Report Part Title: CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

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In the following section, we start out by clarifying our key concepts (2.), before we sketch out existing research on coercion and outline the innovative potential of the research program envisaged (3.). Following this, we propose an analytic heuristic (4.), on the basis of which we highlight key research topics and preliminary lines of research (5.).

2. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

The concepts "coercion" and "peace" are located in a complex semantic field to which other contested concepts such as power, domination, violence, war, and sanctions belong. The more broadly those concepts are defined, i.e., the more strongly "conceptual stretching" occurs (see Sartori 1970; Collier/ Mahon 1993), the greater are their overlaps and ambiguities. For this reason, it is necessary to state the core concepts of the research program with sufficient precision so that they offer a conceptual framework within which various research questions can be examined and reasonable political and normative conclusions drawn.

2.1 TOWARDS A DEFINITION OF COERCION

Coercion is often – in a narrow sense – understood as external influence on an actor, by means of the threat or actual use of force, in order to bring about behavior that would not otherwise occur (Schelling 1966; Ellsberg 1975; Freedman 1998; Byman/Waxman 2002). The concept of coercion focused on the use of violence as a means of applying pressure is, however, too narrow if the everyday use of the concept and the variability of social practice is kept in mind. In fact, even IR scholars who focus on coercion through (threats of) military force normally acknowledge that coercion can also include purely non-military means such as economic sanctions (Art 2003: 7; see also Art/Greenhill 2018: 14; George 1991: 4−6). But non-military forms of coercion with which actors can be forced to do something they would not otherwise do go beyond economic sanctions. They can also involve (threats of) psychological pressure, shaming and blaming, or the exclusion from participation in political/international institutions. In this sense, coercion reflects a continuum along which various types of *costs* are imposed or threatened in order to compel a particular behavior.[3]

Robert Nozick was the first to establish a conceptual framework for investigating coercion in terms of its necessary and sufficient conditions (Nozick 1969).[4] Almost all conceptual-philosophical debates on coercion, for instance about whether coercion necessarily implies physical force, whether merely threatening or actually applying force constitutes coercion, or whether coercion occurs

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3   In this understanding, "der zwanglose Zwang des besseren Arguments" ("the unforced force of the better argument"), which Jürgen Habermas (1981) made the core of his theory of communicative action, according to which norms and decisions are based on the uncoerced agreement of everybody involved in a discourse, does not constitute coercion. The paradoxical formulation already makes clear that such a process of communicative persuasion is less a matter of a negative external effect than of an internal process of voluntarily accepting the better argument.

4   Person P coerces Q into not doing (refraining from doing) act A if and only if: (1) P (the coercer) threatens to bring about some consequence if Q (the coerced) does A; Q understands this threat; (2) Action A, as a result of the threatened consequence, is made substantially less eligible as a course of conduct for Q than A "without" the threatened consequences; (3) P's threat is credible; (4) Q does not do A; (5) At least part of Q's reason for not doing A is to avoid the consequence that P has threatened to bring about (based on Nozick 1969: 441−445).

only when the person placed under pressure gives in or already occurs when the coercive individual makes demands, derive from Nozick's work.[5] As a result, an understanding of coercion has developed which defines it as intentional interference in the right to self-determination of an actor by threatening that costs will be incurred if the actor is not willing to make desired changes in behavior (see Anderson 2015).

Yet, as the remark by Karl Marx about the "[t]he silent compulsion of economic relations" cited above already suggests, coercion cannot be reduced to directly observable events in which identifiable agents coerce others (see Shapiro/Wendt 1992: 206–208). As approaches involving "structural coercion" have emphasized, social relationships and social structures also force people into doing things they would not otherwise do (see Ball 1978; Reiman 2012). In a similar way, in the context of contemporary debates on global justice, Laura Valentini (2011) has distinguished between an "interactional" and a "systemic" type of coercion, arguing that not only powerful agents, but also systems of formal and/or informal rules can have coercive effects on agents' freedom.

Against this background, we define *coercion as the threat and/or the actual imposition of costs on an actor that is directed towards eliminating this actor's freedom of action with regard to a specific set of actions*. This implies, among other things:

- Both actors and structures can coerce. The common element of interactional and systemic types of coercion is that both tend to eliminate an actor's *freedom* of action in a targeted way.
- Coercion is not about generally reducing an actor's freedom of action or autonomy, but involves its *targeted elimination* with a view to a specific act or set of actions. Such a targeted elimination can be "positive" in the sense that all options but one are eliminated (the actor is compelled to take one specific action), or "negative" in the sense that one option is eliminated (the actor is deterred from taking one specific action).[6]
- Coercion is *non-arbitrary* in the sense that it either reflects the intentions of a coercing actor[7] or the systematic features of a coercive structure.[8]
- Coercion, as an *attempt* or a *tendency* to force an actor (or several actors) into doing something, can fail.[9] An actor's freedom of action is never entirely eliminated.[10]

5　See however Anderson (2010), who distinguishes between Nozick's approach to coercion, which he calls the "pressure approach," and an alternative view, which he calls the "enforcement approach."

