kd)? When one takes any political map of Europe, one sees that this Russian territory, situated between the Baltic, Poland and Lithuania, is cut off from the rest of Russia most oddly, a way apparently unique in Europe. It is an enclave or, better to say, an exclave, a term de facto almost only used about Kd. Beyond this situation there is like an enigma. First, why is there such a Russian enclave in the middle of Central Europe? Doubtlessly, there is some strategic issue here since Kd is also a military base, but the mystery remains. How was this territory created? Why is it a full region whereas it could have been a mere military base like Gibraltar? Now it is not a Baltic Gibraltar. This Russian administrative region has a size equivalent to the one of Corsica.

In Kd, some have nicknamed their own region «Stalin's joke». Why indeed does this territory belong to Russia rather than to Lithuania whereas both were Soviet Republics until 1991? And couldn't it have been also included into Belarus which would not have been so far away with some little intermediate appendix to unite them? By the way, Kd is not much less populated than its neighbours of the Baltics since it hosts in 2016 about one million inhabitants (i.e. almost Estonia's population). It would then also have the requested size to be an independent entity... And still it is a piece of Russia, more precisely an autonomous federate entity (an «oblast' », equal to a German *Land*) of the Federation of Russia with its own governor and its own ministers. Isn't there any seed of regionalism in this territory? The Russian and the Western press have already mentioned several times a Kaliningrader "separatism". Quid in reality? Aren't Kaliningraders ethnically Russians? And is Kd's administrative autonomy exceptional in Russia?

One also hears that Kd City used to be known as Königsberg, a German city and the motherland of philosopher Immanuel Kant, and the capital of E.Prussia. It is even in this city that the origin of the Kingdom of Prussia and thus of the Bismarckian IInd Reich does lie. Yet nowadays this city and all its region are Russian. How did happen the transformation of a region so German into a Soviet region and now a Russian one? And what happened to the Germans? When one asks the Muscovites about Kd, one often hears two contradictory answers. Either they mention a city of Kaliningrad-Korolëv situated in their suburbs, or they start saying that Kd is this region of Russia where one speaks German. But do they really speak German in Kd after 1945? No, and yet there are Germans in Kd indeed but they came from the Volga through Kazakhstan...

Now the territory of E.Prussia does not exist any more. It was divided between the Lithuanians, the Russians and the Poles. Yes but though the annexation of the N. part and of the S. part by the Lithuanians and the Poles respectively made their piece of E.Prussia disappear on the map, Russia's piece, in its turn, is visible from 1991 on. Does this central part of E.Prussia, nowadays Russian, have a special link with its geop. predecessor?

What does Germany, the former landlord, think about it? The FRG is interested in

its former E. territories which still do belong to its memory and culture and whose inhabitants have in fact been expelled westwards in the immediate post-war era. The Germans sometimes still speak about "Königsberg" instead of «Kd». Do they keep claiming this Russian E.Prussia? In Moscow, one does still fear the return of the Germans. And in Kd, some Russians would like to return their city and their Russian oblast' the Prussian name of Königsberg, i.e. «the King's hill», that would replace «the city of Kalinin», a Soviet leader definitely little known, and today even less than ever, and who never came to Kd. Some others voice a new name, Kantgrad, «Kant's city», a German philosopher who, in his turn, never went out of Königsberg. What do these Russians fetch when claiming a past which is not historically theirs and which is even potentially dangerous for the legitimacy of their own presence in this place?

Now paradoxically, Kd is the Mekka of the Victory over the IIIrd Reich since WW2 had started around the question of the link between the then German exclave of E.Prussia and the Reich, across Polish Pomerania, a territory considered by Berlin as a «corridor». Kd is also the sole piece of the former Reich to have become a part of Soviet Russia, which makes this territory quite an exceptional one. Are then "Kd Russians" Soviet people, Russians, or Königsbergers? And what do they intend to become?

Kd is by the way called Królewiec in Polish and Karaliaučius in Lithuanian, as if the two countries encircling nowadays the Russian oblast' also had claims on it. But NATO's Charter forbids it. And yet Kd was part of German E.Prussia. Wasn't it with these very territory that the USSR wanted to pay Poland for the losses that it suffered in the E.: Grodno, Wilno, Lwów, etc, in favour of the USSR? As for Lithuania, NATO's charter does not prevent its MPs and ambassadors to call the Russian oblast' «the oblast' of Karaliaučius » and even «Lithuania the Minor ». Is it then a Lithuanian land or was it so once? And when, since W.European memory only knows German E.Prussia?

But this same E.Prussia once belonged to Poland-Lithuania, and even earlier it had been the country of a an autochthonous particular Baltic people, the Borussians (or Pruthenians or old-Prussians¹), culturally tied to Lithuania. Do these historical strata keep any influence nowadays?

From 1945 to 1991, Kd Oblast' was closed to foreigners since it was a military zone. And some scholars claim that even the Russians had no access to it. But in this case how did arrive these hundreds of thousands of Russians who form the present-day local population? And have these Soviet Russians really lived cut-off from the World for 45 years, closed in their fortress of Kd ? Were they all soldiers living in a gigantic garrison ? And how is it possible then to find in Kd several Soviet people who mastered well before 1991 languages such as Portuguese and Yemeni Arabic?

Kd is generally depicted as a «showcase». But this showcase is above all the exhibition of great Baltic mottoes: "Hong-Kong of the Baltic", "Macao of the Baltic",

¹ It shall be noticed that in all the languages, this people has a very fluctuating name. Even in German, which is yet the tongue of the Teutonic Knights, the most involved by this issue, there is some hesitation between *Preussen* (which is meanwhile synonymous of German « Prussians » thus improper), *Prussen* and *Pruzen* (the latter being preferred by the most recent specialists, like Stephanie Zloch). Russian language hesitates between *Prusy*, *Prušane* and *Borusy*. Only Polish has a unique and unequivocal name: *Prusowie*.

"Singapore of the Baltic", "Strasburg of the Baltic"... But is there really anything in common between former British or Portuguese colonial trading posts in a developing China, the former secessionist ethnically Chinese capital of Malaysia, and Kd Oblast' which is not a capital and is not a mere city but a full region depending on a developed post-Soviet Russian in conversion and little integrated in World trade? As a "Strasburg of the Baltic", Kd should be «a bridge with the EU". But not only it is not a bridge but the Kders must ask the EU for a Schengen visa to go to Moscow or St-Petersburg by car or by train. Invented as early as the 1990s in Russia or elsewhere, none of those mottoes received the least beginning of achievement up to 2016. Kd seems to be a land of utopia. Utopia, in Greek ou-topia, means "no-where", the place that does not exist. Now indeed there are Russian-made maps of Russia and used in Russia on which Kd does not exist indeed. This territory was just forgotten by its cartographer. Isn't it a little bit more than some coincidence? Is not it rather the sign of some utopian vocation of this territory? A purely Soviet territory built on a *tabula rasa*, in a Prussian country that did not exist any more (thus once again an "utopia") and secondly deprived from its original ideology by the full crisis of 1991, and even from its Fatherland, the USSR, which suddenly vanished, Kd appears as an ideologically "empty" territory which seems to call for utopias especially if they look prestigious (Hong-Kong, Macao, Singapore, all being dreams of increased wealth).

Simultaneously, "showcase Kd" has a "black fame". It stands for Soviet vandalism which dynamited the remnants of Königsberg Castle in 1967, one generation after the end of the war, and to build instead a "House of Soviets" looking like a "Lego" cube. And, according to some Western leaders, Kd has become the "Russian hell-hole in C.Europe", because of corruption, of organized crime, of poverty, of sanitary, social and ecological disasters. It is said to be an actual global threat for its neighbours of the EU. In Moscow some repeat the same expressions. But if it were true, why do each year thousands of Siberian young post-graduates come to settle there? How is it that this Russian oblast' is so attractive whereas the neighbouring regions of Poland and Lithuania are each year more depopulated by mass-emigration to the British Isles? And why then those rumours about that "hell-hole" and where do they come from?

Today, in 2016-2021 the forces of NATO, of Russia, of Belarus and even of China gather and show off inside or all around the Oblast', on land, on sea and in the air. Troops encircle it, missiles are being set in it: the Oblast' is threatened, the Oblast' is threatening. US forces are now in Poland, which is planned to become the core of the E. half of NATO; and Kd is the HQ of the Russian Baltic Fleet. But what are such huge stakes at the World scale in such a small and apparently so weak territory? And finally, might this oblast' just survive in the long run, in view of its enclaveness and in view of the surrounding major military tensions?

At each step we make, we see sets of questions rising from all sides. Kd is an actual *terra incognita*. The Muscovites seem not to know much better "their" Far-W. Oblast' than do the Westerners who observe it from even further with "Orientalist" eyes. Nobody seems to know clearly whether Kd is still the USSR or still E.Prussia or

something else. The incomprehensible Russian oblast' makes people afraid and inspires irrational discourses and images. On the other hand, everything related to Kd seems contradictory: it is Soviet but German, poor but attractive, claimed by its neighbours but ill-integrated in its own political Fatherland, it is a "showcase" but a "hell-hole"... Kd seems to be the focal spot of tensions but those are not only politico-military ones. This land is the topic of rumours, of rival propagandas distorting even more completely the often utmost paradoxical situation observed in reality. It is finally the whole context of Kd that is missing, a context all the harder to reconstitute and to expose that it is really multiple, divided, heterogeneous. And such is my task in this book.

The topicality of the issue is hot. It is firstly the War in Syria (2011) then, above all, the War in the Ukraine (since February 2014) straining Russian-Atlantic relations and involving most especially Kd, the Mekka by excellence of their real and symbolic expression, as proved by the Russian-Chinese naval exercises in Summer 2017. Kd has become a hot spot in the centre of international relations at World scale.

The local identity issue remains paramount and under debate: the local "Neo-Prussian" particularism is strong but Russification is more and more seriously carried out by Moscow. The German cultural influence, accepted until recently, is partly jeopardized in a context of new international tensions.

In the economic field, the regime of Special Economic Zone (SEZ) ended in April 2016 and has opened on much uncertainty about the development of this Russian region. On the other hand, the legal status of Kd within the Federation keeps being the topic of tense internal debates (should the Russian region become a "Republic" like the Crimea, an Over-Sea Territory "à la française", should it have an ad hoc status, or become a direct dependence of the War Office, or remain a "classical" oblast'?). The current status keeps being contested in Moscow as well as in Kd.

