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Theories of Terrorism and Counterterrorism: The Epistemological Potential of Philosophical-Ethical Theories of the 17th to Early 20th Centuries

Abstract. The article is devoted to the study of the epistemological potential of philosophical-ethical theories from the 17th to the early 20th centuries in the context of analyzing terrorism and developing counterterrorism strategies. The authors examine the ideas of Thomas Hobbes, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Immanuel Kant, and Max Weber, particularly Hobbes's concept of statist terror, which justifies state violence as a means of maintaining order; Rousseau's concept of the «general will» as a critique of violence through direct democracy; Kant's categorical imperative as an ethical condemnation of terrorism; and Weber's theory of legitimate domination, which explains the motivations of terrorist organizations through the ethics of conviction and charismatic legitimacy. The study emphasizes that philosophical theories reveal the underlying causes of terrorism, such as social inequality, ideological motivation, and the loss of moral law, while also offering ethically justified approaches to combating it. The analysis integrates philosophical, ethical, political, and sociological perspectives, contributing to the development of a comprehensive approach to countering modern forms of terrorism, including cyberterrorism and international terrorism. The authors highlight the importance of ethical justification for counterterrorism strategies to ensure their effectiveness and societal legitimacy.

Keywords: terrorism; counterterrorism; etatist terror; epistemology; philosophy of the modern era; 19th–20th century philosophy; ethics; political ethics; Max Weber; legitimate domination; charisma; legitimacy.

Introduction. Terrorism, as a challenge to national security, is constantly evolving, taking on new forms such as cyberterrorism and international terrorism. The study of philosophical-ethical theories from the 17th to the early 20th centuries in the context of analyzing terrorism and counterterrorism is relevant due to the growing global challenges associated with terrorist activities. The philosophical legacy of Thomas Hobbes, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Immanuel Kant, and Max Weber provides conceptual tools for understanding the nature of terror and terrorism and the ethical principles for addressing them in social life. Understanding historical philosophical concepts contributes to the formation of a comprehensive approach to analyzing terrorism, combining philosophical, military, ethical, political, and sociological perspectives. The relevance of the study also lies in the fact that modern counterterrorism approaches often focus on technical aspects (e.g., security technologies), while philosophical-ethical analysis reveals the deeper causes and moral dilemmas associated with this phenomenon. This is particularly important for developing counterterrorism strategies that are not only effective but also ethically justified.

The aim of the study is to analyze the philosophical-ethical theories of the 17th to early 20th centuries (specifically the ideas of T.Hobbes, J.-J. Rousseau, I.Kant, and M.Weber) to identify their epistemological potential in understanding the nature of terrorism and developing counterterrorism strategies.

The Degree of Research of the Problem. The philosophical legacy of thinkers from the modern and contemporary eras is the subject of scholarly investigations by Ukrainian and international researchers. Various aspects of violence-related issues have been analyzed in the works of philosophers from this and other periods. Although the potential of philosophical-ethical theories from the 17th to early 20th centuries has not been comprehensively studied, individual fragments have been reflected in academic discourse, particularly at the intersection of philosophy, political science, military science, and sociology. For instance, the issue of analyzing social violence in the history of philosophy and terrorism as a form of violence has been addressed in the works of V.Sliusar [19; 20; 18]. American researcher Helga Varden conducted an in-depth analysis of Anders Breivik's terrorist attacks in Norway on July 22, 2011, through the lens of Kantian philosophy, exploring why Breivik's mental state caused profound societal concern and evaluating the Norwegian legal system's capacity to address such extreme crimes [7]. In his work Hobbes, der Terrorismus und die Angst in der Weltpolitik. WeltTrends, A. Vasilache examines the role of fear in politics and the transnational strategy of fear employed by modern terrorism, drawing on Thomas Hobbes's theory, which views fear as a key factor in state formation [8]. Ian Turner analyzes how Rousseau's ideas could theoretically justify the UK's counterterrorism legislation post-September 11, 2001. The author concludes that J.-J. Rousseau occupies an intermediate position, closer to liberty than T.Hobbes but less liberal than J.Locke, and partially justifies the UK's security approach [6]. In his article Evaluating Terrorism within The Framework of Weber's Ethics, Action and Authority Concepts, Erol Bulut analyzes terrorism through Max Weber's concepts of ethics, action, and authority, arguing that terrorist organizations are more inclined toward the ethics of conviction, value-rational action, and charismatic authority. The author concludes that these characteristics allow terrorist organizations to remain flexible, avoid criticism, and attract new members, but they may threaten their long-term existence due to international pressure.

