

## **Abstract**

Today sociological research focuses on feelings such as empathy and altruism. The objective is to explain why certain individuals act violently in particular situations. The answer is that these behaviours are often the results of obedience, imitation and cooperation. The ultimate goal of this thesis is to analyse an event that marked the history of our country, trying to find a source for this happening. Thus, I proposed to analyse the Diaz case in a different light in order to investigate the root of what happened in Genoa during the G8 in 2001. In order to understand the dynamics that characterize the individual interactions, I mentioned in my work several authors. They have tried to identify how the social and the individual component are important, and why and in which cases acts of extreme violence are result of acquiescence and conformism. My thesis is composed by three chapters:

In the first chapter, in order to explain how this theme is placed in the methodological debate, I introduced the individualist model and the collectivist model. For the first approach, it is appropriate focus on individual interactions as consequences of rational choices in order to understand certain social phenomenon. Human behaviours are the result of rational choices. The social phenomenon is the unintentional result of intentional human actions. According to this approach, society is considered as a result of the behaviour of the individuals who compose it. Even if people are subject to rules of various kinds,

they have partial autonomy and are more or less unpredictable. For the second one, in contrast to the first, it is necessary to focus on the interests of the group that individuals belong, and shows how a decision initially judged as purely individual may be the product of social forces. Concepts such as class, status, party, family structure, etc. correspond real entities. Without them, there would be no actions of individuals. Collectivist orientation can be divided into two approaches: the Durkheim functionalism, according to which you should refer to the norms, values and social organizations; and Marxist one, which gives a primary role to the relationship of structural origin and the conflicts that result.

I later analysed the phenomenon of obedience to authority and I mentioned as examples of ruthless practices of violence several historical events and experiments carried out by sociologists. I reported the case illustrated by Christopher Browning. Battalion 101, a branch of the German police force, composed primarily of workers, ordinary people, it was able to accomplish the massacre of an entire Jewish population in Jozefow. This behaviour, according to Browning, is sourced from the innate and voluntary submission to authority and decisive pressure group in the context of the. This is also because they felt empowered by the fact that the military authorities asked it. In fact, Stanley Milgram's experiment on obedience phenomenon highlights the importance of some factors: the physical presence of authority, prestige, clothing and its legitimacy. The experiment take place in this way: the guinea pig have to inflict electric shocks, increasingly strong, to an actor, who is in the other room, whenever answer incorrectly. Those factors profoundly influence the attitude of the individual, so that he perform acts that he himself would despise in normal

conditions. It follows that the power and authority play a fundamental role talking about violence. Studying this phenomenon is also important to consider the conformism. In this regard, Solomon Asch has conducted an experiment: he showed to a group of people (composed by one guinea pig and the rest by accomplices) the image of two lines. When asked what was longer, although the response of the accomplices was clearly wrong, the guinea pig conformed. This happens because of a primitive need of the individual to be part in a context, and then be reassured. At the base there is the concept of *informational pressure*. According to this concept other individuals in our group, or those who are superior to us, may have more information for valuate. All of this has a strong weight on the manifestations of group violence.

However, not only criminals and monsters implement these violent actions. Hannah Arendt in fact took into consideration the case of Nazi hierarch Eichmann. What she says is that the danger of this man is that he is completely normal and banal. He led a life of mediocrity: it was a lacklustre student, his father directed him choosing a job, and then a friend suggest him to enter in the Nazi party. It was not motivated by any ideology that he felt his, and he had not even read Mein Kampf. He just complain about the conditions of the Treaty of Versailles, as any German made. Although the push for a military career did not leave by himself, but by an officer who directed him. It was lacking in initiative, cultural depth and slavishly followed orders that his superiors gave him. So anyone can be Eichmann, a man simply lowered into the reality in which he live. Philip Zimbardo's experiment also showed this. He asked a group of students at the University of Stanford to play the role of prisoners or jailers. The experiment

was supposed to last 2 weeks, but was interrupted before. Students who interpreted the guards became very violent; the "prisoners" had reduced their personality drastically becoming much more malleable. They had become the role they played. The pretended prison had become real. This allowed a process of irresponsibility. The consequences of what they did were legitimate by the role that they covered.