Finally, the question of the N.Stream, a Baltic pipeline whose security depends on the Oblast', has grown in importance since the cancellation of the other projects (S.Stream, Turk Stream) in 2014-15, strengthening the Russian interests in the Baltic, thus Kd's part.

The topic of my research is the geop. identity of this territory, defined as the set of Russia's perception, of Kd's self-perception and of the local identification of the inhabitants; those three are in their turn in the middle of a triple complex interrelation between power, population and territory with the latter as the focus. Defined as such, my topic must necessarily be studied at a double scale, the Russian federal one, and at Kd's regional one, indeed Kd, yet autonomous, depends on Russia and this oblast' is fully part of the general Russian context which is also the post-Soviet one. The topic of my research is permanently rooted in the complex relation USSR-Russia-Kd and this leads logically to consider the whole of Russia itself and more specifically its ultra-peripheral territories from the particular case of Kd which is their « mirror » and to study how Kd's issue sheds light on what ultra-peripheral Russia itself is. The chronological limits of the

research may be defined a priori as focused on the era stretching from the end of the USSR in 1991 (giving birth to Kd as an enclaved/exclaved entity) to July 2016 when we ended our investigations. But actually as far as my research topic is a territory, and as far as it is therefore part of a very long time perspective, my point is necessarily diachronic. From the situation prevailing since 1991, a permanent flash-back to the geop. situations of previous eras, both near (the Soviet era) and remote ones (historical geopolitics of German E.Prussia and of Baltic Borussia), is indispensable to understand the evolution of Kd Oblast' and the one of the functions ascribed to it by Russia nowadays. These functions are partly inherited from previous eras and the same functions strikingly reappear in the course of history. I have systematized this diachronic method.

As a result I can define my research topic as a triangle encompassing the geop. identity of Kd Oblast', the one of ultra-peripheral Russia whose it is a part, and the one of E.Prussia: its geopolitical predecessor. The latter implies to take into consideration the issue in a geographical and historical context which is Slavic, German and Baltic (both in the geographical and ethnic meanings).

Such a territory, from the point of view of geop. identity, involves great issues at stake and numerous questions. Which communications between the federate Subject and the federal State and what are the problems involved? At a deeper level, which relation does such a remote territory have with the Russian core, in view of the actual difference of interests involved by geographical position? Which link does Kd keep with foreign pasts (Polish, German, Baltic), with the Russian one and with the USSR's since the Oblast's history only starts in 1946 ? Actually, E.Prussia is "a territory of all vacua" since the "disappearance" of its aboriginal Borussian inhabitants and its transformation into a colonial and ideological territory by the missionaries who settled there, Teutonic monks, Lutheran ministers, German nationalists, Soviet Marxists-Leninists and current Orthodox Russians. This involves then the issue of the rooting of population and of Russian power, both federate and federal. It involves therefore the issue of the legitimacy of the Oblast's very existence because the latter is contested by its neighbours claiming it, or by NATO who threatens it. Such a jeopardy is utmost noteworthy since it is not limited to a mere border issue and deserves deepest analysis. Hence one must ask what part Kd may play in the territorialized geop. relations between Russia and these States or organizations, and which troubles weigh on Russian Kd because of these relations.

The problematics that I shaped is thus the following: is Kd oblast' an ad hoc exception in Russia's geop. set, as might show its situation on the map, its size, its isolation, its historical youth and its old non-Russian history, or isn't it rather meaningful of some other dimension of Russia? Following our theory of the "geopolitics of the Back", would not it be the archetype of another Russia, that of ethnically Russian ultra-peripheral borderlands whose geop. identity is fundamentally discrepant from the one of C.Russia? Since the notion of ultra-peripheral Russia goes beyond Kd, it will lead us, throughout the book, to compare Kd's case with other Russian regions of this type to

highlight its common or original characteristics.

These questions are answered by my thesis: Kd is the Far-Western mirror of ultra-peripheral Russia's geop. identity; not only is it the reflected image in this mirror meaningful of what this Russia is, but also this reflection perhaps has influence on Russia itself.

My research starts from some hypotheses. The first is that Kd comes directly from a Russian-Soviet geop. ambition which is the Drive to the West and to the ice-free seas. Kd was conceived by the USSR to cast itself westwards, not only by the legal extension of the Soviet territory and the foundation of a new province, Kd Oblast', but also by the will to throw its naval forces (military and non-military ones), as far westwards as possible, namely towards the winter ice-free seas, towards the Danish Straits and the Atlantic, thus towards "the World Ocean". This ambition is Russian and Soviet since the USSR who achieved it in Kd in 1945 was following perfect geop. continuity with the Empire of Russia.

Hence, and this is my second hypothesis, I suppose that there is a phenomenon of connected vessels between two spheres, the State's one with its Baltic or oceanic interests, and the population's one who may well not be a victim but the heir of the State's ambitions that it transfers into other fields, including identity. Kd's geop. identity enables thus to raise the deepest issue, namely where to fetch identity seeds in a region apparently and willingly born ex nihilo.

Such a topic, from the point of view of theoretical geopolitics, enables to observe how a territory turned into a *tabula rasa* in 1945 is little by little constituted, settled, integrated into another society, culture, State, which makes this oblast' a topic with universal meaning, and all the more outstanding because of its extreme situation.

Kd seems to be a colonial territory i.e. a territory built on an ethnic *tabula rasa* from 1945 on and which was then entirely resettled by Soviet Russians. As a result Kd is one of the few territories of the Federation of Russia to have been completely created by the USSR, in an ideological and historical really Promethean frame. Kd is thus first of all a Soviet land, far more than a "Russian" one. And it is also a territory whose genesis is a recent one and whose integration into Russian culture and representations is not completed yet: a cultural ultra-periphery. If some historians rightly wrote that "Russian is a country colonizing itself", it is truer in Kd than anywhere else in Russia, in an oblast' born from immigration and keeping to be attractive in the migration field. How then does the integration of such a "new" and Soviet oblast' into Russia (redefining itself with regard to the Empire of the Romanov and to the USSR) take place?

Kd's geop. identity refers to the USSR and thus to the complex relation between the USSR and Russia in a triangle Russia-Kd-USSR. Kd is here as a vivid territorial ghost who seems to ask from the Far-West, like Christ on the cross: "Father, Father, why have Thou abandoned me?». The issue of Kd's geop. identity is thus to a large extent a

legacy issue. Indeed Kd suffers from the weight of the major geop. disaster that was the internal collapse of the USSR for the Russian State and even far more so for its ultra-peripheries. Kd is its living witness, it is the survivor of a greater Baltic Soviet region (*Pribaltika*) mutilated up to 3/4, physically cut-off from Muscovy with guilty silence of the latter, who is insensitive, out of the Army circles, to the amputation of its Baltic shore and its local "compatriots". The issue goes far, inside Russia as well as into the Near Abroad and refers to the calamitous management of the end of the USSR and of Russia's declaration of sovereignty: Kd has appeared as a peculiar entity and as "a problem" **because of** the birth of the new Federation of Russia.

Here geop. identity reasserts its international dimension since the Russians of the Baltic are not only those of Kd but also those of the Baltics, submitted to other sovereignties of course, but who are meanwhile the heirs of the same Soviet State, of the same Balto-Teutonic region, and of the same Western tropism. Hence, from the State's point of view and from the populations' one, Kd's issue goes far beyond the Oblast' and involves a whole world which to some extent turns around it. Which part may Kd play in the identity building and geop. construction of the Baltics' Russians?

On the other hand, Kd seems at first glance to be what some have framed "*Rootless Russia*"². This territory is supposed to have no history, no past, therefore no future. But this argument could no less be applied to the USA, the country without past. Now, in the name of power, one does not apply that argument to this country. The current US power and their imagined future seem to be enough for their legitimation. Why should it be different in the case of Kd? And, on the other hand, does Kd have really neither past nor history? Perhaps, in fact, this history has just not been written yet i.e. not gathered yet into a consistent set. Being Russia's Baltic territory (*Baltijskij kraj*), Kd comes paradoxically within the scope of a long history. It is not the surgeon of the sole "Soviet empire" nor a mere invention of winning Stalinism of the late 1940s. Kd would rather be de facto the heir of at least three different histories:

- 1- the one of Russia's ambitions on E.Prussia,
- 2- the one of Russia's Baltic Provinces and Baltic SSR which have no other heir than the Oblast',
- 3- the one of Russia's Baltic ambition embodied by St-Petersburg and the Baltic Fleet whose Kd is the see.

But we believe that the territory on which is built Kd also is a bearer of some identity by itself. In Kd's case, the territory is fundamental since it is it which gives the most certain continuity in a region that is the arena of contradictory historical strata destroying each other. Now Kd is geographically "a Prussia", namely the old Duchy of Prussia that many people simplify too often as E.Prussia whereas E.Prussia also is Polish Warmia-Mazuria and Lithuanian Memelland (Klaipeda). Does the Duchy of Prussia have really no influence over a Russian land in search for identity? And above all,

2 Misiunas R : « Rootless Russia : Kd_Status and Identity » *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 2004

doesn't XXIC Russian Prussia follow the very destiny or at least the very geop. path of the Duchy, itself an old land of German colonization on Baltic substratum? Wasn't the eradication of the German presence by Russian-Soviet conquerors achieved in the very name of the eradication by the Germans of the old Baltic presence "avenged" by the USSR, a country who wanted to be the World's righter of wrongs, the enemy of any colonialism? Isn't there then an E.Prussian "spirit of the place" (*genius loci*) in Kd ?

I then reach the hypothesis that Kd is also a symbol. The Oblast' is first of all a topic of discourses. It is in fact very scarcely mentioned for itself, and almost always as the extension or projection of some other territories. Similarly to Vietnam's case who, in US geop. vision of 1954-75 was not considered as a humble under-developed newly decolonized Nation-State but as the threatening extension of a gigantic USSR-China Bloc, the Russian Baltic entity is seen neither in Russia nor outside Russia as a small Russian "federate Subject" with one million inhabitants. When one speaks about "Kd" in Central or W.Europe or in the USA, one most often speaks about something completely different or about other countries. They speak about « Lithuania the Minor », a land of Lithuanian nationalistic imaginary; they talk about E.Prussia, a dead Germanic country; they mean Russia's power and above all that of the USSR whose Kd is supposed to be the threatening heir, in Westerners' eyes. In Russia, it is true to a wide extent too. "Kd" stands for the Baltic Fleet, for Russia's power, Russia's border, Russia's Victory, Russia's honour (in the visa issue as well as in the Victory issue), and it is indeed some "square Russia-USSR". Kd also is the symbol of the millennium-long struggle between the Germans and the Slavs. Finally, there is hardly anything about Kd itself. We almost always, from all sides, hear Cold-War-like global geop. narratives. We see that one of the crucial questions for the Oblast's geop. identity is therefore to determine how one uses key-elements, important ones, prestigious ones with which is vested a "void", secondary, ultra-peripheral territory. Which meaning and which value are given to a new-born land imagined by a society, or even by several ones. And what are the consequences of such a process?

