

INTRODUCTION

*We exist in a sea of powerful histories: They are the conditions of finite rationality and personal and collective life histories. There is no way out of stories, but no matter what the One-Eyed Father says, there are many possible structures, not to mention contents, of narration. Changing the stories, in both material and semiotic senses, is a modest intervention worth making.*¹

Changing times always urge us to look back upon ourselves and move again to an open position regarding our most fundamental beliefs to examine them and evaluate how adequate they are for the demands and dynamics of our present times. This kind of exercise can and should be applied to every sphere of human life, in every human creation.² An era marked by an astonishing outburst of segregation, genocide, terror and progressive social demoralization is a clear sign of the need of asking ourselves why violence seems to be so ubiquitous yet so accepted in our contemporary political discourses. Why our forms of being in the world are rooted in the language of violence?

It is in this sense that the International Relations discipline cannot be left apart from such an important task. Karl Deutsch described this discipline as an “area of human action where inescapable interdependence meets with inadequate control.” With this he meant that “[w]e can neither escape from world affairs nor wholly shape them to our will. We can only try to adjust the world while adjusting to it.”³ Therefore, any attempt to ‘adjust the world while adjusting to it’ should be able to show its concern and awareness of non-monolithic thought systems and a multiplicity of units of analysis and perspectives. As a consequence, there is a need to continuously examine and question key concepts in politics and IR to

¹ Donna Haraway, *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium.FemaleMan_Meets_OncoMouse* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 45.

² See the views of Immanuel Kant and Hannah Arendt on *sensus communis*, the enlarged mentality on the Kantian Maxim of Enlarged Thought and Arendt’s first volume of *The Life of the Mind* (Florida: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1978), 94.

³ Karl Deutsch, *The Analysis of International Relations* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1968), v.

ensure that they remain both useful and sensitive to changing times and changing circumstances. With the advent of new conditions and phenomena, such as terrorism, global migration flows, internal ethnic and national upheavals, arms and drugs trafficking, transnational mass communication and financial networks, etc., this task seems ever more pressing. Such new conditions require fresh explanations and, perhaps as importantly, their effects on more traditional phenomena, concepts, ideas and paradigms requires us to revisit and even to reformulate our traditional views of them to realign them with our current sociopolitical reality.

In response to these needs, several significant changes in focus have emerged over the last 15 years within International Relations. For example, the attention paid to culture and identity as important issues that should be analysed and taken into account by theorists and practitioners alike. Terms such as ‘Politics of Culture’ or ‘Political Identity’ have become increasingly common within political and international relations theories after the end of the Cold War.⁴ The emergence of these new ‘moves’ together with the significance of identity and culture as elements of analysis should be considered a response to the demands of our new sociopolitical phenomena. Hence it is of deep importance to point out a few problematic elements of such changes in the following paragraphs.

We live in an era marked by the turbulence provoked by global reach phenomena, transnational turmoil and the disruption of the modern national states’ order. In our times, the traditional state-owned methods of conflict resolution and constrained international organizations have proved to be lax. Although the end of the Cold War marked a ‘triumph’ of the West, this circumstance has not ruled out what Pierre Hassner adroitly calls its

⁴ See Yosef Lapid, Friedrich Kratochvil, *The Return of Culture and Identity in IR Theory* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1996).

condition of “victorious but paralysed” with consequences for a state who has become “fixated on an imaginary enemy yet inactive in the face of real horrors”, thus affecting “civic life and democracy, the nation and Europe, prey both to globalisation and internal crises of identity, confrontation and the combined power of money and violence, in a situation of political disorientation and incoherence.”⁵ Events such as the terrorist attacks on New York, Washington, London and Madrid suggest that currently the menace of violence and terror is present in every part of the world, not only in the ‘undemocratic, underdeveloped south.’ The end of the Cold War made us think that we entered into a new era of peace, where violence is less likely as the number of inter-state violent conflicts has decreased. However, I would follow Hassner in his contention that “we are paradoxically subsumed in a period of ‘nuclear peace,’ “founded on a new technical stability” which coexists with “social anarchy, founded on a state of permanent psychological instability.”⁶ The ‘triumph’ of the West was supposed to bring order to our traditional political interactions, peace, even in the terms of such technical stability was supposed to come, however, “[t]he world appears to be at the beginning, not of a new order but of a new nightmare.”⁷ The apparent stability that ‘unipolar’ systems are believed to bring does not mean that violence has not been eliminated or even reduced, it simply has become “more indirect, more roundabout, and less easy to predict or calculate.”⁸ In short, political violence manifests differently.

