

Ethnosociology. Russian School. Sergey Shirokogorov

Hello, and welcome to this week's ethno-sociology lecture by Professor Alexander Dugin, the Head of the Department of International Relations of the Sociology Faculty and the Chair of the Center for Conservative Research at Moscow State University. This week's lecture will focus on the Russian School of Ethno-Sociology. Professor Dugin? Thanks.

So, today we are going to discuss the Russian School of Ethno-Sociology. The founder of this school is a Russian scientist of 20th century, Sergei Shirokogorov. He was first to introduce the concept of ethnicity, or ethnos, in Russian science.

He is regarded as a founder of Russian ethnology. But he always also stressed the importance of social aspect of ethnicity. He has given the definition of ethnos that we are dealing with in our course.

So, I would like to remind Shirokogorov's definition of ethnos. Ethnos, or ethnicity, is a group of people speaking the same language, recognizing their common origin, and having complex customs, ways of life, stored and eliminated and transmitted by tradition, and different from the customs of other groups. So, we see that it is a kind of sociological approach to the ethnos.

Only one thing that should be discussed especially is a common origin. And what is important is that Shirokogorov recognizes that this common origin is a kind of social representation that is not common origin in fact, but it is a kind of belief in a common origin. So, sociological category.

Ethnos is an open social group. And there are many rituals that serve to the ethnic group to accept the representatives of the other ethnic group. In this case, the individual that wanted to be accepted in this ethnic community should not only enter in the present in this community, but also he was obliged to recognize that the fathers of this ethnic group were his own fathers.

So, it was a kind to accept the common past, common origin. And being the social category, it was thought as something very possible, because the fact to belong to such or such ethnic clan, family or group was considered to be a kind of belonging to some totem, to accept some affinity to concrete totem or sub-totem, as Marcel Mauss called that. So, the individual was considered to be a part of personality that had the social dimension.

The concept of person was a concept of social identity given by the society or in the course of some religious, sacred ritual or given by the society in the process of initiation or adoption. So, the person that was not individual, that was a social construct, for example, the totem. And if you recognize as a source or as your person and the source of your life certain totem, for example, red papagai, as in the case of some ethnic groups

among the Indians.

So, you are considered to be in some kind of this red papagai. Because it represents your personality. And that represents your personality in the present, in the future, but also in the past.

Because the past was considered to be one of the dimensions of the eternal structure. So, the common origin was a kind of sociological construction that formed an important part of personality. So, with this, we could affirm that in the ethnic groups, the individual could, in some limited cases, choose the past, its own past.

To choose its origin in conformity with the demands of such or such social group. Because it was not fixed, this concept of origin. It was more or less interchangeable.

And you could lose this belongingness to the common origin. Or obtain that. That is very important.

The other important point in definition of ethnicity was the fact that Shiro Kagorov highlighted another fundamental sign of belonging to this concrete ethnic group, endogamy. That is a legitimate opportunity to marry within the same group. So, the concept of ethnos, in this way, is something more than a clan of fraternity.

So, it was a kind of a concept of the society, where you needed to have two parts that should be exogamic. And that should give the possibility to find a bride from the clan, from the social group, considered to be other, in front of this concrete group. And the ethnic group should include both parts, creating thus endogamic unity.

Endogamic unity that signifies that ethnos should have at least two exogamous clans or social groups, to give to the ethnic society the possibility to have legitimate marriage inside and not outside of that. So, many myths, many legends were dedicated precisely to define this concept of correct marriage. The marriage that is legitimate in any sense.

It should not be too far or too near. Because if it is too near, it falls in the realm of the same group. So, it is a kind of incest.

But strict interdiction of incest connections was the basis, sociological basis of all existing culture in the world. So, human society as such is based, is constructed on the primordial social fact, the interdiction of incest relations. And that sociologically demands the definition of what is the same family and what is the other family.

So, that is a kind of same family. Same family is not a biological concept. It is the sociological concept.

Because in different kinds of society, the lineage is considered to be belonging to this family by different criteria. For example, there are maternal kind of lineage and paternal

kind of lineage. So, that was a social established norm that defines in which case, in which society, in which ethnic group, what is considered to be the same family or the other family.

And the very strict set of rules and norm defines the possibility of marriage. So, the ethnic group or ethnos is precisely the social group that has in itself both clans or both types of families. The families that are considered to be the same and the families that are considered to be other.

