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# Identity: A Postnonclassical Viewpoint

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Igor PILIAIEV

(Institute for Economics and Forecasting,  
The National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine)

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## **Identity: A Postnonclassical Viewpoint**

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## ABSTRACT

This paper rethinks conflicting identities in the Eurasian mega-continental space from postnonclassical positions through a new interpretation of the East-West paradigm in its fractal reproduction, from the close historical interaction and complementarity of East and West at all levels – from macro-regional to local and personal.

The author posits that in modern China, at all levels from local individual to the central authorities and structures of civilization, one can see a hybrid interweaving of three historical Chinas – the imperial, the Republic of China, and the People's Republic of China.

While exploring the nature of the Russia-Ukraine war of identities, especially in the Luhansk region of Ukraine, the author argues that for more than seven centuries after the Mongol invasion, one can observe a clear fractality in the historical and ethnocultural development of the space of the former ancient Rus state. The contemporary Russia-Ukraine war is being waged simultaneously on geopolitical, international, transnational, and regional scales, fractally breaking down, in the deep worldview and values dimension, into many local, interpersonal, and even intrapersonal conflicts.

Proceeding from fractal universal regularities of the world and society as well as dynamic changes of the global power structure, the author concludes that the true ontological reason for identity wars is the denial of the fractal nature of the binary opposition in identity.

Thus, the full-scale war on the territory of Ukraine, which poses an existential threat to global security, can be stopped by non-military means only through the search, according to the concept of fractality and the fractal essence of society, for a certain balance – axiological, cultural, geopolitical – between the East and West. Moreover, the only way for the world's leading actors to avoid direct military clash and global nuclear catastrophe is to abandon the doctrinal or fatally messianic thinking and adopt the planetary postnonclassical approaches and thus, bridge traditional dichotomies such as “East–West” or “Ours–the Other.”

# Identity: A Postnonclassical Viewpoint

## Introduction

*The purpose of this paper* is to rethink conflicting identities in the Eurasian mega-continental space from postnonclassical positions through a new interpretation of the East-West paradigm in its recursive dimension, outlining ways to resolve and prevent identity wars in the future from this basis.

We are facing an amazing paradox of our times.

On the one hand, the contemporary world, especially the Western world over the past decade, has made an impressive leap in moving away from binarism towards the recognition of fluid gender identities (from two to many dozens of genders), as social constructs. Scientists in the field of artificial intelligence research and the development of robotics, in particular Prof. Jennifer Robertson and Prof. Yuki Nagai, emphasize the importance and relevance, though not problem-free, of the current trend of moving away from “stereotyped minds to diverse minds.”<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, in the field of geopolitics, we have been observing in the last decade a completely opposite trend – towards polarization, towards the restoration of bipolar confrontation, towards the binarism of political-values, political-regimes, political-cultural and political-ideological oppositions (conflicts). In fact, we are talking about the global actualization of the black-and-white dichotomy, the binary zero-sum game.

In this context, the world in which we have found ourselves since February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022 is somewhat reminiscent of the Peace of Augsburg (signed in September

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<sup>1</sup> Affective (Kansei) Robotics in Japan: Designing and Programming Gender and Emotions in Humanoid Robots (ft. Prof. Jennifer ROBERTSON). Commentator: Prof. NAGAI Yuki, Moderator: Hannah DAHLBERG-DODD. Zoom Webinar held at Tokyo College. February 20, 2023. URL: [https://www.tc.u-tokyo.ac.jp/en/ai1ec\\_event/8587/](https://www.tc.u-tokyo.ac.jp/en/ai1ec_event/8587/).

1555) with its notorious principle of *cuius regio, eius religio* (“Whose realm, his religion”).

According to Archimandrite Cyril Hovorun, “Vladimir Putin and his counterparts in the Russian Orthodox Church are driven by a dualistic worldview, which sees the world in black-and-white, as being divided to essentially good and essentially evil parts. Russia, according to this worldview, incarnates the former part, while the West, the latter one. The Russian propaganda effectively appeals to and enhances this worldview among its target groups”.<sup>2</sup>

However, the same black-and-white political thinking is characteristic of the mainstream segment of the contemporary West. As Prof. Kyohei Norimatsu aptly points out, “To this day, both the new universal norm of communism and rebellion in favor of ethnic particularities exhibit the same tendency to fall back on a fixation on the West. That said, this is not solely a Russian problem. Outside the United States and Western Europe, and even within them, there are growing movements away from modern universals in favor of a return to ethnic traditions. We must be careful not to think about what is happening in Ukraine and Russia as something happening only to someone else.”<sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile, because of synergistic interaction, a new quality is being created, fundamentally different from the dichotomous qualities of struggling opposites. It is from this logic that, for example, Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s India is “pursuing its own interests with a new assertiveness, throwing off any sense of inferiority and rejecting unalloyed alignment with the West.”<sup>4</sup>

### ***1. The postnonclassical science: historical roots and present features***

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<sup>2</sup> Hovorun, Archimandrite Cyril (December 20, 2022). War and Appeals to Magical Consciousness. *Public Orthodoxy*. URL: <https://publicorthodoxy.org/2022/12/20/war-and-appeals-to-magical-consciousness/>.

<sup>3</sup> Norimatsu, K. (January 31, 2023). Russian nationalism and the Russo-Ukrainian war. Interview dated October 26, 2022. The University of Tokyo Public Relations Office. URL: [https://www.u-tokyo.ac.jp/focus/en/features/z0405\\_00002.html](https://www.u-tokyo.ac.jp/focus/en/features/z0405_00002.html).