[P]olitical aggression does not consist in trying to destroy one’s adversary, or the system of which he is part, but in attempting to sap the sources of his unity and

⁵ However, I would not only refer to Europe, but also to the rest of the countries that are part of the ‘West.’ I consider that each of its parts undergo particular circumstances and sets of events that in the end coincide with Hassner’s observations on Europe. Pierre Hassner, *Violence and Peace: From the Atomic Bomb to Ethnic Cleansing*, trans. Jane Brenton (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1997), 5.

⁶ Hassner, *Violence and Peace*, 40.

⁷ Charles William Maynes, “Containing Ethnic Conflict,” *Foreign Policy* no. 90 (Spring 1993):5, 6.

⁸ Hassner, *Violence and Peace*, 42.

strength, and promote, not revolution, but a mixture of paralysis and anarchy. Perhaps... that is the substitute for conquest, for the overthrow of alliances, and it is also a way of insuring against the total collapse of the system or any radical transformation of it.⁹

Hassner's claims seem to confirm themselves in the international sphere. Paradoxically, the most prominent IR discourses assert the stability of a unipolar world order and create terms such as 'nuclear peace,' yet our contemporary experiences are marked by the sensation that peace seems to be the exception to an almost perennial state of warfare. The fictional peace brought by the end of the Cold War was soon broken by the declaration of an indefinite 'war' on terror, according to the traditional belief that violence is the last resort for solving any international dispute.¹⁰ Whether or not we are immersed in times of war or peace according to dominant discourses, such kind of superfluous discussions pay a blind-eye to new forms of political aggression by responding to them in traditional terms of war as it is the case of the current war on terror. What is worse, they bypass the side-effects of violence and political aggression within societies, their impact on 'ordinary' people. Such assumptions ignore the aftermaths of warfare and terror that permeate social and communal structures and permit the threat and use of force to become the 'natural' means by which social interactions are to be exerted. In other words, "[w]hat happens when 'disordered' violence becomes a dominant way of being for a society? What happens when violence both contributes to, and undermines the very act of 'making sense' within a community?"¹¹ The answer that Desjarlais and Kleinman have for their own question is that "[a]ny society that relies on disordered violence as a first-tier political order risks the

⁹ Hassner, *Violence and Peace*, 47.

¹⁰ For example the realist and neorealist conceptions of international relations which consider war as an inherent element of human life. See Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State and War: A Theoretical Analysis* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1959).

¹¹ Robert Desjarlais, Arthur Kleinman, "Violence and Demoralization in the New World Disorder," *Anthropology Today* 10, no. 5 (October, 1994): 11.

destruction of that moral order and, consequently, the shared customs, epistemologies, and sensibilities that we know as ‘culture’.”¹²

The symptoms posed by our contemporary times urge us to reformulate our most traditional, dominant, unquestioned configurations and notions such as the nation-state, power and state sovereignty. IR must not put obstacles to the transformation that our political reality increasingly demands. In order to do so, it must adequate and incorporate questions that were traditionally not taken into account by its dominant discourses. IR must rethink its boundaries and palliate the current injustices that take place within them in order to examine how adequate they are for minimizing the numerous outbursts of violence and their new manifestations. Since this thesis is specifically concerned with the question of violence, I will now address particular problems IR faces regarding the study of this phenomenon.

1. Particular Problems: Violence, Human Degradation and Mainstream IR Theories

This thesis attempts to engage the debate of violence in the arena of theoretical discussion. Chaos and fragmentation are phenomena that affect both the core and periphery, however, my claim is that although much has been written since the beginnings of the 1990’s, the academic sphere has not been completely successful in keeping pace with this set of events. Although the outbursts of violence have been varied and numerous, their actual instances remain rare and are obscured in the literature due to methodological errors and to immense mischaracterizations of regions, based on almost mythical perceptions.¹³ Likewise, Desjarlais and Kleinman claim that

¹² Desjarlais, Kleinman, “Violence and Demoralization,” 11.

¹³ Rogers Brubaker, David Laitin, “Ethnic and Nationalist Violence,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998): 424.

