The identity perception of Kaliningrad citizens

Influence of the border on perceptions of identity, belonging and in-/exclusion in a Russian exclave within European Union territory

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During my masters at Radboud University, my interest in borders and their impact on identity and real life experiences of people got sparked. In a strive to combine this interest in borders with the concept of identity and identity perceptions, I started to look for an interesting case-study to conduct the research for my thesis. After a lot of reading, Kaliningrad suddenly caught my attention on a map of Europe. This piece of Russia within Europe caught my attention and ultimately became the topic of my final thesis, which lays before you.

I am very glad that I chose Kaliningrad as the case-study as it proved to be an utterly interesting city to research topics as identity, perceptions of Europeanness, Russianness and belonging. Furthermore, doing fieldwork in Kaliningrad and living in this remarkable city at the most western point of Russia has been an amazing experience, on a scientific- as well as a personal level.

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ABSTRACT

In this research, Kaliningrad has been used as a laboratory to find out how broad and possible essentialist notions of an all-encompassing identity of a region and its inhabitants play out in real life. Singular and essentialist notions of the identity of a territorial space and its inhabitants, often portrayed in discourse and mass-media, could lead to a view of people and places that does not do justice to the nuances, subtleties and variety of identification. Taking into account the unique geographical location of Kaliningrad, a Russian exclave surrounded by European Union territory, this part of Russia has been used as a case-study to further question concepts of identity and perceptions of the Other, Russianness/Europeanness and belonging.

In order to properly grasp the extensive, complex character of identity, the concept of the Thirdspace has been used as main analytical tool, providing the binary transcending components and leaving room that is necessary for intractability's and subliminalities that are inherent to the complexity of identity. Looking at Kaliningrad through a Thirdspace perspective made it possible to a provide a view of Kaliningrad(ers') identity that moves away from notions of Russianness vs. Europeanness, history vs. presence and real vs. imagined. Instead, it underlined the possibility of experiencing *both* instead of *either*, *also* instead of *or*. It became clear that Kaliningraders are no homogenous group (even the relatively small pool of respondents that participated in this research showed great variety in their identity perception) and there exists no such thing as a singular ''Kaliningrad identity''. The majority of the respondents made use of the uniqueness of Kaliningrad's environment and history to construct an identity that goes beyond being merely Russian. Natural features as the Baltic Sea, amber and the soft climate proved to be important contributors to a localized identity. Also, the variety of cultural representations, from the Teutonic and Prussian history to the Soviet and now Russian era, contributed to an identity perception that goes beyond feeling merely Russian. Increased contact with Europeans and visits to European countries, manifested in European influenced local dances and clothing for example, made several Kaliningraders feel different than their mainland Russian countrymen. Multiple respondents reported feelings of uniqueness, sometimes even referring to Kaliningraders as *Special Russians*.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Russia and the European Union have had a long history of encounter with each other. Being powerful neighbors, they both have functioned as important 'Others' for each other in terms of identity formation (Neumann, 1996; 1998).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, EU-Russian relations have been evolving rapidly. Several newly independent member states of the Soviet Union turned their focus more towards Europe than Russia regarding political and economic orientation (DeBardeleben, 2013). The recent (mostly) eastward expansion of the EU in 2004, with the joining of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Cyprus and Malta, has led to a new phase in Russian/EU relations.

After the expansion of the European Union in 2004, the European Union became more influential in the Russian near abroad. The ten states who joined the EU in 2004 adopted the strict Visa regime of the Schengen zone in 2007, which led to a renewal of the border between Russia and the European Union. From then on, a visa became required to travel from Russia to the European Union (and vice versa). This has led to a complicated situation according cross-border travel between Russia and the EU (Browning & Joenniemi, 2007; Diener & Hagen, 2011; Gänzle & Müntel, 2011).

A remarkable space of encounter of these EU-Russian relations is the Russian Oblast Kaliningrad. Kaliningrad, founded as Königsberg, has throughout history belonged to Prussia and later Germany. After the Second World War, the city became part of the Soviet Union and the Soviets renamed the city Kaliningrad. However, after the collapse of the Soviet Union and when Lithuania gained independence in 1991, Kaliningrad became a Russian exclave, disconnected from the Russian mainland. With the accession of Poland and Lithuania to the EU in 2004, Kaliningrad became fully surrounded by EU-territory (Fig. 1), making it an EU-enclave as well as a Russian exclave (Gänzle & Müntel, 2011). Since then, Kaliningrad can be seen as a unique space of Russian-EU encounter.

Being located at the periphery of Europe as well as Russia, the situation of Kaliningrad has been referred to as *''dual provincialism''* (Smirnov, 2009, p. 89), a *''double periphery''* (Gänzle & Müntel, 2011, p. 57) or a *''double borderland''* (Diener & Hagen, 2011, p. 1). The strict visa policy has influenced cross-border travel and trade in the oblast. However, questions about the impact of the border on the identity of the enclave and its inhabitants are also raised. Being not really inside nor outside both Russia or Europe, Kaliningrad is referred to as a *third space* (Browning & Joenniemi, 2007, p. 13), with its own unique identity. Berger (2010, p. 361) calls Kaliningraders *''Russians with a difference''*. Other scholars also endorse the unique identity of Kaliningrad, writing about Kaliningraders as a Europeanized group (Karpenko, 2008) and having an exclave identity (Diener & Hagen, 2011, p. 582).

Fig. 1: Geographical location of Kaliningrad, disconnected from the Russian mainland and sandwiched between Poland in the South and Lithuania in the Northeast (Source: New York Times).

1.1 Research Objective

In this research, the objective is to investigate the influence of the border between Russia and Europe on the identity perception of Kaliningraders, notions of Europeanness/Russianness, in- and exclusion and belonging. Because the border in Kaliningrad has shifted multiple times throughout history and Kaliningrad (former Königsberg) has alternately belonged to Europe and Russia, it is really interesting to find out how broad, comprehensive concepts of identification, belonging and in- or exclusion come together in the unique space of European/Russian encounter that Kaliningrad is.

Being such a unique place, Kaliningrad can function as a very well suited case study for this research. It is such an interesting space of European-Russian encounter because of its unique geographical location, being a piece of Russian territory disconnected from the Russian mainland and totally surrounded by Schengenland. Therefore, the role of the border becomes particularly relevant as it has drastic consequences for the inhabitants of Kaliningrad, as well as those of the surrounding countries in terms of mobility.

By zooming in on this unique border region between Russia and Europe, this research aims to locate rather grand concepts of identity and perception of the 'Other' in everyday life. By speaking to the people living in the border region, an attempt is made to translate the theoretical impact of a border into concrete, everyday lived situations. By allowing Kaliningraders to elaborate extensively on their perceptions of identity and their notions of belonging and in- or exclusion, the goal is to provide a nuanced overview of how these concepts play out 'on the ground' in Kaliningrad. Hopefully, the results of this research lead to a view on identity and belonging that exceeds essentialist notions of Us vs. Them and contribute to a more nuanced and inclusive perception on these matters.

To achieve this research goal, the following research question is formulated:

Can the unique space of European-Russian encounter, the Kaliningrad region, function as a laboratory where essentialist notions of identity, belonging, clear-cut notions of Europeanness vis-à-vis Russianness and perceptions of the Other can be challenged?

The main question will be supported by the following sub questions:

- What is the historical relation between Russia and Europe regarding identity formation and the mutual perception of Europeanness and Russianness?

- Do the inhabitants of Kaliningrad have a unique, *third space* identity, one that transcends the dichotomous identity perception of feeling either Russian or European?

- How do Kaliningrad citizens perceive notions of Europeanness and Russianness and how do they think these concepts interrelate?

- What kind of geographical imaginaries are being used for Kaliningrad in discourse and do they correspond with the everyday lived experiences of Kaliningraders?

- What effects does the hardening of the European-Russian border in Kaliningrad have on the everyday life of Kaliningraders and their perceptions of the Other, belonging and in- or exclusion?

1.2 Relevance

With the expansion of the European Union, their sphere of influence is also expanding. By expanding its influence eastwards, Europe is meeting Russia in their near abroad (Eastern-Europe). Russia, being one of the biggest and most important European neighbors, has reacted competitively on this extended European presence in their backyard and stated that this European presence leads to a strategic competition with Russia in the Eastern parts of Europe (Gowan, 2005). In an interview with The Economist, Fyodor Lukyanov -editor of a Russian geopolitical magazine- described the European Union as *''just a new kind of empire: one that threatens to extend into Russia's historic sphere of influence''* (Lukyanov, 2005).

This Russian reaction to the expansion of the European Union's sphere of influence can be explained by the way Russia perceives itself and the European Union. Regarding Europe, Russia does not see itself as a mere neighbor of Europe. Instead, it demands to be treated as an equal partner (Haukkala, 2009; Diener & Hagen, 2011; Gänzle & Müntel, 2011). This attitude is confirmed in the fact that Russia does not take part in the European Neighborhood Policy, but based their relations with the European Union in the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, which has a more equal character in comparison with the more normative structure of the ENP (DeBardeleben, 2013).

The demand for equal treatment and to be recognized as a global superpower has led to increased tensions between Russia the European Union. Examples of such frictions between the European Union and Russia are the Russian presence in the Crimea, their involvement in the Syrian conflict and their alleged influence in foreign politics. These Russian geopolitical moves lead to a renewed concern –or even fear- for Russia as a global power among European citizens and politicians, especially in their near abroad (the Baltic States and Eastern European countries, Zarycki, 2004).

An important contributor to these feelings is the perception that Russia(ns) and Europe(ans) have of each other. The recent tensions in the international relations between Russia and 'the West' can contribute to a distorted and simplified view of other people and places. Influenced by negative imaginaries of fear and difference, often portrayed and strengthened by mass

media and in discourse, the risk of a simplified perception of other people exists. Through the process of *Othering*, essentialist notions about the identity of people and places who are located on the margins of the European continent can be spread. Consequently, these essentialist imaginaries regarding identity and belonging can lead to a simplified perception of reality, a perception that does not take into account the great difference of cultures and identities that exist in Europe and its near abroad (Van Houtum & Van Naerssen, 2002).

Therefore, it is important to nuance this essentialist view of Russia vis-à-vis Europe. Identity is not a static concept. It is constantly constructed and reconstructed (Grossberg, 1996; Hall, 1996). In this research, perceptions of European and Russian identity and notions of belonging and in- or exclusion are examined and reflected upon. By taking Kaliningrad as a case study, possible essentialist notions of European and Russian identity are expected to play out in a more nuanced and comprehensive way in everyday life. By giving people on the Russian-European border a voice, the results of this research can contribute to a more nuanced, inclusive view regarding concepts of identity, Europeanness, Russianness and belonging and hopefully invite people to move away from the often negative imaginary of the *Other* that gets presented in several discourses and mass media.

This case-study is further important because the Kaliningrad region is an area where European policy and European-Russian relations have immediate, tangible effects in the everyday life of citizens. The hardening of the European border has led to the implementation of the strict visa-policy of the European Union. This means that Russian citizens in Kaliningrad and their European neighbors are feeling the consequences of not being part of Europe (The European Union) in everyday life. By talking to the people in the Kaliningrad border region, this research aims at giving them a voice. Their views and opinions are important and can be used to reconsider the notion of Europeanness vis-à-vis Russianness, or Otherness in general. It can add insight to the debate of what Europe it, where it is located (and where not) and who are – and who are not- part of Europe. Also, this research strives to examine the influence of geographical imaginaries on mutual perceptions of the *Self* and the *Other*.

To compare the image of Kaliningrad and Kaliningraders that exists in discourse with the self-perception of Kaliningraders, both imaginaries will be looked at. A closer look will be given to the kind of imaginaries that are used to portray the Kaliningrad region. In several writings, Kaliningrad is framed as a pilot region (Smirnov, 2009), a double periphery (Gänzle & Müntel, 2011), a double borderland (Diener and Hagen, 2011), Russia with a difference (Berger, 2010) and Little Russia (Joenniemi & Makarychev, 2004). How these narratives relate to the everyday life perception of Kalingraders will be further examined by giving Kaliningrad citizens the change to elaborate on their perceptions extensively.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Identity

Identity functions as an answer to the fundamental question: who am I? It is used to understand who we are and what our place in the world is (Taylor, 2010). The concept of identity has been given much attention in the social sciences over the last decades. Due to globalization, mobility, migration and technological development, the world we live in has changed rapidly. These developments have also had consequences for the concept of identity. Questions of who we are, and what our place in the world is, have been reexamined because the world we live in today, as well as the sense that we live in the world, is different than during previous periods of time (Giddens, 1991, in Taylor, 2010, p. 2).

With this renewed interest in the subject of identity, it also became clear that there is no clear, singular definition of the concept of identity that all scholars agree on. The concept is continuously debated and researched and there is still no consensus about the way identity should be conceptualized (Abdelal et al., 2009; Du Gay et al., 2000; Hall, 1996).

However, in the Post-Cartesian era, scholars from multiple disciplines seem to find each other in their anti-essentialist critique on the Cartesian thought that human beings are *''free agents''* (Du Gay et al., 2000, p. 2) or *''self-sustaining subjects''* (Hall, 1996, p. 1), having a unified, fixed identity. The anti-essentialist view on identity is that people do not have a separate, bounded identity. There is no such thing as an authentic, independent and complete identity. Instead, identities are socially constructed, relational and situational. This social construction of identity takes place in an ongoing process of *''identification''* (Hall, 1996, p. 2). The forming of an identity happens during a process of identification with other people, groups or ideals and is based upon the recognition of a common origin or shared characteristics (Hall, 1996, p. 2).

Another consequence of this non-essentialist notion of identity as an active process of identification, is that people can have multiple identities. As Grossberg (1996, p. 89) states, identities are constructed through their relation to- and difference of something else.

Grossberg hereby agrees with Hall that identities are relational and in a constantly ongoing process of formation. Furthermore, identities are fragmented, consisting of different parts that are put together to create a ''*disassembled and reassembled unity*'' (Haraway, 1991, p. 174). When we see identities as relational and situational, as well as consistent of multiple fragments, we have to acknowledge the multiplicity of the concept. This means that identities can change from one situation to another, and people and places can shift between multiple identities in different situations and over time (Taylor, 2010; Grossberg, 1996).

In this conceptualization of the term Identity, it became clear that the concept of identity is not easy to define. However, it became clear that there is no such thing as a single, unified and fixed identity. Furthermore, identities are acknowledged as being socially constructed, relational, and bound to change over time and different situations. All these characteristics of identity are merged by Stuart Hall in his intelligible caption of the term identity:

> ''*Identities are never unified, and increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic discourses, practices and positions. They are subject to a radical historization, and are constantly in the process of change and transformation.*'' (Hall, 1996, p. 4)

2.2 Place

The concept of Identity, regarded above, is not purely an individual and social category. Identity also has a spatial manifestation when people identify with territorial spaces, e.g. nations, regions or neighborhoods (Paasi, 2001). When discussing the relation between (territorial) spaces and identity, Soja argues that ''*territories provide an essential link between society and the space it occupies primarily through its impact on human interaction and the development of group spatial identities*'' (Soja, 1971, p. 33).

Again, drawing from social constructivism, the concept of place will be regarded as not existing a-priori, but being actively constructed and therefore being in a constant process of *becoming*. The making of a place happens when people establish a *sense of place*, when they

imbued a space with meaning by associating it with memories, emotions and past experiences. The construction (Institutionalization) of a specific spatial scale, the region, will be explained with the processes of *Social Spatialization* and *Spatial Socialization*, and the role of narratives in this process (Paasi, 1996).

Sense of Place

Places are constructed when people imbued space with emotions, feelings and meaning (Tuan, 1977). Every individual develops his/her own *sense of place* by drawing from personal experiences, emotions and memories that have are connected to this place (Thrift, 2004). These personal experiences and memories get associated with and connected to physical spaces, herby forming a sense of place. This place is thus not existing in itself, it is given meaning in relation to personally constructed senses of place (Massey, 1991). A sense of place is therefore subjective, consisting of emotions, personal memories, feelings and associations.

An important assumption in this view is that the view of a singular, established and bounded sense of place is rejected. No place has an enclosed, generally agreed upon identity that is experienced equally among its inhabitants (Massey, 1991; 1995). The way how a person experiences a place is dependent on numerous factors, e.g. gender, age, religion, memories and experiences. An elderly person can have a deeply emotional and nostalgic experience when visiting his birth village after a long period of time, whereas the same village is just a passing site for someone who has to cross it on his way to work. It is the same space, but it is experienced totally different by different people. According Massey, places consists of multiple ''*layers*'' of senses of place that are based on the distinctive meanings that is invested in the place by individual and group actors.

Places are thus not static entities, but social constructs and meeting points of social and spatial processes (Massey, 1991; Paasi, 2001). Hence, (territorial) places are not restricted to their boundaries. Places are being made in relation to other places, interconnected and always in a process of development. Therefore, it should be fruitful to reject notions of the purity of regions, fed by false historical and nostalgic claims, and replace them by a more open and relational view where the concept of place is understood as a ''*meeting place, the location of*

intersections of particular bundles of activity spaces, of connections and interrelations, of influences and movements'' (Massey, 1995, p. 59).

Regions

A specific place, on a specific spatial scale, is the region. In today's continuously globalizing world, regions become more important in the identity construction of people (Paasi, 2009; 2013). A region can be understood as a meeting point of various spatial scales. Scott (1989, in Paasi, 2001) distinguishes four spatial scales, i.e. the global, supranational, national and regional. He designates the region as the ''building blocks'' of the entire system of spatial scales. Furthermore, a region is not a mere passive medium in which social action takes place. Neither is it an entity that operates autonomously above human beings. Regions are always part of this action and hence they are social constructs that are created in political, economic, cultural and administrative practices and discourses (Paasi, 2001, p. 16).

According regional identity, the distinction can be made between the ''*identity of a region*'', and the ''*regional identity*'' (regional consciousness of its inhabitants). The *identity of a region* refers to natural features and landscape, elements of local culture, history and population. These components are used in the creation of a scientific, political, cultural, and economical regional discourse which distinguishes the specific region from others (Paasi, 2003, pp. 478-479). This identity of a region can be understood as the story of the region that is provided by media, educational programs etc.

A *regional identity* is formed when inhabitants are identifying with the region. A regional consciousness is created when people are socialized as members of a regional territory. Narratives about the region connect the inhabitants to the region by providing them with stories about a common history, shared memories, and past experiences. These narratives play a constitutive role in the shaping of social practices and the way how people experience and make sense of the world around them (Paasi, 1998, p. 75).

This socialization of inhabitants as members of a regional territory happens through *spatial socialization*. Building on Rob Shields theory of ''*social spatialization*'' –the ongoing construction

of the spatial at the level of the social- (Shields, 1991, in Paasi, 1996), Paasi uses the term ''*spatial socialization*'' to explain how people are being ''*socialized as members of specific territorially bounded spatial entities and through which they more or less actively internalize collective territorial identities and shared traditions*'' (Paasi, 1996, p. 8).

Institutionalization of Regions

Just as human beings, territories (including regions) don't have an essentialist, bounded and fixed identity. By approaching them as social constructs, regions have to be understood as processes that are not just ''*being*'', but in a constant process of ''*becoming*'' (Paasi, 2009, p. 133). The way how regions are being created and eventually become part of the regional system and social consciousness of the broader region happens through the so-called process of the ''*institutionalization of regions*'' (Paasi, 1996; 2001; 2009; Fig. 2.1).

This institutionalization process happens through four stages. The order in which these stages take place can vary, but they mostly happen simultaneously. The four stages are:

1) Constitution of a territorial shape
2) Constitution of a symbolic shape
3) Constitution of an institutional shape
4) Establishment of the region in regional consciousness
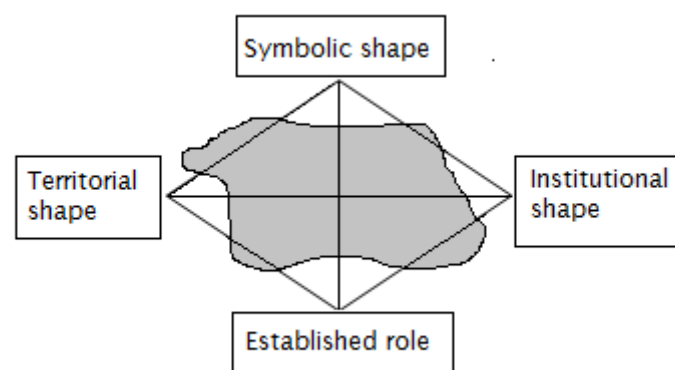
Fig. 2.1: Conceptualization of the process of the institutionalization of regions (Paasi, 1996, p. 34).

The first stage is the constitution of a territorial shape of the region. This implies the establishment of regional boundaries and thus the establishment of the territorial shape of the region, based on either historical narratives, or specific ''*ad hoc*'' decisions (Paasi, 2009, p. 134). In this stage, the region is recognized as a distinctive unit in the network of spatial structures. The region gets distinguished from other territorial units by a combination of administrative, political, economic and cultural practices.

Through the process of *symbolic shaping*, the image of the region (and regional identity) as a distinct territory gets enounced and reinforced. The used symbols are often abstractions about alleged solidarity of the inhabitants of the region, connecting inhabitants to the region and at the same time demarcating the *Other*. These symbols and imaginaries can create strong feelings of belonging and are instrumental in the identification of individuals and groups with the territory. Examples of such symbols are maps, coats of arms, flags, landscape, rituals (e.g. parades), songs, novels, movies etc. The most powerful tool in the symbolic shaping of the region is naming. By naming the region, it gets embedded in the political, academic and social discourses as well as in the everyday life of people (Paasi, 1996; 2001). These symbols can be drawn from memories of the past, but they can also be developed in contemporary everyday life.

Next to boundaries and symbols, institutions are a necessity in the constitution of regions. Political, economic, cultural and formal administrative institutions strengthen and reproduce the regional territory and its fundamental symbolism (Paasi, 1996; 2001). The region becomes *established* when it gets recognized as a part of the regional system and in the social consciousness of the region, as well as in the broader social consciousness. When the region becomes established, it receives agency and possesses instrumental value in politics about the struggle for power and resources. After the region gets established, it is recognized as an entity, is integrated in discourse and gets reproduced in the social practices of the inhabitants of the region as well as outside the region (Paasi, 2009, p. 136).

2.3 Borders

In scientific literature, multiple terms are used to describe borders. Borders, boundaries, frontiers, those are all terms you encounter in literature about this phenomenon (Jones, 1959; Minghi, 1991). Often, it is not clear what the exact difference between these terms is, and they are more than once used as synonyms. However, by using either the term *frontier* or *boundary*, the accent gets placed on a different characteristic of the border.