<sup>4</sup> Cohen, R. (January 7-8, 2023). Russia’s war paves way for India’s ambitions. *The New York Times*, pp. 1 and 4. P. 1.

The ideas of non-linearity and multiple self-similarity (recursiveness) of socio-historical processes go back to the Indo-European mythologeme of the “circle of time.” They are found in the Pythagoreans, Heraclitus, ancient Stoics, in the teachings of the Greek early Christian theologian and philosopher Origen (the favorite writer of a most prominent Ukrainian philosopher H. Skovoroda), in the Renaissance era (when interest in the cyclical concept of time naturally increased), in the idea of eternal return (“The center is everywhere. The curve is the path of eternity”<sup>5</sup>) – the fundamental thought of the entire philosophy of F. Nietzsche, in the noospheric worldview of V. Vernadskyi<sup>6</sup> and P. Teilhard de Chardin<sup>7</sup>. Heralding the latest discoveries of post-nonclassical science, in the early 1920s, the outstanding zoologist, anthropologist and geographer Lev Berg emphasized that “evolution itself is to a large extent the unfolding of already existing predispositions.”<sup>8</sup> According to N. Berdyaev, an outstanding existentialist philosopher of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, both nature and society are formed by single universal energies,<sup>9</sup> a discovery of regularities and an epistemic interpretation of which have been approached by contemporary science – synergetics in particular.

The present-day ideas of postnonclassical science about the fundamental unity of human, society, and the universe and about fractality, as a universal pattern of natural, biological, and social phenomena and processes, are close to Holism<sup>10</sup> – the philosophy of integrity – a school of modern Western philosophy, which

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<sup>5</sup> Nietzsche F. (2002). *Tak govovil Zaratustra / Fridrikh Vil'gel'm Nitsche* [Nietzsche F. Thus Spoke Zarathustra. *In: Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche*]. Transl. by. Yu. M. Antonovsky. Ed. by K. A. Svasyan. Moscow: Ripol Classic, 608 pp. P. 98.

<sup>6</sup> Vernadsky, V. ([1943] 2005). *The Biosphere and the Noosphere*. *Executive Intelligence Review*, 32(7), pp. 30-33.

<sup>7</sup> Teilhard de Chardin, P. ([1959], 1976). *The Phenomenon of Man*. New York, London, Toronto, et al.: Harper Perennial, 319 pp.

<sup>8</sup> Berg, L. S. (1977). *Trudy po teorii evolyutsii* [Proceedings on the theory of evolution], 1922–1930. – Leningrad: Nauka [Science], 1977, 387 pp. P. 311.

<sup>9</sup> Berdyaev, N. A. *Filosofiya svobodnogo dukkha* [Philosophy of the Free Spirit]. Moscow: Respublika [Republic], 1994. 479 pp. P. 169.

<sup>10</sup> The term proposed by the Protestant Afrikaner, statesman of South Africa and the British Commonwealth, military leader and philosopher Jan Christian Smuts (1870 - 1950).

considers the integrity of the world as a result of creative evolution directed by the intangible and incognizable “factor of integrity.”

## ***2. The phenomenon of fractality in the postnonclassical worldview***

In the last third of the 20th century, topologically non-trivial objects (the so-called strange attractors) were discovered through synergy, which radically change the usual ideas about space. Each of these objects has an irregular, self-similar structure, small parts of which are similar to the whole object at arbitrary magnification. Such objects are called **fractals** (lat. *fractus* – ground, fractional), and their non-trivial topological property is called fractality.

Fractality is identical to the existence of large-scale spatial invariance: a part of any fractal repeats the whole with a certain coefficient of similarity. Both the macrocosm (star clusters, galaxies, the universe) and microcosm (all macromolecules, the human genome, the structure of DNA<sup>11</sup>, water, light, sound, electromagnetic, gravitational waves<sup>12</sup>, etc.) have a fractal structure, the same as the space of human activity: social, economic, historical, geopolitical, cultural, etc.<sup>13</sup>

The nature of the human personality, identity, is also fractal. Nietzsche points out that the true purpose of a human is to reveal his/her identity not as a “point in

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<sup>11</sup> The fractal arrangement of DNA in chromosomes was proven only in 2005 (see: Nechaev, S., Vasilyev, O. (2005) On Topological Correlations in Trivial Knots: from Brownian Bridges to Crumpled Globules. *Journal of Knot Theory and Its Ramifications*. Vol. 14, No. 02. Pp. 243-263.  
<sup>12</sup> Another universal sign of the fractal nature of the universe - gravitational waves, predicted by the general theory of relativity, were experimentally registered on September 14, 2015, by the international LIGO observatory (Washington state, USA). See: Orlando, S. (February 11, 2016) Gravitational waves detected 100 years after Einstein’s prediction. *UFNews*. Gainesville, FL: University of Florida. URL: <http://news.ufl.edu/articl: es/2016/02/gravitational-waves-detected-100-years-after-einsteins-prediction.php>.