[w]e can and should develop new theoretical models to understand what is at stake in the social experience of violence and demoralization... Questions on the social construction and destruction of meaning, moralities and political orders are crucial to these considerations... Most important is to be honest about how little we know and how limiting are the most traditional approaches to the subject.¹⁴

Both assertions make obvious that the concept of violence in several important studies lack a thorough theoretical base. A focus on explaining the instances of violence is absolutely crucial if its manifestations are to be understood, addressed morally, contained and hopefully minimized. And more importantly for the scope of this thesis, we must not forget that in any manifestation of violence, whether we talk about terrorism, genocide, hunger or racism, a great deal of human dignity is at stake. If we continue to ignore this fact we will continue to regard ordinary people, those who suffer the consequences of any decision taken in the arena of 'high politics' as *superfluous* and unimportant, as mere extensions of states and systems.

In the light of these pressing demands it is my hope to contribute to the general objective they define from the perspective of IR. I consider that some current 'valid' theories and methodologies for assessing and understanding violence have a limited scope in fully grasping the questions this phenomenon implies. The most dominant IR theories in a general sense are severely flawed for a number of reasons. 'Mainstream' 'orthodox,' 'classic' or 'traditional' IR theories are those construed under the rigorous, modern tenets of rationalism, which pursues scientific objectivity and conceives the international realm fixed under positivist, empiricist terms.¹⁵ Traditional theories pretend to allocate the methodologies of the natural sciences in those concerned with the explanation of the social world and many of them regard the enlightened version of the nation-state as their central

¹⁴ Desjarlais, Kleinman, "Violence and Demoralization in the New World Disorder," 11.

¹⁵ Steve Smith, "Positivism and Beyond," in *International Theory: Positivism and Beyond*, eds. Steven Smith, Ken Booth and Marysia Zalewski (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

unit of analysis. Among the main traditional theoretical stances, realism has been the most prominent and influential school. Classical realist theorists are Hans Morgenthau, George Kennan, Henry Kissinger, etc. In short, they believe that agency in international affairs is located in states. They conceive power, in the form of domination as central to international politics,¹⁶ where one of the main objectives of states is the pursuit of their particular idea of ‘national interest.’ The world-view of realists such as Morgenthau, Kennan and Kissinger was developed from the “balcony of statesmen,” the three of them were independent advisers of statesmen and diplomats.¹⁷ As a consequence, realism, influenced by these prominent views is typically marked by a top-down, state-centred view concerned with issues of ‘high politics,’ where only dominant states have a say in international affairs.

Mainstream postures such as realism have *isolated* IR from debates developing elsewhere on main philosophical issues. If IR is usually conceived as essentially interdisciplinary, its dialogue with disciplines such as philosophy, sociology or anthropology –which have been more successful in moving away from positivism- has been rather meagre, mostly due to the pre-eminence of realism which has defined the parameters of study of IR as a whole.¹⁸ Considering all these tendencies, we sadly find ourselves subsumed in an insular, excessively Western, one-sided discipline that relies on alien modes of explanation to reproduce “utopian visions of idealised communities”.¹⁹ IR

¹⁶ John Williams and Anthony Lang Jr., “Introduction,” in *Hannah Arendt and International Relations: Readings Across the Lines*, eds. Anthony F. Lang, Jr. and John Williams (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 5.

¹⁷ Douglas Klusmeyer, “Hannah Arendt’s Critical Realism,” in *Hannah Arendt and International Relations*, 120.

¹⁸ Albert J. Paolini, *Navigating Modernity: Postcolonialism, Identity and International Relations*, eds. Anthony Elliot and Anthony Moran (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1999), 31.

¹⁹ Christian Reus-Smit, “Realist and Resistance Utopias: Community, Security and Political Action in the New Europe,” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 21, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 28. A paradoxical assertion! Hans Morgenthau contrasts “the realist ‘science of international politics’ with naive utopian internationalism” when in the end the ‘realistic’ element in realism is susceptible to fall in utopianism and disengage itself from a supposed ‘real’ state-centric world. Reus-Smit, “Realist and Resistance Utopias,” 2, 3.

theories lack philosophical depth. As a result, the supposed ‘reality’ that mainstream theories are believed to explain according to an order of ‘truth’ is reduced to nothing but a means to reproduce dominant ways of acting and thinking.²⁰ An obvious consequence is the systematic exclusion of what is considered ‘policy irrelevant’ such as ordinary people; moreover, “for an explanation to be useful a great deal of human dignity is left in the cutting room floor.”²¹ Mainstream IR theories are reduced to tools that legitimate the rules of the game set by a few people, what is worse, they are believed to be immutable in a modern fashion. Conversely, the reification of empiricism in IR has permitted positivist theories to determine what can be studied, since it has fixed what kinds of things exist in international relations. Empiricism has pointed out a reliance only on ‘relevant’ ‘facts’ subject to empirical testing.²² As a consequence, rational calculation and utilitarian procedures are believed to be “theory neutral”.²³ However, it is mostly ignored that the modern approach behind such an empiricist tendency has permitted “a privileging of questions about how the world is to be known, and thus about how knowledge is to be justified”.²⁴

