Abstract

The main subject of the presented work is the question of power within the context of sociological theory, and in relation to the mechanism of psychological mimesis and the phenomenon of the sacred. Our starting point is René Girard’s mimetic theory, which systematizes the relationship between the mechanism of psychological mimesis and the sacred – in the light of the phenomenon of violence.

We, firstly, present Girard’s mimetic theory, explicate its main concepts, and situate all into a broader context. Further, we critically examine Girard’s theoretical scheme and come to the conclusion that his theoretical and conceptual framework calls for a revision, if it is to be utilized within the context of sociology and social theory.

Consequently, we try to „sociologize“ Girard’s thinking. First, we position his line of thought into the wider sociological context, and then examine his theory in the light of thinking of two classical sociologists, Gabriel Tarde and Émile Durkheim. We then project this examination into a theoretical and conceptual synthesis on the basis of which we formulate our own conceptual scheme, which is based on the assumption of psychological mimesis as an anthropological constant, and which overcomes the main shortcomings of Girard’s theoretical framework.

On the basis of this new conceptual scheme, we further examine the phenomenon of power, and formulate our own theoretical framework (so called generative theory of power), which is based on the theoretical and conceptual synthesis in the „Girard-Tarde-Durkheim“ line of thought.

Our theoretical framework conceptualizes power as one of three main social patterns, besides violence and the sacred, and proposes their typology. Our theory also firmly schematizes and systematizes the relationship between violence, the sacred, and power, as key sociocultural factors; and does this on a common foundation – that is on the basis of psychological mimesis.

One of the main theoretical conclusions of the presented work is the finding that social patterns – as mimetic constellations (matrices) – structure the (psycho)social space, by which they determine the dominant traits of collective action and collective consciousness. Our theory thus predicts that the changes in the internal structure of social patterns will be accompanied by changes (according to our typology) in areas that are constitutive of collective action and collective consciousness.

Keywords:
René Girard, mimetic theory, psychological mimesis, violence, sacred, power, sociological theory, Émile Durkheim, Gabriel Tarde.