An enigma, Kd is such too in terms of geographical coordinates. An essential work is thus to situate Kd in a territorial environment: where does the Oblast' lie and above all which regions does it belong to? The answer is not obvious at all. The Oblast' refers to an utmost complex geographical system since it belongs at the same time to:

- _Russia (1), in which Kd is a mere island-like ultra-periphery;
- _the Baltics (2), with Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania i.e. to *Pribaltika* according to Soviet military and economic geography;
- _the Slavic edges of the Baltics (3) where Kd appears side by side with Klaipeda, the regions of Vilnius, Riga, Latgale, Tallinn and Narva;
- _the USSR (4), of which it was the Far-Western shore and the Front, i.e. a place of military excellence, more a member of the State's core than the other Baltics;
- _the Slavic bloc of the E.(5), whose it is both a symbol (Victory of the Slavs over the

Germans) and one of the HQ (that of the Fleet of the Warsaw Pact); this region is deeply tied with the Oblast's birth in 1945-46;

_Polish-Lithuanian C.Europe also known as *Rzeczpospolita* (6), in which it is "enclaved" or rather embedded and to which Kd's territory belonged in the modern era as an autonomous entity;

_ *Mitteleuropa* (German C.Europe) (7) as former E.Prussia; this circle and the previous one have a traditional historical and cultural meaning that the post-1991 era has revived;

_ a Circum-Baltic region (8), seen as a maritime set and whose Kd is a part, in particular thanks to its fleets;

_ "the Russian World" (*russskij mir*) (9), a new Russian territorial concept that I shall analyse;

_ a historically Ethno-Baltic greater World or "Pan-Baltic World" (10), encompassing Lithuania, Latvia, Belarus, C-W.Russia, as well as the three pieces of E.Prussia, and Mazovia, a space whose relevance as regards Kd will be tested for the first time in the geop. field.

These are as many unequal territorial levels and more or less concentric circles enabling to catch the nature of the Russian Subject. These spaces form a part of the theoretical tool-set of this study. They are obviously heterogeneous: Russia is a State i.e. a strong political reality; the USSR is a political reality too but it is over; most of the other "circles" are constructed regions with some political, historical or cultural content but apparently with no reality as such (or with no reality any more). These « circles » enable obviously to set the Oblast' at different scales but also to observe it in diverse geop. situations stretching from periphery to centrality; one sees therefore that Kd's function depends on the very space in which it is considered. The Oblast' is thus far from being just an "enclave in the EU" and a Russian exclave. Among these circles, some certainly prevail over the others. It is obvious in the case of Russia and the USSR, but in the other cases, one shall evaluate their geop., historical and cultural weight in what is nowadays Kd.

Russia's Baltic, German, European ambitions which condensed in the formation of the Baltic Oblast' do certainly also have some influence over its inhabitants. They seem to perceive themselves as "C.European Russians", as Russians of the Baltic, or even as "German Russians", an issue that I shall deepen to understand their actual layers.

Kd is always considered as a region of Europe, be it Russian, Slavic, German, ethnically or geographically Baltic. But Russia, since 1991, has undergone an evolution towards a "Eurasian" self-perception. How is then made the link between these two perceptions? This fundamental geographical question leads to the hypothesis that the relation between Kd and Russia is part of the context of a "Europe/Eurasia" dialectic opposition. The more Russia asserts itself as "Eurasia" (or as part of an even greater Paneurasia), the further it gets from Kd and the more Russia sees this Oblast' born at the

time of "Soviet Europe" as something foreign referring to that C.Europe and those Baltics who left the Russian World. Reciprocally, the more Kd is integrated in Russia, the more Russia recovers its (C.)-European territorial anchoring.

Finally, Kd certainly is contested and ignored in Russia, but it is far more so abroad. In fact, as far as I know, no other Russian oblast' excites such a jeopardy of its legality, its legitimacy, and even its very existence. Why such a radical questioning of this territory? What leads foreign States, near ones (Lithuania, Poland, Germany) or remote ones (UK, USA), to be so hostile to Kd? Are there really exceptional stakes in Kd? And when did this rhetorical and legal struggle about this land start? Was it in 1991, in 1945 or even far earlier? Isn't this matter related, as so many others are, to the "Prussian" issue?

Such are the main research lines that this work, willingly fundamental in its approach, will follow. They enable us to build our research around a general "Russia / Kd" dialectic which is the dialectic of the Far-W. mirror. It will be studied according to three major issues. Firstly according to the geographical model. Russia depicts itself openly as a continental State whereas Kd is a maritime and insular entity, hence a "continentality / oceanity" dialectic (Chapter II). Now our hypotheses have shown the weight of the dynamic of territory appropriation; the latter is a russification such as it is seen from Moscow and wished by federal power, whereas the same process is a rooting which goes towards a local allogenization. Hence a "russification / allogenization" dialectic (Chapter III). Finally, Kd is a border zone, seen as a front by Moscow (and by its foreign rivals) but the Oblast' considers itself and behaves as a borderland more or less opened to its geographical and historical neighbours; hence a "front / alternative Worlds" dialectic (chapter IV). The whole will be introduced by a necessary general presentation of the Oblast' and its geographical, historical and political characteristics (Chapter I).

My geopolitical approach

Geopolitics such as I consider it, as part of critical geopolitics, is thus the study of a system of interrelations between three elements, territory, which lies at the centre of the analysis (which justifies its inclusion into the field of geography), the State (or power), and population. The interrelations considered are:

1_ The interrelations between the State and territory. It is for instance the status given by the State to the territory (in the direction State---> territory), and the way how the territory influences the State's self-perception (in the direction territory---> State).

2_ The interrelations between population and territory. They include among other things the way how a population views its territory (direction population---> territory), and the counter-influence of the territory on the population as an identity key-factor (direction territory---> population).

3_ The interrelations between the State and population through territory (or about it). They include in particular the schoolbooks providing the population with a given perception of its territory such as "central", "conform" or "peripheral" or even non-

existent (direction State---> territory---> population), and, in the reverse direction, the activity of groups trying to influence the State in the name of territories claiming a new status.

Therefore the geop. analysis consists in three interrelations thus six relations. This way to set a problem was here limited to the internal aspect, internal to a given State's territory. Now our analysis also includes an external dimension, that one may describe as the study of:

1_The interrelations between State « A » and State « B » through the territory (or about it)

2_The interrelations between two populations through the territory (e.g.: the Kaliningraders and the E.Prussian expellees through Kd)

3_the interrelations between State A and population of State B through the territory (e.g. : Russia and the E.Prussian expellees through Kd)

4_the interrelations between State B and population of State A through the territory (e.g. : the FRG and the Kders through E.Prussia).

One finds thus four interrelations (eight relations) between geop. systems A and B. Hence, to a given territory, the couple [internal geopolitics + external geopolitics] becomes utmost complex with a system of ten interrelations (four between systems A and B, three inside A, three inside B). This quite «mathematical» scheme enables to set the methodological main lines followed implicitly throughout the research.

I have indeed intended to develop geop. theorization. At each step that I made towards an explanation valid for Kd, I have systematically wondered whether the same one could be valid in similar case (for Sakhalin in Russia about insularity, for Lower-Silesia in Poland about regional «re-Germanization», for California in the USA about subethnic regionalism...), and if not why, and in which types of precise situation it was applicable. Hence, in the run of this work of modelisation, geop. concepts and theories have appeared little by little and we have drawn their list at the end of the book.

Question I: A global presentation of the Oblast'

Question II: Russian geographical perceptions: continentality and maritimity

Kd is a small territory belonging to a huge geopolitical empire: continental Russia. Between them, there is no longer any territorial link as such. Kaliningrad is isolated, becoming a kind of island, while Russia seems to be confirmed in its role as a "Eurasian continent".

These findings actually raise very complex issues. The very fact that one is forced to speak of "continental Russia", a term that is redundant to say the least in the traditional understanding of "continental" in geopolitics, shows that the Kaliningrad issue challenges the oldest definitions and self-representations of Russia. Kaliningrad is a different Russia.

Kaliningrad Oblast is first of all a conceptual question. What is it and what can it be in

the world's largest State? This question leads us to dig deeper into what Russia is as a territorial entity and what this gigantism is, which cannot be limited to a simple graphic observation, because a territory is perceived and imagined because it is above all an invention and creation of men. The history, the culture, but also the images of this territory will enable us to identify the question which, in fine, refers to the definition of what an empire is.

Russia is perceived, by definition, as a mass of solid land, as a single territory. How can Kd Oblast, which is an exception to both the former and the latter Statements, be integrated into Russia's self-perception? Is it not condemned to be ignored or even repudiated by this continent, which considers it optional, as even some Russian maps, including official ones, indicate? This is what we will focus on first (II.1).

But on the other hand, the Baltic Subject is indeed an exclave, i.e. an island open to the sea. The study of Kaliningrad's insularity is therefore essential to grasp its substance. Behind this insularity lies a long-standing maritime ambition which is a Russian and Soviet legacy, but also perhaps a foreign one. In other words, in Kaliningrad as elsewhere, insularity is a source of naval power. This will be the subject of our second part (II.2).

Answer II: two incompatible facets of Russia?

In front of Russia, Kd challenges it in its own geographical identity. While Russian medieval and Petrovian tradition offered an imperial framework enabling a potential inclusion of Kd, Russian XXIC geopoliticians, at odds with them and under the influence of theories from the UK, the USA or Germany, have wanted to make Russia a strictly continentalist entity in the continuity of a Russian trend and practice that began in the XIXc. In this context, Kaliningrad is doomed to disappear because it does not make sense. But a return to the old Russian cultural tradition enables to assign to Kd some actual room into a Russian territory open on the seas and universalistic, "imperial" in the positive and peaceful sense of the term. This is the perspective of A.Neklessa and mine with my theorization of Russia in three parts: the Isthmic one, Siberia and Peri-russia. One rediscovers then the forgotten wealth of the "unwritten" but drawn and implicit geop. culture of the bicephalic-eagled Empire.