Today it can be claimed that traditional IR theories maintain a certain degree of ‘explanatory’ power,²⁵ this means that their tenets are self-evident and can be confirmed in the daily events and actions of the international arena. It is not very difficult to agree with

²⁰ Marysia Zalewski, “‘All these theories yet the bodies keep piling up’: theory, theorists theorising,” in *International Theory: Positivism and Beyond*, 351.

²¹ Cynthia Enloe cited by Zalewski, “‘All these theories yet the bodies keep piling up,’” 351.

²² For implications on how ‘testability’ affects the inclusion of ‘reflective’ or ‘alternative’ theories into the mainstream see Smith, “Positivism and Beyond,” 12. R.B.J. Walker, *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). 82-83. Richard K. Ashley and R.B.J. Walker, “Speaking the Language of Exile: Dissident Thought in International Studies,” *International Studies Quarterly* 34, no. 3 (September 1990): 266.

²³ Smith, “Positivism and Beyond,” 11.

²⁴ Walker, *Inside/Outside*, 53.

²⁵ Reus-Smit, “Realist and Resistance Utopias,” 28. Walker, *Inside/Outside*, 18.

the claim that states are still ruled by the anarchic dynamics and rationalist prescriptions of realism. However, such 'obvious' characteristics are flawed in many ways. Terrorism, genocide or environmental damage make it impossible to think in structural terms or to believe that the geopolitics of realism are adequate measures to solve the outstanding number of ethnic conflicts around the globe.

Concerning the study of violence, mainstream IR theories have tended to overlook it and take it for granted. Assumptions similar to the Waltzian one I exposed, where violence is considered the last resource for settling disputes, or following the Clausewitzian tradition, politics by other means, overlook the experience of demoralization and losses of human dignity. Mainstream IR is used to taking into account almost only one kind of violence: war, and the debates surrounding it revolve on the assumption that states are the only relevant agents for the discipline. Therefore, discussions engaged in the analysis of the effects of violence, even in the form of war, downplay the experiences of ordinary people who suffer from it in direct or indirect forms. Hence, traditional IR, by privileging the abstract and the systemic, has typically failed to notice that not only war, but other forms of violence such as racism, xenophobia, hunger, poverty or unemployment must be of the concern of the discipline. This posture indeed contributes toward considering superfluous the role of ordinary people in the international realm as they are of no significant concern for the decisions that have to be taken in the arena of 'high politics,' their impact on the grass-roots is simply irrelevant. Given this, mainstream IR does not have the proper conceptual tools to analyze the roles of ordinary people in moulding the international realm, it denies them a potential role of *agents*. This superfluous and secondary role considered to 'normal' persons has thus put obstacles for the analysis of the impact of 'high politics' decisions on them. If we take this even deeper, the superfluous status conceded to

ordinary people has obscured the possibility of asking ourselves which characteristics of our current political structures contributes toward such superfluosity. We must not forget that extraordinary violence does not simply explode out from nowhere. The first step toward its cases is found in our ordinary ways of thinking, loving and being in the world,²⁶ the preparation for mass killing is found in social sentiments and in institutions ranging from the family to schools, churches, hospitals and the military. Therefore, rethinking the place and role of common people in our international realm is crucial if we want IR theories to reach a deep understanding and address the problem of violence and its impact on those who suffer most from it.

The path toward a conception of violence is an extremely difficult task. It could be argued, following Stanley Hauerwas and John Berkman,²⁷ that the highly context-specific nature of violence restricts the scope of any conception of the term. The conclusion that follows from this revolves around the claim that “attempts to define ‘violence’ outside any context of language and culture-in-use must be considered sorely inadequate.”²⁸ This may well be a valid claim and I would certainly not contest the idea that violence must be understood from a contextually informed perspective. However, given that the loss of several lives and human dignity is lost because violence is believed to be an extension of politics, Hauerwas and Berkman’s claim here should not be taken to imply that a deeper exploration of the concept of political violence would not be highly useful. Since violence appears to be a self-evident question in international affairs, a theoretical basis for such concept would be an interesting exercise capable of providing a richer and deeper view of

²⁶ Nancy Scheper-Hughes, “Violence Foretold: Reflections on 9/11,” in *Violence in War and Peace*, eds. Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 225.

