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Sociocultural attractors of the Russian civilization**Elena V. Nikolaeva**

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Abstract

The article aims to consider the sociocultural dynamics of the Russian civilization from the standpoint of postnonclassical philosophy of culture. The duality inherent to the Russian civilization as its fundamental characteristic is explained in terms of the “fractality of culture”, “order parameters” and “structures-attractors”. The author of the article puts forward the hypothesis that the trajectory of deployment of the Russian civilizational supersystem in space and time is an attractor of a special kind, formed as a result of the interaction of two sociocultural attractors of different types – “eastern” and “western” ones. The “eastern” circular attractor assumes a closed cyclicity of events and strategic decisions, concentration on the internal (territorial and mental) space, the importance of the traditional path and the integrity of collective being. The “western” spiral attractor means a fundamental openness, expansion into external (territorial and mental) space, a multi-vector nature of events and strategic decisions, the importance of individual trajectories within the movable boundaries of the collective existence. The historical dynamics of the Russian civilization and its sociocultural subsystems can be metaphorically and mathematically (on the basis of the political chronology) described using the Lorenz attractor, which determines the periodic change of sociocultural paradigms in the history of the Russian civilization.

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Keywords

Russian civilization, order parameters of culture, fractality of culture, sociocultural dynamics, sociocultural attractors, “eastern” attractor, “western” attractor, Lorenz attractor, postnonclassical cultural philosophy.

Introduction

In the context of this article, civilization is understood as a set of cultural programs (“working drawings”), realized in the guise of a self-sufficient and unique social organism [Gritsanov, 2003, www]. These civilizational programs enabling the achievement social goals are determined by the existing cultural universals and fundamental constants of culture. The entire civilizational matrix of a particular state is built on the basis of the immanent cultural characteristics of the state-forming (super)ethnic group. Such characteristics can be defined as “pre-symbols” of the culture [Spengler, 2013, vol. 1], “cultural invariants” [Arshinov, Astafeva, 2012], or “higher order parameters” [Hutt, Haken, 2020].

In synergetics this kind of national “constants” are designated as order parameters. The order parameters form long-term determinants such as culture, language, mentality, national character, and short-term ones that include the state, economy, ethics, taboo, fashion, scientific paradigms. The national “constants” of the mega-level determine the limits of the transformation of a culture that retains its integrity and invariant identification features, i. e. the presence of a culture in the basin of a certain attractor; the “faster” order parameters of micro-and macro-levels are the goals and methods of modification, i. e. dynamic trajectories within the sociocultural attractor.

The fractality of culture

Among the theoretical tools of the postnonclassical philosophy of culture, a special role is assigned to fractal geometry, which was developed in the last quarter of the twentieth century by the French-American mathematician Benoit Mandelbrot in his numerous works on fractal issues. The most famous and widely known of his books is *The Fractal Geometry of Nature* [Mandelbrot, 1982].

In the most general form, a fractal is “a structure consisting of parts that are in some sense similar to the whole” [Feder, 1988, 19]. Within any fractal structure, patterns of different scales are repeatedly reproduced, which to one degree or another replicate the characteristic features of the whole. In the simplest cases, the self-similarity of fractals is quite obvious, as, for example, in the “family” of nesting dolls or a circular plan of a medieval town (linear fractals). More complex (nonlinear) types of fractals form complex, often similar to chaotic, configurations: such are turbulent flows, “drip” paintings by Jackson Pollock and some postmodern buildings [Nikolaeva, 2014]. This type also includes the so-called “strange attractors” that look like tangled bunches of trajectories formed by spirals and loops. One of the most recognizable strange attractors is the Lorenz attractor, which resembles a butterfly spreading its wings.

In the 1990s, the ideas of fractality crossed the conceptual boundaries and terminological “moats” of the natural science discourse and the concept of the “fractal” in a certain sense began to claim the status of a fundamental category in the science of the new century. Mathematicians, philosophers and sociologists admit that “fractals as mathematical objects receive an ontological meaning and become crucial elements in the system of the nonlinear dynamic world-image” [Martynovich, 2011, 19], structural and conceptual forms and formulas of the natural and sociocultural universe [Khaitun, 2007]. Unexpectedly, many dynamic processes in culture were no longer perceived as chaos and a random jumble of forms and trajectories, but appeared as the result of complex functional dependencies. The “eternal” constants of culture – the order parameters of the highest level – produce sociocultural attractors of the material-technological, socio-anthropological, mental, administrative and all other subsystems of culture, each of which is connected with culture as a whole by fractal relations.