The insularity of Kaliningrad, apparently a source of weakness, is also a source of power as it pushes to the sea. This sea is the Baltic Sea, whose Kaliningrad seems to be the geop. centre of gravity in a never-ending competition with Sweden. It is equally the Atlantic, which has focused the attention of three generations of Kaliningraders in all areas of human activity.

Is the continental empire compatible with Kd's maritimity? Yes, and all the more so that Kd is not the only one to embody the Russian maritime dream. It is indeed the case of

each of the Peri-Russia-s, situated at the four orient, at the most extreme edges of the State, each oriented to its own sea. As a *terra ferma* empire, isn't Russia thirsty for water, i.e. for seas? The opposition between the two self-perceptions, the Muscovite continentalist one and Kd "oceanist" one is therefore an illusion that is solved by the difference of scale and by the global needs of C.Russia. Still, this illusion has blinded many Russian leaders since at least 1867 (sale of Alaska) and threatens a Far-Western oblast' ignored by the Russian public, by its scientists and by its ideologists. This is to say that Kd is a "colonial" territory whose appropriation is not completed yet. It is therefore essential to study such a process in a new chapter.

Question III: Appropriation in process: russification and "allogenization"

In general, Kd is ignored by the Russian public. Kaliningrad is only a tiny territory, quite recently acquired and distant from "mainland" Russia. This can lead to the negation of the region. And when the Oblast is considered from Moscow or St Petersburg, it becomes a fantasy territory whose representation is determined by images of "the Abroad". It is then either a Baltic country because of its geographical location or, even more often, a part of Germany because of its history. In sum, the idea is the following: Kd is Königsberg, thus E.Prussia, thus German. Thus the Kd historian Il'â Dement'ev reports this significant phrase repeatedly expressed by Muscovites who have never visited Russian Prussia: "They speak German in your region, don't they? Ignorance extends to the authorities: regional Duma deputy Solomon Ginzburg castigates Moscow bureaucrats as "federal fools who look for Kd on the map of the Moscow Oblast". Indeed, Kaliningrad's reputation is so poor that it is sometimes still mistaken for the city of Korolëv, Moscow Oblast, which until 1996 was also called "Kd"... Such an observation (which is probably not unique in Russia), while being a sign that the Russian public is not always aware of the complex vastness of Russia, shows that Kd has not yet been assimilated by the consciousness of the Russian people, at least by that of the capital.

Kaliningrad is a space whose appropriation is far from being completed yet, either by the State or its population. The process of absorption of Kd is slow. It is slow first of all because it is the nature of such phenomena to be progressive and to deepen over time. It is also slow because its inclusion in the State was revolutionary, ex nihilo and violent. The resettlement of Kd was too fast, and took place in great disorder. Its unpreparedness led to a cultural shock for the newcomers of 1945.

Appropriation is a complex phenomenon. On the one hand, it is the process of political and cultural assimilation of Kd territory into the Russian Federation, itself a State under construction, and on the other hand, the process of assimilation of this territory by the local population in terms of identity, which also leads to the establishment of the identity of this population.

State appropriation is the integration of a smaller element into a larger whole. So, schematically, it means to send "more State" into Kd and vice versa to send "more Kd" into the State. "More State into Kd" means centralisation and Russification. "More Kd

into the State” means uniformity.

The appropriation by the population is a triangular relationship between State / population / territory articulated around the symbolic conflict between the central State and the local population, which generates a mobilization of the territory and its particular cultural heritage against the uniformizing State and leads to the merger of the population with its territory. This takes place in a context of a double identity crisis in Kd (end of the USSR) and at the top of the State, reinforced by Russia's increasing federalization.

Under these conditions, the logic of the federal State and the logic of the population (relayed by the federate Subject) are opposed and clash, one tending towards uniformity and the other towards the affirmation of a specificity. I will therefore analyze successively these two contradictory facets of the appropriation of the territory of Kd, first the appropriation by the State which is a Russification (1) and then the appropriation by the population by the local population which is an 'allogenization' (2).

Answer III : identity convergences and divergences

Kd is a territory with no actual cultural function in Russia yet except as 1945 Victory's symbol, which is not so little and which is reheated nowadays as the founding event of modern Russia's identity. It is also a territory in danger of loss, thus a territory deliberately integrated by the State thanks to geop. myths, and this is done in cooperation and competition with the local elite formulating its own identity and its legitimacy. Kd's population has started a slow work of cultural integration of the territory already leading to some noteworthy rooting into the Prussian land whose legacy is claimed by them.

Such phenomena exist in fact all over Peri-russia, which is entirely composed of strong *rodiny*. In Sakhalin and in the Kurils, the rooting process follows to a large extent the same model as in Kd, with this difference that the Russian presence is more historical than mythological ; on the other hand, allogenization as well as memory controversies with Moscow appear in the Far E. just as in the Far-W. It is therefore a really general problematic leading me to reconsider the idea of Russia's memory and identity unity: it is clear that this country or, better to say, this « empire », in this regard, is not monolithic at all, in particular in the territories where the appropriation is still in progress. We shall underline meanwhile that if, up to now, this dimension of Russian identity has seldom been highlighted by the scholars, the reason is that this issue is specific to Peri-russia, itself generally ignored, and also comes from the fact that Peri-russia is extremely ambiguous in its relation with the external world lying just beyond the border. Actually, it is this very situation of border, of edge and this quality of borderland that explains this surprising issue. The relation with the external world is here decisive, and this dimension of the topic will be the core of my fourth chapter.

Question IV: Russia's 'Prussian borderland': a 'Front' and alternative worlds

Kd Oblast is a border region and more specifically a march or a borderland. The specificity of this type of territory is its military character, its autonomy and its very dense relations with the outside world. The geopolitical behaviour of the march is part of a triangular relationship between the central (here federal) State, the march itself and the foreign neighbours. For the central State, the march is the high point of the politico-military and symbolic expression of its power in a process of demarcation, differentiation and opposition to the foreigner. For the march, geographical and/or historical-cultural proximity implies very ambiguous relations with neighbouring States, relations that can go as far as common interests because these States are de facto much closer to the march than the central State is: the latter is confused with the interests of the distant capital. Hence a dialectic of opposition/symbiosis with foreign States. But how do these two seemingly incompatible aspects manage to co-exist in Kd? And in view of the notion of **Peri-Russia***, is this dialectic not brought to a climax by the major politico-military stakes and by the huge number of foreign States interested in the issue (Poland, Lithuania, Belarus, Germany, Latvia and even Sweden)?

In order to answer this question, I shall first look at the notion of a front between two worlds (1), which dominates the international context of relations between the Russian federal State and its NATO-EU rivals; then I shall look at the notion of "alternative geo-cultural Worlds", to which Kd belongs or might belong at the local level (2).

Answer IV : a double-edged borderland

As a borderland, Kd is a particularly salient front since E.Prussia's territory has always been such in the very long run, more or less openly. The front is multiform. It has been historico-cultural since the XIIIth c. and pits W.Europe to a now partly Russified C-E.Europe. Such a front is of course political too: throughout the two key-questions of 1945 Victory and of the debate on legal existence of the Baltics' SSR, it is the legitimacy of Russia's influence and presence in C.Europe that is at issue in Kd as far as it is systematically the Oblast's very existence that is questioned. Finally, the front is of course military and involves the question of the Continent's greater strategic balance. But, each of these questions develops on several scales reflecting the prominence of more national fronts, in particular with Lithuania.

But though Kd is fundamentally a piece of Russia, its politico-cultural cosmology shows that it is also a member of a greater C-E.Europe matching the former Polish-Lithuanian *Rzeczpospolita*, which appears nowadays in the might of Poland's geop. influence, an utmost visible one, but also in the one of Belarus's, which is far more discrete. Other geop. influences affect the Oblast' as it is a member of a Baltic World that the Soviet era had not rejected, and a member of a new German Mitteleuropa that the FRG and its active Länder have managed to resurrect. Meanwhile these two Worlds act across complex borders (linguistic, ideological, socio-economic ones) which partly limit their weight. Finally the Baltic macroregion seems to have no actual geop. influence on former E.Prussia's territory because not only the same borders are even stronger with

Scandinavia than with C.Europe but also because there are actually « two Baltic-s » which are radically alien to each other: there is a **maritime Baltic*** belonging to N-W.Europe involved in a millenium-long untold struggle with **continental Baltic*** belonging to C-E.Europe whose Kd is a part.

From my Peri-russian point of view, I underline that as a front, the Oblast' looks much like the Kurils and S.Sakhalin, Russian territories still very contested by Japan, which are symbols of 1945 Victory just like Kd is, and which once again put face to face Russia with the Western military bloc whose Japan is a member. Similarly these territories do form an actual Civilization front with Far-E.Asia. But it is nonetheless in this matter that one may realize the full symbolic difference between Russian Prussia and the Far-E. Peri-russia-s: in Russian consciousness, the Victory over Germany and thus Kd mean infinitely more than the one won over most remote Japan and the spoils taken on it. Similarly the European issue seems, even today, at least as paramount for Russia as the Far-E because Russia's survival was always decided at the Western borders (1610, 1709, 1812, 1914, 1941), and because Russia's cultural tropism is focused on Europe too. On the other hand, in spite of the might of Japan's claims, at least on the S.Kurils, one does not find in the Far-E. the negation narrative so violently repeated in the Baltics' and in UK-US rhetoric about Kd. Japan questions borders and not the existence of Sakhalin Oblast'. Finally Kd's encirclement by land turns it into a far more vulnerable point than the Kurils, and a far more sensitive one too.