²⁷ Stanley Hauerwas, John Berkman, “Violence” in *Dictionary of Ethics, Theology and Society*, eds. Paul B. Clarke and Andrew Linzey (London: Routledge, 1996).

²⁸ Hauerwas, Berkman, “Violence,” 866.

our international realm and would contribute to address in a more detailed manner the effects of violence on common people.

It is clear that violence is the most practical of issues that requires the most practical of solutions. However, just because this is so does not mean that the theory behind the practice should be skimmed or left aside. It is for this reason that a deeper exploration of how violence can be understood and conceptualised at a primarily theoretical level is absolutely crucial, not only as an interesting theoretical exercise that has, to date, received less attention than it should. It is also important because doing so might well provide a more solid conceptual groundwork on which practitioners and academics concerned mostly with empirical studies of violence can base their own important research. Indeed, it is almost certain that a deeper exploration of violence at the conceptual-theoretical level will have some implications for the methodological frameworks of future theories of violence and its impacts on ordinary persons. However, given the contemporary lack of study in the area of conceptual groundwork, this is also almost certainly a project that will take much time and work within a variety of interdisciplinary fields all providing their own unique perspective.

My hope in this thesis is to merely provide the very beginnings of this task in a few small, but important ways. The first is by demonstrating that conceptions of violence in current literature are theoretically underexplored and therefore excessively vague. The second is that, in doing so, I will attempt to raise the profile of the importance of a deeper conceptualisation of violence and its dehumanizing effects within current academic debate in the hope of stimulating further study on the subject. The third way in which I hope to contribute to the debate is by highlighting the conceptual work on violence of a philosopher who is not usually considered to be an important resource for international relations theory.

The thought of German-American philosopher Hannah Arendt (1906-1975) can be of great use for IR theory. It is my view that her unique views on politics and seminal work on violence²⁹ can be used to highlight both the central ambiguities and problems theorists experience in finding a deeper conceptualisation of violence. Her work is useful to explore and illuminate that the connections between superfluousness and violence are perhaps even closer than many contemporary academics are prepared to claim. For this reason, I attempt to demonstrate that her work is an important resource that could be used very fruitfully to compliment, expand and enrich certain areas of international relations theory, even though she is almost unheard of in many IR academic circles and dismissed outright in others – largely for the somewhat peculiar approach of her work and for its level of conceptual difficulty. Either way, I have not been able to find many published works in the field of international relations that even cite her work, let alone focus on it. In my view, such attitudes to her work would be mistaken in a number of respects. She is arguably the only thinker who has seriously attempted to ‘unpack’ the concept of violence in a deep and sustained manner. She is also the only thinker whose work on violence is deeply linked to a similarly deep conceptual exploration of the concept of politics, the public realm and, most importantly for this thesis, political identity and activity. Therefore it is my contention that Arendt can make a useful contribution toward an alternative concept of violence, which is urgently needed.

Arendtian thought cannot be easily located within a specific theoretical tendency, and as she once claimed, she could not care less about it, the limits of standard political categories frustrated her, and for this reason, she was never a systematic thinker.³⁰ Maybe

²⁹ Hannah Arendt, *On Violence* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1970).

³⁰ Williams, Lang, “Introduction,” 3, 22 note 12.

these characteristics provoked that her theory was not taken particularly seriously during her lifetime and, indeed, is only beginning to be acknowledged for its groundbreaking insight in the political theory and philosophy of the last ten years or so. It is my hope to show that her growing impact in political philosophy can and should be extended into the realms of international relations. I believe that the uniqueness of her approach will provide us with alternative perspectives that can be highly illuminating for our understanding and conceptualising new forms of violence that are becoming increasingly common in the globalised, interconnected world of our contemporary era.