So, it gives the possibility to have marriage, legitimate marriage in the limits of the same ethnos and it shouldn't be in the same family. So, many myths started by different searchers and also by Shere Kogorov himself. He was a specialist in the Evenki tribes of Eastern Siberia and he studied closely these tribes.

And also he has found many forms of social mythos that gave the necessary explanation to the concept of these endogamic basis of the marriage. As fundamental aspect for definition of ethnos as a social group. So, these mythos were designed to define what is legitimate, what is acceptable and what is abnormal.

So, these mythos, for example, featured the bad consequences that are inevitable for ancestral marriages. For example, if you find some narrative that begins with, once upon a time there was a brother and a sister. It is very possible, very probable that will end badly this story because the brother and the sister are considered to be virtually the figures of ancestral relations.

And the story was used to describe how fatal and negative this too close marriage would cause if it will be concluded. At the same time, there are the stories concerning too far marriage. For example, in this case that was the idea of the marriage between a human girl, for example, with animals, with a bear or with a dragon.

Or with some fantastic creature that also is regarded as something abnormal. So, this kind of mythos served to define what is ethnos as endogamous collectivity formed by two exogamous parts. It was very important because this conceptual attitude and understanding of the ethnos contradicts to Aristotle's concept of the society as development of the family.

In the complex, sophisticated society, we see only family as the basis of the society. And we could regard the family as the paradigm of society and we could regard society as the greatest paradigm for family. But in the ethno-sociological field there is not so.

The primordial simplest form of society is not a family. But it is two families, two exogamous families living together and stressing always the fact to belong to the same family. To reaffirm its identity through ages and generations, but at the same time with the possibility to distinguish by the rights, by the cultural attitudes, by the customs and

many other instruments The other family that is considered to be other, but at the same time this other family belongs to the same community because it is the source of legitimate marriages.

So, that is a kind of two families, but that changed absolutely all picture of the society. If the society is based on the concept of ethnogamic two family pattern, that is a kind of society that does not need external regulation. It could regulate itself this kind of society because with this two families pattern there is no need of government, no need of social stratification, no need of power.

That is a kind of balanced society that could proceed in this way eternally. And because there is always the balance of given and received, there is circulation of gifts and the women of exogamous paths of one and the same as now. Gamos group, that is precisely ethnos, is considered to be eternal pattern with zero-sum game, a kind of zero-sum game.

You live, but always the same repeats itself. It is a kind of eternal return. At the basis of this two-part society it is sufficient to proceed so eternally, because there are no reasons of progress, of accumulation, of innovation, of modernization.

There is no reason to install the power structure. So, the ethnos considered to be half-part endogamous with two included, at least two exogamous groups, it's a kind of new object of study that is in the center of ethno-sociological discipline. And it is very important that with these two definitions of ethnos we have, thanks to Sergei Sherekhorov, the object of our discipline of ethno-sociology.

So, Sherekhorov also introduced in the ethnology and ethno-sociology the concept of social organization of ethnos. That Sherekhorov defines as social organization of the society a set of ethnographic elements that regulate the function of society as permanent conglomerate of people. Forming in turn a set of specific internal balance enabling the ethnic unity or ethnos to reproduce, to conserve the economic system, material culture, intellectual and mental activity that is to ensure the continuity of ethnic identity in its integrity.

So, that is important that in this definition of social organization of ethnos or ethno-social organization, these functions are orientated to one goal, to keep the social identity of ethnic group permanent, to keep it always equal to itself, to conserve this ethnic identity through sets of specific procedures. And mental activity, material culture and economic system, all that play an important part in accomplishing this very goal. To keep the ethnos as it is, as it was and as it should be in the future.

So, the ethno-social organization is defined by a very important concept. To keep the same without any changes. Also, we are dealing with zero-sum game.

So, zero-sum game in this sense represents a very important idea of the very profound reason of ethno-social organization. This reason is to keep the same, always the same, all activity, all changes, all efforts in the society, and cultural, economical and material activity is organized in the sense to keep the same. So, to keep the same, social organization as reproduction, the sense of the ethno-social organization is the reproduction of the same.

It is very important, because this ethno-sociological organization oriented to eternal reproduction tries to avoid two things. First, decadence, a kind of danger to lose something. So, one of the problems of functioning of this social organization is to conserve.

To conserve the practices, to conserve the rituals, to conserve the social structure as it is, as it was and as it should be in the future. To conserve the same. But, it is clear that in reality we are dealing with entropy of some different kind.