<sup>13</sup> Afanas'yeva, V. V., Kochelayevskaya, K.V. & Lazerson, A.G. (2013) Prostranstvo: noveyshaya ontologiya [Space: the latest ontology]. Saratov: Nauka Publishing Center, 223 pp.; Lagarias, A. & Prastacos, P. (2021) Fractal dimension of European Cities: A comparison of the patterns of built-up areas in the urban core and the peri-urban ring, *Cybergeo: European Journal of Geography [Online], Systems, Modelling, Geostatistics*, Doc. 987. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/cybergeo.37243> ; Yefimchuk, I. V. (2010) Fraktal'nost' istorii. *Obshchestvennyye nauki i sovremennost' [Social sciences and modernity]*. No. 5, pp. 146-156.

the evolution of a race or of a state or of a science,”<sup>14</sup> but as an integral phenomenon that reflects the universe in itself - with all its recursive natural regularities.

In his work “The Ego and the Id” the founder of psychoanalysis Z. Freud compares personal with a bulb: “<...> if it is gutted, it would be possible to identify all the successive identities that formed it sometime.”<sup>15</sup>

By fractality, human and society are self-similar to the universe, being its integral component. The outstanding American philosopher of the 20th century George Santayana believed that “nature carries its ideal with it and that the progressive organisation of irrational impulses makes a rational life.”<sup>16</sup> And every time the mind forms such ideals and chooses such ways of harmonizing relationships that best meet the requirements of life impulses of the individual and society as a whole.

Fractality, as a defining feature of the post-nonclassical vision of the world, essentially overcomes the nomadological (anarcho-“nomadic”) conception of the world, proposed in the 1970s by the French pro-anarchist philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, and was later called poststructuralism, having become the "mainstream" of European and, in general, Western philosophy in the post-bipolar era of the 1990s – the alleged F. Fukuyama's “end of history.” A key concept-symbol of their nomadology, the *rhizome*, as a metaphor of postmodern consciousness, is a network of multiple non-linear anti-hierarchical connections opposite to the linear structures of being and thinking typical of classical Western culture. While the root (or pivot)—the key concept of structuralist binary thinking—has a center and goes deep, the rhizome is a structure with a missing semantic center, growing in breadth. Rhizome - a kind of “body without organs” – is not responsible for any structural or generative model, it is far from any idea of a genetic axis as a

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<sup>14</sup> Nietzsche, F. (1997, published online on 05 June 2012 [1874]). Schopenhauer as Educator. In: *Nietzsche: Untimely Meditations* Ed. by Daniel Breazeale. Transl. by R. J. Hollingdale. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 125 – 194. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511812101.008>.

<sup>15</sup> Cit. by: Uvarova, S. G. (2012) Sub'yekt kak syuzhet [Subject as a Plot]. *Psychoanalysis. Chasopys*. No. 1(16), pp. 30–35. P. 32.

<sup>16</sup> Santayana, G. (1922) *The Life of Reason*. N. J., vol. 1—5. Vol.1. 291 pp. P. 65.



deep structure.<sup>17</sup> The rhizome’s intrinsic “multiplicity” is a negation of the tree’s properties and manifests at all levels in the absence of any main stem or root. In this case, it is obvious that it is not possible to reduce the rhizomatic structure of society to a single common denominator or single general property, be it liberal democracy or a free market or, at the other end of the spectrum, a paternalistic empire or a nationalized economy.<sup>18</sup>

However, reflecting the factors of nonlinear multiplicity and stochasticity inherent in natural and social phenomena (which allowed us to come close to creating, for example, a quantum computer), poststructuralist “nomadism” striving to “do away with foundations”<sup>19</sup> fundamentally denies causation and the very desire to harmonize being (individual, society, and the outworld), the knowledge of its deep integrity, and unity.

By contrast, the fractal methodological approach to the universe, world and society is grounded and rooted in the progressive theoretical breakthroughs and achievements of the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. Thus, from the postmodern understanding of the world, we can take the concept of rhizome, and from the postnonclassical understanding we can take the universal property of fractality. As a result of such a synergetic approach, the world, society in particular, may be represented and cognized as a substantive multiplicity, or plurality (“rhizome”) of interwoven “tree-properties” each nevertheless having its root-centers and its own logic of fractal development (ramification). Such “tree-properties” are capable both of “grafting” and being “grafted” by various factors and actors, leading in organic nature to mutations and in the social world to socio-economic, political, cultural, and even civilizational transformations spawning hybrid or principally new properties.

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<sup>17</sup> Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. (1987). *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Translation and Foreword by B. Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 28 pp.

<sup>18</sup> Piliaiev, Igor (2019). The Nature of the Armed Conflict in the Donbas: A Postnonclassical Viewpoint. *Ideology and Politics*. No. 3(14), pp. 77–105. P. 78.

<sup>19</sup> Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. (1987). *Op. cit.* P. 24.

### ***3. The East-West fractal dichotomy in studying political and historical identities in the Eurasian space***

The East-West fractal dichotomy seems to actively influence contemporary identity conflicts in the Eurasian mega-continental space, especially along the civilizational fault line zones of Eastern Europe. At the same time, it is important to realize the relativity of such a dichotomy.

As we know, in the era of the Great Migration, the borders of “political Asia” stretched to the terrains of modern Switzerland (Avar Khaganate of the 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> centuries, founded by Attila) and in the 8<sup>th</sup> century – modern France (the Arab conquests).

In Eastern Europe, there is the historical memory of the Great Bulgaria of Khan Asparukh, the Turkic and West Turkic Khaganates, and, of course, the Empires of Genghisides, the Golden Horde, Timur and the Ottoman Empire (the latter at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century even waged the battle for the “Golden Apple of Europe” – Vienna, the capital of the Austrian Empire). Not to mention that prior to being within the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the Kingdom of Poland, and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth for centuries, the lands of modern northern and central Ukraine, for over 120 years, were under the rule of the Horde, while the lands of modern southern and southeastern Ukraine, since the middle of the 6<sup>th</sup> to the start of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, were under the rule of Turkic and West Turkic Khaganates; then from the middle of the 8<sup>th</sup> to the middle of the 9<sup>th</sup> century – under Khazar Khaganate; and in the 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries were under the rule of the Ottoman Empire.