Frontiers are spaces where contact between different people and ideas takes place. Frontier zones are areas where people and ideas meet and interact. Frontiers do not necessarily have the form of a separating line, but the frontier comprises a larger area around the border. In frontier zones, the border is still open. The exact location of the hard border, the *''Line in the sand''*, is not completely evident yet (Eder, 2006).

Boundaries are the manifestation of clear-cut separating lines, demarcating the end of one territory and the beginning of the other. By distinguishing these concepts, the manifold character of borders becomes apparent. On the one hand, borders are the demarcations of spatial territories and social groups. In this view, borders have exclusionary powers and are oriented towards the inside. On the other hand, borders are zones where contact between different people, ideas and cultures is moderated. In this view, borders -frontiers- are seen as outwardly oriented (Paasi, 1996, p. 26). Edgar Morin has expressed this paradoxical character of borders by stating:

> *''The frontier is both an opening and a closing. It is at the frontier that there takes place the distinction from and liaison with the environment. All frontiers, including the membrane of living beings, including the frontier of nations, are, at the same time as they are barriers, places of communication and exchange. They are the place of dissociation and association, of separation and articulation.''* (Morin, 1977, cited in Bennington, 1990, p. 121)

Critical Border Studies

Within traditional Borders Studies, the concept of the border has long been regarded as a demarcation of the territoriality of sovereign nation states, as the inward oriented boundary

mentioned above. In this view, a border is assumed as a *''Line in the sand''*, a tangible, visible boundary between territories with the emphasis of the physical manifestation of the border (Parker & Vaughan-Williams, 2012; Parker & Adler-Nissen, 2012). The border is considered as a static, pre-existing given. As something that is stable, unquestioned and accepted as a reality.

The field of Critical Border Studies (CBS), however, rejects this traditional view of the border. According to CBS scholars, the border is socially constructed and in a constant process of becoming (Newman, 2003; Paasi, 1998). Instead of taking the border for granted and focusing on the effects of the border on the landscape and societies, the focus gets turned towards the processes that constantly (re)construct borders and the way how borders are being performed, lived and practiced (Gielis & Van Houtum, 2012; Parker & Vaughan-Williams, 2012; Rumford, 2012). The aim is to provide critical scholars with tools to determine where the border is located, what type of border is at stake and what consequences this specific border has in its specific setting (Parker & Vaughan-Williams, 2012, p. 729). CBS scholars advocate a shift in focus, away from the *concept* of the border (the ''Line in the sand''), towards the bordering *practices* and the *performances* that actively (re)produce borders (Parker & Vaughan-Williams, 2012, p. 729).

Bordering Practices

Bordering practices entail the *''activities which have the effect of constituting, sustaining or modifying borders''* (Parker & Adler-Nissen, 2012, p. 776). When analyzing these practices, the focus is shifted away from the border as a static entity, and aimed towards the activities and actions that lead to the construction of the border. This expanded view of bordering practices recognizes the more subtle and less evident bordering activities. Now not only activities which have a clear intention of bordering (e.g. the division of a territory in administrative districts) are taken into account, but more subtle and indirect actions are also recognized and given attention. This leads to a deeper understanding of the bordering process, with more room for subtle contributions of bordering. Even activities that don't have a clear intention to create a border are recognized, but are nevertheless also contributing to the bordering process are recognized (Parker & Vaughan-Williams, 2012). Furthermore, this leads to the recognition of the influence of non-state actors on the construction of borders.

Rumford's concept of ''*Borderwork*'', being ''*the efforts of ordinary people leading to the construction, dismantling, or shifting of borders*'' acknowledges the agency that ordinary people have in the abovementioned bordering practices (Rumford, 2012, p. 897). Rumford emphasizes that not only states, but also non-state actors like ordinary people, members of civil-society, entrepreneurs or supranational institutes like the European Union have the ability to engage in bordering practices. By shifting the focus away from the state, Rumford also states that the border at stake is not necessarily located at the edges of nations, but can be diffused and located at different places and scale levels throughout society; within cities, neighborhoods, or at the countryside (*ibid*).

Border Performance

Again, by focusing on the practice of bordering, the emphasize lies on the social constructivist nature of the border concept. The border is not existing a-priori, but is socially constructed. By performing bordering rituals such as passport control checks at the airport, visa application procedures and immigration hearings, borders are constantly *performed* into existence (Parker & Vaughan-Williams, 2012). Ergo, everyday human activities are necessary for the reification of the border. By aiming the analytical scope on the performance of borders, borders can be studied from different locations, contexts and in different representations than the mere ''Line in the Sand''. This point is expressed vividly by Parker & Vaughan-Williams as follows:

> ''*Reconceptualising borders as a set of performances injects movement, dynamism, and fluidity into the study of what are otherwise often taken to be static entities.*''
> (Parker & Vaughan-Williams, 2012, p. 729)

Hard– and Soft Borders

As mentioned above, borders can be identified in various forms, contexts and at different locations, all having different consequences. When addressing these different types of borders, Klaus Eder makes the distinction between ''*Hard borders*'' and ''*Soft borders*''. Hard borders are the borders that you encounter when you want to enter another country, and are stopped by a border control officer. These Hard borders are the institutionalized, juridical defined borders that you encounter when two or more territorial spaces meet (Eder, 2006, p. 256).

Soft borders are the boundaries that are created between different people. These socio-cultural barriers take the form of ideological definitions about notions of in- and exclusion. Examples of such soft borders are definitions of who does and who does not belong to Europe. These concepts are ideologically constructed with the help of imaginaries. By using narratives, historical claims and geographical imaginaries, ideas about e.g. Europeanness are formulated. Over time, these Soft borders become generally accepted and they ultimately lead to the foundation and justification of administrative, Hard borders (*ibid*).

The intangible ideas, imaginaries, narratives and perceptions about cultural identities (Soft borders) are thus being used as building blocks for the establishment of the Hard borders that lead to the division of people. This illustrates the exclusionary power of borders, but also reveal the underlying processes that lead to the establishment of the Hard, constitutive borders that people are encountering every day at the margins of territorial spaces.

2.4 Othering

An important factor in the construction of an Identity is the concept of the Other. As mentioned above, identity -or a sense of self- does not exist independently. Identity is a relational concept that is formed during social interaction with others (Grossberg, 1996; Hall, 1996; Neumann, 1999). In the process of identity construction, one's own identity is defined by clearly establishing the differences between the own identity and the identities of others (Hall, 1996; Neumann, 1996; Paasi, 1996). So, in order to create a sense of Self, the presence of one or multiple Others is necessary; *''The face of the Other summons the Self into existence''* (Neumann, 1999, p. 16).

'Us' vs. 'Them'

When constructing an identity, people often use other groups as points of reference. They define their identity by identifying with their own social group, referring to the shared cultural forms, practices and way of life that their group has, in opposition to at least one other group (Rutherford, 1990; Young, 2004). The Other is thus needed for the creation of the Self. This need for an Other to define the Self is what Hall calls the *constitutive outside:*

''This entails the radically disturbing recognition that it is only through the relation to the Other, the relation to what it is not, to precisely what it lacks, of what has been called its 'constitutive outside' that the positive meaning of any term can be constructed.''

(Hall, 1996, p. 4)

With the use of dichotomies like us/them, here/there, included/excluded, safe/unsafe, developed/undeveloped, one's own identity is positively constructed by setting it off against the (often negative) characteristic of the Other (Paasi, 1996).

This process of differentiation between Us and Them is called *Othering*. A comprehensive definition of Othering is given by Lister. She describes othering as *''a process of differentiation and demarcation, by which the line is drawn between 'us' and 'them' –between the more and the less powerful– and through which social distance is established and maintained''* (Lister, 2004, p. 101). In her definition of Othering, Lister designates multiple characteristics and effects of Othering; i.e. the differentiation between Us and Them, the corresponding creation of borders (both physical and ideological borders) and the fact that the process of Othering contains a component of power, since the dominant group has the power to describe and impose characteristics to the subordinate Other. These characteristics of Othering will be elaborated upon in the following paragraphs.

Construction of the Other

Othering can take place at different scales. At a personal level, a man can identify himself as male by opposing his male identity to female characteristics. When creating a cultural identity, othering also takes place. Somebody can identify as European by opposing his perceived European identity against, e.g., the African, American, Asian or Russian Other. Europeanness is then described by pointing out that it lacks certain (negative) African, American, Asian, Russian features. In other words, to describe what the European identity *is*, an external Other is used as constitutive outside, by explaining why this Other is *not* European. This process also takes place on the supra-national, regional and the local level (Paasi, 1996).

By using Aho's (1990, in Paasi, 1996) explanation of the process of *''reification''*, Paasi explains how abstract imaginations, concepts, ideas and linguistic descriptions are becoming real and

experienced objects in the life of people. When these abstract concepts gets objectified, they are becoming real experiences and therefore accepted by members of society as general knowledge. Aho (1990) identifies five stages in the reification process: naming, legitimation, myth making, sedimentation and rituals.

The concept of reification is also applicable when examining how the Other is created. In the first stage, the Other has to be described, labeled. Then, the features that are ascribed to the Other have to be legitimated and the Other gets mythologized. Hereafter, the process of sedimentation transforms these myths, labels and stories –which are not necessarily true– about the Other into generally accepted knowledge and perceptions of reality by members of a society. The stories and myths are then no longer abstracts, but they have become reified, i.e. objectified, and they now influence the way people experience and understand the world around them (Aho, 1990).

Bordering, the power of in- and exclusion

Stuart Hall (1996) emphasizes that by using the concept of the Other in identity construction, the dominant identity possesses the power of exclusion. When constructing a positive identity, the *Other* gets described by using negative references. The negative Other is everything that the positive Self is not. During the process of labeling the Other, stereotypical descriptions are an often used tool.

The Other is not placed at the same level as the Self. When used as a negative reference point, it gets ascribed all kinds of inferior connotations. The whole construction of the Other is based on the politics of difference. These differences can be based on class, ethnicity, social position, sexuality, gender etc. as a result, the Other can end up being marginalized (Rose, 1995).

Furthermore, the concept of locality plays an important role in the process of defining the Other. In identity discourse, the Other usually does not live at the same place as the Self. '*They*' live over *there*, and '*we*' live over *here*. Stereotypes are used to strengthen this distinction between Us and Them. In Geopolitical discourse, several categories of territorial identities can be constructed by either making clear distinctions between Us and the Other, or thinking more inclusively in terms of We (Fig. 2.2).

Four categories can be identified. The first category takes the *we/here* narrative as point of departure. In this view, a social group is integrated within a specific territory; e.g. a supranational territory, a nation-state or a region. The second discourse is based on the *we/there* assumption, which leads to integration over boundaries. The third category focuses on the differences between socio-cultural groups within in a specific territory. In this view, the Other lives within the boundaries of the territorial space. An example of this view is the notion of refugees as Others within a country, region, city or neighborhood. The fourth narrative is the most evident example of Othering. In this view, the Other lives in another territory, *over there*, clearly separated from Us, living *over here* (Paasi, 1996, pp. 13-15; Fig. 2.2).

These categories all use another category of imaginaries in their creation of socio-spatial integration. These views are represented in two different languages, the language of ''*integration*'' and the language of ''*difference*'' (Paasi, 1996, p. 15). The discourse that uses We as a starting point, seeks to find similarities between various social groups. Hereby making use of inclusive imaginaries, stories and representations and a language of *integration*. The discourse that uses Othering to create a socio-spatial identity uses the language of *difference*. Distinctions between the own social group and Others are (re)produced in narrative, imaginaries and discourse and expressed in geopolitical reasoning.

	Here	*There*
We	Integration within a territory	Integration over boundaries
Other	Distinction within a territory	Distinction between Us and the Other

Fig. 2.2: Analytical framework for forms of socio-spatial integration and distinction (Paasi, 1996, p. 14)

Othering in EU identity discourse

An important Other in the identity formation of Europe has always been Russia. With the formation of Russia as a superpower after the Great Northern War in 1721, Europe was now confronted with a strong Eastern neighbor. Here, a clear East vs. West division emerged (Neumann, 1999). This East vs. West division continued to be present. Neumann states that

one of the reasons for the continuance of this division, is the fact that Russia tried to catch up with European civilization through their process of modernization in the beginning of the 19th century (Neumann, 1996). This has contributed to the image of Europe as the modern, developed Western country that Russia wanted to catch up with. Within Russian society, this also started an ongoing debate between Russians who were looking at the West and Russians who were more focused on the East. Neumann calls this the debate between Westernizers and Slavophiles (Neumann, 1996, pp. 13-39).

2.5 Orientalism and Eastness

During the colonization era, colonizing countries oppressed the colonized countries economically, culturally and politically. Underlying concept of this colonial discourse was the division of the world into binary opposites, thereby strengthening Othering processes, especially between the West and the non-West.

With the decolonization of the former empires during the last decades, the colonization in the political sense of occupation of colonized territory was over. However, the legacy of colonization remains visible in the modern world through the unequal division of power between *''the West and the rest''* in social-cultural ways of identity and representation (Barnett, 2006, p. 147). This unequal division of representational power can be recognized in the old binary oppositions in which the West and the rest -mostly the East- are portrayed. An example of this opposition is the division of the world in central and peripheral regions (Gregory et al., 2009, p. 561; Morozov & Rumelili, 2012). The center is perceived as forward and developed, the periphery as backward and in need of catching up with the center regions. Other distinctions that are used by dominant Western powers to dominate the non-Western world are center/margin; civilized/primitive; advanced/backward and good/evil (Ashcroft et al., 1998).

This center-periphery template also constitutes the normative power of the West. This idea of Western normative power leads to the marginalization of non-Western experiences and voices, strengthened by the Eurocentric claim of the perceived superiority of 'European' values

(Bhambra, 2009, p. 14). These ''European'' values were reinforced by portraying colonized territories and people as backward, undeveloped and peripheral. Classifications that opposed the West, which got portrayed as rational, developed and humane (Said, 1978, p. 300).

Orientalism

One of the most influential writers of postcolonial literature is Edward Said. In his writing about the relation between the West and the East, he introduced the term *Orientalism* to describe the way the West (the Occident) uses certain imaginaries to construct the East (the Orient). By practicing Orientalism, the Orient is used as the main Other for the construction of a European identity. In his critique on Orientalism, Said describes how Western scholars are creating an image of the Orient, mostly based on stereotypical descriptions and imaginaries, that is oversimplified and unjust. In Orientalist works of Western scholars, poets and other influentials, the Orient gets portrayed as backwards, irrational, depraved, childlike etc. Consequently, the West gets considered rational, virtuous, mature and normal, the opposites of the classifications ascribed to the Orient (Said, 1978, p. 40).

An important observation made by Said is the fact that the Occident possesses the power to describe the Orient. When describing the Orient, the Orient itself has no voice in the process. The Orient is described by Westerners by using stereotypical, simplified and racist classifications. These classifications are justified and strengthened with the help of imaginaries. Imaginaries are depictions of others, or more specifically:

> ''*Representations of other places –of peoples and landscapes, cultures and natures – that articulate the desires, fantasies and fears of their authors and the grids of power between them and their Others.*'' (Gregory et al., 2009, p. 369)

These imaginaries get manifested in the form of paintings, novels, travel reports, films, poems and so on. However, these material expressions of imaginaries can over time become more and more accepted, and eventually adopted as true representations of the world. In this way, geographical imaginaries lead to a taken for granted view of the Other and really influence the

way in which the world (and particularly the Other) is perceived. Said underscores the constitutive impact of Orientalism on the social consciousness of Westerners as follows:

> *''Orientalism is not an airy European fantasy about the Orient, but a created body of theory and practice in which, for many generations, there has been a considerable material investment. Continued investment made Orientalism, as a system of knowledge about the Orient an acceptable grid for filtering through the Orient into Western consciousness.''*
> (Said, 1978, p. 6)

The unequal power relation that is embedded in Orientalist practices lies in the fact that the people from the Orient have no voice in the process of describing the Orient. They merely serve as the object in the description process. Said describes the power relation between the East [Orient] and the West [Occident] as one where *''the West watches, the East is watched''* (Said, 1978, in Gregory et al., 2009, p. 370). By describing the Orient, Western writers assumed that the Orient existed in itself and was there to be discovered by them. However, instead of *discovering* the Orient, Western writers were *creating* the Orient by describing it as sensual, backward, inaccurate and tending towards despotism (Said, 1978, p. 205), an imaginary that people who are being written about do not recognize themselves in (Said, 1995, p. 345).

Summarizing, Orientalism is a discourse, originating from the colonial period, in which the subjects of description don't have a voice in the description process (Bhambra, 2007, p. 18). The Orient (or the non-West) is portrayed as a backward Other with the use of simplified, stereotypical imaginaries. These imaginaries help to create an image of a uniform, backward non-Western space, ignoring the pluralism and nuances that exist between spaces located in the Orient.

Nesting Orientalism in Europe: Eastness

In his critique on Orientalism, Said mostly focused on Orientalizing practices in the Far East. The imaginaries of the Orient he described, mostly concerned people, places and practices located in Asia, the Middle-East and Northern-Africa. However, examples of the use of the

East as a backward space, in need of catching up with the West, can be detected within Europe as well.

In contemporary European discourse, this East/West binary can still be detected. In her appliance of Orientalism on the Eastern Europe, Merje Kuus identifies a division between European countries on a perceived scale of *Europeanness* and *Eastness.* Drawing on Said's critique on Orientalism, she describes the classification of European countries into three categories, i.e. the European core; Central Europe and Eastern Europe. In this division, the European core consists of Western European countries with perceived '*European'* values such as a functioning market economy, democracy and human rights. Eastern Europe consists of countries which are assigned negative '*Eastern'* connotations of backwardness.

Countries that are perceived as Eastern European, are Ukraine and Belarus. These countries are culturally, ideologically and politically closer to Russia, which gets the questionable honor of serving as the main Other in this narrative. With the expansion of the EU and NATO in 2004, formerly perceived *Eastern* European countries like the Baltic States, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, suddenly became more *European*. However, because they were still in a transitional process and not yet fully belonging to the European core, they were classified as Central European. Not yet *Core European*, but also not *Eastern* European anymore (Kuus, 2007, pp. 1-37).In this division of European countries on an East/West scale, Western Europe gets idealized as the place where true European values are located. By doing so, the East as a backward, inferior space within Europe is moved further eastward, more towards Russia (Kuus, 2004; 2007). An often used Orientalist imaginary for Russia, is that of Russia as a threatening space:

> *''The East–West distinction was always related to the experience of the Eastern border as a frontier. The East provides the second frontier of Europe. In the narrations of this frontier, the second other of Europe was constructed. This East appears as Russia, providing a referent for something that Europe is different from. From Tsarist Russia to Communist Russia, a particular sense of threat was imagined. The East is the space from once the 'Mongols' came, then the 'Russians' and finally the 'Soviet Communists.''* (Eder, 2006, p. 264)

This classifications of European countries on the basis of their Europeanness, be it Eastness, are comparable with the Orientalist practices described by Said. Milica Bakić-Hayden describes this process of dividing Europe and the East therefore as ''*Nesting Orientalism*'' (Bakić-Hayden, 1995). With the expansion of the European Union in 2004 and 2007, the so-called Eastward Enlargement, Central European states suddenly became part of the European Union. The process prior to this enlargement was critically examined by several scholars. The term Eastern Enlargement in itself was criticized as being an Orientalizing term (Böröcz, 2001, p. 6). The part of enlargement was falsely implying that it was just a process of augmentation, while in reality it was a far more complex process of socially and culturally transforming Central- and Eastern-European countries towards Western-European standards. The term Eastern emphasized the distinction between Western and Eastern Europe. In this context, Eastern can be conceived as being inferior to Western Europe (Böröcz, 2001, pp. 6-7).

The normative power of the European Union is based on rather vague descriptions of Europeanness, described as ''*Euro-Speak*'' (Diez, 1999). When talking about a European identity, the European Union is guilty of both self-universalization and the exclusion of others. In this identity concept, Europe is ascribed all kinds of positive qualities, while neglecting the possibility of those features also existing in non-European places. These positive aspects are seen as something that is characteristic for Europe, while critical thinkers could argue that these positive aspects could also be discernible in places outside Europe. This makes this discourse falsely inclusive and exclusive. Also, the term European is universalized, as if Europe is one integral whole, overlooking the grand regional differences within the European Union (Diez, 1999, in Böröcz, 2001, pp. 7-8).

2.6 Thirdspace

Deconstructing the dichotomy: An anti-binary approach

Grounded in Postmodernism, this research seeks to approach and analyze the concept of identity and place in a way that exceeds binary thinking. Instead of thinking in terms of us/them; East/West; developed/undeveloped; modern/backward and inside/outside, this

research aims to inquire identity perception in Kaliningrad and Kaliningrad as a space in a more fluid way.

When talking about identity, cultures and spaces, postmodern theory takes claims about the fluidity and flexibility of cultures and identities as their starting point. Identities, cultures and spaces are not fixed, given entities. Instead, they are socially constructed and in a constant process of (re)negotiation. By looking at spaces and identities this way, essentialist claims about the purity and essentialism of cultures and identities and spaces are rejected. Cultural identities are not authentic, but in a constant process of (re)construction (Grossberg, 1996; Hall, 1996).

Opposed to the Modernist view, where binary opposites are used to organize people and places in clear cut categories, postcolonial theorists argue that these absolute categories are not existing in reality. In line with postmodern thinking, postcolonial theory states that there are no clear cut categories where different cultures can be placed in. Moreover, these cultural practices are not neatly contained within clearly marked social spaces such as nations. In this paragraph, the concept of *Thirdspace* will be introduced and elaborated upon. Thirdspace, a term introduced by Edward Soja, is a very advantageous way of deconstruction binary thinking and analyzing space and identities in a way that does right to the complexity and profoundness of these concepts.

Thirding-as-Othering

Binary oppositions, such as in-out, physical-mental, real-imagined and center-periphery, are leading to a reductionist and closed view of reality, concepts and terms. In order to escape the totalizing closing practice of binary thinking and dismantle the enclosure of reality in dichotomies, it is necessary to introduce an-Other term, another possibility. By introducing this third term as an Other option, a process called ''*Thirding-as-Othering*'', a shift is being made from a closing and totalizing logic of ''*either/or*'' towards a profoundly open logic of ''*both/also*'' (Soja, 1996, pp. 60-61).