And society could forget something, could lose something. There could be some circumstances that oblige to put aside some rights or some material or spiritual or cultural practices. And in this sense, ethnos is in eternal struggle against this possibility of entropy.

So, the ethnical life is a life of conservation of the same. And that is not so easy as it could be seen from our sophisticated complex society. Because we cannot understand that the conservation of the same could be the goal.

So, we are habituated to think, to reason in the terms of progress, of development, of the new. But, we could not understand what ethnos is, if we don't accept these different ethos of some kind. To conserve the same is the main concern of the ethnic life.

So, ethnos lives not only in order to survive, it lives in order to conserve. Not to survive biologically, but to conserve the sameness of ethnical structure in all possible senses. In material, economic, rituals, cultural, linguistic and also material and spiritual.

So, it is a kind of all-composed conservation, that is the main concern of ethnic group. But, there is the other goal, the other concern of such ethno-social organization, according to Sorokogorov. It is also very difficult for us to understand that the second part of this organization is directed against the new, against apparition of the new, against accumulation of the goods, against any kind of acquisition that is not necessary or not habitual, something new.

So, that has not the place in the context of ethnic, ethno-sociological organization today, or that had not in the past, have not the chances to be accepted, to be recognized, to be used and to be appreciated. So, struggling for conservation of the same, ethnic group or ethnos struggles also against new. It struggles against the loss and against acquisition.

Ethnos should not lose anything and should not acquire anything. That is the sense of ethnic life and that is the end of ethno-social organization, according to Sorokogorov. It is very important, because that is the reason of many functions of rights, of the myths, of the customs in the ethnic group.

So, the ethnos insists on its immutable identity that could be endangered by the loss and by the acquisition of something new. It's very important and that is the sense of reproduction, not production, not loss. Reproduction of the same.

That is the kind of nature that reproduces every year the same seasons. But always these very seasons are different in some details. There are different weather and differences in the rhythms and natural events in such or such season.

But the autumn is always the autumn, the summer is always the summer and so on. But we regard nature as something that makes this eternal return of the season by itself. But that is not the case of the ethnic group, because the ethnos considers this eternal return as a kind of practice, where the full participation of the man is badly needed.

So, without repetition of some rituals, of some sacred ceremonies, the summer will not come. There will not come also the night or day without implication of the man, of the society. And so, the difference between nature and culture doesn't exist in the ethnos.

And in order for spring to come, the society, the ethnic society should produce some rituals, should think or should wait for the spring. Without this expectation of the spring, the spring will not come. So, it is very important to reproduce the same.

You need to pay, to pay your life, to pay your efforts, your material and spiritual activity, dedicate to this eternal return of the same. So, it is a kind of conception of Shirokogorov. So, there was a kind of formula proposed by Shirokogorov as a kind of law of balance of cultures.

That is, that this concept of Shirokogorov insists that the number of the people in one ethnic group, if we divide it on the cultural level and on the land area occupied by this group, is a constant. So, in order to live on the same territory for greater number of the representatives of the same ethnic group, it needs to develop its level of culture. Or to expand the territory.

That is very practical and starting of ethnic group and that could be also regarded as a possible reason of development of something new. If there is exaggeration, acquisition of the quantity of the population, that signifies that ethnic balance is hurt, badly hurt. And to improve that, ethnic should also make acquisition of something in correspondence, or of the territory, or of the level of culture.

That is a kind of ethnic law according to Shirokogorov. And that is known as equilibrium theory of cultures, based on ethnic balance factors. So, Shirokogorov pays great

attention to the concept of environment.

Environment for him is divided. Ethnic environment is divided on two parts. Natural and social.

So, natural environment is a kind of territory where the ethnic lives and is considered to be the path of ethnic life. So, this physical or natural environment is considered by ethnic as a part of the society. There is no clear border between ethnic itself and nature.

Natural environment is included in the ethnic concept, as well as ethnic is projected on the environment. So, it is ethnic environment and there is also natural correspondences in the structure and composition and function of the ethnic itself. But there is the other kind of environment, that Shirokogorov calls ethnic environment or social environment.

That is something else, that inclusion of the nature of the physical environment in the context, in the texture of ethnics. It is a kind of challenge to the ethnic represented by the other ethnic. So, you could meet...Ethnic is dealing with two things, that it could meet theoretically around it.

Or it is included nature or it is the other ethnic. Other ethnic represents a kind of challenge to these ethnic and is considered as something other in all the senses. It is something that is excluded.

