THE CONCEPT OF EVIL IN WESTERN POLITICS

Cecilia González Gómez
2 Batxillerat
Tutora: Ruth Zamora

This project examines the relationship between political power and the concept of evil in Western political thought, exploring whether evil is inherent to politics or whether it emerges from flawed systems, harmful ideologies, and a lack of moral responsibility.

The theoretical section analyzes five key thinkers: Machiavelli, who separates ethics from political effectiveness; Hobbes, who sees evil as arising from fear and chaos, requiring absolute authority; Arendt, who introduces the "banality of evil" to explain obedience-driven atrocities; Orwell, who exposes how language and truth can be manipulated; and Marx, who locates evil within exploitative economic structures. It also addresses 20th-century totalitarian regimes such as Nazism and Stalinism.

The practical section applies these philosophical perspectives to the 2020 U.S. presidential election, examining the discourse of Joe Biden and Donald Trump. Biden's campaign focused on unity and moral restoration, while Trump's emphasized fear, nationalism, and institutional distrust. Both relied on rhetorical strategies that reveal deeper mechanisms of political manipulation.

The study concludes that political evil is not inevitable but emerges when power operates without ethical limits and when manipulation, propaganda, and a lack of accountability prevail. Even democratic systems are vulnerable to subtle forms of political wrongdoing, including misinformation and polarization. Ultimately, the project argues that politics must be guided by values, truth, and civic responsibility if it is to serve society ethically.