Main Material. The analysis of philosophical-ethical theories from the 17th to early 20th centuries that enable the study of various aspects of terrorism and counterterrorism involves examining the philosophical legacy of Thomas Hobbes as a precursor to the theory of statist terrorism, the core principles of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's «general will» concept as a critique of violence, the content of Immanuel Kant's categorical imperative as an ethical principle condemning terrorism, and Max Weber's political theory on the essence of the legitimacy of the state's monopoly on violence in the context of analyzing terrorism and defining counterterrorism strategies.

In Thomas Hobbes's philosophical legacy, there is no direct analysis of terrorism, as this phenomenon was not yet conceptualized during his time. His theory of the social contract and the role of fear in governing society are significant for understanding this phenomenon [2; 3; 13].

According to Hobbes, the state serves as a tool for ensuring order in a society that, in its natural state, exists in a condition of «war of all against all». Humans are driven by natural egoism and the desire for self-preservation, which collectively lead to the dominance of violence. To avoid this, people are compelled to enter into a social contract and transfer their rights to a sovereign, who, in turn, receives absolute authority to maintain peace. Fear of death, according to Hobbes, is a material and universal motivator that encourages people to seek peace and submit to the sovereign [2]. The philosopher thus justifies the use of state terror, as it prevents a return to the aggressive natural state. This underpins the idea of statist terrorism as a controlled application of fear by the authorities, which manifests in citizens as the need to obey laws, avoid punishment, and submit to coercion [9].

The sovereign is granted unlimited authority to use methods of violence to preserve social order, giving fear the status of a moral force. Fear of the sovereign aims to achieve pragmatic goals – preventing rebellions and deterring potential criminals from illegal actions. Fear, emanating from a single center of power, replaces regular direct violence with the potential threat of its use to discipline citizens. To this end, the state employs corresponding rituals, establishes symbols, and demonstrates its power. However, Hobbes acknowledges the possibility of citizens refusing to obey the sovereign's orders if they contradict fundamental principles (a position that reflects the beliefs of proponents of non-state terrorism). Against those who commit crimes against the state by attempting to overthrow the socio-political order, the harshest punishments are justified. At the same time, the philosopher emphasizes that punishment should primarily target leaders and ideologues who incite such actions, while severe punishment of ordinary, uninformed individuals is unjust, as their ignorance is partly due to deficiencies in education, for which the sovereign is responsible.

In Jean-Jacques Rousseau's philosophical legacy, there is no direct analysis of terrorism, as this phenomenon was not yet conceptualized during his time. His concept of the «general will» (volonté générale) is significant for understanding this phenomenon, particularly in preventing terror [17].

Jean-Jacques Rousseau further developed the theory of the social contract, which assumes that people can agree without resorting to aggressive actions against one another [16]. Equality in the natural state is disrupted by private property, leading to conflict between the rich and the poor and, consequently, the emergence of the

state. This results in political inequality, which is overcome by the usurpation of power by a despot, establishing a state of equality – equality in the deprivation of rights. The way out of this condition is a popular uprising against the despot, leading to the overthrow of their power and the establishment of true equality and freedom as the highest values of human existence. The concept of the «general will» is based on the theory of the social contract and involves each individual transforming their own strengths into a collective asset under the supreme guidance of the general will, where the part reflects the whole. The generalized will of citizens is directed toward the common good, possessed by every citizen whose actions are aimed at the public good, as opposed to their particular will (volonté particulière), which they have as private individuals. The general will expresses the interests of the entire political body, not the sum of individual desires, and is formed through the participation of all citizens in voting, where each expresses their opinion without submitting to particular interests. Thus, sovereignty, according to Rousseau, is inalienable and belongs exclusively to the people, who exercise it through direct democracy [17]. Social existence is the manifestation of natural and civil freedom. Natural freedom is physical freedom of action, while civil freedom is the freedom of social life. The former is limited by the physical condition of the individual, while the latter – expressed through the general will – represents public interests and collective opinion. Virtue is interpreted as the alignment of an individual's particular will with the general civil will, requiring the rejection of egoism and self-love to establish «public happiness», where a person becomes «truly the master of themselves».