2. Main arguments, central hypotheses

My main objectives throughout this dissertation will be to highlight the need of new conceptual perspectives that are capable of casting a new light upon the relation between violence and what I will call human superfluosity within the International Relations discipline. I attempt to prove that it is of decisive importance to move away from rational state-centred theoretical models if we want to understand the dynamics of violence and the production of superfluosity. Violence, I will show, is an element that should not be taken for granted in international relations. If this is correct, it follows that a proper assessment and understanding of the interactions between violence and superfluosity as well as an awareness of the implications of both elements should be helpful to solve the problems this relation poses both in the theoretical and practical spheres in a way that will be helpful to palliate the conception of violence as an inherent element in every dispute. It is in this sense that Hannah Arendt's particular view of violence and superfluosity is unique and, if taken seriously, can prove significantly useful in an era where even the most basic of political and IR concepts are becoming increasingly disarticulated and essentially contestable.

The main hypothesis of this thesis is therefore that *Hannah Arendt can make a significant contribution to current theories of International Relations*. The specific contribution I will highlight in this thesis is her *concern with the study of violence and superfluosness*. I hope to show how some important elements of her thought should be considered useful to the International Relations sphere. The purpose of my main hypothesis takes me to establish as one of the sub-hypotheses that *current mainstream IR assumptions are insufficient to understand in depth the relation between violence and superfluosness*. Such lack of theoretical tools for understanding the deep relation between violence and superfluosness *is caused by a crisis of the traditional formulations and practices of fixed concepts of state sovereignty violence and the overlook of persons as agents in the international realm*. Such crises obscure the fact that what I will call the *management of lives* caused by the superfluosness of persons is *a form of violence* due to the depth of the relation of both elements.

Even though this thesis is mainly engaged with theoretical discussion, this does not mean that it should not attempt to provide any practical application. From this perspective, the analysis of the question of what I will call new terrorism will be the framework upon which I will intend to validate my third hypothesis. I will demonstrate that *an alternative understanding of both the concept and the dynamics of violence and superfluosness is crucial to understand and solve some major contemporary problems that derive from the relation of both elements*.

3. Structure and Content

Chapter one will provide an exploration of Hannah Arendt's thought, specifically with a reading of her concepts of identity and politics with the purpose of getting familiar with their peculiarity and complexity. The examination of her concepts of politics, action,

plurality, natality, agonism, etc. will provide the general framework upon which I will criticise the ‘perversion’ of politics in our contemporary political models. The second stage of this chapter will consist on the analysis of traditional state sovereignty, where I will assert that it is a fictional order that marks where the political community resides. I will contrast such traditional views of state sovereignty with a conceptualization of it as socially constructed. This move will allow me to claim how real sovereignty is located in ordinary people and how they can make sense of a political community in a more flexible way than the state does. This exercise will have the purpose of drawing and emphasizing the role of ordinary persons in moulding our international realm in contrast with the state-centred utopianism of mainstream international approaches.

The task of the second chapter is twofold. On a first instance it will deal with the problem of the production of superfluousness. I will argue that outdated concepts of state sovereignty that are present in our political structures make it possible to render superfluous the lives of ordinary persons. Arendt’s contributions on the matter will be valuable because her reflections on totalitarianism will serve as the main point of reference for developing this argument. Hence the next step will consist on a critical assessment of IR’s traditional conceptions of violence, I will compare them with Arendt’s notion of violence as distinct from her peculiar understanding of power and will show how this conceptual distinction can be a fruitful contribution to IR theory. By the end of the chapter I will analyze in depth the relation between the production of human superfluousness and violence from an Arendtian perspective in order to provide a more detailed picture of the extent to which this relation can take us, which basically is a state of isolation. Moreover, an extreme state of isolation might lead to loneliness, which for Arendt is inherent to a state of terror.

The final chapter of this dissertation will intend to demonstrate the importance of the conclusions and notions analysed in the first two chapters applied in the case of post-9/11 politics. In a general sense, the chapter will emphasize which have been the consequences of not developing a proper conceptualisation of violence and human superfluousness. In order to pursue this task, first I will expose Arendt's conceptualisation of terror and show how it is reflected in the practices that intend to palliate terrorism such as the 'war on terror.' By arguing that post-9/11 politics intend to mitigate terrorism with terror, I will expose one of the most extreme cases of this tendency through a criticism of the situation of Guantánamo inmates. After verifying Arendt's insights on violence and superfluousness in the case of the war on terror, for the last section of this chapter I will draw some Arendtian principles such as forgiving and promising that could possibly contribute toward construing alternative measures to palliate terrorism. I will also argue that her notion of space in-between, taken to an international sphere could be a fruitful contribution to this attempt.

It is time now to start focusing our attention on some crucial elements of Arendt's thought to show how her perspectives can be applied toward the reconfiguration of our international realm of theories.