The issue of Peri-russia-s' relations with their « alternative Worlds » puts into parallel Kd with the same oblasti of the Pacific. Kd maintains links with Germany or Poland to be compared with Sakhalin's with Japan who is in its turn an "alternative World" itself too, just as China can appear as such for the oblasti of the Amur and Primor'e. But at once Kd's peculiarity arises: the multiplicity of « alternative Worlds » there is exceptional. No other Russian oblast' might claim to belong (simultaneously or in competition) to so many different cultural regions. Moreover, Russian Prussia's « territorialized occidentalism* » has no counterpart, as of today, in Asia since though the Far-E.'s and Far-W.'s geographical situations are symmetrical, their cultural weights are not such at all. Kd finds culturally its meaning within C-E.Europe to which Russia itself is so deeply tied or of which it is even a full member. Japan and China, in spite of the outstanding progress of their cultural prestige throughout the two last decades in Russia do not excite such strong belonging and familiarity feelings yet. Russia, remains, in the Far-E., a European country, a perception that was not jeopardized yet by Sino-Russian strategic and diplomatic cooperation nor by the Eurasianist ideology, both of them being new factors and without visible cultural depth up to now. As a result our Baltic Oblast' is among all Peri-russia-s the most integrable into some « alternative World », all the more that its encirclement pushes towards this path. It is therefore the most extreme Peri-russia, the one where the « alternative Worlds » play the greatest and deepest part up to counter-balance seriously the Muscovite Centre's influence, which is too little aware of "its" Far-West's realities. Nevertheless, the geocultural Worlds always

play in both directions: if Kd is part of them, then Russia has one foot inside them, which enables it, sooner or later, to play a influential geop. part in the new *Rzeczpospolita*, new *Mitteleuropa* or the Baltic World.

General Conclusion : new geopolitical concepts for Kaliningrad, for Russia, for the Baltic and for the World

What is the geop. identity of Kd ? This ethnically Russian oblast' apparently exceptional reflects to a large extent the geop. identity of current Russia itself, with all its contradictions. After a general presentation (I), I have firstly seen that this Far-Western Peri-russia was a geographical matter. On the one hand its ultra-peripheral characteristic and its very limited size question the Russian federal geop. self-perception, a fundamental issue of exceptional interest to reach the geop. identity of Russia itself (II.1). But the insular, maritime and oceanic dimensions arising from « ultra-peripherality » are both the very *raison d'être* of the Oblast', the deepest stratum of the Kaliningraders' identification and the source of an outstanding wide-horizoned maritime power which is not only military, and which is the indispensable complement of Russia's power that has been thirsty of seas since the XVIc at least (II.2). Then, I have investigated the issue of State's and population's appropriation and rooting into Kd's territory. In this utmost Soviet Promethean oblast', 2000-2016 Russia aims at a paradoxical conformistic « russification » to fight against Kd's exclaviness and disconnection from pre-Soviet Russian history, and does it through public policies as well as through ancient geop. myths (III.1). At the same time, the Federation is undergoing the aftermath of its general federalization, which has enabled and even has forced to the creation of a regionalist identity in Kd since 1991 which has rooted thanks to the claim of E.Prussian legacy, in particular the German one. Hence passionate debates or internal conflicts in the Oblast' as well as Moscow-Kd controversies (III.2). Finally, Kd is an authentical borderland in all the meanings of the word. It is thus a front, which this territory has always been symbolically and paroxystically in the long run. Such a front is once again active nowadays under NATO's pressure, under German and Polish ambitions, and under Lithuanian territorial claims in particular (IV.1). But at the local scale, one notes how strong is the «geop influence » of the « neighbours » on Kd's geop. identity. This oblast' is part of these « geocultural Worlds » which are both potential alternatives to Russia, and Worlds into which Russia can enter through Kd which is therefore a «geop. propeller» (IV.2).

Throughout this study, I have drawn a comparison of our Russian Far-W. with the Far-E., Sakhalin, the Crimea and other members of ultra-peripheral Russia. When considered within this comparison, Kd is far less exceptional that it seemed. When compared to S.Sakhalin which is among all Russian territories the one which is the most similar to Kd, the Far-W. Oblast' distinguishes itself, in the geographical field, only through its encirclement; in the field of cultural identity, the sole differences lie in the

outstandingly prestigious and active part of the German culture and in the stronger fear of loss by Russia since 2002; as for its border-zone characteristic, however, Kd is exceptional through the fundamental and fierce struggles about it (delegitimation of the Oblast's existence, « Baltics front ») as well as through the extraordinary number of alternative Worlds to which Russian Prussia belongs (five). It is thus indeed an ultra-peripheral Russia among others, but the most complicated and the most sensitive of all and it is in full logic that I have built the concept of **Peri-russia*** from the case of Kd, an extreme and threatened Peri-russia, and almost incomprehensible because of its complexity.

To shift from anonymous and general ultra-peripheral Russia to **Peri-russia** was a long way to go. I had to put in parallel dramatic contrasts between an Oblast' at the top of oceanographic research and an Oblast' ignored by Moscow, a territory very remote even from Pskov and St-Petersburg and a land where each year new young Siberian degrees-holders arrive, a "microscopic" oblast' and an oblast' known as the one « of the Atlantic ». How to understand such a situation ? How to link such opposite images? What kind of consistency did have the picture ? I had to start from the most fundamental elements. Russia is built and organized such a way that anything that is not Muscovite is « peripheral ». The State's ultra-periphery thus matches its borders and coasts. But which part do these regions play inside Russia ? The observation of the map, the interrogations of Vadim Cymburskij about the geop. pattern of Russia, and my precise knowledge of Russian historical geography, i.e. of the date of acquisition of the « ultra-peripheral » territories provided us with the intuition that the Russian « ultra-periphery » in itself was not a consistent set, but that some ultra-peripheral territories did form an actual « crown », a circle around "mainland" continental Russia. And this is how arose Peri-russia, by opposition to Siberian standard somehow over-developed by the Russian geopolitician and leaving no room for our Kd. My concept of Peri-russia* has then enabled me to answer loads of questions asked previously thanks to a new perspective and a new analysis grid .

Firstly it enables to define three consistent territorial sets, Isthmic Russia, Siberia, Peri-russia itself, three geographical, historical and cultural sets which have completely different functions, that I might simplify under the formula “authority / might / propeller”, Isthmic Russia taking decisions, Siberia playing the part of power-provider, Peri-russia being the power's propeller outside. Peri-russia enables also to highlight the cultural specificity of the member regions. Peri-russia is not the Russia of national « allogeneous » Republics; Peri-russia is an ethnically Russian Russia and still all Peri-russias run across external geocultural Worlds, and simultaneously they are opened on the seas, or rather on the World Ocean. They are not just mere remote dependences of the State, perfectly conform to the culture of the Muscovite core and meekly obeying its decisions because they are « ultra-peripheral » thus dominated : on the very contrary, Peri-russia is a set of ethnically Russian regions but with outstanding cultural and territorial identity (=geop. identity*), particularly opened on the World and other

Worlds, on foreign and maritimes Worlds, and which behaves often boisterously and dares to demonstrate against the Centre when the latter matches too clearly the sole Moscow instead of actual Russia. Peri-russia is a sort of « Reverse Russia » when compared to Moscow and to the Russian Isthmus, i.e. a Russia of maritime edges, born to be "greater", more powerful and "more World-scale" than the Federation has been since 1991. This Peri-russia was built willingly by Russia's Statesmen, whose ambition was followed in this case by Russian settling, in order to reach the seas. It is the Mekka of the expression of Russia's ambitions. It is then « more statist » than Moscow itself, i.e. more faithful to the « Empire », to the USSR, to the military, scientific and social grandeur built by the State. The fact that the same Peri-russia asserts itself as « Neo-Prussian » in Kd, « Neo-Japanese » in S.Sakhalin or « Neo-Manchu » on the Amur is not really in contradiction with what I have just written, it is in fact its logical consequence: from lack of a great USSR and its oceanic and World horizon, Peri-russia took refuge on its own territory or on the one of the neighbouring Worlds because between 1991 and the 2010s, the Federation cut down to the sole interests of Moscow and Petersburg cities, and was not up to the challenges nor to the high traditions of Peri-russia which has something especially imperial in its identity. Peri-russia follows therefore a specific dialectic, the **Peri-russian dialectic*** : “the great empire / the particularist region”, « the square USSR » / « Neo-German E.Prussia », two scales jumping above or beneath the step "Federation of Russia". The geopoliticians of the Federation themselves have generally « forgotten » Peri-russia, above all when it was apparently « small ». As a result, the further Russia gets from the USSR in the geop. field, the further it goes from its Peri-russia which is then abandoned, even ignored and denied. But reciprocally the closer Russia gets to the USSR, the more Peri-russia regains its function and the more it finds itself tied to the rest of Russia, in all fields (social, economic, cultural, identity, etc...). The concept of Peri-russia helps thus also to read a geop. dynamic in the long run: the **expansion / retraction imperial dynamic*** of Russia and of its ambitions. Kd is in fact fully dependent on this dialectic because it lies exactly on the place where this dynamic is launched. Therefore the Oblast' casts a new light on the relation Russia-USSR : Russia evolves either towards a further retraction denying Kd (« the Mainland Federation »), or towards a re-extension reintegrating the Soviet Oblast' into a « new USSR » or rather into a « Wider Russia » which would also be more powerful. From the creation of the Oceanic fishing harbour of Kd to its chaotic « reform » in the 1990s, it is nothing but the grandeur and the weakness of the USSR that one does read in Russia's Far-W. (and in its Far-E.). In fact Peri-russia is paradoxically not as « peripheral » as one might think: it is also « ultra », i.e. it is often at the peak, in all fields, be it a positive or a negative way.

My contribution to the Kd issue may be synthesized through some other concepts answering my starting hypotheses. Because Russia often depicts itself as a Sibero-Muscovite mainland State or even as a « Eurasian continent » I have been moved to conceptualize **Russian continentalisms***, Siberian or Eurasian ones. In the reverse

direction, I have identified a process of **insularization*** and an oceanic identity in Kd that I had to develop in full details because it is an utmost complex phenomenon involving the whole geop. and socio-cultural system. In particular I have discovered, to my astonishment, the capital part played by oceanic fishing in the Kaliningraders' identity, less as an economic activity than as its countless effects: maritime culture, transoceanic journeys, knowledge of foreign languages, openness on the World, integration into a Pan-Soviet social elite, development of scientific knowledge, global socio-economic enrichment, creation of the institutional network, cultural festivals, literature, etc... Oceanic fishing (in Kd but also elsewhere in Russia and in the World) must thus be reconsidered as an actual full « social World » of its own, which forces to revise completely the idea of Soviet Kd's identity "with no local specificity". If there had ever been any *homo sovieticus*, in Kd he was and is a quite original ***homo sovieticus oceanicus****.