In Immanuel Kant's philosophical legacy, there is no direct analysis of terrorism, as this phenomenon was not yet conceptualized during his time. His concept of radical evil and its ethical-political implications, as well as the principle of the categorical imperative, are significant for understanding this phenomenon. Kant's philosophical ideas provide the foundation for a comprehensive approach to understanding terrorism, combining ethical, political, and legal perspectives.

The principle of the categorical imperative, central to Kantian ethics, is significant for understanding the ethical dimension of addressing terrorism. It requires acting in accordance with universal moral laws, independent of personal interests. Every action is determined by practical reason based on factors: maxims (subjective principles) – personal rules of action expressing an individual's will; and imperatives (objective principles) – morally relevant rules and commands [5]. Imperatives are hypothetical (conditional rules determined by the necessity of achieving a specific goal or desire) and categorical (apodictic rules, absolutely obligatory). The coercive nature of the categorical imperative stems from the nature of sentient-rational beings, who, due to various «obstacles», do not always act morally. The categorical imperative is universal, grounded in reason, and realized through several formulations: the formula of universalization and the formula of natural law, the formula of the end in itself, the formula of autonomy, and the formula of the kingdom of ends [14].

The formula of universalization – «Act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law» – and the formula of natural law – «Act as if the maxim of your action were to become through your will a universal law of nature» – require actions to be evaluated based on their potential to serve as a rule for all, meaning everyone in an identical situation would act as you do. For example, if someone intends to lie for personal gain, they must ask: Is a world where everyone always lies possible? The categorical imperative is unconditional and universal. The formula of the end in itself – «Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means» – emphasizes respect for human dignity and prohibits using others to achieve personal goals. The formula of autonomy – «The idea of the will of every rational being as a will giving universal law» – stresses the autonomy of the will, as moral principles arise from reason itself, not from consequences or emotions. The formula of the kingdom of ends – «All maxims ought to harmonize with a possible kingdom of ends, as with a kingdom of nature» – adopts a deontological stance, focusing on duties rather than consequences [15].

Duties are classified as perfect – strict moral requirements (e.g., prohibitions on lying or violence) that must be followed under all circumstances, as they are grounded in universal moral law – and imperfect – flexible requirements allowing choice in their realization (e.g., helping the needy or self-development). Perfect duties ensure the protection of fundamental human rights, while imperfect duties encourage humanitarian aid based on social solidarity.

Kant's concept of radical evil is also relevant for analyzing terrorism. Evil lies beyond religious interpretation and opposes the moral law. Radical evil, resulting from a deviation from the moral law, manifests in three forms: Gebrechlichkeit (weakness), Unlauterkeit (impurity of motives), and Bösartigkeit (malice). The first, the mildest form, appeals to the «weakness of human nature», where a person acknowledges their duty but justifies failing to fulfill it due to insufficient strength. This is evil as weakness of will. The second form involves a subject claiming to act out of duty, ostensibly guided by ethical motives, but in reality driven by pathological motives. Unlike the first form, this involves self-deception, mistaking pathological motives for duty due to a misunderstanding of its nature. This is evil as self-deception. In the third form, the subject loses an internal sense of duty as a moral agent, perceiving morality merely as a set of external rules imposed by society to limit

egoistic interests. In this case, notions of «right» and «wrong» lose meaning, and adherence to accepted moral rules aims to avoid consequences. This is evil as the loss of an internal moral sense.

The most radical form of evil, according to Kant, involves a subject consciously choosing evil as their maxim (principle of action), rejecting the moral law and subordinating their actions to entirely amoral motives, where evil takes the form of its opposite. Although Kant describes this as a radical manifestation of Bösartigkeit, later philosophical discussions labeled it «diabolical evil» (evil for the sake of evil). Unlike the three described forms, this extreme form of evil is impossible for humans, as they are beings with a moral law by nature [4]. Thus, even the most heinous crimes have a pragmatic basis rather than «pure» amorality.

Max Weber's theory, particularly his concepts of political ethics, types of social action, and the theory of legitimate domination, is a crucial tool for analyzing terrorism [11; 12; 10].