This Other term is not merely a combination, or an addition of the two initial terms. It is a critical form of Otherness that disrupts, disorders and deconstructs totalizing dichotomies. Through Thirding, the construction of space remains open and thus defended against conclusive, categorical constructs that are permanent and closed in character. The adding of an Other, a third term, produces a ''*trialectic*'', a non-binary term containing a third possibility next to the two initial terms. The result is simultaneously similar to the first two terms, as well as remarkably different. Trialectis have to be understood as expansions of existing knowledge, with the emphasis on the openness of the concept. It is not a final point in the production of knowledge and understanding, but an expansion of previous knowledge and an *approximation*, one that builds and extends previous approximations. The result of the Thirding process is not a completion, but a starting point from where another term, a new Other has to be included, and after that another. In this way, current forms of knowledge are not thrown away, but are constantly being developed and expanded (Soja, 1996, pp. 60-70).

Trialectics of Being

In western philosophy, science, and social theory, there is an overprivileging of Historicality and Sociality when it comes to knowledge formation. In the past century, the focus has been mainly on the relation between Historicality (Time) and Sociality (Being-in-the-World) and their influence on knowledge production. In this dialectical view of Being, Spatiality is reduced to a mere platform, a podium where human behavior and social action, as a result of the interplay between history and sociality, takes place. Edward Soja (1996), building on Henri Lefebvre's *The Production of Space* (1974), emphasizes the influence and importance of Spatiality in our understanding of the world by adding Spatiality to the dialectics of being, thereby creating a trialectics of being (Fig. 2.3).

The adding of Spatiality as an-Other term opens up the Historicality-Sociality dialectic and reconstitutes our understanding of the world with the addition of two dialectics: the relation between Spatiality-Sociality and Spatiality-Historicality. The first, the relationship between spatiality and sociality, is one of mutual construction. Spatiality produces Sociality as well as Sociality produces Spatiality, both processes that are naturally historical (Soja, 1980). In the same way, history (Historicality) and geography (Spatiality) are interconnected in the

construction of knowledge. By adding these three dialectics into one, inclusive trialectic, Spatiality gets the attention and agency it deserves in the process of knowledge construction (Soja, 1996).

These three interplays of the trialectic (Historicality-Sociality, Spatiality-Sociality and Spatiality-Historicality) all contain the other ones. They are all interrelated and connected and cannot be separated. Unfortunately, this has happened all too much with the overprivileging of the relationship between Historicality-Sociality in research, analysis and theory formation. By adding Spatiality, our understanding of the world is still building on the insights of the relation between history and sociality, but opening up and expanding this understanding and conceptualization rigorously (Soja, 1996, pp. 71-73).

Fig. 2.3: The Trialectics of Being (Soja, 1996, p. 71)

Trialectics of Spatiality: Thirdspace

In Geography, there have been two dominant discourses about producing spatial knowledge. Building on the three dimensions of social space brought forward by Henri Lefebvre in his 1974 work The Production of Space (*La Production de l'espace)*, Soja calls for a view on spatiality that goes beyond the two dominant discourses of physical and mental spaces.

The first discourse of spatiality is structured around the area of ''*Perceived Space*'', which is the material form of spatial practices that is empirically visible and can be mapped (Soja, 1996,

p. 66). From a Firstspace perspective, the focus is on physical, materialized spatial configurations. These spaces can be concretely mapped, measured, and precisely located. It entails spatial entities, sites, activities, and are shaped and recognized in the built environment: structures, neighborhoods, cities, regions, countries, etc. Firstspace is directed at an objective analysis of the physical, the built environment. It evolves around *''Things in Space''* (Soja, 1996, p. 76).

The second discourse of spatiality takes the *''Conceived Space''* as point of departure. From a Secondspace perspective, spatial knowledge is produced by interpreting the representation, organization and idealization of the physical, materialized form of spatiality and spatial practices. Space is mentally and cognitively perceived by people, and ideas and representations of the material world are formed. Representations of space are the focal point, making it a more reflexive and subjective analytical scope. This area of spatial discourse is ideational, containing mental projections and geographical imaginations that can be found in texts, logos, signs and languages. Put simply, Firstspace focuses on *''Things in Space''*, where Secondspace is about *''Thoughts about Space''*, a dialectic between objective phenomena and subjective imaginaries, the Real and the Imagined (Soja, 1996, pp. 66-67).

Aspiring to think about spatiality in a way that exceeds the duality of either physical or mental spatiality, real and imagined, Soja introduces a critical third term, which he calls Thirdspace. This Thirdspace is the space where the everyday lived experiences of people takes place, making it a fully *''Lived Space''* (Soja, 1996, pp. 80-81). It is a combination between material forms of space and mental conceptions about space, interacting with each other in a spatial trialectic (Fig. 2.4).

However, while Thirdspace contains both real and imagined forms of spatiality, it is more than just the sum of the First and Second space parts. Thirdspace has the capacity to think about space
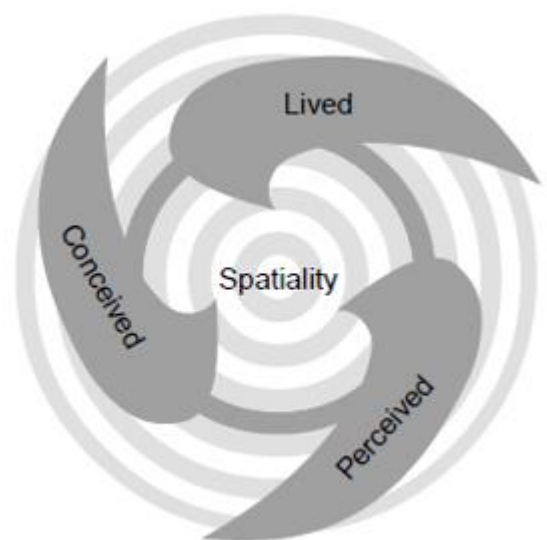
Fig. 2.4: The Trialectics of Spatiality (Soja, 1996, p. 74)

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in a way that goes beyond the dualism of physical/mental space. It has to be understood as the fully lived space, the space where material and conceived space come together, interact, and where creativity takes place. Or as Soja explains it:

''*Thirdspace is a product of thirding of the spatial imagination, the creation of another mode of thinking about space that draws upon material and mental spaces of the traditional dualism, but extends well beyond them in scope, substance and meaning.*'' (Soja, 1996, p. 11)

With the focus on the everyday lived experiences that take place in the Thirdspace, Thirdspace has the potential to create spatial knowledge that goes beyond the compartmentalized forms of knowledge that are dominant in the conventional social sciences. It allows us to think about space in a way that includes the intractabilities, mysteries and subliminalities that are inherent to the concept of spatiality.

Appropriation also takes place in the Thirdspace, when the imagination actively seeks to adjust and appropriate an initially ''passively experienced'' space. This space lays over the physical (First) space and it is appropriated by making use of its signs, symbols and objects (Soja, 1996, pp. 67-68). Furthermore, Thirdspaces are not merely 'other spaces' which can be neatly defined, categorized and stored amongst other ways of thinking about spatiality. They are fundamentally different than traditional ways of thinking about space, and are intended to deconstruct, disrupt and disorder conventional understandings of spatiality (Soja, 1996, p. 163).

> ''*Everything comes together in Thirdspace: subjectivity and objectivity, the abstract and the concrete, the real and the imagined, the knowable and the unimaginable, the repetitive and the differential, structure and agency, mind and body, consciousness and unconsciousness, the disciplined and the transdisciplinary, everyday life and unending history.*''
> (Soja, 1996, pp. 56-57)

Thirdspace Identity: Hybridity

Bhabha, in his writings on cultural identities, states that cultures and cultural identities are not fixed entities. Cultures and cultural identities are in a constant process of (re)construction and (re)negotiation. In the process of identity construction, signs and symbols are used to establish cultural identity. When two different cultures meet, however, notions of cultural identity that were agreed upon before get challenged and renegotiated. This happens at the cutting points of cultures; liminal, in-between spaces that Bhabha calls Third spaces. In this space, the meaning of abovementioned signs and symbols can be contested and renegotiated, resulting in something new and unique (Bhabha, 1994).

> *''It is that Third space, though unrepresentable in itself, which constitutes the disruptive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized, and read anew.''* (Bhabha, 1988, p. 21)

At these liminal meeting points, *''the cutting edge of translation and negotiation''*, a process of *''hybridization''*, a mixing of cultures takes place (Bhabha, 1994, p. 56). Bhabha strongly emphasizes the constructive capacity of the Third Space by arguing that during this hybridization process, a new culture emerges, one that is different from the two cultures that interact in this process. In line with Soja's concept of Thirdspace, Bhabha states that this unique identity combines elements of both cultures, however it a mere combination of the cultures it takes its elements from. Instead, something unique emerges, something new. At the outcome of the hybridization process, people construct an identity that is neither this, nor that, but their own.

> *''Third refers to the constructing and re-constructing of identity, to the fluidity of space, to the space where identity is not fixed. Third space is where we negotiate identity and become neither this nor that but our own. Third is used to denote the place where negotiation takes place, where identity is constructed and re-constructed, where life in all its ambiguity is played out.''*
> (English, 2002, p. 109)

Discussion

Taking a closer look at the theory section, different assumptions regarding the openness of space can be identified among the addressed scholars. In his works on regions, boundaries and (regional) identities, Paasi conceptualizes (territorial) space as a rather closed territorial unit. By describing the process of institutionalization of regions (Paasi, 1996; 2001; 2009; Fig. 2.1), Paasi explains how a regional territory gets established and how its inhabitants get socialized as members of this territorially bounded spatial entity. This view draws on a perception of space as a closed and fixed entity, accompanied and strengthened by notions of *Us* vs. *Them*. In this view, borders are conceptualized as the demarcation of different territorial units, as dividing lines between two separate territorial units that both have their own identity.

As brought forward by Rumford (2012) and Parker & Vaughan-Williams (2012), states and non-state actors such as ordinary people constantly *perform* borders into existence. An important concept in this division of territories and identities, is the Other. By conceptualizing what one is *not*, and ascribe these negative qualities to the Other, a positive Self gets established. By Othering and (B)ordering other people, the notion of territorial spaces as fixed spatial unities gets constantly reinforced.

As this thesis strives to approach Kaliningrad and Kaliningrad identity in a more open way, it asks for a more open conceptualization of space and identity, one that that goes beyond clear notions of us vs. them, inside vs. outside or Russian vs. Prussian/German/European. This openness can be found in the radical open approach of spatiality that Soja brings forward in his works on *Thirdspace*. Thirdspaces are fundamentally different than conventional notions of spatiality as they go beyond dichotomies as us/them and inside/outside. Furthermore, they possess the power to disrupt enclosing notions of space and identity through Thirding-as-Othering. By constantly adding an-Other term, Thirdspaces and Thirdspace identities are profoundly open and leave room for all the nuances and subtleties that are so essential when describing places and identities in my opinion. By doing so, Thirdspaces and Thirdspace identities challenge the assumption of places and identities as closed/fixed entities as conceptualized by Paasi in his use of the concepts of spatial socialization and the institutionalization of regions.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Semi-structured interviews

In this thesis I want to find out how inhabitants of the Russian Oblast Kaliningrad perceive their identity as citizens of a Russian exclave, surrounded by EU-territory, and how they experience the border in their everyday life. Furthermore, how does the fact that Kaliningrad is totally surrounded by EU-countries influence Kaliningraders' perception of Russia and Europe, Russianness and Europeanness, feelings of in- and/or exclusion and belonging? To gain insight in these questions, semi-structured interviews were used as primary method of data-collection.

The reason why semi-structured interviews were used, is that semi-structured interviews enables researchers to gain insight in the deeper interests, experiences and views of the interviewees (Valentine, 2005). As the goal of this research is to gain insight in the complex feelings and perceptions, opinions and emotions of the people, and not merely reflect on quantitative data such as percentages about identification, semi-structured interviews were chosen as primary method of data-collection (Longhurst, 2010).

Furthermore, by conducting semi-structured interviews, the interviewees were given the chance to elaborate deeply on their perceptions, feelings and experiences. Because this form of interviewing is fairly informal and fluid, and has a conversational style, the interviewees had the freedom to bring forward and elaborate on topics that they found particularly important. This had the advantage that the interviewees were given freedom to emphasize what they thought was important when explaining a certain topic, or even raise issues that were forgotten about by the researcher, while the interview still followed a predetermined list of topics in the form of an interview guide (Appendix) (Valentine, 2005, p. 111).

Designing the interview

In order to establish an atmosphere where the interviewee felt comfortable and encouraged to deeply elaborate on his/her feelings and perceptions about the discussed topics, the interviews started off with a short introduction about the research. In the introduction, the topics that

would be addressed and the insurance of the respondents anonymity were explained. Also, permission to record the interview was asked, so that the interviews could have a conversational flow, without having to be interrupted to make notes during the conversation. The opening questions were broad, factual questions, asking about the respondent's age, place of birth, occupation and travel experience. In this way, the conversation could 'warm up', and rapport was created (Longhurst, 2010, p. 107).

More difficult and sensitive topics were introduced later in the interview, when the conversation was already flowing. Realizing that questions about identity perception and the relation between notions of Russianness/Europeanness are not asked regularly to most respondents, I emphasized that the respondents could take their time to reflect on the questions before answering and that there were no such things as *right* or *wrong* answers. My interest as a researcher purely focused on the way the interviewee perceived and felt about concepts of identity, belonging, in- exclusion and sense of place. By emphasizing this regularly, and literally saying that the respondent could say whatever came to mind, I tried to minimalize the risk of leading the respondent in his/her answers, which is always a risk during interviews (Valentine, 2005, p. 121).

At the end of the interview, the list of discussed topics was briefly recapped. Then, the respondent was asked if he/she felt that we had discussed everything that matters, or that he/she felt that we had forgotten something in the conversation. Furthermore, the interviewee was given the opportunity to highlight or emphasize something he/she talked about more or make an additional comment before finishing the interview.

3.2 Fieldwork

The fieldwork where the data for this research got collected is the city of Kaliningrad, Russia. For this research, I have been an intern at the Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University (IKBFU) in Kaliningrad, being primarily engaged with the Center for Social and Humanitarian Informatics (Humanities Faculty). Staff members of this Center have excessive knowledge about the history of Kaliningrad and proved to be really helpful in the search for suitable respondents, as well as in providing assistance in the form of acting as translators during interviews with non-English speaking respondents. Being engaged with staff-members from IKBFU gave me the opportunity to see the most interesting parts of Kaliningrad, as the center organized multiple historical bicycle trips in the city as well as city tours by bus, accompanied with extensive information about the history of Kaliningrad by university expert and local historian Ilya Dementiev.

Recruiting respondents

As the goal of this research is not to generalize the findings of the respondents into conclusions about the whole of Kaliningrad, but instead it aims to gather experiences and perceptions of a diverse range of participants, a broad variety of respondents were interviewed. To collect a rich overview of perceptions and visions, the respondents that were recruited are varying widely in age, gender, occupation, travel history and language skills (English speakers and non-English speakers).

By consulting with the employees from the Center for Social and Humanitarian Informatics and my Kaliningrad supervisor, and making clear what type of interviewees I wanted to interview, they could help me in my search for suitable respondents. Finding respondents this way was especially helpful in the beginning stage of my stay in Kaliningrad, as I did not know many people myself yet. After living in Kaliningrad longer, my own social network expanded and I was able to find suitable respondents with the use of my own social network more regularly. To ensure a variety of views on the topic of Kaliningrad identity and perceptions of belonging, a broad selection of respondents are interviewed (Fig. 3).

Participant	Age	Sex	Occupation	Translator	Date
1	76	Female	Retired manual labor	Yes	20/09/2016
2	24	Female	PhD-Student	No	23/09/2016
3	32	Female	Entrepeneur	Yes	28/09/2016
4	23	Male	PhD-Student	No	18/10/2016
5	40	Male	Craftsman	Yes	20/10/2016
6	34	Female	Secretary	Yes	27/10/2016
7	65	Female	Teacher	No	07/11/2016
8	26	Male	PhD-Student	No	08/11/2016
9	23	Female	Student	No	23/11/2016
10	63	Female	Accountant	Yes	27/11/2016
11	40	Male	Medical Worker	Yes	27/11/2016
12	51	Female	Tour guide & Translator	No	28/11/2016
13	85	Female	Retired manual labor	Yes	29/11/2016

Fig. 3: List of interviewees. Interviewed in Kaliningrad between 20/09/2016 & 29/11/2016

3.3 Data Analysis

During the 13 interviews, a voluminous amount of data was gathered. All the interviews were recorded and transcribed completely. During the transcribing of the interviews, I have already tried to reflect on the data and search for early detectable patterns and recurring categories and perceptions. Intensive reading and rereading of the data provided a broad overview of the content of the data and helped to (re)organize the structure of the thesis throughout the analyzation process. Eventually, the data is analyzed with the help of ATLAS.ti (version 8.0), where the interviews were coded and thereby organized into a comprehensible dataset. The use of codes provided a structured overview of the data, and made it easier to detect similarities and differences in the perceptions of Kaliningraders.

An important part of the data is analyzed by using the analytical framework of the Thirdspace, a term introduced by Edward Soja. By analyzing the data through a Thirdspace perspective, a move away from dichotomous view in terms of either this/that, inside/outside, us/them, place/time or inside/outside is sought. Instead, this analytical scope leaves room for partial unknowability's and binary transcending notions of identity and space, resulting in an open and fluid portrayal of Kaliningrad identity and perceptions of belonging.

In line with the Thirdspace perspective, a considerable part of this research builds on the everyday lived experiences of Kaliningraders. Their views regarding broad concepts of identity, Russianness/Europeanness, in-/exclusion and belonging are given much room in this research. However, another part of the thesis focuses on the way Kaliningrad and Kaliningraders are portrayed in discourse. Therefore, an over of the different metaphors and imaginaries that are used for Kaliningrad(ers) in newspapers, journals, policy documents and scientific literature is given. To see how this ''top down'' narrative of Kaliningrad(ers) in discourse relates to the everyday life experiences of Kaliningraders on the grassroots level, it is critically analyzed and compared with the everyday life experiences of Kaliningraders as expressed during the interviews.

3.4 Reflection

Preceding and during this research, I have been aware of my positionality as a Dutch researcher, studying in a Dutch university and having a socio-cultural background that differs from most participants. Especially regarding questions about perceptions of the Other, mostly touching upon differences and similarities between Russian and European culture, I became aware of my positionality as being an inhabitant of a European Union country. Striving to minimalize the impact of this positionality on the interview results, questions were asked in an way that was as open as possible and participants were assured that they could say anything that came to mind.

Another issue was the language barrier that existed between me and some respondents. Not all interviewees spoke English, and I don't speak Russian. Therefore, some interviews were held with the help of a translator. To minimalize the influence of the translator and assure a flowing conversation, the interview guide was discussed beforehand with the translator, so he/she could clarify possible questions before the interview was held. Clear agreements about the non-participating role of the translators were made beforehand, in order to minimize their possible influence on the interview.

Ethical considerations

All respondents participated voluntarily and were informed about the structure and topic of the interview beforehand. Before every interview, the anonymity of the participants was ensured, as well as the confidentiality of the data, and participants were clearly informed that they could speak out freely. Also, explicit permission for the recording of the interview was asked before the start of the interview.

Some topics that were discussed during the interviews could be considered (politically) sensitive or even emotionally distressing. Therefore, participants were assured that their answers would be handled with full confidentially. Whenever they did not want to answer a question, they were explained that they could refuse, without having to justify their refusal. Moreover, participants were informed that they could stop the interview at any time during the interview whenever they, for whatever reason, did not want to participate anymore.

4. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE KALININGRAD REGION

4.1 The founding of Königsberg

Today's territory of Kaliningrad has a long history of shifting sovereignties. At the start of the thirteenth century, the territory surrounding Kaliningrad was taken over by Teutonic Knights a Germanic group. They created a monastic state, with Königsberg as its center. In the following three centuries, the Teutonic Order gradually lost influence in the territory. At the beginning of the 16th century, the Teutonic leader at the time (Albrecht of Hohenzollern), converted to Lutheranism and established the protestant Duchy of Prussia, as a fief of the Kingdom of Poland. Despite being under Polish influence, culturally and linguistically the Duchy of Prussia kept a German character. Therefore, the Duchy of Prussia could be considered a cultural enclave, separated from other German speaking territories by the Kingdom of Poland (Diener & Hagen, 2011). In 1618, the Duchy of Prussia was inherited by the Brandenburg line of the Hohenzollern dynasty and joined Brandenburg into Brandenburg-Prussia (Fig. 4.1). Fredrick III, Elector of Brandenburg-Prussia from 1688-1713, desired to become king. Therefore, he crowned himself King in Königsberg, establishing the Kingdom in Prussia in 1701 (Palmer et al., 2007). In this Kingdom, the former Duchy of Prussia became the province of East Prussia, geographically still disconnected from Brandenburg**.**

Fig. 4.1: Königsberg, situated in Brandenburg-Prussia **1525-1648**: A corporation of German speaking territories, separated by the Kingdom of Poland (Ward et. al, 1912).

Königsberg during Prussia's expansion

At the end of the 18th century, the Kingdom of Poland lost much of its power and influence. The powerful Hohenzollern dynasty had incorporated several German territories into the Kingdom of Prussia, which had developed into a strong power in Eastern Europe alongside the Russian Empire and Austria. During a series of wars known as the Seven Years' War (1756-1763), the Russian army occupied East Prussia. So, between 1758-1762, Königsberg was briefly ruled by Russian governors. However, with the death of Empress Elizabeth of Russia, Königsberg and East Prussia came back under Prussian rule (Palmer et al., 2007).