So anyone can be evil in certain contexts, and exercising certain roles. In relation to this Bauman argues that the human ability to perceive has been decreasing because deprived of the ability to imagine and then to make automatic connection between its actions and the devastating effects that may ensue. Lack of imagination translates into not aware of what it is done. So by man resulting tragedy for thousands of people.

In the second chapter I explained the events that took place in Genoa during the G8 in 2001. On the evening of July 21, between twenty-two and midnight, there was the raid by the police in schools Diaz, Pertini and Pascoli. Among the 93 activists arrested, 61 were taken to hospital (3 in critical condition and 1 in a coma). For this reason assistant chief Michelangelo Fournier called it "Mexican butcher" and were placed on trial 125 members of the security forces. Therefore, I wanted to reconnect to the previous arguments stressing the importance of the context in which it operates. Starting from the statements by the former General Secretary of the Silp Claudio Giardullo, saying that the political dimension should not be overlooked when analysing the facts, I have highlighted the relevance of issues such as obedience and acquiescence to authority, with the unfolding of events. Security policies, the orientation of a

government and the discretion given to the police are key factors that affect the actions of political actors. In a government in which, in fact, security becomes the most important factor of public policies, it is inevitable that the attention to certain values, freedom and civil rights, overshadowed. It is precisely here in my opinion that there is the root of what happened in Genoa. Agents felt protected in carrying out arrests in response to the previous devastation of the city, to redeem the image of the police accusation of inertia. This has led to the brutality of the events. Moreover, the position held in society plays a fundamental role and it brings to a dehumanizing acts. It does not allowing the full understanding of the actions that we do, and it excludes an overview of the effects of the actions in a moral framework. To demonstrate this we must refer to the judgment of April 10, 2013 in which the judges tried to impose alternative punishments to the sentenced. A key requirement would be the repentance of these individuals, or getting aware of their responsibilities. But 12 years later there was not visible sign of repentance. Pareto, about the distribution of power within society, distinguishes between ruling elites and non-ruling elites. The first are those that directly or indirectly influence government policy, while the latter are those who hold positions of prominence in society, but did not influence political decisions. Consequential, considering police as non-ruling elite, an important aspect of socialization is the creation of particular attitudes in respect of these roles. They were no longer citizens, members of a community to protect, but the armed wing of a public policy extremely defensive, in which the most basic civil rights are subordinated to a more urgent security needs. The atmosphere was that of a civil war. The character of guerrilla attributed to these clashes was also caused by the behaviour of the police department: it had put in place tight security, and

suggested a kind of military training to counter any event during the period of the G8. It is true that operator of the Police is a profession that undergoes the individual to high stress. The fear of death (this is an high eventuality in a job like this, and especially in situations such as the events of the G8) implies a risk for anyone involved in public policy. This causes defensiveness that can lead to real acts of violence.

Finally, I interviewed Daniel Tissone, current General Secretary of the Silp. In order to realize an objective analysis and targeted at the same time, I wanted to ask the opinion of one who is fully inserted in this area and to provide the perspective of an "insider."

What has emerged is that certainly for police chiefs and the Executive, events like those of Genoa should no longer happen again. Emerges equally clearly that the disorganization of the vertices allowed the ineffective management of events. Then emerges that the attachment of the police to the Executive, what Tissone calls "adaptive capacity", is a strong point but even a limit. While on one hand it allows the police to reflect the orientation of the people, on the other hand they must do their best every day to stay anchored to the values of democracy and respect for the individual. It is also important to consider that the individual agent has thought it right to obey those who are hierarchically superior to him. Whether for self-interest, both for fear of a penalty. We have seen how influential can be the figure of authority in the context of violence. A possible solution in order to prevent events like this from occurring again is The School for the public policy of Nettuno. It should be implemented, in my opinion, the knowledge of the

recent history of this country, the civic culture and the level of assimilation of democratic values.

In conclusion, my path analysis developed in three distinct phases, permitted me to detect what is the real heart of the matter: the trade-off between freedom and security. The natural inclination to obedience to authority and the related individual irresponsibility, the need to conform and the context in which it operates are all factors that explain why there is the existence of actions of group violence. At the same time, this social and political problem of choosing one or the other element, face the need for internal stability and the tenacious defence of untouchable civil rights. The search for balance between these needs determine the characteristic and the behaviour of the various actors in the political and social life.