Violence is a decisive force in political activity and carries the risk of fracturing social cohesion. According to Weber, the primary sources of antagonism are the qualities that drive individuals to political activity. A politician must possess three qualities: passion, a sense of responsibility, and a sense of proportion, forming a triad of «devotion to a cause – accepting responsibility for that cause – a psychological factor preventing negative consequences of the former components.» Political activity depends on the subject's ability to balance passion and restraint; otherwise, it transforms into extremism. Political ethics becomes paramount. Achieving any ethically good goal may have ethically dangerous consequences, as it inherently allows for the justification of outcomes. Based on the relationship between goals and consequences, Weber distinguishes two forms of ethics: the «ethics of conviction» and the «ethics of responsibility.» The former focuses on the goal without regard for consequences (acting for the sake of the goal, shifting responsibility to others or divine will), while the latter holds the politician accountable for the outcomes of their actions [11]. Weber's theory highlights that terrorist organizations predominantly rely on the «ethics of conviction» in evaluating their activities, prioritizing the establishment and maintenance of a state of fear. Thus, based on Weber's theory, counterterrorism policies must balance both ethics, while terrorist organizations rely solely on the ethics of conviction.

In his work Economy and Society, Weber introduces the concept of «social action», which refers to human behavior imbued with a certain meaning, always involving an attitude toward objects with understanding, where a (subjective) meaning exists or is implied, regardless of how well it is understood. Internal behavior is social action only when oriented toward the behavior of others. Weber identifies four main types of social action based on their causes (ranging by degree of rationality): purposive-rational, value-rational, affective, and traditional. Purposive-rational action is directed toward achieving a specific goal, with means and methods rationally calculated, and goals and means establishing a causal relationship. Value-rational action is oriented toward a conscious belief in the unconditional intrinsic value (ethical, aesthetic, religious, etc.) of certain behavior, regardless of its outcome. Affective action is driven by emotions, arising spontaneously or in response to an event, determined by current affects or emotional states (e.g., revenge, piety, or sensual pleasure). Traditional action is a «reaction to familiar stimuli, toward a previously formed disposition», based on ingrained social behaviors and norms perceived as habitual [10].

Social actions oriented toward values, affects, and the ethics of conviction play a significant role in shaping the activities of terrorist organizations. For terrorists, performing an action is often more important than achieving a specific goal, though the rationality and meticulous planning of terrorist acts must be noted (e.g., the September 11, 2001, attacks demonstrate a rational choice of means to achieve a goal, or the targeting of energy infrastructure by cyberterrorists). The same type of social action governs the recruitment and financing processes of terrorist organizations. Their activities share characteristics with affective social actions, as they are also driven by the desire to vent anger toward «enemies» or satisfy a sense of revenge. Value-rational action orients terrorists' activities toward the social significance of the struggle itself, rather than its outcome. They often label themselves within their communities as «fighters for justice», «defenders of oppressed groups», or «righteous ones.»

Building on the idea that power in society gains recognition and support through legitimacy, Max Weber distinguishes two types of power: power as authority (characterized by legitimate application) and power as coercion (illegitimate, achieved through threats and violence). Based on the trust of subjects or citizens in power, Weber identifies three «ideal types» of legitimate domination: rational-legal, traditional, and charismatic. The first is based on established rules, with its purest form being bureaucratic domination. Laws are enacted and amended through formal procedures, and the power structure functions as an enterprise with organs of power, including heteronomous and heterocephalous structures. Obedience is directed not toward individuals but toward rules, with subordination distributed hierarchically and subject to appeal procedures. Traditional domination is based on belief in the sanctity of ancient orders, with its purest form being patriarchal domination, where the community submits to the ruler out of reverence for their lineage. Formal law is absent, material principles of justice prevail in governance, and orders are limited by tradition, the violation of which undermines legitimacy. Outside tradition, governance is exercised at the ruler's discretion. The absence of formal law is a key feature of all traditional forms of domination. Charismatic domination is based on devotion to a leader due to their unique qualities (e.g., magic, heroism, or oratory), with the purest examples being the domination of a prophet or

military hero. Followers submit to the leader through faith in their charisma, which persists only as long as their qualities are confirmed; otherwise, domination dissipates. Charisma rejects traditions and established rules, creating new norms through revolutionary ideas or force [12].