Then, I have proposed to re-conceptualize the Russian territory as a whole from Kd's case, showing that Kd and thus Peri-russia formed not an « abnormal » part of Russia but a third one, a very specific one, side by side with Isthmic Russia and Siberia. This very concept has also led me to reconsider the geop. identity of the Federation as regaining Russia's **geop. pattern of 1783*** rather than the one of the XVIIc. This has led me to highlight the key-territories (including Kd) providing the current federal territory with its irreducible specificity. By doing so, I have set the theory of the two Russian geop. doctrines: « **Tsar Alexis' doctrine** »* leading to a Eurasian empire hungry of *terra firma* (the Empire since 1793, the USSR), and « **Ordyn-Nașokin's doctrine** »* leading to a narrower Russia but thirsty of seas (the Empire of the XVIIIth-1792, the Federation). Peri-russia must thus systematically be taken into account in any analysis of Russian geop. identity since it plays the main part in the access to the seas, to the World and to the neighbouring cultural regions.

Indeed I have identified consistent **geo-cultural Worlds*** that have been used by Russia for centuries to play a World-scale role thanks to Peri-russia. The latter acts as a **geop. propeller***, even though such a propeller can also be boomranged against Russia, and in this the propeller becomes a part of the **alternative Worlds***. This is reflected in the weighty influence exerted from 1985 to 2016 by Germany, Poland and Lithuania, the three States keeping the other pieces, territorial or symbolic (population, cultural heritage, Museums, memory), of E.Prussia.

If one wants to understand Kd's geop. identity, one must take into account its very complex **geop. legacies***. Kd inherits in fact from several historical Great Powers: Poland-Lithuania, in whose continuity Russia is forced to enter in order to integrate Kd ; the Swedish *Dominium Maris Baltici* that Russia transferred to Kd ; the Teutonic Order which is twice the ancestor of Kd since it is both the one of E.Prussia thus of Kd and it is simultaneously the creator of *Pribaltika* whose Kd is the Russian embodiment; finally the USSR and its World-scale oceanic ambitions, whose Kd was one of the brightest pearls. These geop. legacies that I have identified at the outset of a fundamental research

explain why Kd is not “a small Russian enclave encircled by EU-NATO” with no reason to exist. On the very contrary, Kd is a condensation of historical and geop. legitimacies with no equal in Europe. It is perhaps because its actual geo-historical meaning is so complex that it is generally omitted.

We have secondly been face to face with a number of questions referring to the notions of West and Europe seen from Russia. Hence, I have drawn the concept of **geop. logic of the compass direction*** i.e. this continuous geographical development of a Russian West starting from Ingria (formerly Swedish) and from Smolensk (formerly Lithuanian), extending itself through Pribaltika on one side and through Belarus on the other one, these two branches converging into Kd which, in its turn, aims at the Atlantic. It is exactly this way that Kd was geopolitically built, which gives it its most relevant **geop. scope***. Reciprocally, this set has been conceptualized by me as **Russian Europe*** on the cultural field. Kd is indeed fundamentally nothing but a **territorialized occidentalism*** in all senses of the expression. Generally speaking, my interest for names, since Kd is first of all a name, has led me to the idea of **onomastics as geop. destiny*** which was confirmed by the noteworthy geographical migration throughout history of paramount geop. toponyms such as *Baltiâ-Baltikum, Pribaltika, Prussia*, and all the effects that this phenomenon fathers in terms of identification and claims in the long run, as was also highlighted by the impassioned debates about the Oblast's and its capital's names.

I have then been moved to define a range of **cosmologies (or Worldings): cultural*, ideologic*, diplomatic cosmologies***. These ones are constructed according to complex dialectics that I have identified in practice : the most classical **dialectic Ours / the Other***, but also **proximity / exotism*, and power / independence geop. dialectics***. These cosmologies determine Kd's self-perception (and the ones of each of Peri-russias, let us not forget them), thus its behaviour towards Moscow and towards the rest of Europe. Put in practice, they enable to conceptualize « **Europe** »* as it is seen from Kd, distinct from « **Our Europe** »* ie the one to which the Kaliningraders identify themselves, i.e. a Polish-Lithuanian World enlarged to St-Petersburg.

Kd comes meanwhile within the scope of Russia as such but thanks to what I have called **geop. myths*** i.e. thanks to a generally ancient process (and by the way not only Russia-centred) of cultural staging of Russia's origins put in relation with the young Kd's territory. The geop. myths happened to be, in a way, at the core of my topic, and broadly determined its scientific evolution. The staging of R.'s origins in order to integrate Kd means indeed that the Russian culture is forced to wonder about Russia itself and even to revise its limits and shape because of Kd. It is from this fact that my thesis, "the Far-Western Mirror", has arisen. These geop. myths rely on **relay-territories*** which make the link (otherwise unfindable) between Russian Prussia and Russia proper. Alone, these relay-territories already show that the Kd issue completely exceeds the Oblast's very narrow borders. These same myths invite to consider a fragmented territory which matches the Slavic edges of the Baltics alias **Baltoslavica*** since they involve in fact all

such a territory whose Kd appears as the focal point because the Oblast' is first of all the **remaining Pribaltika***, i.e. its Russian piece on which the World of the Baltic SSR survived.

The idea of *remaining Pribaltika* fathered another concept, the one of **seed of geop. empire***. Instead of speaking of «empire's shreds», I speak of seed of geop. empire because a territory is a living entity and not a dead one, and because Kd has shown its ability to extend on the seas and even on land (within *Pribaltika*) and then to withdraw into a smaller territory. This concept was usefully compared with similar situations on other continents, demonstrating its relevance throughout the World. Linked to politico-military power and territorial expansion issues, it has been developed at the same time as the concept of **Civilization's consciousness place*** which is, to some extent, its socio-cultural counterpart. In such a place, a border-zone like the empire's seed, a Civilization gets conscious of itself while meeting the Other in an opposition taking the shape of a very elaborated symbolic staging. The fact that such concepts appeared in this study was unavoidable: Kd is absolutely the former and the latter, and it has been such for seven centuries under the name of E. Prussia, which explains the highest degree of conflictuality, symbolic or real, tied to this exceptional territory.

The way Kd is integrated or not into Russian (=Muscovite) representations has led me to two new concepts. The first one is **territorial symbolic investment*** i.e. the complex process through which a culture ascribes some value (high or low) to a territory according to symbolic associations. The second concept is the one of **territorial inclusion*** consisting in a typological reading grid of the territories whose inclusion into a new State has some impact, important or not, on its geop. identity. On the other hand, the way Kd might (or might not) be geographically linked to the « isthmic » Mainland has inspired me the **dialectic of the umbilical cord***, a legacy of E.Prussia.

I have also surveyed E.Prussia's statuses since the Middle-Ages, with the conclusion that this territory fluctuated between the three situations of **domination/ independence/ absorption*** in relation with its E., W. and N. neighbours.

Beyond Russia and the USSR, our hypothesis of Kd's circles has proved very fertile. If *Russkij mir* ("the Russian World") is « weak » as regards Kd, it is because this «geographical circle» is very global and inclusive, and certainly too new to be efficient yet. Still, I have shown that it was not irrelevant since the actors working on the conceptualization and development of this Russian *Horizont* are the ones to be really interested in Kd and ascribing it its meaning (Neklessa, the Patriarch, MPs Baburin and Bindûkov) as if it was indeed in this circle, beyond Russia proper, that Kd did lie in Moscow's eyes.

The « Baltic » circle has given very contrasted results. On the one hand, the study of Kd has shown how rich Russian culture was as regards the Baltic, identifying three **faces of the Baltic*** (*the Varangian Sea, the Swedish Sea, and Ostsee*). Now I have demonstrated that Kd is fully part of anything that is Baltic because it is its geop. heart, a

rival of Sweden with which it keeps an old indirect geop. kinsmen relation, the *Dominium Maris Baltici*. Less paradoxically than it seems, this is also the reason why Kd does not really have any function in the Swedish-centred Baltic Macro-region arising since the 1990s: Kd refers to another and even rival conception of the Baltic, a Russian **national and imperial* Baltic** which broke the traditional Swedish-German monopoly on the region. There are fundamentally **two Baltic-s, a « maritime » one** (the N-W. half) **and a « continental » one** (the S-E. Half); Kd lies exactly where they historically overlapped and fought each other (a struggle that I have identified as the **Baltic geop. dialectic***) until Russian-Soviet Victory in 1945. When studying this very circle, there appeared the concept of **maritime appropriation*** applied to the Baltic with **imperial appropriations*** (among which the Russian one), **national appropriations*** (the ones of the Baltics), Kd combining both dimensions, imperial and national.

The importance of the former E.Bloc remains: Kd is its historical symbol. The Russian geop. myths do anchor in it (the Wends' one in particular) and reflect by themselves that the Oblast' also is a member of C.Europe. Now this C.Europe has a weight that proved to be far heavier than I had thought. The *Rzeczpospolita* as well as *Mitteleuropa* are far more than historical regions. They are nowadays again lively Worlds that are very influential on Kd's geop. identity. The *Rzeczpospolitha* has spontaneously been reborn and it has become a cultural and economic region with strong linguistic impact in present-day Kd. As for *Mitteleuropa*, resurrected ex nihilo by the efficient action of German Länder, it has become one of the two identity pillars of a Russian Oblast' defining itself as an E.Prussia, be it Russian-speaking.

The circle of Pribaltika, in its turn, lost none of its relevance. Anything related to Kd always goes across some part of Lithuania ; but, far beyond this, Kd keeps in itself the historical and geop. identity of the Baltic SSR-s, and in particular of the Lith.SSR, while the Lithuanians do acknowledge this fact implicitly by their fear in front of Kd and by their claims heated anew over mythical « Lithuania the Minor » in the Oblast's E. half.

Finally the Pan-Baltic circle has been tested and has given interesting and unexpected results. This circle fathered the concept of **Pan-Baltic World***, a concept enabling to reintegrate Kd in a new historical and geographical context that had never been considered yet by the specialists of geopolitics, i.e. the « ethnically Baltic » dimension of C-W.Russia as well as the one of Belarus and of N-E.Poland. I think that I may deepen this dimension and use this region in further researches to complement the works written on the Baltic Region by providing the help of a middle territorial frame, larger than the small Baltics and more precise than the E.Baltic.

On the methodological field, we have tried to define differently and as strictly as possible my disciplinary field, « **geopolitics** ». Because the term is utmost polysemic, I have given a new definition of it that I have implemented in this study. This definition has been constructed very slowly and step by step since my first researches. I have put

back geopolitics into geography and re-focused it on territorial matters showing that the very existence of the term geopolitics and the fact that it did survive all the other Kjellen's concepts are evidence that it is "power" (the political one but also, more deeply, the cultural one) which creates and institutes the territory and that their interrelation, involving densely the inhabiting (or formerly inhabiting) populations, is nothing but the demiurgic force of society. Such « geopolitics » is thus at the core of human geography.