So, it is very important that natural environment is included in the ethnic structure and other ethnic is excluded. So, we are dealing with two different kinds of environment. But the border between one ethnic and the other is not also absolutely exclusive.

It could be passed or by individual representatives or some families, that should be adopted in this ethnics. Or it could be regarded as some object, that has its legitimate presence in the cultural complex of this very ethnics, but that is alienated by some one or other reason. So, that is a very difficult concept of ethnic reasons of war, according to Shirokogorov.

So, war is also a kind of relation between two distinguished ethnic entities. So, the war is a kind of inter-ethnic communication. And the war as ethnic phenomenon could be regarded as incorporation or assimilation of those who win or those who lose the battle.

In this kind, those who have lost the battle or in such one or other manner are integrated in this society. So, the war could be the instrument of integration of the other in the same. So, there will be after the war, after one war, that could be the process of integration of the other.

Or that could be also a kind of annihilation of the other. Because the other is the conceptual problem for the ethnics. Ethnics is based on the concept of the sameness.

So, dealing in the nature, as Shorokogorov stressed, making emphasis on that, that nature is not completely other. It is the same, it forms part of the same with majuscula or four ethnicities. But the other ethnicity is a real problem.

So, dealing with it, you could assimilate it in the same, accept it. And there are different ways of ethnosociology of the war. For example, that is cannibalistic practice.

To eat the other, to make it the same. If you eat it, you not only use his force, his powers, his energies, but you assimilated it and you make the other the same. So, it is the deep reason of cannibalism or ethnosociology of cannibalism.

Cannibalism is based on the idea that the same should always triumph the other. And if you eat your enemy, you make him the same as yourself. You interiorize him.

You make him the part of yourself. So, you finish the difference. You overcome the difference between him and you.

And that is also a positive practice for the ethnical affirmation of the sameness. And that is the explication of the humanistic aspect or side of cannibalism. So, there are other practices.

For example, to exterminate the males of the other ethnic group and appropriate the women, females. And to make them the women of marriage or concubine. With also elevating children taken from defeated ethnic group as the same children.

The children of this ethnic group are winners in the ethnic war. So, it is a kind of assimilation also. But these practices are often combined.

You assimilate the warriors of males of the other ethnic group by eating them. And you assimilate the females, the women by marrying them. And you assimilate the children by elevating them, nurturing them in the context of this ethnos.

So, there were two ethnic entities that represented gnosiological challenge to each other. And after the ethnic war there is only one. There is not problematic.

So, you could assimilate all of them on different level and reaffirm the same. As it is the goal for all assimilated to accomplish the greatest goal of ethnically conceived existence. So, the reason of ethnic existence is precisely to affirm and conserve the same.

And in the ethno-ethnical environment there is a kind of challenge. Because the other ethnos with its inclusivity, with its norms, with its nature, with its set of values is considered to be a kind of you. Because it is the other.

The other that could not be assimilated without some special situation. But that also doesn't encompass all kinds of inter-ethnical relations. Because some ethnic groups could be considered to be the source of legitimate marriages.

That is the other kind of inter-ethnic relations. When they are legitimate others and they give the possibility to serve a point of exchange of the legitimate persons to marriage. So, at the same time the exchange of the goods or the symbolical objects could be also the practice of these inter-ethnic relations.

The most important in all that is to conserve the sameness with all means possible. So, Sherekhagorov also speaks about three kinds of inter-ethnic relations. He calls that commensalism, cooperation and parasitism.

Two ethnic groups could live in a form of symbiosis when they don't depend on each other. And commensalism is a kind of relations when if the relations stop, their absence would not cause any of participants some serious harm. Cooperation, ethnic cooperation is a kind of relations when the interdependence of each ethnic group is so great that if it ceases, it does cause some harm to both of the groups.

For example, when some ethnic group is concentrated on production of agricultural goods and the other on industrial instruments. If they cooperate, if they cease to cooperate, both ethnic groups could lose their possibility to survive. And there is the third kind of parasitism of ethnic group where the alliance between two ethnic groups is created so that one of them depends absolutely from the other.

And in the case of the end of this cooperation, in the case of parasitism, the group of parasites dies. And the group that has relations with it, on the contrary, is freed from some completely unnecessary dependency. Sherekhagorov studies this kind on the rich ethnographic material mostly of Siberian tribes living in the ethnic condition.