Whereas adherents of the civilizational academic school consider the cultural-orders conflicts in terms of a certain isolated logic of development and even antagonism of distinct civilizational and cultural worlds (systems), we can, instead, consider the cultural value and civilizational dichotomy in its fractal reification at all levels – from macroregional to local and personal (to illustrate the above point, see below a paradigmatic ancient artifact from the Tokyo National Museum and an English translation of a holistic verse of the widely renowned contemporary Kazakh

poet and diplomat Olzhas Suleimenov written at the start of humankind's cosmic era).



*The author's photo from **the Tokyo National Museum's collection**: In the Kofun period of Japan, local chieftains favored mirrors that depicted Chinese mythology. The non-reflective side of this Chinese bronze mirror shows sacred beasts and two mythical figures: **the Queen Mother of the West and the King Father of the East**. Found at Shindo Ötsukayama Tumulus, Kanagawa, the mirror dates the 4th century.*

***There is no East and there is no West.***

***The sky has no end.***

***There is no East, and there is no West,***

***The father has two sons.***

***There is no East, and there is no West,***

***There are sunrise and sunset,***

***There is a big word – EARTH!***

**Olzhas Suleimenov.**

From *the Sunny Nights* poetry collection, 1962<sup>20</sup>

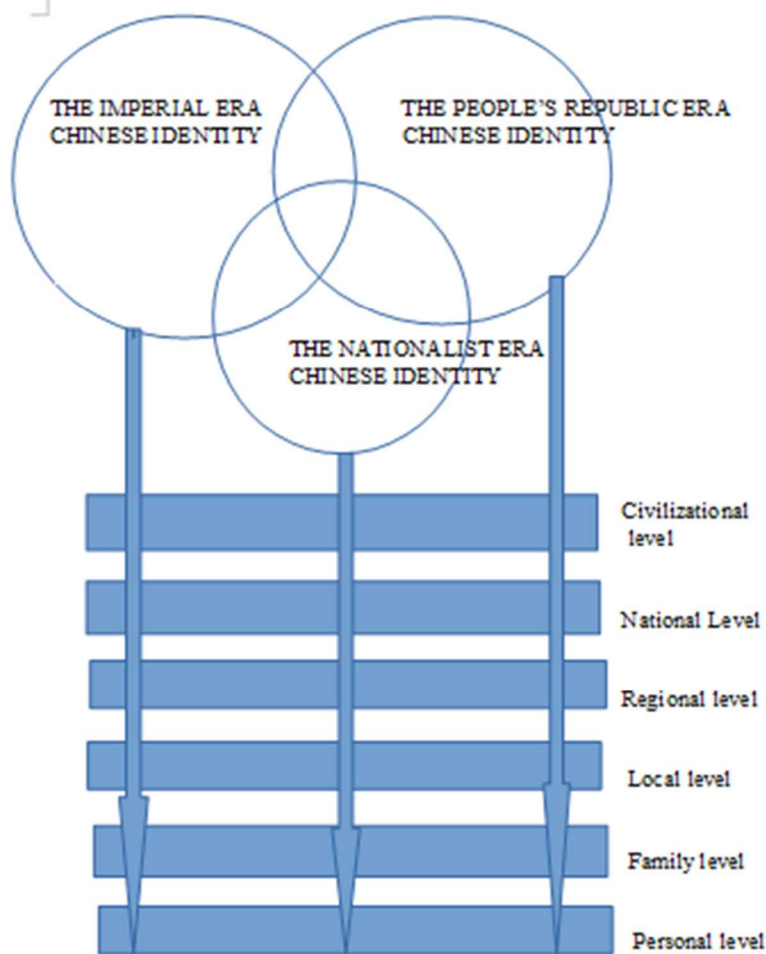
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<sup>20</sup> Translated by the author of this paper from the original text of the poem in: Olzhas Suleymenov: «Net Vostoka, i Zapada net. Yest' bol'shoye slovo - ZEMLYA!» [“There is no East, and there is no West. There is a big word – EARTH!”]. *Panorama Shymkenta*. May 13, 2016. URL : <https://panorama.shymkala.kz/index.php/world/item/1409-olzhas-sulejmenov-net-vostoka-i-zapada-net-est-bolshoe-slovo-zemlya>.




Let us consider the fractal-synergetic approach applied to the example of modern China.