This new definition, necessarily quite a strict one in order to answer disciplinary vagueness often surrounding the term of geopolitics, has excluded from the research a range of questions that other scholars would have investigated or have already investigated indeed. My conception of what belongs to geopolitics has moved me to consider as external to my topic all the « spatial » aspect, i.e. a whole range of flux phenomena based on networks. This is the case of numerous economic facts and of the international relations *stricto sensu*. I have not excluded economics from the research. It does appear and is much more significant than I had thought, as is reflected in the striking and astonishing case of oceanic fishing. But commercial fluxes are not territorialized, or more exactly do not influence the territorial issue, thus they appeared as irrelevant. With one exception, though: if and only if they involve a deep relation which, in its turn, roots itself into a territory and if the former outbounds a strictly economic sphere, as it is the case of cross-border Polish-Kd relations, continuing an oldest and most lasting geop. fact, and encroaching on the cultural sphere. In the same way, I have chosen to let aside all that belonged to diplomacy proper. My analysis of E.-W. tensions as well as of the influence of the neighbouring countries over Kd is indeed not a diplomatic but a geop. one i.e. a territory-focused one. Diplomacy is just a context of my research topic. For instance, if I have integrated the US factor into my topic it is only because US influence affects Russia's perception of Kd as well as the territorialized game of directly involved NATO members (Poland, Lithuania, Germany). Contrary to R.Krickus, US specialist of international relations, I did not believe that it was relevant to develop a chapter on the relations between Kd and the USA ; there is no territoriality at issue in their "geostrategic" relation. The visa issue was considered as external for similar reasons. The latter issue does affect inter-Russian communications but it is not decisive on the territorial field : the Kaliningraders can nevertheless go to Mainland Russia, and be it with or without Schengen visa, Kd keeps the same geop. identity. Similarly once more, I have excluded from the scope the "neighbourhood policy" implemented by the EU through different programmes. This policy, so different from the German *Länder's* one, is spatialized but little territorialized, its aims at economic, legal, infrastructural transformations and is based on institution networks. As for the Euro-regions instituted by the EU, they seem to have no part into the questions that we have investigated. For example the Euro-region called "Baltic" set around Kd is not the actual frame of Russian-Polish or Russian-Lithuanian geop. relations, which develop spontaneously, according to non-institutional and much older geop. logics.

Finally, as for the EU, a specialist of which I am not, it itself raises questions of scientific geopolitical definition. It acts both as a direct actor (the Brussels Commission) and through its members, which makes it an actor whose own territorial action is hardly identifiable. It is also a supra-national but not federal entity, it is a statist entity without being a State and it has no sovereignty of its own, i.e. no territory of its own distinct from that of its members. Moreover, the EU is very recent, de facto even more "a-historical" than Kaliningrad, and is defined as an experimental political project which does not currently form a "world" in which Kaliningrad can find its room, because on the one hand the EU is not a consistent geo-cultural entity. On the other hand, a geo-cultural world means belonging and rootedness, and the EU does not integrate these issues. In a way, the EU is a 'space' rather than a territory, a political rather than a geopolitical entity. This does not prevent it from having a geop. dimension, however: the EU has pursued a typically geop. policy of extension of the 'panist' (here Pan-Europeanist) type, with implicit reference to a manifest destiny: the EU would have the vocation to absorb all European countries. Some authors have considered it as an 'empire' (Zielonka, Behr) but it is clear that this 'empire' does not assume its imperial dimension. The EU is also the representative of an ideological cosmology, "Europeanism", as the debates between the different identity options at the time of joining the EU have clearly shown (in Finland: Scandinavianism, Panfennism, Finlandization; in Poland: Panslavism, Miedzymorze, Atlanticism...). The EU represents the choice to follow Western Europe. We can see the difference between the extra-EU issue (Europeanism, which gives rise to passionate speeches) and the intra-EU issue (once the choice has been made, the geopolitical question takes a back seat). Finally, one may wonder whether it is not the geographers and geopolitologists who determine the geopolitical scope of the EU through their discourse, taking the place of a failing political and cultural discourse (see for example the role played by the French cartographic programme *Le Dessous des Cartes* in this respect).

Another question that I have not developed here but for much different reasons is the one that I was asked by Bruno Drweski in 2015, namely: "What part might Kd play in the Chinese-Russian strategy of the « Silk Roads » alias « One Belt, One Road »?". I did start an investigation about it, but it faced several problems. The first is that in Kd, the question was, at the beginning of 2016, apparently without much importance. The second is that I should have carried out a specific fieldwork, and not only in Kd, but rather in Moscow or even in Peking. It was impossible in 2016. A third problem was a scientific one. A priori, the geographical link between Kd and the rest of Russia was already so difficult through Belarus and Lithuania that the part of the Far-W. oblast' in a transcontinental territorialized "Road & Belt" strategy seemed theoretically weak (which was not the case for St-Petersburg for instance which, as early as 1900, already played the part of European outlet of deep Eurasia thanks to the Trans-Siberian railroad starting from Port-Arthur). But the arrival of the Chinese Navy in Kd in 2017, in the continuity of its deployment in Syria, revealed all the weight of this question. In fact it is even far more complex than it seemed, since it does not only involve another scale, the Pan-

eurasian one, but it also plays with the wilful ambiguity of the « Silk Roads & Belts » that are as economic and cultural as politico-military ones, as maritime as mainland ones, potentially as Arctic as Indian, African or Mediterranean ones. Meanwhile, it is already clear that « One Belt, One Road » is really a geop. project (in the full meaning I have given to this term) and not a mere geostrategic one; in fact the Chinese with their Russian and Eurasian partners are building one more « geocultural World». Several pieces of evidence of this are already visible. Firstly, the way the first instigators of the «Silk Roads » presented their programme: namely as built on a historically Chinese-Pakistani « Buddhist » axis referring to the Indo-iranian origins of Chinese Buddhism, i.e. using nothing but a geop. myth, ancient history³ and rooting itself also into the literary tradition of the *Xi You Ji*, *The Pilgrimage to the West* of the monk and the monkey, one of the most famous tales of Chinese literature⁴. Today, it is obvious that arising Chinese « Paneurasia » is a « geocultural World» which is already based upon three pillars : the former common Socialist World, the theory of the two Worlds « of Right » (Asia) and « of Might » (colonialist West) by Sun Yatsen, and the Mongolian Empire (Chinese-Iranian-Russian). The second pillar is the least known and casts the idea, developed as early as 1924 by the Chinese President⁵, that Soviet Russia also is a (Eur-)Asian country that turned its back to the colonialist West (the World of « Might ») and has returned to the Asian family of the « Right » (the imperial Sino-mongolian right) and to anti-colonialism. Thus considered, can the Chinese Pan-eurasian World integrate Kd and provide it with one more alternative World? It might be a little too early to analyse such a completely new dimension of the topic, a dimension still partly submerged. and still, in a fully World-scale frame (this one being though a « World » of its own), Kd would regain its "oceanic" dimension and its Soviet « supra-Russian » dimension. In any case, for Kd, the interest of the matter is great : to deepen this question would mean to discover a new harmonisation of its geop. function within Russia, finally sublimating the Europe / Eurasia opposition that has framed it up to now.

I must also identify the hypotheses that have been invalidated or qualified. I had viewed Kd as the epicentre of the issue of the Russian-speakers in the Baltics. Quid in fine ? On the one hand, we have demonstrated an actual consistency of Kd with this issue on the level of geop. myths, which is important. But on the proper geop. level, the question has proved too difficult to be investigated in the frame of this research. The reason is the following: on the one hand, the difference of State- belonging between federate Kd and the Slavic edges of the Baltics means that the relation of these territories with Russia or even with the "West" and the dynamics of this relation in the Baltics (politically outside Russia and pulled towards a closer relation) are opposite to the ones in Kd (a part of Russia looking for "allogenization"); on the other hand, within a geop.

3 Li Wuzhou : « History of the Silk Road "China Today, 07022014.

4 See for instance the introduction of Yeung YM, Shen Jianfa : *Developping China's West, a critical path to balanced national development*, Hongkong University Press, 2004

5 Discourse in Kobe (Japan) on Panasianism of the 28th November 1924.

study the question arose about the methodology and epistemology to be used in the case of geop. relations between territories that are not contiguous, not belonging to the same State, and when linked to each other, are so thanks to networks (cultural, political, family...); as a result, I should have set the question in terms of « space » and not of « territory », which would have broken the methodological consistency of my work. I have thus gathered here anything belonging to common geop. identity proper (for instance the **Prussia-Livonia consistency*** or the retention of an E.Prussian geop. set from Kd to Klaipeda) I have left aside the study of consciousness (or its absence) of a common cultural and regional identity of all the Russian-speakers of former Soviet Pribaltika through the example of the links between Kd and Latvia. Moreover, following this path would have meant to move the focus of my topic which was already torn between the scientific requirements of Peri-russia (thus the Far-E. and Crimea), the ones of Russia (the federal and Muscovite context), the ones of Kd itself (the obligation to have an overview of most of the aspects of the local society) and the ones of E.Prussia (thus researches about Germany, Poland, Belarus, the Lithuanian State, etc...). And still, until the last moment, I envisaged to include at least among the alternative Worlds Kd's "Baltoslavic" dimension. I have not, because I missed the identification of the key-actor of this « World » and evidence of the activity and significance of this World today, in 2016. This "Baltoslavic" question remains thus opened, calling for further researches, that I may perhaps carry out later, within a more limited scope.