So, the other concept of Sherekhagorov that influenced much ethnic sociologists and above all German ethnic sociologists, for example, Wilhelm Müllmann considered Sherekhagorov to be his teacher and considered Sherekhagorov as founder of ethno-sociology. The other important point of his teaching, his theory was psycho-mental complex. He has written a book published only in English, not in Russian, because Sherekhagorov was in the 30s in immigration in the Far East after revolution in the 20s and 30s and worked there in China, communicating with European researchers and academic circles.

So, he has published the book Psycho-Mental Complex and Shamanism. Studying the specific set of attitudes, social, psychological, mental and cultural that forms the phenomenon of Siberian Shamanism. So, he was one of the first explorers of Shamanism as a phenomenon.

And he was one of the brilliant anthropologists studying this subject. So, Mircea Eliade, Romanian specialist in religions, cited in his works and in his main work on Shamanism, Archaic practices of ecstasy, very much Sherekhagorov and basing mostly his own concept on Sherekhagorov's work, Psycho-Mental Complex. So, Psycho-Mental Complex

of Tungus, that was Tungus or Psycho-Mental Complex by Tungus.

That was the book published in 1935, 2 years before the death of Sherekhagorov. So, important point in studying of this Psycho-Mental Complex, that is also called Ethnographic Complex. Because, according to Sherekhagorov, in Shamanism and Sacred Practices of Ecstasy, there was a concentration of the cultural code.

So, he affirmed that the phenomenon of Shamanism could not be reduced to a kind of mental illness. Sherekhagorov stressed the point that Avangs or Tungus or other Siberian tribes living in ethnic conditions know very well what is mental illness. And they distinguish these mental ill persons from the Shaman.

The Shamans are completely different. They could master, they could control their specific ecstatic state. They could provoke them, that could fall on them and that could quit them by their will.

So, it wasn't a kind of uncontrolled mental disorder. It was a special ritual and special state necessary for existence of ethnic community. And the Shaman as the central figure of the ethnos was studied by Sherekhagorov.

Sherekhagorov affirms that Shaman is central not because he is chief, not because he is king, not because he is considered to be higher than other members of society. But because he is the most conservative person in the ethnic group. He conserves.

He is a healer. So, he is dealing with the situation of some entropy. So, when there is the illness, when there is some problem, when there is a catastrophe of natural, social, personal, individual or collective character, the Shaman should restore it, should improve it, should repair the reality.

So, in this he accomplished central function in the society. And his psycho-mental complex is oriented for this goal. To repair the reality that could be broken or could be damaged.

So, Shaman also, his rites and the stories and practices and functions, all of that is designed to restore the same. Because, for example, illness is a danger, a risk to lose something, for example, life or physical integrity. So, Shaman needs to repair this and why he is a healer.

But he also fights against the evil spirits that could represent danger for the nature, for the society, for the rituals that are necessary to accomplish and to transmit to the other generation. Also, the Shaman plays a very important role in the conception of the fetus, accompanying the dead to the realm of the fathers. So, he is an active person in birth and in the death.

He helps the dead to arrive to the land of the first sacred beer fathers by Tungus and to

bring from the same land of the beer bear fathers the germ of the newly born person. So, he accomplishes this cycle of eternal return, conceived as a main sense of the ethnic existence, of ethnic life. So, the psychomental complex of Tungus is precisely this psychomental complex centered by Shamanism as the main figure in fulfillment of the eternal return.

And also as an agent of this eternal return and not as a chief. Ethnology developed by Sherakogorov and his main theories and the principles of his doctrine, his study, all of them are foundation, basis of actual ethno-sociology. He could be considered not only as distinguished anthropologist, sociologist, ethnologist, but also as the founder of ethno-sociology.

Not only Russian, but also German. And the fact that Murman and Thurnwein considered Sherakogorov as a teacher and as a founder of their own discipline, ethno-sociology, it is also valid for this discipline at Inghul. So, Sherakogorov wasn't accepted as an academic person in Soviet period.

And that was a great damage for Soviet anthropology and ethnology, because without Sherakogorov they could not find important sources to construct a really relevant science in the field of ethnology and ethno-sociology. Being considered bourgeois or tsarist or not communist and immigrant, he didn't play an important role in the Soviet ethnology. And that is a real problem, because without that it was not capable to construct some coherent and interesting discipline.

And the second part of this lecture I would like to speak a little about Lev Gumilyov, that is the other important Russian theorist of ethno-sociology. Okay, that finishes the first part of the lecture on Russian ethno-sociology on Sergei Sherakogorov. And the next section will concern the famed Soviet era sociologist and ethno-sociologist Lev Gumilyov.