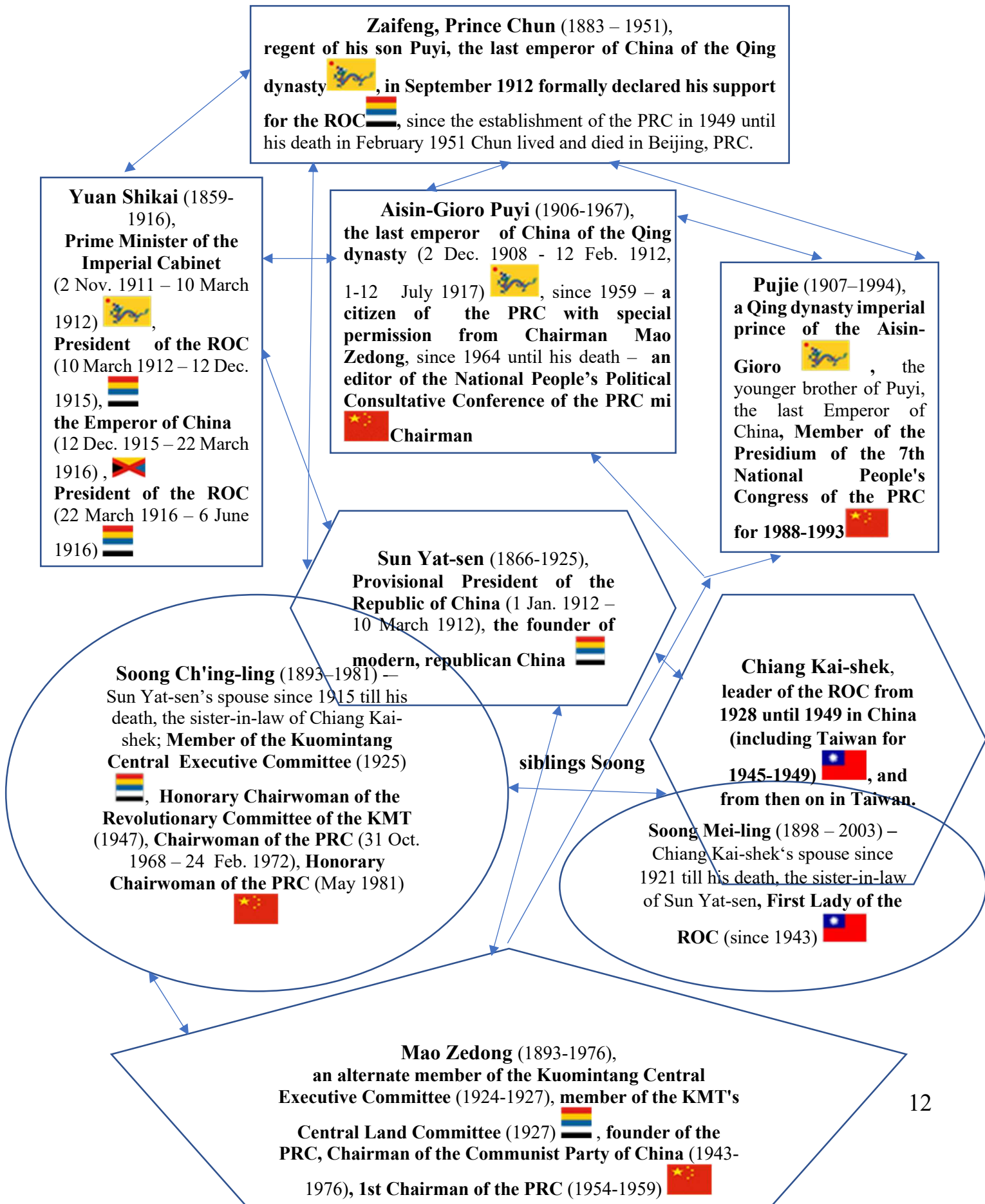
In viewing the above, regarding the identity of modern China, such definitions as “communist,” “Confucian,” “socialist,” or “capitalist,” etc. look like obvious ideological simplifications. In fact, in modern China at all levels – from the local individual to the central authorities and structures of civilization (cultural codes, ideology, worldview, social mentality, etc.) we see a hybrid-interweaving of three historical Chinas – the imperial, the Republic of China and the People's Republic of China (see Figures 1 and 2).

**Figure 1. Fractal Impact of Overlapping the Historical China Identities**



Source: created by the author.

**Figure 2. Personalistic interrelationship of the three key polities of Chinese civilization in the 20th century – Imperial China (till 1911, with short periods in 1915-1916 and 1917) , The Republic of China (ROC) (1912-1949) , and The People's Republic of China (PRC) (from 1949 to the present) **



*Source:* Created by the author based upon data available at Encyclopedia Britannica (URL: <https://www.britannica.com/> ) as well as upon facts found in the following publications: Schram, S. (1989). *The Thought of Mao Tse-Tung*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 256 pp. P. 170; Joseph, W. A. (2014). *Politics in China. An Introduction*. Second edition. Oxford University Press. 2014. xxiv + 554 pp.; Kirkpatrick, M. (November 3, 2009). China's Mystery Lady. *Wall Street Journal*. URL: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052748703574604574500412440365156> ; Xinhua (October 29, 2003). Madame Soong Mei-ling remembered by all Chinese. *China Daily*. URL: [https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/en/doc/2003-10/29/content\\_276451.htm](https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/en/doc/2003-10/29/content_276451.htm).

As Fernand Braudel put it, “Capitalism only triumphs when it becomes identified with the state, when it is the state.”<sup>21</sup> And it was almost never a case for China.

In the traditional Confucian system, profit and wages are not the principal motivators of the economic subjects’ behavior. China's economy has never been capitalist in the sense that profit and capital maximization have never been its main engine or the basis for decision-making by the main economic entities. It also retains a strong overall basis towards the East Asian centuries-old tradition of a greater utilization of human (primarily domestic) than of non-human resources.<sup>22</sup>

As a typical example, one can take, at this contemporary moment, the great number of traditional Japanese ethnic cuisine restaurants in Tokyo or traditional Chinese ethnic cuisine restaurants in Taipei with their stable menus, no advertisement campaigns, lack of information in foreign languages, and a staff that almost never speaks English or another Western language. And the prices for these traditional meals are very moderate. They are family businesses throughout generations. And this picture is characteristic even for areas adjacent to the world class university campuses where thousands of foreigners work, study and live.