Aiming to connect Prussia with Brandenburg, Prussia orchestrated the partition of the weakened Kingdom of Poland. In three partitions, between 1772 and 1795, the weakened Kingdom of Poland ceased to exist as it was divided between Austria, Russia and Prussia. Prussia gained several north-western parts of Poland, thereby connecting East Prussia with Brandenburg (Fig. 4.2).
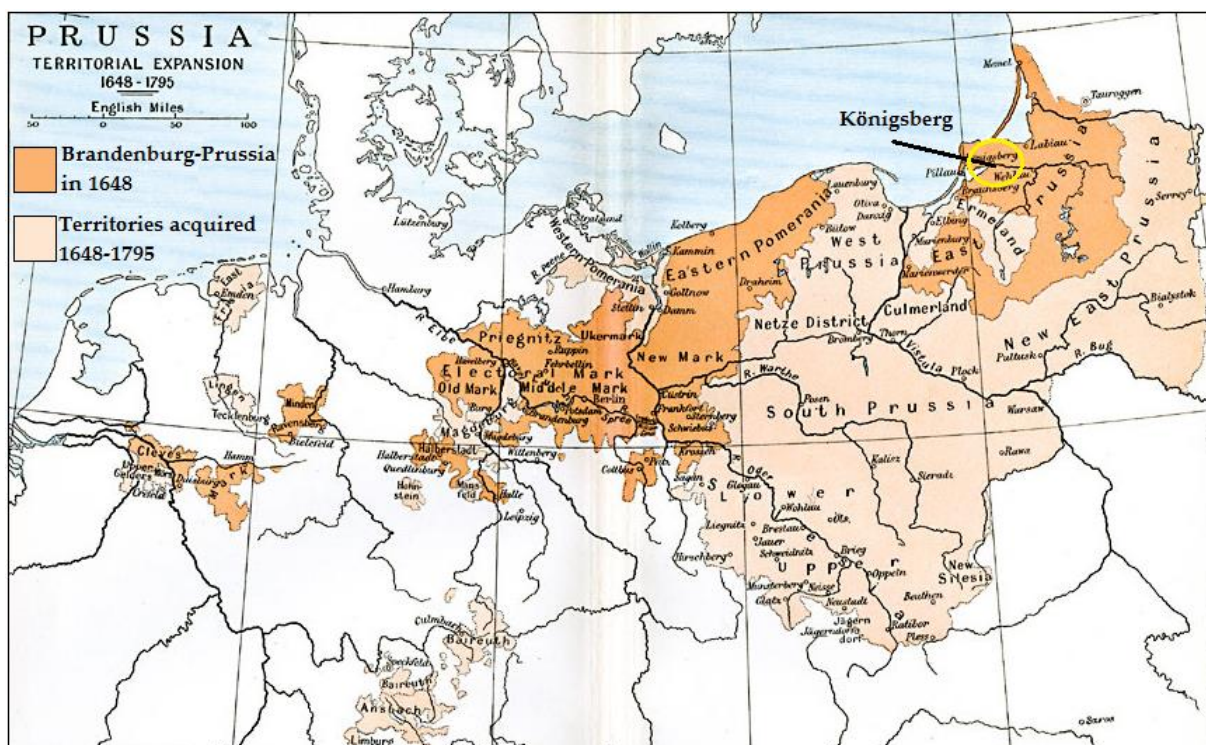
Fig. 4.2: Königsberg in the Kingdom of Prussia after its expansion between **1648-1775** (Ward et al., 1912).

Unification of Germany

During the first years of the 19th century, Prussia was defeated by Napoleons armies in several battles, leading to a decrease of Prussia's influence on the European geopolitical podium. However, after Napoleons defeat at the battle of Waterloo, Prussia again rose to power and became the most influential power within the German Confederation. During the 19th century, Prussia, with its focus developing a powerful military and a well-organized bureaucracy, connected several German cities through an intensive railway network. Eventually, in 1871, Otto von Bismarck united all the territories of the Northern and Southern German Confederation into one unified German Empire, with Prussia as its most dominant state (Fig. 4.3). Under Prussian initiative, the new German Empire further industrialized, expanded its railway network, developed its bureaucracy and flourished scientifically (Palmer et al., 2007). This period of socio-cultural and industrial prosperity came to an end with the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. After four years of war, the Central Powers –including Germany– were defeated in 1918. The geopolitical situation in Europe changed significantly in the aftermath of WWI, severely impacting the situation of Königsberg.

Fig. 4.3: Königsberg in the unified German Empire, **1871** (Palmer et al., 2007, p. 538).

4.2 Rebordering East Prussia after World War I

After the defeat of Germany in World War I, great territorial revisions took place. During the Paris Peace Conference, Polish and French delegations aimed to restore Poland to its 18th century borders, creating a Polish nation which would include a considerable amount of ethnic Germans. Fearing this would lead to future instabilities, American and British delegations sought to create a situation with more attention for the different ethnic groups in the area. The final solution, based on the ideal of national self-determination of ethnical groups, carefully took the ethnical composition of the area into account in its division of the territories. In the resulting Treaty of Versailles, the country of Poland was reinvented. This Polish state consisted of former Polish territories of West-Prussia, ethnically and culturally predominantly Polish, however also including a significant German population. Because East-Prussia –including Königsberg– was predominantly German, it was not incorporated in the new Poland and remained part of the German Empire. In this new geopolitical situation, East Prussia was now cut off from mainland Germany by the so-called Polish Corridor, that ensured Polish entrance to the Baltic Sea (Diener & Hagen, 2011, pp. 569-571; Fig. 4.4).

Initially, Danzig was intended to become part of Poland as well, but the majority of its inhabitants identified as Germans and went on strike to protest against their allocation to Poland. To ensure the new Polish state access to the Baltic Sea, a compromise was found and Danzig became a Free City under governance of the League of Nations, with special transit regulations for Poland (Palmer et al., 2007, p. 712). As **a** result, East Prussia became a German exclave once again, surrounded by Poland and cut-off from mainland Germany by the Polish Corridor (Diener & Hagen, 2011). This situation would be short-term however, as World War II would drastically transform the geopolitical situation of Europe and especially Königsberg.

Fig. 4.4: East Prussia after the Versailles Treaty, **1919**. Separated from mainland Germany by the Polish Corridor (Diener & Hagen, 2011, p. 571).

4.3 Rebordering after World War II, creating Kaliningrad

With Adolf Hitler's rise to power in 1933, the dissatisfaction about East Prussia's exclave status reappeared strongly. It was one of the reasons Hitler decided to invade Poland (Diener & Hagen, 2011). During Germany's invasion of Poland, East Prussia and Königsberg were incorporated in the Third Reich, thus directly linked with other German territories again. This would not last long, however, as Germany was defeated in WWII, resulting in the loss of much of its territories. Suffered heavily from allied bombings and Soviet attacks, Königsberg was destroyed for 90 percent at the end of WWII (Oldberg, 2001, p. 26). After a heavy battle, East Prussia was conquered by Soviet troops at the end of World War II.

At the Potsdam Conference, where the conditions for Germany's surrender were negotiated by the leaders of the victorious powers (United Kingdom, United States of America and USSR), the territorial division of Germany was determined. Looking for compensation and reward for the heavy losses the Soviet Union has led during the war, and realizing the importance of an ice-free port to the Baltic Sea, USSR Joseph Stalin aimed to incorporate East Prussia in the Soviet Union. To justify this demand, he made historical claims about the Slavic origin of the territory (Browning & Joenniemi, 2003, pp. 69-71). Stalin also saw the military importance of East Prussia, as he liked to have a military outpost at the western border of the Soviet Union as a security against possible future military aggression from the West (*ibid)*.

During the Potsdam Conference, it was decided that the northern area of East Prussia (Memel, or Klaipeda) was given to the Soviet Republic of Lithuania, the southern part to Poland, and the area surrounding Königsberg would be incorporated in the Soviet Union (Fig. 4.5 & 4.6). The claiming of Königsberg was strategically important for Stalin because in this way the USSR involved Poland strongly in Soviet politics and at the same time he was able to isolate the Baltic Republics, allowing the Soviet Union to keep them in check (Oldberg, 2001; 2009).

VI. CITY 0F KOENIGSBERG AND THE ADJACENT AREA

The Conference examined a proposal by the Soviet Government to the effect that pending the final determination of territorial questions at the peace settlement, the section of the western frontier of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics which is adjacent to the Baltic Sea should pass from a point on the eastern shore of the Bay of Danzig to the east, north of Braunsberg–Goldap, to the meeting point of the frontiers of Lithuania, the Polish Republic and East Prussia.

The Conference has agreed in principle to the proposal of the Soviet Government concerning the ultimate transfer to the Soviet Union of the City of Koenigsberg and the area adjacent to it as described above subject to expert examination of the actual frontier. The President of the United States and the British Prime Minister have declared that they will support the proposal of the Conference at the forthcoming peace settlement.

Fig. 4.5: Section VI of the Potsdam Declaration, where the new borders of East Prussia got determined (Potsdam Declaration, 1946, cited in Krickus, 2002, p. 34).
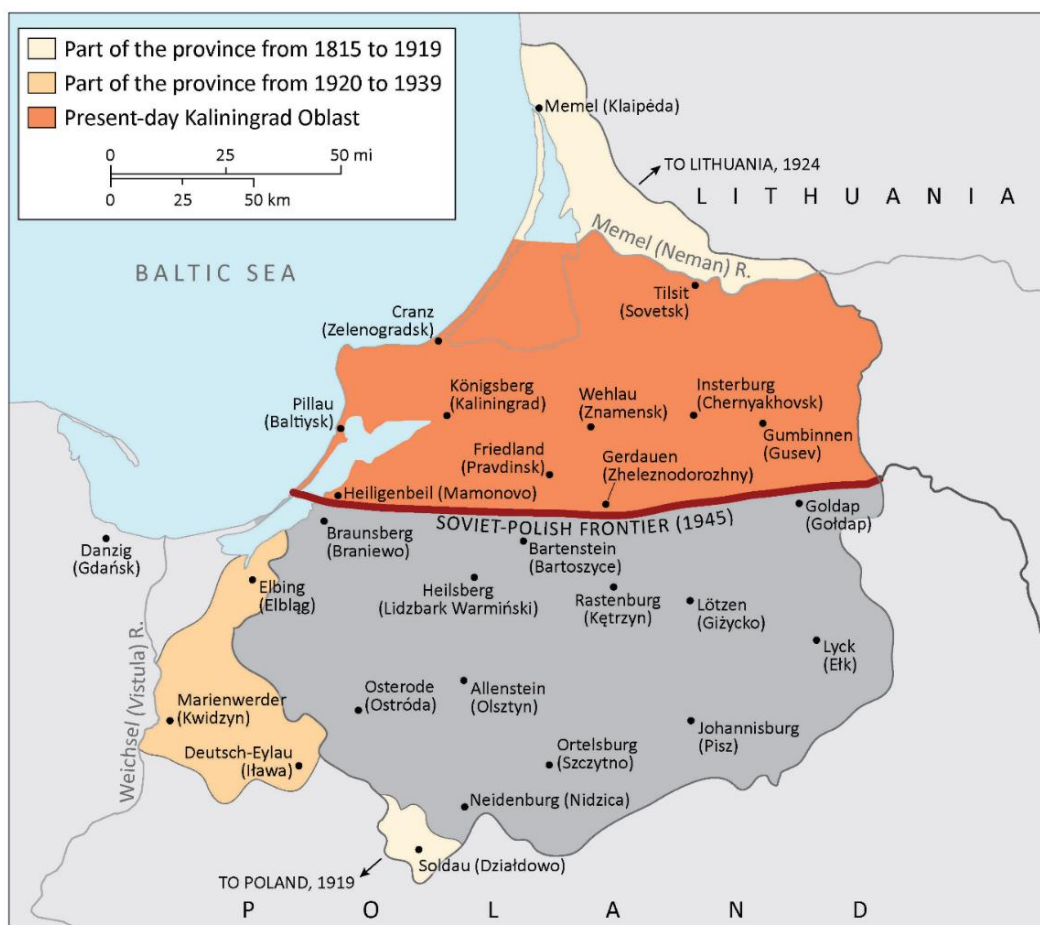
Fig. 4.6: The rebordering of East Prussia. During the Potsdam Conference, **1946**, the decision was made to draw a straight border between Braunsberg and Goldap, dividing East Prussia between the Soviet Union (northern part, red) and Poland (southern part, grey and orange) (Diener & Hagen, 2011, p. 569).

Königsberg becomes Kaliningrad: period of Russification

After the conquest of Königsberg in WWII, the vast majority of the remaining German population was deported to Germany. Between 1947-1948, around 100.000 German citizens were deported from Kaliningrad to Germany, and the oblast was totally repopulated with Soviet citizens from all over Russia, Belarus and Ukraine (Berger, 2010). The Soviet Union was divided into 15 independent Soviet Republics, based on ethnic and linguistic similarities. But with the repopulation of Kaliningrad with Soviet citizens from all over the Soviet Union, it did not make sense to incorporate the oblast in the Lithuanian SSR. Therefore, Stalin decided to make Kaliningrad part of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic and rename Königsberg into Kaliningrad, after former Soviet head of state Mikhail Kalinin (Diener & Hagen, 2011, pp. 572-573).

Urban Russification

During the following period, Kaliningrad was turned into a Soviet model-city. Because of the heavy bombings by the British RAF in WWII and the battle of Königsberg at the end of the war, Königsberg was mostly destructed after the war. Therefore, Soviet urban architects from Moscow had the opportunity to rebuild the city as a model Soviet city. During this Sovietization process, traces of the prewar history of the city were erased in the form of the demolition of Prussian-German churches and castles, which were replaced by Soviet architecture in the form of residential blocks and governmental buildings (Berger, 2010; Diener & Hagen, 2011). Several buildings, those who had significant cultural value such as Königsberg Cathedral and the Schiller monument, were saved from destruction, but most other traces of prewar history were erased. Symbolic for the de-Germanization of Kaliningrad is the demolition of the ruins of old Königsberg Castle, which was damaged badly during the war. Despite some protests from local intelligentsia, the ruins were blown up in 1969 and on the former location of this icon of Prussian history the House of Soviets was built, a governmental building in typical Soviet architecture and a strong symbol of the creation of Kaliningrad and the accompanying erasure of Königsberg (Image 4.1). This House of Soviets has never been finished, as the soil under the building couldn't support its massive weight (Diener & Hagen, 2011). The building has been described as one of the ugliest buildings in Russia (Diener & Hagen, 2011, p. 574) and locals sometimes refer to it as the 'Monster' (Browning & Joenniemi, 2003, p. 71).

Image 4.1: The House of Soviets. Built in typical Soviet style and located on the site of the demolished Königsberg Castle, the House of Soviets is a powerful imaginary of the de-Germanization and Russification that occurred in Kaliningrad after WWII.
Source: Author
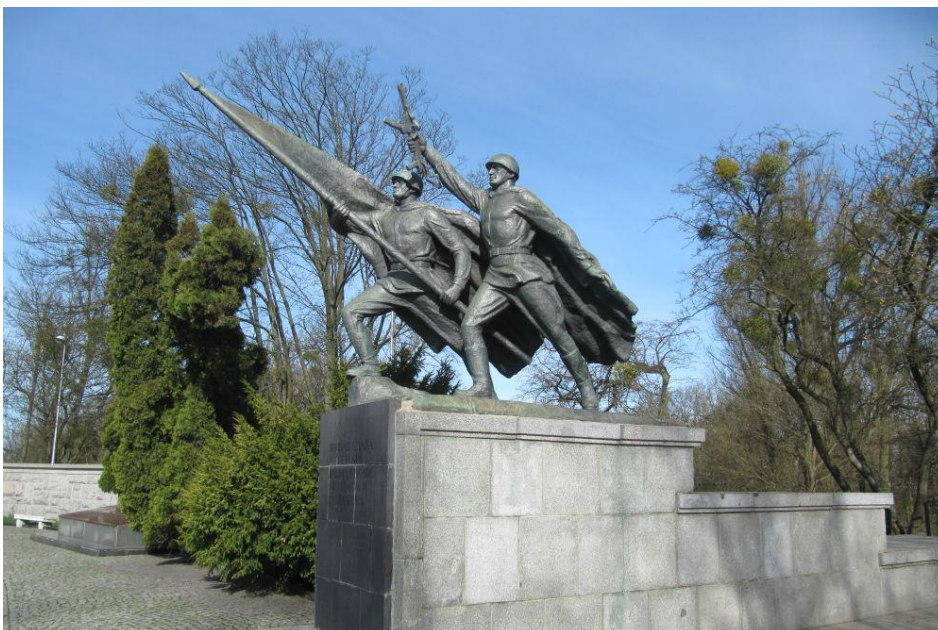
Image 4.2: Monument to the 1200 Guardsmen. A monument to commemorate the 11th Guards Army, who took part in the battle of Königsberg in April 1945. One of the many war memorials in Kaliningrad, commemorating the Soviet victory over fascist Germany and contributing to the image of Kaliningrad as a military stronghold. Source: Van Esch

Mental Russification

With the replacement of Kaliningrad's population by loyal Soviet citizens, an ideological russification of the Kaliningrad region was needed in order to legitimate the presence of the new inhabitants to the city and provide them with a narrative that made it easier to '*root*' in their new surroundings (Berger, 2010; Diener & Hagen, 2011; Karpenko, 2006). To obtain this goal of de-Germanization, Soviet government reconstructed a Russian narrative of East Prussia, emphasizing the historical Slavic origins of the region. Physical reminiscent of the Prussian and German history got described as leftovers of colonial Germany, who had wrongfully conquered the originally Slavic territory of East Prussia (Berger, 2010, p. 348). To justify this historical claim of Slavic heritage of Kaliningrad, archeologists looked for archeological evidence of Soviet occupation before the Teutonic era (Diener & Hagen, 2011) and historians even briefly spoke of Baltic Slavs that would have inhabited the area before the Germans took over (Misiunas, 2004, p. 395).

This ideological justification of the Slavic identity of Kaliningrad resulted in the abovementioned transforming of Königsberg into Kaliningrad. Besides replacing German architecture with Soviet architecture, renaming became an important tool in the reshaping of the imaginary of the oblast. German street names, as well as the names of towns and villages were replaced by Russian names. An important theme in the renaming process was the military, emphasizing the military importance of Kaliningrad and appealing to the vast amount of military personnel in Kaliningrad. The towns of Interburg and Preuβisch Eylau became Chernyakhovsk and Bagrationovsk, named after famous Russian war heroes (Diener & Hagen, 2011, p. 573). Accordingly, monuments in honor of heroes from the Patriotic War and the Red Army soldiers that defeated the fascist Nazi-Germany were established all over Kaliningrad (Berger, 2010; Image 4.2). In schools at the time, history lessons about Kaliningrad started from the postwar period of Kaliningrad, learning about the Soviet conquest of Königsberg and not paying attention to the prewar history of Königsberg, in line with the Soviet narrative at the time (Diener & Hagen, 2011, p. 573; Sezneva, 2002, p. 51). In their 2003 article, Browning and Joenniemi clearly describe the Soviet attempt of erasing the prewar history of Kaliningrad by saying: *''Kaliningrad was to become a place without history, or rather a place where history was limited to the post-war period''* (Browning & Joenniemi, 2003, p. 70).

Rediscovering the German past

Despite the efforts of Soviet government to erase the pre-war, German past of the new Kaliningrad, interest in the history of former Königsberg grew amongst Kaliningraders during the 1950's. Voices in the city were heard who sought to incorporate the prewar history of Königsberg in the new city of Kaliningrad and give the Prussian past a more prominent role in the city's architecture. Efforts were made to preserve German/Prussian monuments and buildings. Ultimately, however, the official narrative of the Soviet regime regarding Königsberg, i.e. how the dark, evil Königsberg was defeated by the glorious Soviet Union, remained dominant. However, it has to be noted that this narrative was never unchallenged and local interest in the prewar history and the call for a more nuanced narrative have always existed among parts of Kaliningrad citizens (Berger, 2010, pp. 348-350).

During the 1980's, the Perestroika and Glasnost period, information about the prewar history of Königsberg became more easily available. Increased interest in the history of the city and a more open debate about the heritage of Königsberg ensued. Local intellectuals made efforts to preserve German remnants and dived into the history of the region. During this period, identification with Königsberg and the Prussian past of Kaliningrad became more common and it began to play a more prominent role in the local identity formation of young Kaliningraders in the 1980's (Berger, 2010, p. 350). This more pronounced call for the rediscovering and incorporation of prewar Königsberg in contemporary Kaliningrad was given expression it the celebration of the 750th anniversary of Kaliningrad in 2005, celebrating the founding of Königsberg in 1255. In the same year, Kaliningrad University was renamed 'Immanuel Kant Russian State University of Kaliningrad', in memory of the famous German philosopher Immanuel Kant (Berger, 2010, p. 354) and was later again renamed 'Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University' in 2010, emphasizing Kaliningrad's link with the German history (Immanuel Kant) and its geographical location in the Baltic Region (Diener & Hagen, 2011, p. 584; Images 4.3 & 4.4).

Image 4.3: Monument to Immanuel Kant, Universitetskaya street, Kaliningrad. An example of the revaluation of Kaliningrad's prewar history.
Source: Author

Image 4.4: Logo of Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University, named after the famous German philosopher Immanuel Kant who lived in Königsberg all his life.
Source: www.helpgoabroad.com

4.4 Rebordering Kaliningrad after the collapse of the Soviet Union

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1996, Kaliningrad became part of the Russian Federation, the successor state of the Soviet Union. Several other former Soviet States became independent countries, including Kaliningrad's neighboring- or close by countries Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Belarus. In this post-Soviet situation, Kaliningrad became a Russian exclave, disconnected from the Russian mainland and surrounded by independent countries (Diener & Hagen, 2011, pp. 575-577; Fig. 4.7).

Fig. 4.7: Kaliningrad after the collapse of the Soviet Union, **1991**. Now a Russian exclave, disconnected from mainland Russia and surrounded by the newly independent republic of Lithuania and Poland (Palmer et al., 2007, p. 1059).

Kaliningrad became an important issue in Russia's diplomatic policy and a test case in EU-Russian relations. Threats of separatism emerged, as well as territorial claims of (parts of) Kaliningrad by neighboring countries Lithuania Poland or Germany. However, the local inhabitants never seem to have fully strived for independency, as surveys about the subject

reveal. Support for independence has always been relatively low, under ten percent, with an incidental peak of 20 percent in 1993 (Diener & Hagen, 2011, p. 576). In their aim to remain unquestioned sovereignty over Kaliningrad, and valuing the strategic importance of Kaliningrad, in 1991 Russia stationed between 120.000 and 200.000 troops in Kaliningrad (Misiunas, 2004, p. 388).

When Kaliningrad's neighboring countries began to gradually turn their focus on Europe, taking steps towards their future EU membership, border security became stricter. As a result, cross border travel and commerce became more expensive and complicated for Kaliningrad citizens. Consequently, Kaliningrad suffered heavier economic decline than the average Russian oblast during the first half of the 1990's (Diener & Hagen, 2011, p. 578).

In 1991, Kaliningrad was declared a Free Economic Zone [FEZ], eliminating customs and duties and advantageous tax rules for new businesses who wanted to establish in Kaliningrad. This FEZ, however, was perceived as a hard security threat by Russia, as Russian fears about too much foreign –especially German- economical influence in Kaliningrad grew. Internally, other Russian regions had concerns about a preferential treatment of Kaliningrad, and how this would undermine their position as competing local economies. In 1996, Russia therefore restructured Kaliningrad into a Special Economic zone [SEZ], increasing federal control over the Oblast and showing their aim to full sovereignty of Kaliningrad (Diener & Hagen, 2011, pp. 578-580).

Kaliningrad and the European Union, the Visa regime

With the accession of Poland and Lithuania to the EU in 2004, Kaliningrad became fully surrounded by EU-territory, making it an EU-enclave as well as a Russian exclave (Gänzle & Müntel, 2011). In 2007, these countries joined the Schengen Agreement, meaning from then on they implemented the strict Visa-policy of the European Union. Since then, citizens of Kaliningrad need a Visa to travel through EU-territory to mainland Russia, strongly restricting the freedom of movement of Kaliningrad citizens.

