

My hope in this thesis is to demonstrate that conceptions of violence in current literature are theoretically underexplored and therefore excessively vague. 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. I hope to contribute to the debate 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 violence can be used to highlight both the central ambiguities and problems theorists experience in finding a deeper conceptualisation of violence. I claimed that traditional formulations and practices of fixed concepts of state sovereignty, violence and the downplay of persons as agents obscure the dynamics of violence and superfluosity. It also was crucial to state how fixed concepts of sovereignty and mainstream IR disregard of persons as agents in the international realm are problematic in contrast with Arendtian thought. I claimed that current mainstream IR assumptions are insufficient to understand in depth the relation between violence and the superfluosity caused by the management of lives. According to Arendt, our current political structures were close to totalitarianism since they enact mechanisms for producing superfluous, apolitical lives which are only supposed to survive but not to act in a space of plurality.

Finally, an alternative understanding the concept and the dynamics of violence and superfluosity is crucial to understand and solve some of the major contemporary

problems that derive from the relation of both elements. The case of new terrorism, post-9/11 politics and the 'war on terror' are a suitable, up-to-date framework that I hope permitted me to show how Arendt's meditations can contribute to IR's sphere in more practical cases.