So, the nature of the contemporary Chinese economy is not “partially socialist” and “partially capitalist” but rather a state-regulated market that is not capitalist.

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<sup>21</sup> Braudel F. (1977). *Afterthoughts on Material Civilization and Capitalism*. Charles Village, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 136 pp. P. 92.

<sup>22</sup> Sugihara, K. (2003). *The East Asian Path of Economic Development: A Long-Term Perspective*. In: G. Arrighi, T. Hamashita, and M. Seldon (Eds.). *The Resurgence of East Asia: 500, 150 and 50 Years Perspectives*. London and New York: Routledge, 2003. Pp. 78-123.

In fact, prior to the Great Divergence between East and West at the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the East Asian developmental path, and that of China in particular, was as market-based as the European one, but was not the bearer of a capitalist dynamic.<sup>23</sup> From the long-durée world-system methodological viewpoint, we see that China has its own robust market economy tradition. It echoes with Grzegorz Kołodko's insights about China's "Third Way."<sup>24</sup>

#### ***4. Application of the fractal-synergistic approach to the analysis of the Russia-Ukraine war of identities, especially in the Donbas region of Ukraine***

The lands of Kyivan Rus after its disintegration in the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, because of the Mongol invasion, were accumulated over the centuries around sharply conflicting centers: conditionally European (Galician-Volyn Rus, Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Poland, Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Austria, Austria-Hungary, again Poland) and Eurasian (Vladimir-Suzdal Rus, Grand Duchy Grand Duchy of Moscow, Russian Tsardom, Russian Empire). Only for a short historical period – in 1939-1941 and 1944-1991 – were these centers in the format of a single state – the USSR, in which a fractal dichotomy was traced from the macrolevel (the civilizational contrast between the western republics of the Baltic States, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova and the eastern republics of Central Asia, and within the RSFSR (the present Russian Federation) – between Ingria, or Ingermanland (St. Petersburg and a few districts of the Leningrad oblast), the Novgorod, Pskov, Arkhangelsk oblasts, Karelia and the Eurasian regions of the Volga area, North Caucasus, the Urals, Siberia, Dauria) to the subregional and even local level (the ethnocultural and axiological contrast between the historically Slobidska Ukraine's districts of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts and their mobilizationally industrialized areas, which in 2014 became the base of the alleged

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<sup>23</sup> Arrighi G. (2008). *Adam Smith in Beijing. Lineages of the Twenty-first Century*. London, New York: Verso, 418 pp. P. 93.

<sup>24</sup> Kołodko, G. W. (2018). Sotsializm chy kapitalizm? Tertium datur [Socialism or capitalism? Tertium datur]. *Ekonomika i prohoznuvannya [Economics and forecasting]*. No. 1, pp. 7–36.

“DPR” and “LPR”). Thus, for more than seven centuries after the Mongol invasion, we observe not only the civilizational, cultural and geopolitical bipolarity, but also a clear fractality of the historical and ethnocultural development of the space of the former ancient Rus state: Western Rus – Eastern Rus, Ukrainian ethnogenesis in the states of Central Europe and in the Tsarist Russia, Ukraine – Russia, Right-Bank Ukraine – Left-Bank Ukraine, the historically Slobozhan Donbas – the mobilizationally industrialized Donbas, etc.

This dichotomy was particularly acute during the national liberation struggles over the territory of Ukraine following the October 1917 Bolshevik coup in Petrograd. By its civilizational nature, it was a struggle “not for life, but for death” between the Horde-Eurasian Russia of the Bolsheviks and the imperial absolutist monarchists who joined them (represented by tens of thousands of former tsarist officers and generals, part of the tsarist intelligentsia and bureaucrats who deliberately joined the Bolsheviks because of their messianic-imperial beliefs<sup>25</sup>) and European Rus-Ukraine, which – although not for long, but quite symbolically in August-November 1920 – united on the pro-Western (approved by the Entente representatives) platform of recognizing the statehood of the Ukrainian People's Republic (UPR) and allied actions of the UPR Army and the Russian Army of Baron Wrangel against the Bolsheviks.

Fractal causality fits perfectly into the spiral dialectic of social processes since the spiral itself is a fractal. If the social system (political regime) stabilizes, the spiral that will twist in the phase space will correspond to an oscillatory process with a decaying amplitude. If the system is destabilized, the “unwinding” spiral will correspond to an oscillating process with an increasing amplitude, which ultimately leads to the destruction of this social system (political regime).<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Shulgin V. V. (2002). *Posledniy ochevidets: Memuary. Ocherki. Sny* [The last eyewitness: Memoirs. Essays. Dreams]. Moscow: OLMA-PRESS, 588 pp. P. 579.

<sup>26</sup> See: Zhukov, D.S. & Lyamin, S.K. (2011). *Fraktal'noye modelirovaniye sotsial'no-politicheskikh fenomenov i protsessov* [Fractal modeling of socio-political phenomena and processes]. *Pro Nunc. Sovremennyye politicheskiye protsessy* [Pro Nunc. Modern political processes]. No. 1 (10), pp. 161-171. P. 170.