Stating that every Russian citizen has the right to travel Visa-free between sovereign Russian territories, Russian government demanded Visa-free travel through EU-territory for all Russian citizens. European Union officials declined and proposed that Kaliningrad citizens could receive Schengen passports. Fearing that this would undermine Moscow's sovereignty over Kaliningrad, this proposal declined. Therefore, in 2002, an agreement was made that enabled Kaliningraders to purchase fair prized facilitated transit documents [FTDs] that made travel between Kaliningrad and mainland Russia possible. These FTD's functioned as multiple entry Visas for Russians who had to travel through EU territory to another Russian territory (Archer & Etzold, 2010, pp. 335-336).

On 27 June, 2012, an agreement between Russia and the EU was reached according Visa-free travel for inhabitants of the border region between Poland and Russia (Kaliningrad), the so called Small Border Traffic zone. Polish and Kaliningrad inhabitants of this border zone, which covers the entire Kaliningrad Oblast and parts of Northeast Poland, have free access to each other's countries without applying for an official Visa. Instead, Poles and Kaliningraders can obtain a card for 20 euros (which is less than an EU Visa costs) that allows them free entrance to territories inside the border region (around 50 km from the border) for up to 30 days, with a maximum of 90 days per half year (Domaniewski & Studzińska, 2011, pp. 543-545). After the implementation of this SBT zone, cross border travel between Kaliningrad and Poland strongly increased (Fig. 4.8).
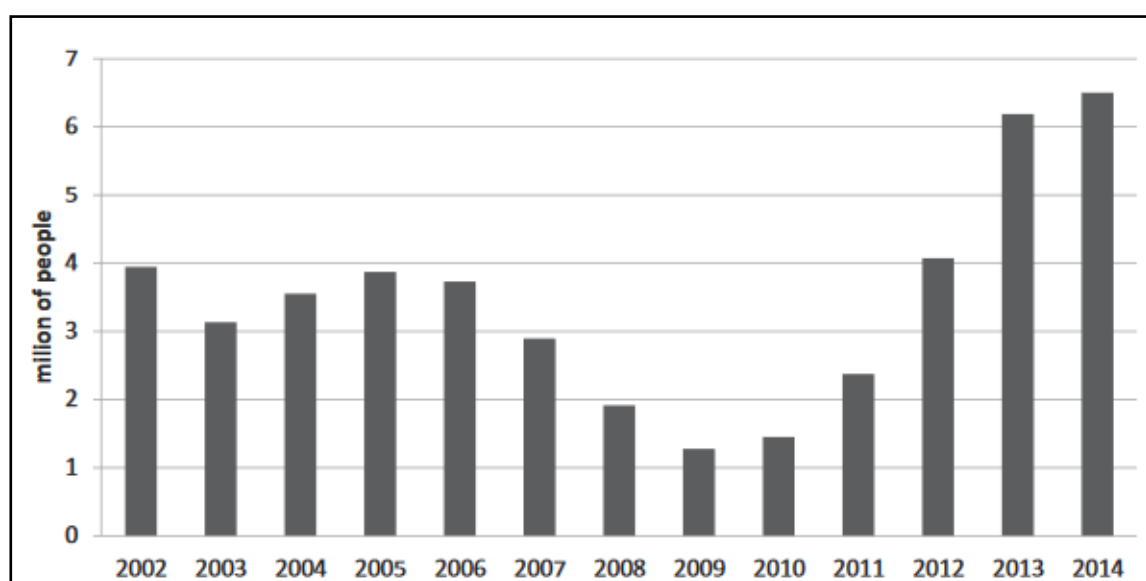
Fig. 4.8: Border traffic at the Polish-Russian border, **2002-2014** (Domaniewski & Studzińska, 2011, p. 546).

Despite the mutual benefits of the SBT in terms of tourism, economic advantages and increased contacts between Poles and Russians, the agreement was suspended during the NATO summit in Warsaw on 8-9 July 2016. Due to political tensions between Russia and Poland, with Poland fearing the further militarizing of Kaliningrad, Polish government decided to put the agreement on a hold, again complicating travel between Poland and Kaliningrad and hardening the border between Kaliningrad and Poland (Radio Poland, 2017).

Overview

As described above, Kaliningrad has a fascinating history. Going back to the Teutonic Order in the 13th century, being part of the mighty Prussia and eventually Germany, Königsberg has played an important role in European history. Having faced drastic territorial rebordering after both World War I and II, the region has been subject of geopolitical shifts in history multiple times. After WWII, the city of Königsberg became part of the Soviet Union and underwent an intensive process of Russification. Within several years, the German population was replaced by Soviet settlers and the city was transformed into a Soviet city as Königsberg became Kaliningrad.

However, already during the Soviet period there was local interest in the prewar history of Kaliningrad. Remains of Prussian history could be found anywhere in the form of archeological findings and ruins of medieval architecture. After Perestroika and Glasnost, information about the prewar history became more available.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, Kaliningrad became a Russian enclave, disconnected from mainland Russia. With the accession of Lithuania and Belarus to the European Union in 2004, Kaliningrad became surrounded by Schengen territory and faced the consequence of the hard borders of the Schengen zone. In EU-Russian relations, Kaliningrad became a test case. Russia and the EU agreed upon local traffic arrangements for the Kaliningrad border region with the implementation of the only visa-free zone between Russia and the EU in 2012. Due to political difficulties, however, this agreement is suspended in 2016.

By now, it is hopefully clear that Kaliningrad can function as a useful place to further investigate notions of the Other and the interrelation between perceptions of Europeanness/Russianness, belonging and identity. This will be done in the following two chapters, with a focus on mutual perceptions of the Other, Europeanness/Russianness and belonging in chapter 5 and the way how the concept of identity plays out in Kaliningrad in chapter 6.

5. KALININGRAD BORDERLAND: MUTUAL PERCEPTIONS OF THE OTHER, EUROPEANNESS, RUSSIANNESS AND BELONGING

''Kaliningrad is one of few places where the self-perception of people differs from their perception by others. Locals are used to describing themselves as Russian Europeans or European Russians. Even in the Soviet era, the region had a euphemistical definition with dangerous connotations: The Westernmost. During the Perestroika period, the literary journal that was published there was called 'West of Russia'. It seemed that the location itself conditioned the closeness of this region of Russia to the Western world. Kaliningrad lies more to the west compared to Moscow and Saint-Petersburg, but also to Warsaw and Vilnius. People in Kaliningrad are forever emphasizing their Europeanness. Drivers on the 'westernmost' roads give way to pedestrians in nearly every other case – you'll never encounter this in other regions of Russia. Russian tourists are amazed at the quality of roads, though local motorists have a habit of criticizing them.''

-Ilya Dementiev, 2013

5.1 Kaliningraders' perception of Europe and Europeanness

What is it like to live in a city with such a complicated history, geographical location and built environment? What effect does it have on one's identity perception, the atmosphere in the city and notions of Russianness/Europeanness, belonging and sense of place? Those are topics that were discussed with Kaliningrad citizens during a series of interviews between September and December 2016. In the following chapter, Kaliningraders' associations with Europe/Europeanness, Russia/Russianness and their views on questions of belonging and in- and exclusion will be brought forward. In chapter 6, their identity perception and everyday life experiences of in-betweenness will be analyzed through the concepts of Thirdspace, in-betweenness and Hybridity as used in the works of Soja and Bhabha, when real life experiences of Kaliningrad as a fully lived space will be brought forward.

Sign of quality

When asked about their associations with Europe, many respondents refer to Europe as a place with a high standard of life. When asked to tell what comes to mind when thinking about Europe, a 65-year-old teacher explained: ''*In general not only in Kaliningrad's, but all over Russia, people still think that it is more prosperous in Europe.*'' In terms of historical and cultural development, economic prosperity, societal organization and infrastructural quality, most respondents have positive connotations with Europe.

While talking about their perceptions and associations with Europe, it became clear that for some Kaliningraders, Europe is used as a positive point of reference, and that Europe should be used as an example of how to live. When asked about her opinion on the characteristics of Kaliningrad in terms of Europeanness/Russianness, one respondent stated: ''*This city is not Russian or European, it's another one. But I want it to be more European, because it's a sign of quality*'' (R6, female, 34 years old). In her assessment of Kaliningrad, she clearly refers to Europe as place of quality and how she desires Kaliningrad to use Europe as an example of how to develop their way of life.

This use of Europe as a positive example is also expressed by one respondent when she speaks about how non-Kaliningrad Russians perceive Kaliningrad:

''I don't know why, but I always hear that this place feels friendlier and safer. While for me it feels like it's not friendly and safe enough, compared to Europe. For me that is the standard of how you should behave.'' (R9, female, 23 years old)

By describing its friendliness and safety, she explains that most non-Kaliningrad Russians feel that Kaliningrad is safer and the atmosphere in Kaliningrad is friendlier than in most other Russian cities. She herself, however, feels like it is not as safe and friendly in comparison with Europe, which is even safer and friendlier in her eyes.

Another perception of Europe that several respondents have, is that of Europe as a place with a rich cultural and artistic heritage. When addressing her perception of Europe, a 24-year-old PhD-student explains how multiple visits to Europe shaped her perception of Europe as a place of historical and artistic significance: *''I was in Europe many times to travel. And for me Europe is mostly culture, and history. It's about great buildings, and beautiful paintings. Beautiful paintings, mostly these things.''*

Organized and responsible

More than once, respondents expressed their perception of European as a very well-organized place. Multiple respondents stressed the cleanliness, safety and high level of organization and infrastructure of European cities. While talking about Europe, one respondent expressed her perceived European qualitative organization when stating: *''I think they have clean cities, good infrastructure. It's very well thought of, how to create something that is comfortable for people. It´s good''* (R2, female, 24 years old). This well-organized structure of European societies is also associated with European people and their way of living. When talking about his perception of Europe, a 23-year-old PhD-student elaborates on his perceptions of Europeans having a responsible lifestyle as follows:

''For example in Europe, people tend to go to bed early, in order to get out early to go to work. And it's always some kind of sensible, more wise way of living. Because in Russia, for example, we just don't pay enough attention to how we live. We could just stay active at night and then the next day we go to work all tired.'' (R4, male, 23 years old)

Open and friendly, however suspicions about the sincerity

An association with Europe and Europeans that kept recurring during the interviews, was the perceived openness and friendliness of Europeans. According to one respondent, *''Russian people, they are more closed. Europeans are more open''* (R8, male, 26 years old). This openness is being linked to tolerance, friendliness and a positive view on life.

Often, this perceived European openness, friendliness and tolerance is placed in opposition to an imaginary of Russian culture as being heavy and more closed. For example, when talking about her perception of Europe, a 23 year-old student explains: *''I think Europeans are way more polite and tolerant to other people than Russians are.''* This use of Europe as an Other, by which the Russian identity can be described, can also be detected in the following passage, where a respondent clarifies her perception of European openness by contradicting it with the perceived suspiciousness of Russian culture.

> *''I just imagine Europeans to be open-minded. With bicycles [laughs]. Kind. And Russians are contrary. We are really heavy people, and closed. We are always waiting for something that can happen. You know, that someone is going to cheat on us. We can be cheated by everyone, by the government, by the neighbors, by our relatives. By the weather!''* (R6, female, 34 years old)

The most mentioned example of this perceived European friendliness and open-mindedness is that people in Europe tend to smile a lot. Especially respondents who have visited European countries seemed to have an impression of Europeans as very happy people because they seemed to smile so much in public. One respondent explained how the way people smiled all the time struck him when he visited Europe: *''For example if you go to Europe you see people smiling all the time and you begin to feel it's a really nice place, because people just smile and have positive emotions''* (R4, male, 23 years old).

A possible explanation of why most respondents noted the regularity of smiling in Europe, is given by the following respondent. She explains how in Russian culture, in general, people tend to smile less than people from Europe do as follows: *''We have a different communicating*

culture, because in our culture we don't really smile. I sometimes even say to my students, just smile! Why are you so grumpy, even from the early hours of the day?'' (R7, female, 65 years old).

Despite of their perception of Europeans as happy, open and friendly people, it was remarkable how many respondents also expressed suspicions about the sincerity of the friendly, smiling behavior they encountered in Europe. The following respondent shared his impression of Europeans as being friendly people. Right after, however, he expresses his doubts about the sincerity of this friendly behavior by presuming it might have to do something with him being a tourist when he says: *''I think people from Europe are friendlier, but it might be because I'm a tourist and they want to show me their friendly side. But in general I think people in Europe are more friendly''* (R5, male, 40 years old).

This suspicious attitude towards the sincerity of European friendliness and happiness is endorsed by another respondent. During a conversation about his perception of European and Russian culture, he elaborated upon the twofoldness of European openness. One the one hand, he explains how he perceives Europeans as seemingly open and friendly people. On the other hand, however, he mentions how he finds it difficult to fully believe the sincerity of this expressed happiness that seems common on European streets.

> *''If you go to Europe you see people smiling all the time and you begin to feel it's a really nice place. But we don't know what they really feel. From the first glance we consider it a good place to live because people seem happy. But in Russia you can go to a city and see some bored people, some dull people, some disappointed people. But at the same time you can see some happy people. For me it's easier to read these people.''* (R4, male, 23 years old)

Later in the conversation, he uses the concept of the *Russian Soul* to explain why it is easier for him to understand Russians. Generally speaking, communication with Russians is easier because they act from their *Soul*. What you see is what you get. When communicating with Europeans, he seems to doubt if their outward expressions really matches their inner thoughts and feelings.

''When foreigners meet Russian people, they always notice the openness of the Russian Soul. This mysterious Russian Soul. Russian people, they don't hide their emotions, they express how they are feeling. So for me it is easier to communicate with Russians. It is easier from the emotional side because I know Russians. I know how they think and they express what they think with their emotions. With foreigners it is not always so clear.'' (ibid)

So one the one hand, the respondents associate Europe and Europeans with happiness, friendliness and open-mindedness. However, they also had their doubts about the genuineness of this behavior. And although in Russia people seem to be less outgoing with their happiness and smiles, the respondents seem to have less doubts about the sincerity of Russian displays of emotions. Referring to the pureness of the Russian Soul, they explained how they perceive Russian communicative culture as trustworthy; what you see is what you get. A feature they doubted in European communicational culture. Are these European smiles sincere, from the heart? Or is it just a façade? These doubts were expressed by multiple respondents during interviews about their perception of Europeanness.

European '*Mind*' vs. Russian *'Soul'*

Finally, a perception of Europe –i.e. Europeanness- as a place full of business minded people who are focused on making money and getting a career, has been reported by multiple respondents. When asked to share his thoughts on what European culture is, the first thing one respondent said was: *''Career. European people think about getting a career. Maybe money, to get some good earnings''* (R8, male, 26 years old).

Another respondent talked about how her son had been living in Europe for several years. After a while, he decided to come back to Kaliningrad. When she asked him why he had decided to leave Europe and return to Kaliningrad, he explained how he didn't feel at home in Europe due to the commercial, businesslike mindset he encountered.

''When I asked my son why he came back to Kaliningrad, he said: why do I have to stay in Europe… it is just not mine. Europeans are good people, very wise and intelligent. But they always think about what to buy and what to sell.'' (R1, female, 76 years old)

This commercial mindset is also associated with a loss of basic skills. When talking about his visit to Germany, one respondent noticed that most Germans relied fully on supermarkets and restaurants in their daily life:

''But, because Europe is more of a consumption society, they can't do many things by themselves. Simple things, like making dinner. For example, I noted a lot of people in Germany eat in restaurants. They can't make a fire in a forest, but it's very simple. They don't eat mushrooms from the forest, but only from the supermarket.'' (R5, male, 40 years old)

Again, as heard when talking about the communicational style of Europeans and Russians, the imaginary of the pure and honest Russian Soul is used as a positive point of reference by a respondent. When she was asked to share her perception of Europe and Europeans, a respondent distinguishes Europeans and Russians by referring to the (European lack of) Russian Soul by saying: '*'The whole of Europe is very commercial, and business minded. People from Europe act more economical. Not like Russians, Russians always act from their heart, from their soul''* (R1, female, 76 years old).

Later in the conversation, she again uses the Russian Soul as a positive point of reference. She explains how she dislikes certain European influences in Kaliningrad, entering through the internet and certain television programs, by emphasizing the lack of *Soul* in these European programs:

''We would like to take some things of Europe that we like, but not everything. For example, not the things you see on the internet. It is like they said during the catastrophe of the falling of the Soviet Union, that all this money that we have is only corrupting people. Internet is also something that corrupts people. Because in Kaliningrad we also have some television channels, it is called first city, and they are always talking about European topics. There is no soul in it!''
(R1, female, 76 years old)

5.2 Kaliningrad as imagined by Europeans and non-Kaliningrad Russians

In discourse, Kaliningrad gets portrayed in various ways. In the following section, the different metaphors and imaginaries that are used to depict Kaliningrad will be analyzed. Furthermore, the influence of these imaginaries on the way Kaliningraders get perceived by their direct neighbors (Poles and Lithuanians), and other Europeans as well as 'other' Russians will be examined at the hand of experiences of Kaliningrad citizens.

Imaginaries and metaphors used for Kaliningrad in discourse

In scientific writings about Kaliningrad, a wide variety of metaphors is used to describe the city. Metaphors are important tools in the construction of a regional sign. Like geographical imaginaries, they can function as representations of the identity of the Kaliningrad Oblast. Therefore, it is useful to have a look at the imaginaries and metaphors that are being used to describe Kaliningrad in scientific literature, newspapers and speeches.

The first category of metaphors that can be detected, is centered around cultural and ideological assumptions of the Other and the Self. These metaphors contain essentialist claims about Kaliningrad as a carrier of moral and cultural values, functioning as either a bastion of Russian values, surrounded by Europe, or as an undesirable Russian intruder in Europe. According these narratives, Kaliningrad is situated on the *''faultline of East-West tensions''* (MacFarquhar, 2016). Hostile imaginaries of Kaliningrad as a *''Soviet hellhole''* (Patten, 2001), an *''unsinkable aircraft carrier''* (Holtom, 2001, in Makarychev, 2013) or a Russian *''Trojan horse''* in Europe (Diener & Hagen, 2011) are used by (European) academics. From Russian side, Kaliningrad gets portrayed as Russia's *''cultural outpost''*, where Russian values are being preserved (Klemeshev & Fiodorov, 2002). In these descriptions, Kaliningrad is a Russian *''reservation''* or *''bastion''* inside Europe (Sychiova, 2002, in Makarychev, 2013). Russian Patriarch Kirill has called Kaliningrad a *"beacon of the Russian World in Europe''*, located on the *''ideological battlefield between the West and Russia"* (Kirill, 2015, cited in Sukhankin, 2017).

A second category of metaphors describes the in-between status of Kaliningrad with a focus on its perceived marginality. Descriptions of Kaliningrad as a *''double periphery''* (Gänzle & Müntel, 2011), a *''double borderland''* (Diener & Hagen, 2011), *''geopolitical hostage''* (Lopata, 2004) or a victim of *''dual provincialism''* (Smirnov, 2009) are referring mainly to the negative consequences of Kaliningrad's geographical and administrative location, in-between Russia and the European Union. These metaphors imply that Kaliningrad is located at the margins of both Russia and the EU, suffering the consequences of being on the periphery of both geopolitical superpowers.

Finally, a third category of metaphors can be detected, one that explains the in-betweenness of Kaliningrad through a far more positive lens. In this discourse, scholars describe Kaliningrad as a *''pilot region''* (Sergunin, 2007; Smirnov, 2009) of Russian and European cooperation. The accent in these descriptions is placed on Kaliningrad's capability to function as a *''bridge''* between Europe and Russia (Browning & Joenniemi, 2004). Other metaphors pointing referring to the connecting capacities of Kaliningrad are those that describe Kaliningrad as the *''meeting place''* of Russia and Europe (Browning & Joenniemi, 2004), a *''gateway''* (Browning & Joenniemi, 2004; Sergunin, 2007) or *''ski-jump''* to Europe (Revzin 2007, in Makarychev, 2013), or a *''hole in the wall''* between Europe and Russia (Haukkala, 2003). In these metaphors, Kaliningrad gets envisioned as a unique place where two large geopolitical actors (Russia and the European Union) can get in contact and where they can encounter, communicate and cooperate.

As brought forward by Paasi, the use of language is essential in the symbolic creation of space, territoriality and boundaries (Paasi, 1996, p. 15). In the case of Kaliningrad, a distinction between what Paasi calls a language of *''difference''*, and a language of *''integration''* can be detected (*ibid*). An important component of the language of difference is that of Western fear of Russian aggressiveness and possibility of military expansion (Archer & Etzold, 2010, p. 331). In the following section, a closer look will be given at how these different imaginaries, metaphors and languages about Kaliningrad play out in real life, based on Kaliningraders' experiences with non-Kaliningrad Russians and Europeans.

"Other" Russian imaginaries of Kaliningrad

When people from other parts of Russia visit Kaliningrad, they often expect to encounter a region that is somehow Europeanized. Multiple respondents report about meeting non-Kaliningrad Russians and their impressions of Kaliningrad as a 'European' looking region, like the following respondent, who shares the reactions she get during her work as a tour guide:

''Before coming to Kaliningrad, they had certain expectations, good expectations, to see something which is not Russia, which is Europe. And this is what they see in the form of the architecture, and in the form of all the stories about the German past. In the Baltic Sea, and Amber! Amber is another important feature, attribute which makes us special and different.'' (R12, female, 51 years old)

The following respondent has encountered similar responses when meeting non-Kaliningrad Russians. Other Russians seem to be impressed by the German architecture they see in Kaliningrad.