Sociocultural attractors

According to the postnonclassical cultural philosophy, culture is an autonomous, self-regulating, self-governing, balanced unity [Sorokin, 2017, 38-39] and, further, a complex nonlinear dissipative system [Knyazeva, Kurdyumov, 2010]. The behavior of open nonlinear systems, which include society and culture, is most often characterized with strange attractors, consisting of an infinite number of unstable cycles of different periods in a certain limited area. To describe sociocultural phenomena, S.P. Kurdyumov and E.N. Knyazeva proposed the term “structures-attractors”, meaning the “goals” of the evolution of the system, a kind of “tacit knowledge” of culture about the direction of its evolutionary processes [Ibidem, 93-94]. In this context, the “repetitions” of history and periodic returns to traditions that form cultural and historical “cycles” can be considered as stochastic loops of strange attractors.

Thus, the historical dynamics of civilization and, accordingly, the functional forms of culture, including statehood and social organization, are determined by the “goals” of the evolution of culture, which are expressed by the attractor structures, as well as by the interference of the attraction zones of local attractors, since the culture of the Russian super-ethnos, and, accordingly, the Russian civilization involves a significant number of different overlapping and nested (ethno-national, confessional, social, etc.) “tempo-worlds”. The two most significant of these “tempo-worlds” are formed, respectively, by the ideological attitudes of the governing elite and the populace and have sociocultural attractors of different types (“western” and “eastern”). In mathematical terms, these two attractors lie in areas of values with opposite signs, which means the “negative” symmetry of almost all axiological components of culture, including the moral foundations of statehood.

The “eastern” circular attractor assumes a closed cycle of events and strategic decisions, concentration on the internal (territorial and mental) space, the importance of the traditional path and the integrity of collective being.

The “western” spiral attractor with the trajectories of development and actionality diverging from the center and converging towards it means a fundamental openness, expansion into the external (territorial and mental) space, the multi-vector nature of events and strategic decisions, the significance of individual trajectories within the mobile boundaries of collective existence.

All the “breaks” in Russian history are associated with periodic modernization leaps, when the governing elite “pulled” the country from the “eastern” circular attractor to the “western” spiral one. All the transitions back and forth gave the values of the subsequent system of public administration a positive value according to the law of “negation of negation”.

The complexity of establishing a form of statehood adequate to Russian culture is due not only to the Eurasian geopolitical position of the country and the multidirectional vectors of cross-cultural interactions along the West-East axis, but also to the internal essence of the Russian civilization itself. Combining “eastern” and “western” characteristics, it has historically been involved in a complex cyclical movement, in which “eastern” and “western” development trajectories are intricately interlaced. To a certain extent, the areas of attraction of these trajectories are conceptually correlated with the ideational and sensitive types of culture described by P. Sorokin [Sorokin, 2017, 27-28]. However, taking into account that Eastern cultures create civilizations of the mythological type, and Western cultures generate technogenic civilizations, it is necessary to admit the historically unchanging predisposition to certain structures-attractors (goals of evolution), corresponding to the “original premises” of culture. In this regard, the historical trajectories of civilizational development are unique for each of the cultures. It is obvious that each culture spends most of the historical time in the space its “own” attractor.

As for the Russian culture, its inherent duality proves to be a fundamental characteristic of a specific (super)attractor of the Russian civilization, formed as a result of the interaction of the attractors described above.

Let us venture to assume that the sociocultural dynamics (trajectories) of the deployment of the Russian supersystem in space and time and, accordingly, its sociocultural subsystems, can be described – metaphorically and mathematically based on political chronology – by the means of the Lorentz strange attractor. The two “wings” of the attractor represent the trajectories of Russia's development in the “western” (globalizing) and “eastern” (local-national) civilizational spaces.