The results of a sociological survey funded by Umea University (Sweden) and conducted by Michael Gentile in the city of Luhansk in late 2013, on the eve of the armed conflict in the Donbas, testified that “geopolitical identities in Luhansk have a complex political stratigraphy that includes demographic, socio-economic, cultural and attitudinal components.”<sup>27</sup> As Gentile claimed as early as 2015: “Luhansk is one of (currently) two main hubs in the ongoing armed conflict in the Donbas, meaning that an in-depth understanding of the political stratigraphy of the geopolitical identities in this city provides the key to a better understanding of the specific context upon which the Russo-Ukrainian war—let us call things by their name—has been projected.”<sup>28</sup>

Not so long before the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine the author of this paper applied the fractal-synergetic analysis to the entire Luhansk oblast disaggregated into various administrative raions.

According to the results of the last All-Ukrainian Population Census held in 2001<sup>29</sup>, Ukrainians make up 58.0% of the national composition of Luhansk oblast, with Russians at 39.0%. By contrast, in 2001, only 30% of Luhansk oblast’s population considered Ukrainian to be their native language, specifically 63.8% of the rural inhabitants and 25.5% of the urban dwellers. In 8 of the 12 raions of Luhansk oblast where the Ukrainian authorities controlled and exercised powers before the 2022 Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the Ukrainian language was considered native by anywhere from 93.8% (the Markivka raion) to 62.8% (the Troitske raion) population, while from 6 raions where the state authorities of Ukraine temporarily do not exercise their powers since 2014, only in one—the Dolzhansk

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<sup>27</sup> Gentile, M. (2015). West-oriented in the East-oriented Donbas: A political stratigraphy of geopolitical identity in Luhansk, Ukraine, *Post-Soviet Affairs*. No. 31(3), pp. 201-223. P. 213.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> *State Statistics Committee of Ukraine* (2003-2004). All-Ukrainian Population Census 2001, English version, General results of the census, Linguistic composition of the population. URL: <http://2001.ukrcensus.gov.ua/eng/results/general/language>.

(former Sverdlovsk)—did more than half of the population (56.0%) indicated Ukrainian as their native language.<sup>30</sup>

I consider – conditionally and for the purposes of the local fractal-value analysis of the Luhansk region as an inter-civilizational borderland zone actualized by geopolitical armed conflict – Ukrainian ethnicity, Ukrainian language, and historical affiliation to the Yekaterinoslav<sup>31</sup> or Kharkiv<sup>32</sup> provinces to be indicators of European identity; and Russian ethnicity, Russian language as well as belonging to the region of the Don Cossacks to be indicators of the pro-Russian (pro-Eurasian) historical and cultural identity. Respectively, I consider ethnicity, native language, territorial affiliation, and historical memory as determinants of some relatively stable value identities, even though the latter may be changeable under crucial circumstances.

My analysis has shown that the strongest pro-Ukrainian identity is mainly in the northern mostly rural raions (the historical Slobozhanschina and the Zaporozhzhian Host's historical lands): Bilovodsk, Bilokurakyyne, Kreminna, Markivka, Milove, Novopokrov, Svatove, Starobilsk, the Popasna and Troitske raions. The strongest pro-Eurasian (pro-Russian) historical and cultural identity is present in the raions of Antratsyt, Dovzhansk, Khrustalny (former Krasnyy Luch), Sorokine (former Krasnodon), and Stanychno-Luhanske (*See the Map below*).

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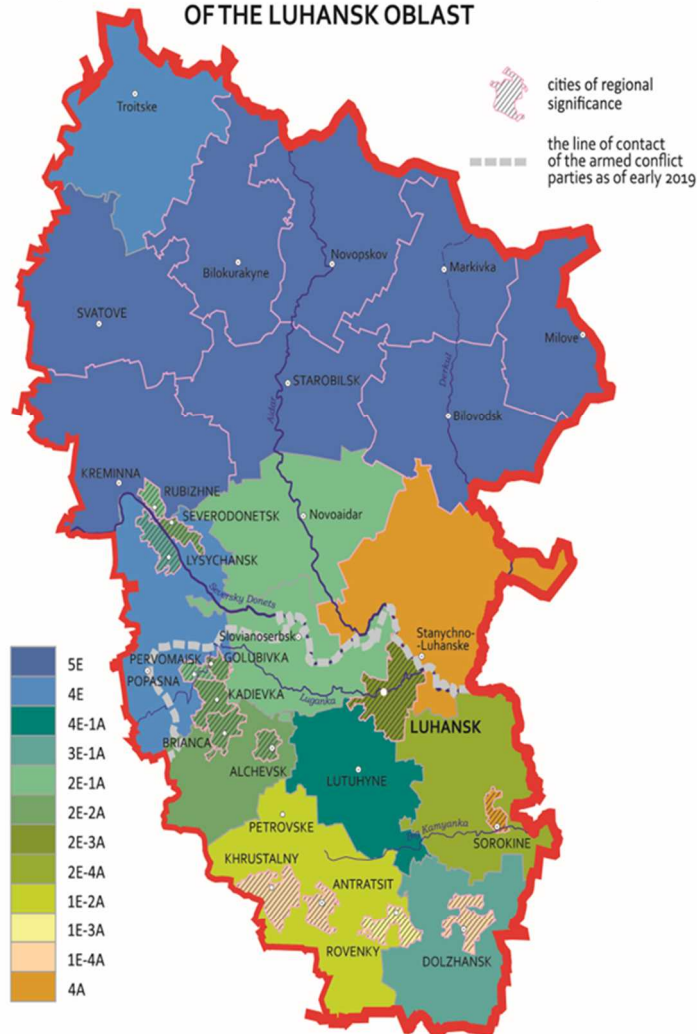
<sup>30</sup> The author's analytical calculations according to the 2001 All-Ukrainian Population Census data (State Statistics Committee of Ukraine 2003-2004).