''They think it is European. When I meet another Russian guy, from Moscow, or the rest of Russia, when they come in here, they always say: 'wow, it looks like Europe!' They have a lot of impressions, like 'wow, you have German buildings!' But for me, I lived here for a long time you know, and I think: how do you think this is beautiful? I'm tired of looking at those buildings, and you like it. But yeah, Russian people think it's a quite European region.'' (R8, male, 26 years old)

Another Kaliningrad feature that other Russians seem to associate with Europe, is its climate and natural environment. On average, it is warmer and the climate is milder in Kaliningrad than it is in most other parts of Russia. Also, the proximity of the Baltic Sea is something that other Russians mentioned as something that contributes to Kaliningrad's image as a European-looking part of Russia. In the following passage, a respondent explains how he sees Kaliningrad as a place where other Russians can see something ''European'' without having to leave Russia:

''Some Russians like to spend time here because we have the sea nearby, and a lot of nature. The German architecture and other German things we have here is interesting for Russians too, because not all of the Russian people have a visa for Europe.'' (R5, male, 40 years old)

Based on abovementioned experiences of Kaliningraders' encounters with other Russians, non-Kaliningrad Russians seem to imagine Kaliningrad as a part of Russia which has 'European' features. Mostly, they have positive views about the natural and built environment of Kaliningrad, its interesting history and its geographical location. However, the enclave status of Kaliningrad also leads to misunderstandings and wrong perceptions of the Oblast and its inhabitants. One persistent misconception, mentioned by several respondents, is that other Russians sometimes think that people in Kaliningrad speak German. Sometimes, they even expect Kaliningraders to pay with Euros instead of Rubles, explained by this respondent:

''And when people come here from other parts of Russia they are surprised that we don't speak German, because they expect us to speak German in here. And they expect us to have Euro as our currency.'' (R9, female, 23 years old)

Furthermore, respondents have experienced misperceptions about the present day demographic composition of Kaliningrad's inhabitants. The following respondent, a 63-year-old accountant, explained how she has encountered Russians who thought that Kaliningrad was still inhabited with Germans nowadays:

''They thought that people in here lived with Germans. They didn't know that the German population was forced to leave. They didn't know, and they thought that two nations live in here at the same time.'' (R10, female, 63 years old)

Another misconception, linked to the geographical location of Kaliningrad within Europe and its enclave status is told by a 34-year-old secretary. In the following story, she explains how Russians from other places contact her to ask for work visas and other customs documents, even though she works in a totally different sector:

''When I was in Siberia, people constantly asked me how I could come there. Because they thought that we were standing at the border for days, proving something to the guards. And here is another example. I work as a secretary now. Sometimes people call me from other parts of Russia, with some requests. They say: we want to come to your place, what kind of jobs can you offer us? They say to me that they've heard that since we are surrounded by borders, that every citizen can fill in the customs papers. As if we were all born with this knowledge. I was really surprised. We have organizations who work with these customs, but there are not so many of them here. They think that every person in Kaliningrad can fill in those papers.''

(R6, female, 34 years old)

Neighboring countries' fear of Russian aggression

As discussed above, part of the way Kaliningrad is perceived by others can be placed in a broader context of fear of Russian expansion. Especially neighboring countries like Poland (Zarycki, 2004) and the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania) use Russia as negative other in their strive to identify themselves as European (Kuus, 2007). An important part of this orientalist imaginary is the portrayal of Russia as aggressor, capable of a sudden expansion of its borders at the expense of surrounding countries. Due to Kaliningrad's location, in-between and surrounded by abovementioned countries, it is interesting to see if and how this language of fear and suspicion of Russia that is used in discourse takes shape in real life.

Due to the closeness of Poland and Lithuania, many Kaliningraders visit these countries regularly. This means there is a lot of contact between Kaliningraders and Polish and Lithuanian people. During the interviews, questions were asked about the relation between Kaliningraders and their neighbors (Poles and Lithuanians), and how Kaliningraders think their neighbors perceive them. When asked about the relationship with their neighboring countries, one respondent explained how she had the impression that Lithuanians indeed started to fear Russians by saying: *''We actually had good contacts with these border regions. I don't know about Lithuania, maybe not anymore now because they don't like us. They think we will occupy them''* (R7, female, 65 years old). She later elaborates on the political situation that, in her opinion, caused this view of Russian aggressiveness by explaining: *''This situation we are living*

in, as if the war will start tomorrow. Especially if you watch our TV. And I think the abroad TV as well. As if we are trying to occupy Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Ukraine'' (ibid).

Another respondent also reports about increased tensions. She suspects the cause to be rooted in Polish fear of Russian expansion, which has caused Polish government to revoke the visa-agreement that made travel between Poland and Kaliningrad easier for Kaliningraders and nearby living Poles:

''You can just give them this card and then they'll let you through. So that makes it easier. But since July of this year, Poland delayed this arrangement because of Russian politics. Because we annexed Crimea and Poland felt unsafe that it has an open border with us, so they are afraid that we could annex Poland. I don't know how this works but...'' (R2, female, 24 years old)

That this hostile portrayal of Russia in foreign media can lead to unpleasant situations in real life, gets also proven by the following story, told by a 23 year old student:

''Based on the stories I hear from a brother who often goes there, he tells me that some people in Poland are not happy to see Russians in their country. No matter where they are from, whenever they see Russian license plates, they can draw something on their car [scratchy movement], or they puncture the tires. That has happened a few times.'' (R9, female, 23 years old)

That ordinary Russians can suffer the consequences of hostile imaginaries in real life, gets confirmed by another respondent. She reveals how she experienced politically motivated anti-Russian racism when she visited the Czech Republic in the following passage:

''Unfortunately, this year, I've experiences racism… nationalism. We rented a flat from a woman on Airbnb, and everything was ok. Then we found out that water was coming from the ceiling and asked her to take care of it, which she did. That night, we went out, and I came back at about 3 o'clock in the morning. I was alone, I was quiet, I was sober. But then I got an sms from her that said: 'you fucking Russians, get away from here! We are not Crimea. You want to conquer us, but we won't let you'. And I was like… what?!'' (R3, female, 32 years old)

Impact of increased contact on Othering

Illustrated by the unpleasant experiences of hostility towards Russians mentioned above, the narrative of Russia as a potential threat to the regional security in its near abroad has its effect 'on the ground'. However, speaking to several Kaliningraders about the relationship with their neighbors, has led to a more nuanced view of this perceived anti-Russian sentiments. Whereas multiple respondents acknowledged the hostile imaginaries of the Other that occur in mass media –from both Russian, and Western side-, respondents often add that this view is not being shared by people with whom they interact in real life. It is mostly portrayed in media and discourse. This respondent, who claims that the mutual perception of Russians and neighboring countrymen in real life differs from the view that is portrayed in mass media explains: ''*They [Poles and Lithuanians] still have this bad attitude towards us, but mostly on the political level. People who live on the border territories, they are normal, they are ok*'' (R6, female, 34 years old). Later in the conversation she elaborates:

> ''*It seems to me the relationship is kind of good. But, in mass media, they want to put some shit on us. And it's the same with Lithuanians. My friends visits Lithuania quite often, and she says that Lithuanians have quite a good attitude towards us. But in their mass media, they say that we will go into Lithuania.*'' (R6, female, 34 years old)

She further elucidates this view when she gives her opinion on the relationship between Poles and Kaliningraders, by saying: ''*We are made to dislike each other. When we meet Polish people, we will act normally. But in the whole, through mass media, there is more negativity from both sides*''. This view gets supported by another respondent, who also claims that this negative narrative of Russia is used mainly in discourse, and not in everyday life encounters between Kaliningraders and Poles/Lithuanians:

> ''*I haven't felt any negative attitude towards Russians on the part of either Poland or Lithuania. Despite all the political tension. The relationship between people on the grassroots level is absolutely fine.*'' (R12, female, 51 years old)

This is where the ambiguity, the twofoldness of borders finds expression in Kaliningrad. As Morin articulated, *''borders are at the same time as they are barriers, places of communication and exchange. They are the place of dissociation and association, of separation and articulation''* (Morin, 1977, cited in Bennington, 1990, p. 121). Living in a border area, on the so called 'frontline of East-West tensions', Kaliningraders have experienced the unpleasant consequences of hostile imaginaries by means of discrimination and vandalism. On the other hand, also as a consequence of their location at the border, Kaliningraders have way more interaction with their neighboring countries than other Russians. Thus, while at the same time experiencing the border as a *barrier*, a place of *dissociation* and *separation*, this same border simultaneously functions as a place of *communication*, *association* and *articulation*. And as a result of this increased communication in the border area, Kaliningrad citizens actively reshape possible negative, orientalist imaginaries about Russians by emphasizing their similarities and shared interest in good everyday life relations. A view that is well expressed by the following remark of a respondent who interacts with Poles regularly:

> *''People from Poland come here to buy cigarettes and petrol, and we go down to buy products and clothes. And we all understand that it's not profitable for us to dislike each other.''*
> (R6, female, 34 years old)

European and Other Russian perceptions of belonging and in-/exclusion

As mentioned on pages 46-47, a distinction between a language if *inclusion* and *exclusion*, of *integration* and *difference* is noticeable in discourse about Kaliningrad. It is interesting to give Kaliningraders some space to shed their light on questions of belonging and in- or exclusion. Therefore, a closer look will be given at the language they use themselves when referring to Kaliningrad(ers)'s place in terms of belonging to Europe or Russia, as well as their experiences with the language used by others in this context. When asked to share his feelings about the way he thinks Europeans look at Kaliningrad in terms of belonging to Russia or Europe, a 23-year-old PhD-student said the following:

> *''Maybe they are perceiving us as non-European people. Because in Europe, there is a point of view that Russia is not Europe, that it's closer to Asia and that Russian people are not European*

people. For example, they ask why Russian teams are playing in European cups. They perceive us as foreigners. I don't know about Kaliningrad, maybe they perceive us as a part of Europe, but I don't know.'' (R4, male, 23 years old)

By pointing out the use of sporting competitions as some sort of indicator of Europeanness by Europeans, he interestingly brings forward the problematical nature of such indicators. When asked about his view on this 'barometer of Europeanness', he commented:

''I think we have reasons to assume that we may play in European cups. For example if you take Turkey, it has only a small part of its territory laying in Europe. They can play in European cups, so what about Russia?'' (ibid)

Talking further about the perception of belonging, but now from the Russian point of view, he explains how he feels that other Russian sometimes question the *Russianness* of Kaliningrad and Kaliningraders. He touches upon the power of geographical imaginaries by using the peripheral location of Kaliningrad on the weather forecast map as a possible explanation of this other Russian doubt of Kaliningrad's Russianness:

''I've heard that people in big Russia perceive Kaliningrad as, and I don't know how many people feel this way, but they perceive Kaliningrad as not part of Russia. Because it's somewhere far away. Because on the weather forecast you can't always see Kaliningrad. You can see Moscow, St. Petersburg, Novgorod… You can see Kaliningrad, but there's no weather notion on it and it is not named. So some people don't know what kind of people live here… are they Germans... are they Russians? What currency is used there?'' (*ibid*)

Based on the experiences of this respondent, another PhD-Student who regularly makes study-related trips to neighboring countries, Kaliningrad also gets depicted as a special Russian region within, apart from 'Big Russia', as a member of a broader supranational Baltic or Eastern European network. He explains how German organizations treat Kaliningrad as an autonomous region in their application process for scholarships:

''There are a lot of programs for Russian students to go to Germany, for a scholarship. I won a scholarship last year from the German Ecological Foundation. And this scholarship was only for people of the Kaliningrad region. I mean, it's related to all Eastern European countries. Like Poland, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and so on. And also to Kaliningrad, but not to Russia.''
(R8, male, 26 years old)

While working together with people from European countries, he and his fellow Kaliningrad participants kept being referred to as Kaliningraders instead of Russians. Once, a German supervisor even introduced the Kaliningrad delegation as being from Königsberg.

''When I was there on the first meeting at this German ecological foundation... The officials of this German foundation, when they presented the people, they said: 'okay, we have some students from Latvia, students from Poland, and we have some students from Kaliningrad'. They didn't say we are from Russia, but from the Kaliningrad region. Once they even said that we came from Königsberg. We had this opening meeting with the delegation, where we stayed at one place for four days. And this committee introduced our programs and projects. After that, we visited the museum, and this guide at the museum asked us where we came from. Then the person who was with us said: 'they came from Königsberg.'' (ibid)

By calling Kaliningrad differently, a mental appropriation based on its perceived historical belonging can be justified. Another respondent reported about another case where this happened, during his interactions with Polish colleagues:

''Some Polish people call Kaliningrad not Königsberg, not Kaliningrad, they call it in Polish: Królewiec. They think it was a Polish city, but it's not. If you look at the history it was Prussian, but not Polish. But still some Polish people think it's Polish.'' (R5, male, 40 years old)

Kaliningraders' perception of belonging and in-/exclusion

As discussed above, Kaliningraders have experienced imposed projections of non-Europeanness from Europeans, as well as non-Russianness from other Russians. However, they have also been treated as a special part of Russia, one that because of its geographical location within Europe gets treated as part of Eastern Europe and the Baltic region. How Kaliningraders themselves think about the relation between Russia and Europe, and how Kaliningrad relates to both worlds, will now be discussed further.

During conversations with Kaliningraders about the (im)possibility to place Kaliningrad in a clear category of being European, Russian or anything else, a wide variety of answers were given. Some respondents, like this 24-year-old PhD-student, perceive Kaliningrad as a Russian city. Although she does recognize the uniqueness of the Kaliningrad region, she places this uniqueness in a broader context of all local differences within the great variety of Russian districts that the Russian Federation consists of in the following passage:

> ''If you want me to choose, where to put Kaliningrad, in Europe or Russia, it is definitely Russia. It is special like all other districts of Russia, because we have a different geographical position, a different climate, we are near the border. So it has to be unique in this way. But I think that also in the Moscow Oblast or Ural, Kamchatka, they have their differences and they are still Russian.'' (R2, female, 24 years old)

Another respondent also sees Kaliningrad as belonging to Russia. She too recognizes the unique local features that Kaliningrad has, but agreeing with the previous respondent she attributes these local differences between the different oblasts [provinces] to the great variety of people and ethnicities that encompass Russia.

> ''It's definitely a Russian city, because people who live here come from what used to be the Soviet Union. A big country with many nationalities. But as any Russians living in their own region, we have our own features.'' (R12, female, 51 years old)

The following respondent, however, finds it more difficult to place Kaliningrad in one specific categorized space of belonging. In the following reflection, he adds nuance to the question where Kaliningrad belongs by referring to the multiple and sometimes contradicting facets of identity and cultural belonging:

''I think at the same time Kaliningrad is a European city, because it has its European, German culture. If you just go outside, you can see the European shopping malls and the organization of the streets. It reminds of European eras. But about the people who are living in Kaliningrad, I consider them Russian. And that makes the city in which they live a more Russian city I think.'' (R4, male, 23 years old)

Like the other respondents, he considers the inhabitants of Kaliningrad to be Russian. Therefore, he considers Kaliningrad a Russian city. However, several other respondents remarked that they find it difficult to clearly differentiate Russia and Russians from Europe and Europeans. One respondent emphasizes the overlapping and similarities between Russians and Europeans by saying:

''I think Europeans actually are the same as us, just people with a different history, maybe living in a different reality, but people with the same values. Maybe living in better living conditions, but people with exactly the same values. A family, a job, health and an ability to develop one's capacities.'' (R12, female, 51 years old)

This vision gets acknowledged by another respondent, who also sees similarities between Europeans and Russians: *''But still I can't say that the European soul is totally different than the Russian. We have the same feelings and orientations in the future''* (R2, female, 24 years old).

One respondent does not see a difference in belonging to Europe or Russian, when she explains: *''To say if I'm a European or a Russian, for me it's just the same because Russia belongs to Europe in my opinion''* (R7, female, 65 years old). She does acknowledge cultural and historical differences between countries and regions, but in her assessment these varieties do belong to the same category:

''Yes. I think we are just one of the countries of Europe. But definitely, our cultural background, communicational backgrounds and historical backgrounds are different. I think the advantage of the Russian nation is that we are mixed. We are not a mono-national country and it contributes to a variety of faces, a variety of characters and a variety of talents.''
(R7, female, 65 years old)

Conversing with Kaliningraders about questions of belonging and in- and exclusion pointed out the difficulty and questionability of assigning people, places and cultures to clearly demarcated categories. More than once, respondents found it difficult to assign Kaliningrad and Kaliningraders clearly to either Europe or Russia. During these conversations, the situational and relational character of identity and identification became really apparent. It was proven difficult to isolate specific features and exclusively assign them to either Russian culture, European culture or any other categorized unit. In chapter six, therefore, an attempt will be made to move away from this dissatisfaction that can be felt when trying to grasp Kaliningrad in clear-cut categories of Russia vis-à-vis Europe by inviting you to look at Kaliningrad through the more open and inclusive perspective that the *Thirdspace* provides.

5.3 Effects of the border on everyday life in Kaliningrad

In this paragraph, the effect of the physical border on Kaliningrad citizens will be explored. How does the border, and the accompanying bordering practices such as visa applications and border controls influence Kaliningraders and does the physical border contribute to feelings of (dis)connection?

Pragmatic view

When talking with Kaliningraders about the border between Kaliningrad and the European Union (Poland and Lithuania), an often encountered reaction was that this is just the situation Kaliningraders live in and had to be accepted, as explained by this tour guide: ''*This is part of our life, our reality, nothing to complain about*'' (R12, female, 51 years old). Another example of this pragmatic view of the border is given by the following respondent, who explains how she accepts the fact that she has to apply for a Visa because that's the way it goes when you live in Kaliningrad:

> ''*For me it's like a necessity. I live in Kaliningrad, so I should get a Visa and I have difficulties with transportation to other parts of the world. So, I just get used to it. It's like a second nature for me. Visa? Ok, I should do this and then I will have a good trip.*'' (R2, female, 24 years old)

Another respondent, when asked about the role the border plays in his life, also responds pragmatically. He explains how he perceives the border and visa procedure as a formal obstacle, and not as much as a mental separating device in the following passage:

> ''*I don't think that it plays a great role, because you know you can fly and it doesn't require Visa or other special documents. It's the same with ferries. For example, you can go to St. Petersburg by ferry. They are formal obstacles, I don't think they make people feel more separated.*'' (R4, male, 23 years old)

Besides this pragmatic attitude towards the border and the necessary procedures to acquire a visa, respondents did have different attitudes towards the border. One the one hand, obligatory visa procedures were perceived as a nuisance, expensive, time-consuming and

causing feelings of disconnection and exclusion. On the other hand, living in a border area was perceived as providing opportunities that other Russians did not have, mostly referring to easier and cheaper traveling to Europe (most interviewees had visited European cities more than they had visited cities in mainland Russia).

Discomfort as a consequence of the border and bordering practices

During the interviews, multiple respondents expressed feelings of discomfort regarding the border. It has to be noted that the manifestation of the hard border between Kaliningrad and the EU, in the form of the visa procedures resulting from the accession of Poland and Lithuania to the Schengen agreement, is not the only border at stake in the Kaliningrad region. Bordering practices and rituals such as visa applications, waiting in line at the airport and undergoing border checks –as a result from the hard, institutionalized border- constantly perform borders into existence. However, these hard borders contribute to ideas and feelings of belonging and exclusion, and therefore lead to the construction of soft borders.

The following respondent, whose daughter lives in Ireland, explains how the performance of bordering rituals such as visa-application and passport control at the airport lead to feelings of embarrassment and emotional discomfort. When asked how she experiences the border between Kaliningrad and the European Union, she says:

> *''Oh, I hate it! Before, I didn't care much about it. But now that my daughter lives in Ireland, it's a problem. Because it costs much money. For example, to receive a visa only for one stay, from 22nd of December till 8 January, application for a visa cost me 20,000 rubles. That's about €300. Plus, it's very time-consuming. And it's emotionally consuming, when you are monitored. Besides, it's a very discriminating thing when you have two channels at the airport, one for Europeans and one or the rest. I don't think about it too much, but it's a little bit confusing to some extent. It's just… we are used to think that we are not liked. For me, I don't think much about it, but whenever you face this situation you feel a little bit embarrassed.''* (R7, female, 65 years old)

Feelings of disconnection were also reported when discussing the border. This respondent explains how she realizes more clearly that she lives in a distant part of Russia, far away from the Russian mainland, whenever she travels to Russia by train:

''It's only hard when you go to Russia. Because I don't have much money so I have to use the train and that's a little uncomfortable. It's 1,5 hour by plane and around 24 hours by train. It's different. And when you go by train you feel in a more sharp way that you are far from home, you're far from Russia. You feel it, because of these 24 hours you know. And because you cross two borders, with Lithuania and Belarus.'' (R2, female, 24 years old).

Later in the conversation, she explains that this disconnection from the Russian mainland also contributes to feelings of unsafety, as she is afraid that its exclave status makes Kaliningrad more vulnerable in comparison with mainland Russian territories:

Because from this border situation, and the situation between Russia, Europe, the U.S. and Asia.. it's complicated. Maybe a little scary, for me. When I think about that there is so much going on in the world. And that you have so much distance from your original country and you, maybe it is a little unsafe. And it is worse when our government would place here some weapons, that would make it more scary for us. Like they are preparing for something. (R2, female, 24 years old)

How the hardening of the border can lead to the construction and perception of soft borders, sociocultural boundaries between groups of people, is exemplified by the story of this respondent. When asked if she remembered how she felt when Poland and Lithuania joined the EU, she recalls how it suddenly made her feel unwanted.

''I remember my mom saying: well, we are not going to Poland anymore, to waterparks or shopping, because it's gonna be more complicated now. And I was very sad, because I thought: well these are just our neighbors. We are friends, why can't we go? It was like you are working with your friends and suddenly they put a wall between you. Suddenly, they weren't our close friends anymore, but they were someone that did not want to see us anymore, because they chose

someone else over us. It was like saying to our face: you are difference, you don't belong here.''

(R9, female, 23 years old)

This story demonstrates how borders are more than just a 'line in the sand'. The hardening of the administrative border, a geopolitical process, resulted in a young girl from Kaliningrad feeling unwanted and excluded from her Polish neighbors. A separation between her and people from a country that she always liked to visit, and who she considered friends. So instead of just an administrative border, a line in the sand, she experienced how a sharp social division between her and her neighbors was performed into existence.

Benefits of living in a border region

Despite feelings of disconnection and exclusion, a more positive view of the border also came forward during the interviews. Multiple respondents explained how they saw their situation as Russians, living in Kaliningrad at the border with Europe, as an opportunity to explore Europe easier and cheaper than their countrymen from mainland Russia. The following respondent, who had been traveling a lot to Europe throughout her life, explains how he feels that living in Kaliningrad gave him the opportunity to travel:

''Of course it has an influence. But one of the great advantages of Kaliningrad is that we are located in Europe, so you can reach a lot of European cities because we are located here. We can just go to Gdansk, and then take a plane in any direction. Spain, Italy, whatever.'' (R8, male, 26 years old).

His focus on the opportunities for travel that living in a border region offers is shared by the following respondent. She explains how, despite nuisances of border checks, living in Kaliningrad offers the opportunity to see more of Europe. When asked about she feels about living in a border region, she explained:

''Is definitely a good thing, because it provides the ability to go and see. And learn. Of course, sometimes you need to wait. And sometimes you need to wait for hours. But this is, I don't know whether it's avoidable or unavoidable. But it still worth waiting for hours at the border to

go to Poland, or to Europe, just to see. Just to change the context, to learn, interact. Getting new experiences.'' (R12, female, 51 years old).

