

Abstract

This thesis aims to comprehensively analyse the theories of violence and non-violence in the work of leading contemporary political philosophers - Judith Butler, Giorgio Agamben, Étienne Balibar and Slavoj Žižek. The thesis first offers a historical excursus into the development of the concept of violence, tracing its transformations from classical theories to the present. It then examines how contemporary political philosophy in general views the concepts of violence and non-violence, identifying key trends and debates in the field.

The main part of the thesis focuses on a detailed analysis of the concept of violence in the aforementioned thinkers. For Judith Butler, the thesis examines her concept of non-violence. Giorgio Agamben is analysed with an emphasis on his theory of state violence. For Étienne Balibar, the thesis focuses on his conception of the relationship between violence and politics. Slavoj Žižek is examined in terms of his dialectical approach to violence.

The thesis concludes that contemporary theories of violence depart significantly from traditional conceptions, emphasizing structural and symbolic forms of violence. It also identifies a growing trend towards problematizing the clear distinction between violence and non-violence, especially in the context of globalization and new forms of conflict.

The practical part of the thesis applies the theoretical findings to the current Russian-Ukrainian conflict. Through a critical discourse analysis based on an interview with Judith Butler and essays by Étienne Balibar and Slavoj Žižek, the thesis examines how these philosophers respond to the 2022 invasion. The analysis reveals the tension between the philosophers' theoretical positions and their responses to the concrete geopolitical situation.

The thesis concludes by arguing that contemporary philosophical approaches to violence and nonviolence, while providing sophisticated analytical tools, often encounter limits when applied to real conflicts. The thesis suggests that future research should focus on bridging the gap between abstract theory and concrete political practice, particularly in the context of the changing nature of global conflicts.