<sup>31</sup> In the second half of the 16th and first half of the 17th centuries most of the future territory of the Yekaterinoslav province was controlled by the Zaporozhian Host (Sich), a polity of Cossacks having been at those times under the sovereignty of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth [*see*: Markova, O. & Khvedchenya, S (2007). *Katerynoslavs'ka huberniya* [Katerynoslav province]. In *Entsyklopediya istoriyi Ukrayiny* [Encyclopedia of History of Ukraine], Smoliy, V. A. (editor-in-chief): in 10 volumes; Institute of History of Ukraine of the NAS of Ukraine. Kyiv: Naukova Dumka. Vol. 4. P. 135].

<sup>32</sup> Kharkiv province is the province that existed from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries on the territory of Sloboda Ukraine (Slobozhanshchina). Those lands from the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century until the 16<sup>th</sup> century were part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries the Ukrainian population, especially the Cossacks, of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth seeking for free land was resettling en masse to that newly formed border region of tsarist Russia [*see*: Markova, O. (2013). *Kharkivs'ka huberniya* [Kharkiv province]. [In:] Smoliy, V. A. (editor-in-chief). *Op. cit.* Vol. 10. P. 351].

In general, the aggregated indicator of ethno-cultural identity in the Luhansk region (2E-3A) proves that in the last year of the All-Ukrainian population census (2001) in this region, the pro-Eurasian identity somewhat prevailed over the pro-European one.

**AGGREGATED INDICATORS  
OF THE HISTORICAL & CULTURAL IDENTITY OF ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS  
(CITIES OF REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE AND RAIONS)  
OF THE LUHANSK OBLAST**



≥ E — presence of the absolute majority of bearers of conditionally pro-European historical & cultural identity by one (several) criteria

≥ A — presence of the absolute majority of bearers of conditionally pro-Russian historical & cultural identity by one (several) criteria

≥ 2E or ≥ 2A — presence of the overwhelming majority of bearers of conditionally either pro-European, or pro-Russian historical & cultural identity

EA or AE — absence of the absolute (overwhelming) majority of bearers of conditionally either pro-European, or pro-Russian historical & cultural identity (the hybrid identity)

In this context, the formation of interactive fractal maps (tables) of value identity in the context of regions (oblasts), districts (raions) and administrative-

territorial units of local self-government seems relevant. Accordingly, the maps (tables) should zoom in fractally even further – to the level of individual settlements, their historical and functional parts, streets, micro-districts – and then zoom out fractally – to the level of the regions, Ukraine, countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, the whole of Europe, Eurasia, and so on. Searching for “red” (problem) indicators should be carried out in the automatic search mode throughout the entire fractal depth for each indicator (index).

On the basis of recent scientific achievements regarding the fractal nature of the universe and society, and taking into account the relativity and fractality of the East-West dichotomy, as well as other value paradigms, it seems appropriate to create in the future, in contrast to a discrete-dichotomous approach, a computer model of the value continuum to the full depth of fractal analysis—from the world system to local levels—searching for a dynamic equilibrium of value parameters in the conflict zone. We see this as an important task of modern conflictology.

### **Conclusion**

The contemporary Russia-Ukraine war is being waged simultaneously on the geopolitical (actually, the post-colonial and post-imperial phantom pains of the current political regime in the Russian Federation have become the main driver of the war), and on the international, transnational, and regional scales, fractally breaking down – in the deep worldview and values dimension – into many local, interpersonal, and even intrapersonal conflicts. We have certain parallels of this fractal worldview and value conflict of “trees” and “rhizomes,” already in the Confucian dimension, in the conflict between “red” mainland China and ideologically “white” Taiwan and “quasi-white” Hong Kong.

**In fact, the true ontological reason for identity wars is the denial of the fractal nature of the binary opposition in identity.**

In my opinion, the full-scale war on the territory of Ukraine, which poses an existential threat to global security and even the existence of humanity, can be stopped by non-military means only through the search, according to the concept of

fractality and the fractal essence of society, for a certain balance – axiological, cultural, geopolitical – between the East and West.

We have considered the East–West cultural, value, and civilizational dichotomy in its fractal reproduction, in the close historical interaction and complementarity of East and West at all levels – from macro-regional to local and personal.<sup>33</sup> Based on this approach, the only way for the world's leading actors to avoid direct military clash and global nuclear catastrophe is to avoid doctrinal or fatally messianic thinking by adopting the planetary (or noospheric according to V. Vernadskyi and P. Teilhard de Chardin) postnonclassical thinking that opens the way to the global civilization of the future, the dialectical overcoming (bridging) of traditional dichotomies such as “East–West” or “Ours–the Other.”

Meanwhile, proceeding from fractal universal regularities of the world and society, as well as dynamic changes of the global power structure with a rising impact of the Confucian tradition identities, the East-West conceptual opposition requires further interdisciplinary research and development.

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<sup>33</sup> Kistersky L., Marmazov V. & Piliaiev I. (2021). *Prospects for the East-West Civilizational Convergence: Confucian Tradition Democracy in the Republic of Korea*. Monograph. Prague: Coretex CZ SE, 2021, 248 pp. P. 193.