Terrorist activity is a significant threat to the legitimacy of power, serving as a stimulus for authorities to strengthen political, legal, economic, and other institutions. In the context of studying terrorism, the theory of legitimate domination reveals the nature of certain terrorist organizations that mimic rational-legal structures by creating their own «pseudo-state» institutions (e.g., the Donetsk People's Republic, Luhansk People's Republic, or the Islamic State). This also applies to their justification of activities by appealing to «laws» and «rules», declaring either the illegitimacy of existing power or their own legitimacy. Thus, one direction of state activity is establishing the rule of law and transparent legitimation procedures. The rejection of the rational-legal type and the adoption of an alternative – raditional type – characterizes the activities of terrorist organizations rooted in religious fundamentalist ideologies. They typically position themselves as «defenders of tradition», legitimizing their power through traditional norms and belief in the «sanctity» of local customs. Regarding the third type, the charisma of a terrorist organization's leader fosters the devotion of its followers. Belief in their supernatural abilities is significantly amplified today through media idealization and heroization, particularly via social media, as traditional democratic media do not promote terrorist activities.

Conclusions. The philosophical-ethical theories of the 17th to early 20th centuries, particularly those of T. Hobbes, J.-J. Rousseau, I. Kant, and M. Weber, provide conceptual tools for analyzing terrorism and counterterrorism. Hobbes's ideas allow for the analysis of terrorism through the lens of his concept of statist terror, where the state uses fear as a tool to maintain order, justifying violence to prevent the chaos of the natural state of «war of all against all». However, Hobbes also acknowledges citizens' right to resist immoral orders from the sovereign, reflecting motivations to prevent state terror. At the same time, in describing the characteristics of non-state terrorism, he emphasizes the need for severe punishment of its ideologues. Jean-Jacques Rousseau's concept of the «general will» identifies the sources of state terrorism (social inequality caused by private property), which is overcome through direct democracy. His social contract theory suggests that uprisings against despotic power that violates the general will are a path to restoring true equality and freedom, which may explain the motivations of some terrorist movements directed against unjust regimes. Immanuel Kant's ideas enable the analysis of terrorism through the categorical imperative, which condemns violence as a violation of universal moral laws, demanding respect for human dignity as an end, not a means. Kant's concept of radical evil reveals the motivations behind terrorist acts, including weakness of will, self-deception, or loss of moral sense, while emphasizing that even the gravest crimes have a pragmatic, not irrational, basis. Max Weber's theory of legitimate domination allows for the analysis of terrorism by explaining how terrorist organizations mimic rational-legal structures, appeal to traditional norms, or use the charisma of leaders to legitimize their activities. His concepts of political ethics and social actions explain terrorists' motivations, which rely on the «ethics of conviction» and combine value-rational and affective actions.

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Слюсар В., **Вітюк І., Куташев І., Савіцький В.**

Теорії тероризму та контртероризму: гносеологічний потенціал філософсько-етичних теорій XVII-поч. XX ст.

Анотація. Стаття присвячена дослідженню гносеологічного потенціалу філософсько-етичних теорій XVII – початку XX століття у контексті аналізу тероризму та розробки стратегій контртероризму. Автори аналізують ідеї Томаса Гоббса, Жан-Жака Руссо, Имануїла Канта та Макса Вебера, зокрема концепцію етатистського терору Гоббса, яка виправдовує державне насилля як засіб підтримання порядку, концепцію «загальної волі» Руссо як критики насильства через пряму демократію, категоричного імперативу Канта як етичного засудження тероризму та теорію легітимного панування Вебера, що пояснює мотивацію терористичних організацій через етику переконання та харизматичну легітимність. Дослідження підкреслює, що філософські теорії дозволяють розкрити глибинні причини тероризму, такі як соціальна нерівність, ідеологічна мотивація та втрата морального закону, а також пропонують етично виправдані підходи до боротьби з ним. Аналіз поєднує філософські, етичні, політичні та соціологічні перспективи, що сприяє формуванню комплексного підходу до протидії сучасним формам тероризму, включаючи кібертероризм та міжнародний тероризм. Автори акцентують на важливості етичного обґрунтування контртерористичних стратегій для забезпечення їхньої ефективності та суспільної легітимності.

Ключові слова: тероризм; контр тероризм;, етатистський терор; гносеологія; філософія Нового часу; філософія XIX-XX ст.; етика; політична етика; легітимне панування; харизма; легітимність.