That living in a border region really leads to more contact with neighbouring countries became clear during conversations with Kaliningrad citizens about their travel experiences. A 40-year-old craftsman explained: *''Most people from Kaliningrad see Europe more than big metropolitan Russia.''* Another respondent similarly explained: *''I think that I've been in Germany more than in St Petersburg for example''* (R4, male, 24 years old).

Especially trips to Poland are mentioned, to go shopping or sightseeing. *'''Traveling to Poland, this is a normal thing for every Kaliningrad family to do. This is what I do, on a monthly basis, traveling to Poland just to go shopping''* (R12, female, 51 years old). When asked how living in a Russian exclave influences the life of Kaliningraders, this respondent also stressed how it leads to more contact and an exchange of ideas:

> *''People go on holidays more often, and they see how other people live over there and they bring something back over here. For example when people go on business trips away from Kaliningrad, when they come back that brought some ideas, they open restaurants, bars, shops.''* (R7, female, 65 years old)

Duality of borders embodied in Kaliningrad

What has been clear when looking at the borders at stake in Kaliningrad, is the duality that is inherent to the concept of *border*. In the stories about how the border caused some respondents to feel excluded and separated, the exclusionary power of the boundary came forward. Bordering practices and their underlying narrative of differentiation between groups of people caused feelings of discomfort and even anxiety.

At the same time, however, the border between Kaliningrad and the EU functions more as a frontier, where it functions as an opening, a contact zone. In this manifestation of the more outward oriented character of the border, Kaliningrad is a contact zone, a place of communication and exchange between different people and ideas.

6. The Identity Perception of Kaliningrad Inhabitants

''Like the banks of the river, the past and the future are linked by a bridge: the present. Once Bert Hoppe remarked that, for a long time, Kaliningrad was a city without a past for the Russians and a city without a present for the Germans. By the early 21st century, the situation has changed dramatically. At last the bridge over the Pregel to nowhere (its construction began at the end of the Soviet era) was finished. But the bridge to the future is still hidden in fog. Does it lead to a miraculous place that sees the final reconciliation of all peoples of the Earth with each other and inside themselves? Or is it indeed called Utopia? Even Leonhard Euler couldn't have solved this problem, but the millions of new inhabitants of this land have to do so every day.''

-Ilya Dementiev, 2013

6.1 Multiple levels of identification

When asking Kaliningraders to share their thoughts on how they would identify themselves, multiple levels- and points of identification were mentioned. Multiple levels of identification were heard, varying from the national (feeling Russian), the local (feeling Kaliningrader) and the supranational level (feeling European). In the following section, these different levels and points of identification of Kaliningrad citizens will be reviewed, as well as their reciprocal relation.

National identity: feeling Russian

What became clear in conversations with Kaliningraders about their identity, is that almost all respondents feel Russian to a certain extent. The profundity and exclusivity of their identification with Russia varied between respondents, but the vast majority of respondents did identify themselves as Russians in one way or another. Much heard points of identification were the Russian language, (communicative) culture and recognizable features between fellow Russians.

A topic that was discussed regularly, was how Kaliningraders view the relation between Russians from 'Big Russia' –i.e. Russians living on the Russian mainland, and the Russians that live in Kaliningrad, disconnected from Russian mainland and surrounded by European countries. When asked to identify herself, this respondent clearly indicated: *''I see myself as purely Russian. Sometimes other people see differences, but I cannot, I feel Russian''* (R10, female, 63 years old). She gets supported in her view by another respondent, who does acknowledge some regional differences, but in her opinion these local features don't seem to detract anything from the Russianness of Kaliningrad citizens.

> *''I am definitely Russian. Leningrad and Kaliningrad are not quite the same, but still all the people who live there bring the same qualities and traditions. So I am definitely Russian and I don't like the abroad. You have a different mentality.''* (R1, female, 76 years old)

These respondents show clear signs of an exclusively national identity. Despite of some minor local differences between Russian districts, they view themselves Russian. Other respondents

however, despite also feeling Russian most of the time, were expressing more levels of identity. Examples of a local Kaliningrad identity were heard, referring to local peculiarities like the environment or population, whereas other respondents felt themselves more European. These different levels of identification and the way they interact will be further looked into in the following section.

Russian, Kaliningrader, European: Interrelation between different levels of identity

As said before, almost all respondents mentioned their Russian identity during conversations about identity. However, several respondents also mentioned their Kaliningrad identity. When asked how she would identify herself, this respondent expresses two levels of identification, both Russian and Kaliningrader, by saying:

''I'm a Russian living in the very special city of Kaliningrad. I'm a Russian person living in Kaliningrad. And a Kaliningrader, but in the first place I'm Russian. When I introduce myself when traveling abroad, I introduce myself as a Russian, coming from Kaliningrad.'' (R12, female, 51 years old)

This corresponds with the identity perception of this respondent. He also feels Russian, but at the same time Kaliningrader. When asked how this national Russian identity and this local Kaliningrad identity interrelate, he says the following:

''I consider myself of course Russian. It is not only because your city is a geographical part of Russia, but is because some sort of inner bond, inner points of interaction. Because you're a member of society, you feel yourself Russian. But I also feel as a Kaliningrader. In my opinion there are two levels of identity. The first one is a citizenship. If you are a Kaliningrader, you are a citizen of this city. And the second level is your nationality. There is some kind of mixture between these levels. And I am both Kaliningrader and Russian.'' (R4, male, 23 years old)

According to this respondent, people can have multiple levels of identity, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive. These different levels of identity can co-exist and one can shift between them, illustrating the situational character of identity. In the following passage, he

further elaborates on the relation between different levels of identity, and the situational character of identification. He explains that he feels just as Russian as other Russians, but how he gets more aware of his Kaliningrad identity when he meets Russians from outside Kaliningrad.

''There are no barriers between me and for example a citizen of St. Petersburg or Moscow. The only case when you feel yourself a Kaliningrader is when it comes to a discussion of the peculiarities of the cities. Then I can feel myself a Kaliningrader. For example when they say Moscow is like this and St. Petersburg is like that, then I feel Kaliningrader. But in all the other cases… We speak the same language, not only in terms of articulated language, but also some sort of mind connection.'' (R4, male, 23 years old)

According the relationship between Russian and Kaliningrad identity, this respondent also indicates that she feels both Russian and Kaliningrader, and that the order of both levels varies depending on the environment she finds herself in. When in Kaliningrad, she feels Kaliningrader, whereas she feels primarily Russian when she finds herself abroad.

''I identify as Russian whenever I'm traveling abroad because it's just too complicated to explain to people that I'm not quite from the main part of Russia but from this little piece of Russia called Kaliningrad. So that's when I say I'm Russian, and then I feel Russian because of the contrast with other cultures. But whenever I'm here, I'm definitely not just Russian, I'm a Kaliningrader, which is like Russian, but with little things that are European.''
(R9, female, 23 years old)

In her characterization of Kaliningraders, she explains that a Kaliningrader is like a Russian, with little things that are European. This European level of identification was addressed by several Kaliningraders during conversations about identity. One respondent who traveled extensively in Europe identified himself primarily as European. He describes that he feels primarily European and connected to Europe. He also mentions his Kaliningrad identity, but he does not seem to feel Russian.

''I think I feel more European. And of course of as from Kaliningrad, but not so much as Russian. For example when I meet some people when I'm traveling, for example at the bar. I always ask them what country they think I come from, and they never have it right. They never say Russia. The first time they thought I was from Belgium. And I was like no, it's good to hear, but no. Then they were: 'okay you are from Denmark or Sweden'. Again, no. And when they hear I come from Russia, they are like: 'wow, you don't look like a Russian'. That's why I identify myself more as a European.'' (R8, male, 26 years old)

In his narration, he seems to make a distinction between European and Russian identity when he identifies as European and Kaliningrader, but not as much as Russian. There were more respondents who identified as Europeans, but they had a different vision on the relation between Russian and European identity. According these respondents, Russian and European culture and identity are not two elements. Conversely, they are strongly overlapping, interwoven and according this respondent indistinguishable.

''To say if I'm a European or a Russian, for me it's just the same because Russia belongs to Europe in my opinion. Because when we look back in history, the Russian Empire, Tsarist Empire, was a very influential power. So I think I'm European and I'm Russian. I can't distinguish.'' (R7, female, 65 years old)

This interconnectedness is also pointed out by another respondent, a 32-year-old entrepreneur who has lived and traveled in different European countries. When talking about the relation between European and Russian culture, she emphasized the similarities between the two at the hand of her own heritage and parallels between European and Slavic traditions.

''Come on, my grandfather was Polish. My grandmother's surname is from Poland. Most of my boyfriends were English. My great-grandfather from my father's line was from Georgia. So, I'm European. Look at the Celtic religion and the Slavic religion. We even have the same parties around the year. I mean, you have Samhain in Celtic and we have the same in Slavic traditions. They celebrate the beginning of summer in Celtic tradition, and we do it on the same date in the Slavic tradition. Even when you look at the fairytales we tell our children, they are the same.

You can find any hero of British fairytales in Russian folklore. It's the same.'' (R3, female, 32 years old)

While conversing with Kaliningraders about their identity perception, it became clear how diverse their views on this subject are. Even within the relatively small pool of respondents this research draws from, each respondent expressed his/her own personal view on both the identity of Kaliningrad, his/her personal identity and notions of Europeanness/Russianness. Where some respondents perceived Europe and Russia as clearly demarcated cultural spaces, others found it way harder, or even impossible to make a clear distinction between them. Asked to share their perceptions of Kaliningrad in terms of cultural belonging, the same pattern was noticeable. Some respondents perceived Kaliningrad as a totally Russian city, whereas others found it harder to make such definitive statements. Regarding the personal identity perception of Kaliningraders, perceptions vary between identifying as Russian, Kaliningrader, European and a broad variation of interpretations of and combinations between these concepts.

One of the things that characterizes Kaliningrad, is the great variation of inhabitants. Other than most other Russian cities, Kaliningrad has a relatively short history of belonging to Russia. Most people who live in Kaliningrad are descendants of the settlers that moved into Kaliningrad after the Second World War, who originated from all over Russia and the former Soviet Union. Furthermore, due to increased immigration from Central Asian and the Caucasus, the demographic composition of Kaliningrad shows a great variety of ethnicities. Due to this great diversity among Kaliningraders, a strive to find an all-encompassing, conclusive Kaliningrad identity would seem unfeasible. Instead, it would be more fruitful to look at Kaliningrad through an open lens, one that doesn't use a logic of *either/or*, but a binary transcending logic of *both/also*. A point of view that leaves room for an imaginary of Kaliningrad with all its complexities and subtleties intact. Hence, in the following subchapter, Kaliningrad and Kaliningraders' identity will analyzed through a Thirdspace perspective, as used in the works of Soja and Bhabha.

6.2 Kaliningrad through a Thirdspace perspective

''Everything comes together in Thirdspace: subjectivity and objectivity, the abstract and the concrete, the real and the imagined, the knowable and the unimaginable, the repetitive and the differential, structure and agency, mind and body, consciousness and unconsciousness, the disciplined and the transdisciplinary, everyday life and unending history.''

-Edward Soja, 1996, pp. 56-57

Realizing the impossibility of finding a conclusive, unambiguous Kaliningrad identity, or to portray a 'prototype Kaliningrader', the focus in this section will be on the uniqueness of Kaliningrad. Moments where Kaliningrad emerges as a *Thirdspace* will be described, -i.e. a space where the past and present, and the real and the imagined come together. In a strive to move away from characterizations of Kaliningrad(ers) as being either Russian or European/German, this section aims at providing an insight in the unlimited versatility of identity perceptions in Kaliningrad. This will be done at the hand of several everyday experiences of Kaliningraders, and if present, leaving room for ambiguity and feelings of discomfort.

Combination of cultures

When asking Kaliningraders to describe their city, a variety of characteristics will be given. However, there are a few features that often recur in all interviews. Often heard characteristics of Kaliningrad are the unique combination of cultures, its geographical location within and connection with Europe, the cities multicultural population and its openness. What makes Kaliningrad a unique region within Russia is its combination of Teutonic, Prussian, German, and Russian culture. A 26-year-old PhD-student explains the unique city fabric of Kaliningrad in the following passage:

> *''I think it's quite unique, compared to Russia. If you go to Kaliningrad, it looks different than if you go to Russia, because here you can see a combination of cultures. Here you can go to the street, and on the right-hand you see some German buildings, and on the left-hand you can see buildings from the Soviet ages. And then in front of you, you can see some new skyscrapers.''*

Remembrances of former Königsberg can still be seen all around Kaliningrad, visible in the architecture in the city and the region. When walking around Kaliningrad, it is possible to see old German houses located next to typical Soviet building blocks. So during a short walk around Kaliningrad, you can get confronted with spatial representations of different cultures, visually experiencing the rich history of the city. Several respondent addressed Kaliningrad's interconnection with its never ending history, speaking about the *''shadow of Königsberg''* or the *''Ghost of Königsberg''* that is still visible in today's Kaliningrad (R12, female, 51 years old). Or, as explained by another respondent: *''Königsberg didn't leave us, it is still here''* (R5, male, 40 years old).

Typically reminiscent of the German history of the city is that all respondents addressed the red bricks that are used in the architecture of Prussian castles, houses and roads (Images 6.1 & 6.2). Also, the street pattern in Kaliningrad is unique within Russia, as stated by the following respondent who he says: *''For example the Gothic architecture. You can't see this in Russia at all. The structure of the streets is different than other cities in Russia because it's radial''* (R5, male, 40 years old). According another respondent, this unique combination of different buildings are an essential part of Kaliningrad. She explains the importance of all those different architecture for her experiencing of the city, and its interwovenness by saying:

> *''They are an essential part of Kaliningrad to me. Because, whenever I think about it, I think of the house of Soviets. I think you've seen that ugly building [smiles]. And also the red bricked buildings, because this is what makes Kaliningrad Kaliningrad.''* (R9, female, 23 years old)

This mutual constitution of history and spatiality is emphasized by this 51-year-old tour guide, who explains the interconnectedness of Kaliningrad and Königsberg as follows:

> *''Königsberg and Kaliningrad are inseparable, and Kaliningrad is nothing without Königsberg''* (R12, female, 51 years old).

Image 6.1. Königsberg Cathedral, burial site of Immanuel Kant.
Source: Author

Image 6.2: Brandenburg Gate, accompanied on the left by a typically Soviet style flat.

Source: Author

Geographical location and connection to Europe

Another characteristic of Kaliningrad that is often mentioned is its unique geographical location as a Russian exclave within Europe. Because of its location, being cut off from the Russian mainland and surrounded by European Union countries, Kaliningraders have more interaction, and are more connected to Europe than other Russians. Kaliningraders travel more often to Europe than other Russians. Various respondents stated that they travel more often to Europe than they do to mainland Russia, including a 40-year-old craftsman who explains: ''*Most people from Kaliningrad see Europe more than big metropolitan Russia. Driving to Berlin is closer than to Moscow. And cheaper!*''

As a result of this regular visit to European countries and increased contact with Europeans, Kaliningrad citizens are more influenced by Europe than non-Kaliningrad Russians. A 23-year-old student explains:

> ''*I suppose it's more influenced by Europe. I can see it clearly in clothing, people dress differently here than they do in other Russian cities. When other Russians, like from a real deep Russian place, come here it's easy to spot them because they dress differently. They usually have warmer clothes [laughs]. And they usually don't color coordinate their outfits, they don't care what they wear so much. Because in here, people are... they see how people in Europe dress, how nice they can look.*'' (R9, female, 23 years old)

The larger interaction with Europeans and regular visits to European countries also lead to an increased openness towards other people and cultures, something that is often mentioned as a typical feature of Kaliningraders. This has also to do with the fact that due to the relocation process in the late 1940's, Kaliningrad has a very mixed population, originated from all over the former Soviet Union. This makes Kaliningrad a very multicultural city. In the following fragment, a 40-year-old respondent explains the openness of Kaliningrad citizens as a result of their connection to Europe:

> ''*It makes people from Kaliningrad more open, friendly and tolerant for people from all over the world. We are open, not only to Russians, but to people from Europe too. We know more about*

Europe than people from big Russia. People from Kaliningrad see more from the world than people from Big Russia, because of the geography.'' (R5, male, 40 years old)

Special Russians

The uniqueness and complicated geographical and geopolitical situation of the city makes it hard to neatly place Kaliningrad in clear-cut categories of Russianness or Europeanness. Several respondent addressed this complexity and expressed the in-betweenness of their city in one way or another. A 34-year-old secretary who explains *''this city is not Russian or European, it's another one''* is endorsed by another respondent who states: '*'I can't really place my feelings whether it's more Russian or more European. It's just Kaliningrad''* (R9, female, 23 years old).

When asking about the identity perception of Kaliningrad citizens, and if they feel different than other people from Russia, their answers vary greatly. While the vast majority of the respondents see themselves as Russian citizens, several respondents also explained how they feel different from Russians living on the Russian mainland, or '*'Big Russia''*. One of the respondents calls Kaliningraders '*'Special Russians*'', while expressing his thoughts on this topic:

> *''We are special Russians. We are Russians too. We are not separatists, no! But we are special, I think. We are more open than other Russians. And Europe is near us, around us.''* (R5, male, 40 years old)

Their greater connection and more regular interaction with Europe, Europeans and European history, as mentioned above, is leading to feelings of uniqueness and in-betweenness. One respondent, a 23-year-old student, explains how she feels different from people from mainland Russia. She emphasizes that she does not identify herself as a European, but that she is not feeling comfortable being placed into the same category as *Other* Russian, who are living on the Russian mainland:

''When I really feel like a Kaliningrader, and not Russian, is when people come here and say: wow this is just like Russia. Then I'm like: excuse me, this is nothing like Russia! I get offended, then I'm like: I'm not like you, I'm different! I can't say: I'm European. I can't do that, but I can say: I'm a Kaliningrader, which is like Russian, but with little things that are European.''
(R9, female, 23 years old)

Struggle with history

As mentioned above, Kaliningrad's history of belonging to different countries and cultures is still visible in the city nowadays. In the same street, typical Soviet style building blocks can be seen next to buildings of German architecture (Images 6.3 & 6.4). An interesting question that comes to mind is how this influences the character and atmosphere of the city. When asked to explain the atmosphere of the city, and how Kaliningrad citizens experience the city and its history, one respondent explained the complexity of living in a city with such a unique history as follows:

''I'm a Russian, but a Russian in a strange city. Not Russian, not German, I don't know how to say. It's like something new. I probably won't have this feeling anywhere else.''
(R6, female, 34 years old)

She further explains how she experiences feelings of discomfort because the buildings in Kaliningrad are not typical Russian. There are old German and Prussian buildings, which remind the inhabitants of Kaliningrad of the complicated history of their city. Because she identifies herself very much as a Russian and feels strongly connected to Russian history and architecture, living amongst non-Russian looking buildings in Kaliningrad creates feelings of uneasiness. To describe this uneasiness, she says she feels as if she is an orphan, adopted by the city:

''It is easy in the city, and at the same time heavy, hard. Because the history of the city creates some kind of pressure. It is not Russian history, not our history. It is as if I am an orphan in here. It's like an enemy city, but at the same time it's mine. As if the city took us in, adopted us as orphans. And I kind of feel that.'' *(ibid)*

A strong contributor for these feelings of living in a strange place is the long non-Russian history of Kaliningrad. Unlike the Russian heartland, which has been part of the Russian empire for centuries, Kaliningrad has a relatively short history of belonging to Russia. As a result, the city architecture differs from other Russian cities that have been under Russian influence for a longer period of time. In these cities with a longer Russian history, Russian architecture such as Orthodox churches and cathedrals, Soviet style buildings (Khrushchyovka) and Russian decorations are dominating the public space. Whereas in Kaliningrad, the public space is much more diverse. Street patterns are different than in other Russian cities, buildings of different architectural styles are clearly visible and act as constant reminders of the Teutonic, Prussian and German (i.e. non-Russian) past of Kaliningrad.

When asked to express their thoughts about these German architecture, multiple respondents declared that they think it is beautiful and interesting, but not part of their Russian heritage. This view is exemplified by this response of a PhD-student: *''I don't have a connection with the German heritage. It is beautiful and I like it very much, but it is not mine''* (R2, female, 24 years old).

Because most other Russian cities are, unlike Kaliningrad, much more uniform and have a more distinct Russian appearance, it is easier to feel at home as a Russian according to another respondent: She explains how she experienced strong connection to her Russian heritage when she visited Kaluga, a Russian city 150 kilometers from Moscow. There she found herself completely surrounded by Russian buildings, churches and art. When talking about her visit to Kaluga, she referred to it as being in the Motherland, a feeling of connection to Russia and Russianness that goes deeper than she experiences in Kaliningrad:

> *''I've visited Kaluga, a Russian city. And everything there is Soviet, Russian. Churches, houses, special ornaments, a lot of things from the Soviet times. We have less Soviet in here, just from the 1940s. And let's say in Kaluga, over there, you feel yourself like.. that it's the motherland. But, at the same time, everything over there is old. And in here everything is new, but it doesn't really feel like the motherland.''* (R6, female, 34 years old)

Image 6.3: Khrushchyovka in Kaliningrad, concrete building blocks from the Soviet period.

Source: Author

I**mage 6.4**: A reminder of the Prussian history of Kaliningrad. A former German house, located on a

cobblestone road on Nosova Street near the center of Kaliningrad.

Source: Author

Another story that illustrates the confusing feelings that living in a city with so many different cultural heritages brings along is told by a local dancer. She explains that Russian culture is consisting of old traditions, which go back centuries. These traditions are expressed in poetry, writing, art, music and dance. In parts of Russia that have belonged to Russia for centuries, these artistic cultural expressions are mostly drawing on Russian culture and traditions from (Tsarist) Russian and Soviet times. In Kaliningrad however, due to the more complex and diverse cultural history of the city, local traditions are not limited to Russian cultural heritage. Local customs and artistic expressions also consist of Lithuanian and Polish cultural features, in her case exemplified by the different styles of dance she performs during her dancing classes. She explains how the different styles of dance performed in Kaliningrad have influenced her sense of place as follows:

> *''In here, this connection to the past is a bit different. Because for example, I am a dancer. I have been dancing for 15 years, all different types of dances. We do traditional Russian dances, but also Lithuanian and Polish dances. So I've been confused since my childhood, where am I living, why are we dancing three different styles?''* (R9, female, 23 years old)

Appropriation of Space and History

In the previous paragraph, feelings of uneasiness and struggle with Kaliningrad's history were covered. However, not all the respondents agree that the non-Russian features of Kaliningrad are not part of their Russian heritage and cultural identity. Several respondents explained that Kaliningrad's history, its Königsberg component, is also part of their heritage and that it contributes to their identity and feelings of belonging. In the following fragment, expressed by a 40-year-old craftsman, he claims Kaliningrad's history as being part of his own history and heritage: *''We have the history of this place in our minds. Some Russian people don't like his history and say it's not our history. But I think because I live here, it's my history too''* (R5, male, 40 years old).