It is obvious that the main sociocultural attractors-ideas of Russian statehood in the “eastern” space are: 1) the head of state is the Father; 2) the common good; 3) value imperative: social justice (which assumes not equality, but a hierarchical distribution of benefits in accordance with the contribution to the service of national state ideals).

In the “western” paradigm of statehood, the main sociocultural attractors-ideas are different: 1) the head of state is the Manager; 2) individual benefit; 3) value imperative: material well-being (hierarchical distribution of benefits regardless of the individual's contribution to the service to national state ideals).

For many centuries (with the establishment of the Romanovs dynasty), the Russian governing elite has belonged to the Western civilizational type. It borrows administrative strategies from the European evolutionary paradigm. However, Western European and, later, American civilizations, “moving” along the trajectories of the spiral attractor, drew and draw (material, human, energy, intellectual, etc.) resources from outside, capturing them, expanding into the external, world space and exploiting other cultures. In this sense, the symbolic image of the “hydra of world imperialism”, invented by the Bolsheviks at the time, is only a verbal description of the spiral attractor of the Western European civilization. The Russian civilization, expanding outward, involved other cultures in the orbit of its evolutionary movement on equal and even preferential grounds (for example, during the Soviet “empire” many national republics developed much more dynamically than most regions of the Russian Federative Soviet Republic). At the same time, the governing Russian elite organized its own consumption of resources on the basis of the Western spiral attractor in the internal space of culture, i. e. exploiting its peoples. It is no coincidence, according to sociological surveys, that Stalin and Alexander III receive high ratings when assessing the public policy of Russia in a diachronic perspective. The repressive/anti-liberal nature of many aspects of these politicians' activities is subconsciously perceived as a struggle to return to the path of a more “comfortable” for Russia “eastern” attractor.

Conclusion

The complicated trajectory of the development of the Russian civilization may be described in the terms of so-called strange attractors. All “breaks” in Russian history caused by periodic modernization leaps, when the country was forced from the “eastern” circular attractor to the “western” spiral one, meant the change of the higher order parameters of culture. At the same time, the experience of history shows that the replacement of “eastern” conceptual attractors of state development with “western” ones and even their combination in one “phase space” (in one space-time locus) does not lead to positive results for the Russian civilization. That is why it turns out to be problematic to form a new state (national) unifying idea for the Russia of the 21st century, as well as to create a common moral code of the state structure for the elite and the low-class populace. However, if the evolution of the Russian

civilization is really determined by the trajectories of the “two-winged” strange attractor, then the desire to try to get on the “western” rails will apparently be repeated more than once in the Russian history.

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Социокультурные аттракторы российской цивилизации

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Аннотация

Цель статьи – рассмотреть социокультурную динамику российской цивилизации с позиций постнеклассической философии культуры. Двойственность, присущая российской цивилизации как ее фундаментальная характеристика, объясняется в терминах «фрактальность культуры», «параметры порядка» и «структуры-аттракторы». Выдвигается гипотеза о том, что траектория развертывания российской цивилизационной суперсистемы в пространстве и времени является аттрактором особого рода, сформировавшимся в результате взаимодействия двух социокультурных аттракторов разного типа – «восточного» и «западного». «Восточный» круговой аттрактор предполагает замкнутую цикличность событий и стратегических решений, концентрацию на внутреннем (территориальном и ментальном) пространстве, важность традиционного пути и целостность коллективного бытия. «Западный» спиральный аттрактор означает фундаментальную открытость, экспансию во внешнее (территориальное и ментальное) пространство, многовекторный

характер событий и стратегических решений, важность индивидуальных траекторий в подвижных границах коллективного существования. Историческую динамику российской цивилизации и ее социокультурных подсистем можно метафорически и математически (на основе политической хронологии) описать с помощью аттрактора Лоренца, определяющего периодическую смену социокультурных парадигм в истории российской цивилизации.

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Ключевые слова

Российская цивилизация, параметры порядка культуры, фрактальность культуры, социокультурная динамика, социокультурные аттракторы, «восточный» аттрактор, «западный» аттрактор, аттрактор Лоренца, постнеклассическая философия культуры.

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