I must also tackle the evolution of my research topic. The most important of all was logically its geographical evolution. At the beginning, my topic was defined around a Kd-Russia-Pribaltika axis. It was a typically post-Soviet topic, a very «northern» one. I considered Kd within the former USSR, focusing north, on the region from which the oblast' had just been born. This focus was justified also by the sharpness of the symbolical Baltic struggles, and by the very weighty part that I then ascribed to military issues, to *hard power*, and to “hard geopolitics”, i.e. to territorial claims proper. But my will was, from the beginning, to give these questions their full cultural and phenomenological extent, for instance the link that one could draw between cultural identity, military identity and the territorial aspect. This methodological choice, in the long run, deeply changed the approach enlarging it to other realms, to cultural influence and the different kinds of *soft power*. Hence a geographical shift south-westwards: my E.European and Baltic topic, when welcoming cultural and economic influence, has fully integrated Poland and Germany in the view scope, turning the topic to something C.European. I had certainly not excluded at the beginning Poland and Germany from the Kd question; but during the whole of my work's “first era”, the German parameter was viewed mainly as a reminiscence internal to Kd or as a question typical of the Russian context, while the Polish matter was seen as a historical legacy willingly taken on by Russia to integrate Kd. The study's “second era” shifted the perspective. The reality in Kd where one spoke quite often Polish on the one hand, and the remarks of Bruno

Drweski on German re-rooting in Lithuanian Memelland on the other hand, convinced us to reconsider the active and contemporary part of the FRG, of its Länder and of Poland as more central actors. This evolution is visible above all in chapter IV.2 ; it is while confronting *Pribaltika*, Polish linguistic and legal-historical influence and « Prussianness » that I have forged the concept of alternative geo-cultural World, already in germ, but which took its definitive shape thanks to this comparison. And yet, the understanding of the Neo-Prussian phenomenon, that I already mastered inside Kd, was completed only after I reached the needed level in German (2015) and thanks to my stay in Marburg offered by the Herder Institut in its collections. Then the chain linking the FRG's theoretical policy, the Länder's practical policy and the results witnessed in Russia appeared clearly. But I had had to learn one more language and to work on another research field, Germany. I had physically migrated from E.Europe to C-W.Europe to give its full Mitteleuropean dimension to my « Russian » topic. This scientific adventure shows well that Kd cannot be easily studied by a French, were he perfectly Russian- and Polish-speaking (or, on the opposite, German-speaking). Such a topic demands to be put into multiple contexts, thus an exceptional cultural adaptation ability from the researcher, especially from a French. I have made my best; it is up to German, Polish and Russian scholars but also to Belarussian and Lithuanian or even Latvian ones to say whether this was enough to seize properly as polycephalic a hydra as Kd. Even Hercules was not alone when facing the one of Lerna...

In this conclusion, let us enlarge our comparison of Kd's case outside the borders of Russia. One notices that Kd is affected and willingly attracted too by the German Länder's cultural policy targeting all the territories from which the Germans, once a majority people, were expelled in 1945. This utmost efficient *soft power* policy leads to some cultural "Re-germanization", founding the bases of regionalist identification. Now in Polish as well as in Lithuanian E.Prussia, in Silesia as well as in Pomerania, one witnesses the same phenomenon. "Neo-Prussian" regionalism is therefore as much a Mitteleuropean phenomenon as the result of Russia's federalization since the late XXc. I shall soon work on this question in a next research project.

There is certainly also much to say about Kd and E.Prussia as a Pan-European Mekka which should arouse actual debates and high thoughts about the past, the present and the future of Europe. Though it causes violent articles in the press and fearful military demonstrations, the E.Prussian Front and its meaning were never seriously integrated into current public debate, except perhaps in Germany, whereas they play an exceptional part in Europe's cultural and territorial imaginary, not only in Germany's one. Kd is not a mere geostrategic question. It is a peculiar place that one must put not only among the Globe's "hot spots" but also among Civilization's consciousness places and the greatest symbolic borders of our World, side by side with Palestine in particular, both being "holy lands" at Worlds' edges where one struggles under all forms for much more than some square kilometres and a key- position. Kd has to do with the setting of the

(European) World order at its borderland and with the notion of universal Empire which, as seen above, is not really outdated in this early XXIC. While the USSR collapsed more than a generation ago and while Kd is strongly established on Europe's map, it is high time to deepen these paramount questions.

From another point of view, the "Peri-Russian" phenomenon is not exclusively Russian. The Continent-States as well as « surinsular » States (Indonesia, Greece, Japan...) dear to scholar P. Pelletier do face more or less similar situations. I have noticed several times similarities with the USA whose federalism leads to regionalisms. Alaska is now a US exclave just as it was already such during Russian era. California also has something to do with Kd, and not only because both are "Far-W." starting with [kali-] ; they are also entities claiming « allogenization » where an originally consistent and united settlement over-extended over too wide a territory; then the Californians claim the Spaniards to be "theirs". And isn't it the same with the S.Vietnamese, settlers coming from the North who settled on former Khmer lands? Beyond a certain geographical extension, a people generates *subethnè*. Kd, the absolute Promethean territory, shows us most strikingly how a "geop. system" made of a power, a population and a territory appears. Now this birth always happens with reference to a past whose value is often very paradoxical (despise, reject, destruction switching to fascination, claim and assimilation as soon as circumstances push towards this opposite path). These "ultra-peripheral borderlands" have therefore always ambiguous territorial identities, hesitating between the Worlds they unit. Hence they are proteiform entities, depicting themselves as or perceived as « allogeneous » from inside ("Kd's Prussians" in Moscow's eyes), but metropolitan from outside (« Kd=USSR » in Poland's or Germany's eyes).

Finally territory unites humans. It is the E.Prussian (or Californian) territory which unites the "national Russian (or US) World" and the German, Polish and Baltic (or Hispanic) Worlds. It is the territory which enables to unite the most incompatible elements, i.e. the history of the Borussians « exterminated by the Germans », the one of the Germans « expelled by the Soviets », and the one of the Soviet people becoming Russians while claiming Immanuel Kant. It is again the common territory that leads Kd's inhabitants to follow the identity transformations socially decided by a local elite. Territory is thus at the very centre of social life and it is therefore most rightfully that I have wished to set it at the centre of the definition of geopolitics and of geography.

To finish, my geographer's vision moves me to notice that it is not the least of paradoxes that the very small oblast' of Kd born between 1945 and 1946 had enabled me to make such a wide trip throughout space and time. Through Kd, we have seen not only E.Prussia and the Baltics but also Smolensk and Petersburg, the whole of Poland-Lithuania, the Holy Empire and *Mitteleuropa*, the shores of Iceland, the ones of Antarctica and those of all Russia. Similarly, from my starting point in the XXIC, we have surveyed Russian and Prussian developments of the XXc and of the XVIIIc but also of the XIIc and XIIIc. At the hinge of ultra-peripheral Russia with World-scale

perspectives and of E.Prussia with pan-European scale ones, the geop. identity of Kd has appeared to be a gigantic issue, despite the amount of its inhabitants which can be compared to the one of the other Baltics, and despite its limited internal resources. One should thus wonder about the geop. destiny of a territory that is exceptional. Just as Mixail Geller marvelled in his monumental *History of the Russian Empire* at the smallest Upper-Lithuania founding in the XIVth c. an empire of 700 000 km² almost replacing old Kievan Rus' with Kiev, Minsk, Polotsk and Smolensk, leaving besides only Suzdalia and Novgorod, whereas the Lettish lands became a peripheral Germanic colony, similarly we have witnessed, at least thrice, the smallest E.Prussia becoming titanic: firstly with the hegemonic Teutonic Order from 1255 on in a land yet exhausted by starvations and the conquest; secondly with the Hohenzollern, we have seen a petty Ducal Prussia vassal of tremendous *Rzeczpospolita*, ravaged and looted by the Swedes, but becoming the core of the first military Power in the World of 1914, the IInd Reich ; finally, ex nihilo, in a territory almost entirely depopulated by war and the exodus of the Germans, a land in ruins under the British bombings of 1944 and amidst the German-Soviet fights of 1945, we have watched the rebirth of a prosperous Soviet « E.Prussia » with global perspectives, associated to leading sectors of Soviet economy, combining scientists, upper officers and adventurers-fishermen coming from the whole USSR. Most patently, an E.Prussian *genius loci* does exist and he pulls upwards despite all cataclysms, constantly inspiring the highest ambitions to the landlords of the day. E. Prussia, « land of all voids» as we have written in the introduction is thus also the « land of all rebirths » and of all the dreams of grandeur. Now the Kaliningraders are aware of this. What they have rebuilt and built little by little in the harshest conditions since 1945 and then again since 1991 are a light piece of evidence.

Marburg, October 1, 2017

RECOMMENDATIONS to the French Gouvernement and to the UE

English version:

Kaliningrad is too sensitive a territory to avoid some recommendations to the Western political authorities.

1-It is necessary to systematically avoid orientalism (such as it was expressed by British-EU Statesman Chris Patten) which is a real epistemological obstacle to understanding the Kaliningrad problem.

2-Political authorities should also avoid contesting Kaliningrad's territorial integrity, its legal existence, and the Russian identity that is developing there. Discourses

that contest these points create strong tensions, as L. Karabeskin and C. Wellmann have well shown. Similarly, it is necessary for the EU and France to recognise that Kaliningrad has a history and a meaning.

3-It is important to consider that Russia is European, especially through Kaliningrad, and therefore that the stakes are very high whenever it comes to Kaliningrad.

4-France has a traditional historical interest and a very important role in this issue that it has left aside since 1945. France has to control Germany's great activity on the one hand and to restrain Lithuania on the other.

France once had a major role in the creation of the Republic of Lithuania and in the fixing of its borders with East Prussia. It must assume this role today and exercise stricter control over Lithuanian rhetoric, official and unofficial, about Lithuania Minor and its territorial claims to Kaliningrad. This rhetoric has sometimes been supported in the USA and more recently in Poland. France must oppose these dangerous trends.

As far as Germany is concerned, the period 1991-2016 coincided with the implementation of a major policy that was at the same time very effective, discreet and not very visible, carried out by the FRG and above all by its Länder. A great German comeback in Central Europe, in line with its ancient history, has taken place. France must consider it with lucidity and ensure a role of counterweight necessary to the European balance, in accordance with the historical role of France in Central Europe. This must involve a greater French presence in the region and a stronger association of France with German diplomatic activities, in particular those of the Länder.

In this respect, the deployment of German troops in Lithuania, including in the immediate vicinity of Kaliningrad, is a cause for concern, creating a high level of fear of a German "return" in a formerly German region.

5-Generally speaking, France must oppose the militarization of a region that is already very sensitive in times of peace and détente.

6-France and the EU should support the Polish regions of East Prussia, as it is from them that the most effective cooperation with the Oblast originated.

7-It would be desirable to turn Kaliningrad into a meeting place for the two Europes. The model should be the meeting of the three Heads of State of Russia, Germany and France in Kaliningrad for the 750th anniversary of the city.

To enlarge the possibilities of such meetings, the rules for crossing the border, which are currently particularly restrictive, must be relaxed. In the XIXc, at the time of nationalism, it was much easier to cross the border than it is today, in a world that is considered to be "post-national" and in the framework of a "united Europe" that is clearly not such.

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