Geographically located in Europe, with a long Prussian/German history, and only being part of Russia since the end of WWII, on first sight it does not seem easy to feel yourself at home as a Russian in Kaliningrad. However, several respondents explained how Kaliningrad,

including its non-Russian, i.e. its German and Prussian features play an important role in their sense of belonging, their feeling of being at home in the city. An example of how Kaliningrad's unique physical environment, that is not visible elsewhere in Russia, is being embraced as an important factor of her local identity is explained by a 24-year-old PhD-student. When asked about the ruins of Teutonic castles and Prussian/German buildings, she explains that they contribute to her feeling at home in Kaliningrad. She says she often travels to Poland, where these ruins are much less visible due to better maintenance. However, when returning to Kaliningrad and seeing its ruins again, she feels like coming home again *''because these ruins, it is like my soul. It is part of my soul.''*

Another way to appropriate Kaliningrad and its surrounding is by looking at historical events. One student, who studies history, explains how she got comforted by a speech of Stalin where he stated that Kaliningrad is built on Slavic territory: *''You know, in 1945, Stalin said that this land is Slavic. That it's not German and not Prussian, but it's Russian. And it is pleasant for me that I can see my way as a Russian, connected to this land. So this sentence of Stalin, it's a little warming for me''* (R2, female, 24 years old). By emphasizing the Slavic nature of the land Kaliningrad is located, she geographically imagines Kaliningrad as built on Russian land. Through this symbolically powerful speech, it becomes easier to identify with Kaliningrad as a Russian and its non-Russian history can be placed in a broader context.

Koenig

When asked how she experiences the relation between old Königsberg and contemporary Kaliningrad, one respondent explains how the Prussian/German history of the city is interwoven with and continues to live on in today's Kaliningrad by saying:

> *''Königsberg and Kaliningrad are inseparable, and Kaliningrad is nothing without Königsberg. Physically, as the architect say: city fabric. But also metaphysically. I don't know how it works, but it is very special.''* (R12, female, 51 years old)

By emphasizing the influence that Königsberg has had –and still has in the geographical imaginaries of Kaliningrad, she shows that it is possible to accept Kaliningrad's non-Russian

history and still feel at home as a Russian woman in Kaliningrad. Later in the conversation she tells how the Königsberg heritage plays an important role in the place-making process of younger generation Kaliningraders. When referring to Kaliningrad, they often call it ''*Koenig*'', clearly linked to Königsberg. By doing so, they emphasize the German heritage of their city and incorporate it in their imaginaries of the city.

> ''*If you ask a younger person in Kaliningrad where he is from, the answer will be: I am from Koenig. Not from Kaliningrad, but from Koenig. This is a short version of Königsberg, because this place still has a bit of Königsberg. It is not Königsberg anymore, period! It is not, it is a different city. But the shadow of.., the ghost of Königsberg is still walking along the streets of Kaliningrad. And this is what the younger generation likes in Kaliningrad. Its Königsberg part, its Königsberg component. This is what makes it their city, this is what makes it different from other Russian cities. They want to embrace it, and they want to keep it as part of their identity. They are from Koenig, they are not from Kaliningrad.*'' (R12, female, 51 years old)

She herself does not refer to Kaliningrad as Koenig, this is something that is most common amongst the younger generation: ''*I am from Kaliningrad, but the younger generation is from Koenig. They focus on the German image, on the German features of their Russian city. They appreciate it, and they articulate it*'' *(ibid).* A possible explanation for this re-appreciation of the German past of the city can be found in the increased access to information about pre-war Kaliningrad. Where people who grew up in earlier decades had very limited access to this information, the newer generation does have this information. Another respondent explains how the narrative of Kaliningrad changed over time and how this influenced her generation as follows: ''*In the 60's, 70's and 80's it was all about that Kaliningrad is Russian. Only in the 90's, when we got a lot of information about the history before 1945, I think this influenced our generation*'' (R2, female, 24 years old).

The name Koenig, or Kenig [Russian: Кёниг], is not only being used by young Kaliningraders. Multiple companies in Kaliningrad have incorporated parts of Königsberg in their company name, referring to the German heritage of their city. When I told a tour guide that I had seen

several cars in the streets of Kaliningrad with Königsberg on their license plate (Image 6.5), she confirmed the use of Koenig/Kenig in license plates and company names in Kaliningrad.

''Yes, you can buy them. It's common, just as names of different companies like Kenig Auto, a city transportation company. Or Königsbäcker, a local bakery. So Koenig, or Königsberg is still visible in signs and in names of companies from Kaliningrad.'' (R12, female, 51 years old)

The use of derivatives of Königsberg when referring to Kaliningrad, or its use in the naming of local companies and license plates shows that there are many people in Kaliningrad who don't push away the German past of their city Instead, they (re)-appreciate its Königsberg component and give it an important role in their vocabulary and geographical imaginaries (Images 6.5 & 6.6).

Image 6.5: Königsberg license plate on a car in modern day Kaliningrad. An everyday example of how the *''ghost of Königsberg''* is still walking along the streets of Kaliningrad
Source: www.imbisscafe.de

Image 6.6: The use of Königsberg in the naming of modern companies in Kaliningrad. A branch of Königsbäcker bakery, Nevsky Street, Kaliningrad.
Source: www.visit-kaliningrad.ru

Fully lived Space

During one of the interviews, a 51-year-old interpreter/tour guide told a story that is a powerful example of how Kaliningrad's history can be experienced in everyday life by its inhabitants. She explained that she has been living in an old German house in Kaliningrad. In the Soviet period, there was not much attention given to the German history of Kaliningrad, and most people did not really think about the pre-war history of the city. However, in her case this changed when she met the former residents of the house she has been living in:

> *''I know the family who lived there before the war. It was a family of a local policeman, with two daughters and his wife. The wife and the two daughters, they fled in January 1945. These two sisters came back in 1997, and we met. Together, we stayed in the flat where they were born and brought up, and we went to the church where they had their confirmation when they were 14.''*
> (R12, female, 51 years old)

She continues telling how she got to know these sisters, and how she showed them around the flat and the neighborhood where they had grown up:

> *''Although it was a tragedy for their family that they had to leave, but they have reconciled with that. They accepted it, and they were very happy that the flat where they were born and brought up was owned by a nice family. And that the family that now lives there could communicate with them in a common language, and we laughed.''* *(ibid)*

Before the sisters left, she took a picture of them in the doorway of her flat. After a month, she received a copy of a picture of the two sisters taken on the same place, but in their youth. This strong, visual confrontation with the pre-war history of Kaliningrad, taken place at her own home, led to an increased realization of the unique history of her city. She explains how this experience made her more aware of the history of Kaliningrad in the following narration:

> *''It's interesting, I took a picture of these two sisters in the doorway in the house, at nr. 80A. And then, one month after, I received a copy of a black and white photo of the same girls, on their confirmation day, standing in the same doorway. Taken in the same location, but in a*

totally different context. And I think you can feel it. If you start thinking about it, even if you don't think about it and just go to work, eventually you can't ignore it. The day will come that you just bump into this German, bumping into a house wondering: what was there before the war? And this is what I think makes Kaliningrad different from other parts of Russian because we are inquisitive, we are rediscovering the German past of the city.'' (ibid)

This story is a striking example of what Soja calls a Thirdspace. It is simultaneously real (the physical house where the respondent lives) and imagined (the imagination of the situation before the war). Drawing on objective perceptions of space and subjective imaginaries of space, but leaving room for the intractability's, mysteries and subliminalities that are such important contributors of the complex nature of the concept, making it a fully lived space (Soja, 1996).

Another example of Kaliningrad as a fully lived space is given by a 65-year-old teacher who explains how she suddenly experienced the unique geographical location of Kaliningrad within Russia when she saw Kaliningrad on the weather forecast map:

''I don't know if it's scientific or not, but here in Kaliningrad we are a little bit different from those living on the mainland of Russia, because we are separated. Not long ago, on TV, there was a map of Russia. First, Kaliningrad was shown. Then a lot of states, and then Russia. At that moment, I realized how far we are from mainland Russia, and how small we are!''
(R7, female, 65 years old)

She explains how Kaliningrad suddenly became a fully experienced space for her, combining its objectively perceived spatiality and its conceived representation of space as embodied on the forecast map. She touches upon the partial unknowability, mystery and secretiveness of Kaliningrad as a place, as covered by Soja in his work on Thirdspace, making it a directly lived space, with room for all its intractability's, partial unknowability, mystery and secretiveness (Soja, 1996).

Another story where Kaliningrad gets described as a fully lived space is given by another respondent, who explains how the real and the imagined come together when she watches the sunset in the most Western point of Kaliningrad (and thus of Russia):

''In the Kaliningrad region, I feel myself special. Because we are the most Western point of Russia. And at the most Western point, the Baltic Spit, it is really beautiful to watch the sunset. Because you feel that you are the last in the country who sees the sunset, because it is the most Western point of Russia.'' (R6, female, 34 years old)

In this passage, she shows that her experience exceeds objective, Firstspace notions of space. While watching the sunset, she simultaneously draws upon real and the imagined characteristics of space. The real is perceived while watching the physical sunset. It becomes fully lived when the Firstspace experience of the sunset as a physical phenomenon, gets combined with the geographical imaginary of Kaliningrad as the westernmost point of Russia when she realizes that she is the last one in the country to experience this sunset. In that moment, she fully experiences Kaliningrad as a space where the real and the imagined, mind and body, subjectivity and objectivity and abstract and concrete come together in what Soja calls *Thirdspace* (Soja, 1996).

7. CONCLUSION

In this research, Kaliningrad has been used as a laboratory to find out how broad and possible essentialist notions of an all-encompassing identity of a region and its inhabitants play out in real life. Singular and essentialist notions of the identity of a territorial space and its inhabitants, often portrayed in discourse and mass-media, could lead to a view of people and places that does not do justice to the nuances, subtleties and variety of identification. Taking into account the unique geographical location of Kaliningrad, a Russian exclave surrounded by European Union territory, this part of Russia proved a suitable and interesting case-study to further question concepts of identity and perceptions of the Other, Russianness/Europeanness and belonging.

Talking to a broad variety of Kaliningraders, people of different age, gender and occupation, resulted in a comprehensive overview of perceptions, views and everyday life experiences that exist in Kaliningrad. In discourse, a wide variety of metaphors have been used to describe Kaliningrad and Kaliningraders. The first category made use of Orientalist imaginaries about the Other, thereby using a clear language of *difference*. In those narratives, Kaliningrad has been portrayed as being on the fault line of the East and the West, physically as well as ideologically. This responds with Neumann's work on how Russia and Europe use each other as main Other in their identification process. Another category of metaphors has been noted, one that focuses more on the connecting capacities that Kaliningrad has. Here, Kaliningrad is seen as a bridge, a meeting place where different people and ideas can connect.

The Kaliningraders that have been interviewed during this research made it clear how many different views regarding identity and belonging there are in Kaliningrad, each with its own subtleties and accents. Overall, respondents came up with a variety of associations with Europe, mostly associating Europe as a space of high quality; organized and with an open-minded, friendly population. Several respondents used Europe as a positive point of reference, at least some elements. On the other hand, however, Europe has been used as a negative point of reference as well. The perceived lack of sincerity of Europeans in their communication, and their economical, commercial mindset were brought up and functioned as a negative Other in

the construction of a positive Russian identity. A significantly strong imaginary that was used to strengthen this Othering process was that of the Russian Soul, which was pure and honest, opposing the rational and economical European Mind.

However, although there has been cases where the Othering of Europeans occurred to construct a Russian identity, deeper questioning about notions of Europeanness and Russianness made it clear that most Kaliningraders had more nuanced and diverse perceptions of these concepts. When asked to elaborate on where Kaliningrad belonged, a multiplicity of answers was given. Clear notions of Russian and European culture were encountered, but most respondents found it way harder to clearly distinguish Russian and European culture and identity. Some respondents viewed Russia as part of Europe, impossible to distinguish the tow, as they pointed out the impossibility to isolate specific cultural features and exclusively assign them to either belonging to Russian culture, European culture or any other categorized unit.

An important role in the perception of Europeanness/Russianness and feelings of exclusion or belonging was played by the border. The hard, administrative border between Kaliningrad and Schengenland (Poland and Lithuania) has led to increased feelings of separation among some respondents. How the border leads to feelings of discomfort, came forward in stories about the negative impact of bordering rituals such as visa applications, separate waiting lines at the airport and an complication of traveling due to increased costs and time-consuming bureaucracy. However, the hardening of the border also lead to an increase in feelings of ideological separation. Several Kaliningraders reported how they suddenly felt unwanted by their neighbors after the Schengen regime came into effect, or how they experienced increased anti-Russian vandalism in neighboring European countries. On the other hand, the vast majority of the respondents stated that they visit European countries regularly, far more than their mainland Russian countrymen. That this increased contact with Europe led to a more nuanced, positive view of them by their neighbors was acknowledged by most respondents. Almost all respondents explained how the negative image that gets portrayed in discourse and mass-media is not how they experience their everyday life contacts with Poles and Lithuanians. These everyday contacts were mostly experienced as normal, friendly and

mutually beneficent and satisfactory. This is where the duality of the border comes forward in Kaliningrad. On the one hand, the hardening of the border leads to Othering and (B)ordering. On the other hand, however, the border functions as a contact zone where different ideas and people interconnect and actively reshape negative images about the Other.

In an attempt to further look into concepts of Europeanness and Russianness, and how they play out in real life, respondents were asked to expand on their personal identity perception. Because Kaliningrad has such a complicated history, belonging to Europe and now Russia, and with a total repopulation short ago, it proved an interesting place to look into the concept of identity. With a built environment that constantly reminiscent of the non-Russian history of Kaliningrad and Europe close by, Kaliningraders appeared a fruitful audience to discuss the concept of identity with. Notably, almost all respondents expressed their Russian identity during the interviews. However, them living in Kaliningrad, a Russian exclave in the European Union, seems to have strongly contributed to a multiplicity of identities among Kaliningrad inhabitants.

It became clear that Kaliningraders are no homogenous group (even the relatively small pool of respondents that participated in this research showed great variety in their identity perception) and there exists no such thing as a singular ''Kaliningrad identity''. The majority of the respondents made use of the uniqueness of Kaliningrad's environment and history to construct an identity that goes beyond being merely Russian. Natural features as the Baltic Sea, amber and the soft climate proved to be important contributors to a localized identity. Also, the variety of cultural representations, from the Teutonic and Prussian history to the Soviet and now Russian era, contributed to an identity perception that goes beyond feeling merely Russian. Increased contact with Europeans and visits to European countries, manifested in European influenced local dances and clothing for example, made several Kaliningraders feel different than their mainland Russian countrymen. Multiple respondents reported feelings of uniqueness, sometimes even referring to Kaliningraders as *Special Russians*.

An important contributor to this identity perception that exceeds being merely Russian is the interplay between the spatial, the social and history. The respondents that expressed identity perceptions that transcended mere Russianness often made use of signs and symbols of Kaliningrad as well as Königsberg. Although Kaliningrad's prewar history was sometimes perceived as a burden, traces of former Königsberg were also appropriated and incorporated as a fragment of Kaliningrad identity. This was expressed with the use of language, as some Kaliningraders refer to Kaliningrad as *Koenig* and several local companies use derivatives of Königsberg in their company name. Furthermore, the unique geographical location of Kaliningrad proved to be a strong contributor to a regional identity also. Moments where Kaliningrad became a fully lived space were expressed when respondents touched upon their realization of their unique position within the Russian Federation, being the most Western point. In order to properly grasp the extensive, unutterable complex character of identity, the concept of the Thirdspace has been a highly satisfactory analytical tool. It provided the binary transcending components and necessary room for intractability's and subliminalities that are inherent to the complexity of identity.

8. DISCUSSION

Looking at Kaliningrad through a Thirdspace perspective has made it possible to move away from notions of Russianness vs. Europeanness, history vs. presence and real vs. imagined. Instead, it underlined the possibility of experiencing *both* instead of *either*, *also* instead of *or*. Hopefully, the Thirdspace perspective used in this research can provide a positive contribution to Kaliningraders who are experiencing struggles with their identity or difficulties with coming to terms with Kaliningrad's history, by inviting them to move away from an essentialist view towards an open, binary transcending conceptualization of space and identity.

Furthermore, this research invites readers to take a look at territories and regions with an open view, as dynamic spaces that are relational and in a constant process of becoming. Underlying assumption is that regions and identities are not singular, bounded entities, but instead open spaces that get constantly lived and experienced in everyday life by its inhabitants. Resulting, there is no such thing as a 'Kaliningrad identity', or an all-encompassing identity that suits all Kaliningraders. Therefore, this research focused on the perceptions and everyday lived experiences of a broad range of Kaliningraders and used the Thirdspace as an analytical scope to expand on the topic of Kaliningrad identity in an open way.

Looking at Kaliningrad through a Thirdspace perspective made it possible to a provide a view of Kaliningrad(ers') identity that moves away from notions of Russianness vs. Europeanness, history vs. presence and real vs. imagined. Instead, it underlined the possibility of experiencing *both* instead of *either*, *also* instead of *or*. Hopefully, the Thirdspace perspective can provide a positive contribution to Kaliningraders who are experiencing struggles with their identity or difficulties with coming to terms with Kaliningrad's history, by inviting them to move away from an essentialist view towards an open, binary transcending conceptualization of space and identity. People don't have to make a choice if they are either Russian or European. Instead, they can construct and experience their identity in a way that contains both terms, but through Thirding-as-Othering add infinitive fragments to their identity, thereby creating an identity that, albeit containing both Russia and Europe, extending far beyond those

concepts. This in-between character of the Thirdspace and the power the Thirdspace possesses to create something new, something unique, got directly referred to by a respondent who said: *'I'm a Russian, but a Russian in a strange city. Not Russian, not German, I don't know how to say. It's like something new''*. The uniqueness of Kaliningrad and Kaliningrad identity also got expressed by respondents who refer to their city as ''*Koenig*'' (containing both concepts of Königsberg and modern Kaliningrad, but being more than a mere addition of the two) or to Kaliningraders as ''*Special Russians*'', being neither Russian or European, but something else, while still containing both concepts. Another example of a respondent who directly referred to a Thirdspace perspective was encountered when a respondent stressed the inseparability of former Königsberg and modern Kaliningrad by saying: *''Königsberg and Kaliningrad are inseparable, and Kaliningrad is nothing without Königsberg. Physically, as the architect say: city fabric. But also metaphysically. I don't know how it works, but it is very special.''* Here, the interplay of historicality, sociality and spatiality that takes place in the Thirdspace gets exemplified neatly.

This is where this research can add fluidity to the debate about Kaliningrad identity. By challenging essentialist notions of in-/exclusion and clear cut regional spaces with an identity that fits neatly between these demarcated spaces, this research shows that it is more satisfactory to keep an open view that leaves room for the intractabilities, subtleties and contradictions that are inherent to fully understand space and identity in general, but especially in a border region. This research therefore challenges the perception of space as a closed and fixed entity, accompanied and strengthened by clear notions of *Us* vs. *Them* as often used in literature about borders and identities, for example by Paasi in his works on regions, boundaries and (regional) identities.

Limitations

The results of this research are reflecting foremost on the specific identity perceptions of Kaliningraders. By taking Kaliningrad as a case study, the focus has been fully on Kaliningrad's situation and the views and attitudes of Kaliningraders. Therefore, the results are not generalizable, nor representative for other border regions. Moreover, the results are even not representative for all inhabitants of Kaliningrad, as there are an immeasurable amount of personally experienced Kaliningrad's and Kaliningrad identities. This corresponds

with the goal of this research, however, as this research never intended to come up with a definitive, Kaliningrad identity that suits all Kaliningraders.

Recommendations

Despite being limited to Kaliningrad, the results and especially the open analytical scope that this research applied, can be used as an inspiration and invitation to apply on other case-studies. Further research regarding the identity perceptions of Kaliningraders gets recommended, preferably making use of the open lens that the Thirdspace provides. Constantly adding knowledge and understanding to previous knowledge about Kaliningrad leads to an expansion of previous knowledge and an *approximation* of knowledge that builds on previous approximations. The result of this research should therefore be seen as a starting point for further research on Kaliningrad identity, inviting other researchers to add knowledge and Other terms and thereby constantly develop and expand knowledge about this fascinating border region.

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APPENDIX: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Opening questions

Could you please tell me something about yourself?

-How old are you?

-Where were you born?

-What kind of job do you have or what are you studying?

Key questions

Personal background

1. Can you tell me something about the places you have lived during your life until now?

2. Where does your family come from originally?

3. Have you ever been to places outside Kaliningrad Oblast?

Perceptions of Kaliningrad/Russia/Europe

4. I know it is a broad question, but if I ask you to describe Kaliningrad to me. How would you describe it?

5. And now the same for Russia, how would you describe Russia and Russian people.

6. What is Europe to you?

7. Do you think that there are a lot of differences between Europe and Russia? What do you think are the main differences and commonalities?

8. When you look at Kaliningrad, how would you compare Kaliningrad with Russia and Europe?

Identity perception

9. How would you describe your own identity, how would you describe yourself as a person?

10. Why do you feel like this?

11. Do you think your friends and family feel the same way or do their opinions differ from yours?

Perception of others

12. How do people from other parts of Russia think about Kaliningrad? Have you ever encountered stereotypes about Kaliningrad?

13. How do Europeans think about Kaliningrad?

14. How do you feel about this image that people from outside Kaliningrad have?

Border with the European Union and Visa regulations

15. How do you feel about the fact that Kaliningrad is now surrounded by countries of the European Union and Kaliningraders need a Visa to cross these borders?

16. Do the border and Visa regulations influence your daily life? How does it affect you?

17. Did the expansion of the European Union (Poland and Lithuania) in 2004 change your view of Europe and Kaliningrad? In what way?

18. Did it change the relationship with your neighboring countries Poland/Lithuania?

Future developments

19. How do you feel about the future of Kaliningrad?

20. What do you think about the fact that Kaliningrad is one of the cities where the world cup 2018 will be held?

21. What are your plans for the future?

Closing questions

22. Were there any topics that you thought I would be asking about, but that I didn't do?

23. Is there anything that we didn't discuss, but you think is important for my research?

24. Have I forgot to ask something important or do you feel you want to add or emphasize anything before we end the interview?