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On fractal characteristics of the micro-aggregate structure of loess soils

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The idea of loess as a natural multi-fractal was formed in the works of Bird [1], Russell [2]. On the basis of the fractal characteristics of the pore and particle structure, there were obtained theoretical models describing diffusion, deformation of the compaction and the shift of the medium [3], [4]. In [2] the distribution function $N_s(L > d_s)$ of the particles sizes is defined as the number of particles of the size L such that $L > d_s$, where d_s runs over the real numbers. The fractal dimension of the particle size distribution function is defined as follows

$$D_s = \lim_{d_s \rightarrow 0} - \frac{\ln(N_s(L > d_s))}{\ln(d_s)}$$

In the presented paper we study subsidence of soils, which are eluvial, eluvial-deluvial loess-like deposits of the Middle-Upper Pleistocene age, lying on the Right-Bank Loess Upland Plain (Middle Dnieper, Ukraine). Under some additional conditions of fractal nature of the loess soil and developing methods introduced in our paper [5] we obtained certain predictive estimations of the coefficient of porosity after the disintegration of micro-aggregates.

The particles forming the ground may have only a finite set of sizes. We denote these sizes $d_1, d_2, \dots, d_{n-1}, d_n$ ranging in decreasing order from the largest. We assume that $\alpha = \alpha_j = d_j/d_{j-1}$, where $2 \leq j \leq n$, does not depend on j . This assumption corresponds to the idea of the self-similarity of fractal structures. In addition, all known mathematical fractals are constructed on this principle. Then we put $\beta_1 = 1$ and $\beta_2 = (d_j/d_{j-1})^{3-D_s} - (d_j/d_{j-1})^3 = \alpha^{3-D_s} - \alpha^3$, where $2 \leq j \leq n$ and D_s is the fractal dimension of the particle size distribution function. As the structures formed by particles of a fixed size are self-similar, we also assume that all these structures have the same coefficient of porosity k_p as well as the same porosity $K_p = k_p/(1 + k_p)$. We discovered that under such conditions two different situations may occurred.

Theorem 1. *In the above denotations, two different situations may occurred:*

1. *If $K_p > \beta_2$, then*

$$e_1 = ((1 + k_p)d_1^{3-D_s}) / (d_1^{3-D_s} + \beta_2(\sum_{j=2}^n d_{j-1}^{3-D_s})) - 1$$

is the porosity coefficient after the disintegration of micro-aggregates.

2. *If $K_p < \beta_2$, then*

$$e_1 = ((1 + k_p)d_n^{3-D_s} + (d_1^{3-D_s} + \beta_2(\sum_{j=2}^n d_{j-1}^{3-D_s}))) / (d_1^{3-D_s} + \beta_2(\sum_{j=2}^n d_{j-1}^{3-D_s})) - 1$$

is the porosity coefficient after the disintegration of micro-aggregates.

Applying the obtained estimations for e_1 , we can obtain a predictive estimate of the volume deformation by the following formula: $\varepsilon = e_1 - e_0$, where e_0 is the coefficient of porosity in the initial (natural) state and e_1 is the predicted value of the porosity coefficient. The results of our experiments and calculations show that on the basis of a new theoretical models and the "Microstructure" technique, having the values of the fractal dimension of the particle size distribution function, it is possible

to forecast the volume deformations after the disintegration of the micro-aggregates.. Depending on the type of loess soil and the specific experimental conditions, this may be the amount of subsidence deformation, swelling or suffusion.

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V. Lomadze <i>A purely algebraic construction of Schwartz distributions</i>	34
S. Maksymenko <i>Deformation of functions on orientable surfaces by symplectic diffeomorphisms</i>	36
Martseniuk V., Bondarenko A., Gefter S. <i>Application the p-adic topology on Z for study determinants of infinite order with integer coefficients</i>	37
K. Matsumoto <i>Warped product semi-slant submanifolds in locally conformal Kaehler manifolds, II</i>	38
Mormul P. <i>What points in Goursat Monster Tower are strongly nilpotent</i>	39
Mukhamadiev F. G. <i>The local density and the local weak density of N_7^φ-kernel of a topological spaces</i>	40
Tetiana V. Obikhod <i>Topological invariants and microscopic quantum description</i>	41
A. Ozkan <i>On the misconceptions of 10th grade students about analytical geometry</i>	42
Parasyuk I. O. <i>Hyperbolic quasiperiodic motion of charged particle on 2-sphere</i>	43
E. Petrov <i>Representing trees of finite ultrametric spaces and weak similarities</i>	45
Prishlyak A., Hladysh B. <i>Functions with three critical points on closed non-oriented 3-manifolds</i>	47
V.M. Prokip <i>A note on similarity of matrices</i>	49
Romakina L.N. <i>Inversion with respect to an elliptic cycle of a hyperbolic plane of positive curvature</i>	51
Romaniv A. M. <i>On the relationship between the Smith normal forms of matrices and of their least common multiple</i>	53
Ryazanova O. <i>Estimates for the surface with given average curvature</i>	54
Samokhvalov S. E. <i>Kinematic renormalization of energy in the gravity</i>	55
Savchenko A. <i>Fuzzy metrization of the spaces of idempotent measures</i>	56
Sazonova O. <i>General form of the Maxwellian distribution with arbitrary density</i>	57
Skuratovskii R. <i>The commutator and centralizer of Sylow subgroups of alternating and symmetric groups, its minimal generating set</i>	58
Sokhatsky F., Krainichuk H. <i>Semi-lattice of varieties of quasigroups with linearity</i>	59
Salimov R., Stefanchuk M. <i>Asymptotic behavior of solutions to a nonlinear Beltrami equation</i>	61
Mokritskaya T. P., Tushev A. V. <i>On fractal characteristics of the micro-aggregate structure of loess soils</i>	62
Vasilchenko A. N. <i>Spaces of primitive elements in dual modules over Steenrod algebra</i>	64