6　The distinction between compellence and deterrence has been introduced by Schelling (1966, see below).

7　Intentionality in interactional coercion, normally implies that the coercer *aims at* forcing the coerced to do (or refrain from doing) a specific act. Yet, generally speaking, coercion can also result as an unintended side-effect of an action that aims at something else. As long as the action that produces the coercive effect – that is, the action that tends to eliminate another actor's freedom of action – is intentional, we would still consider it a type of (indirect) coercion.

8　In Valentini's definition of systemic coercion, the constraining effects of systems of rule on agents' freedom have to be foreseeable, avoidable and non-trivial in order to be considered coercive (Valentini 2011: 137).

9　In this regard, we depart from Nozick's assumption that coercion must necessarily be successful.

10　As Giddens (1984: 175) has noted, even the threat of death leaves the threatened actor the option of accepting to die. And when the coerced is dead, coercion is obviously no longer possible. In this sense, also, Art and Greenhill (2018: 15) distinguish successful (wartime) coercion from victory (in terms of total defeat of the enemy): In cases of successful coercion, it is still the coerced actor who decides to act (even if there are virtually no alternative options available).

- Coercion can operate though both the *threat* and the actual *imposition* of costs.[11]
- Coercion can be violent or non-violent, as physical force is only *one* way of limiting the freedom of others.

Coercion can have different degrees of *(il-)legitimacy* according to whether it is applied through procedures that are generally acknowledged (by the coerced actor, too), is exercised by acknowledged authorities and/or is aimed at achieving generally accepted goals.

2.2 COERCION, POWER AND LEGITIMACY

The concept of coercion, as defined above, is closely related to the concept of power. In fact, Robert Dahl's famous definition – *"A* has power over *B* to the extent that he can get *B* to do something that *B* would not otherwise do."* (Dahl 1957: 202–203) – is fairly close to Nozick's conceptualization of coercion, with the exception that power refers to the *potential* to shape the behavior of another actor, while coercion connotes the actual *exercise* of power. Still, in contemporary academic debates, power is usually understood in broader terms. In these debates coercive or compulsory power is mostly regarded as a subtype of power which is characterized by a direct relationship of control between actors (see Barnett/Duvall 2005; Lukes 2005).[12] Our usage of coercion is both more specific and broader. It is more specific because, in terms of our definition, not every exercise of direct power over another actor involves coercion, but only if it aims at *eliminating* the other actor's freedom. While (threats of) costs or deprivation are never prohibitive in a strict sense, coercion implies the attempt to leave no other option to the coerced. At the same time, our concept is broader than, for example, Barnett and Duvall's notion of compulsory power, because we not only include coercion that is exercised by identifiable actors but also structural or systemic forms of coercion. The key criterion is, then, the significance of the (assumed or perceived) consequences for the actor who is to be coerced (Anderson 2015; Valentini 2011), no matter whether these consequences involve overwhelming physical violence, unbearable economic costs or an unacceptable loss in reputation, and no matter whether these consequences are produced by a specific actor or arise from existing social structures and institutions.

Another debate concerns the purposes of the actors who make use of coercion and the relationship between coercer and coerced. In the context of this research program, we are interested in coercion that constraints actors' freedom of *political* action, broadly conceived. Coercion, then, involves an attempt at political steering or control as well as a claim to rule, authority or domination (*Herrschaft*, in Max Weber's terminology). The claim to, or manifestation of *Herrschaft* immediately raises the question of the justification and legitimacy of coercion. Given that it directly infringes upon actors' freedom of political action, coercion necessarily creates a need for justification (see Nardin 2005;

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11   As in Nozick's definition, usually the coercer him/herself is seen to also be the one threatening or actually imposing costs on the coerced. Yet, interactional coercion can also involve more than two agents. In "indirect coercion", a coercer P coerces Q into doing (or refraining from doing) A by promising to shield Q from the costs threatened or imposed by a third actor X (see Emanuelson/Willer 2015: 3).

12   Barnett and Duvall (2005: 42), for instance, define power broadly as "the production, in and through social relations, of effects that shape the capacities of actors to determine their circumstances and fate," a definition that explicitly also encompasses diffuse and constitutive types of power.

Valentini 2011). Furthermore, in line with Weber (1968), we can assume that coercion – if it is to be considered a legitimate exercise of authority – requires an institutionalized setting that establishes a system of enforcement with legally sanctioned practices of coercion.[13] However, a certain degree of unjustified or unjustifiable coercion always remains. Political rule (*Herrschaft*) never simply becomes authority – it can never be based solely on consensual agreement and voluntary compliance, but always contains an element of rule enforcement, or domination.[14] Such "nonconsensual" processes are precisely where coercion enters the picture, which can therefore never be fully legitimate, as Jane Mansbridge (1997) has argued. Thus, coercion is intimately related to, and regularly provokes, resistance (Mansbridge 2015).

These remarks on legitimacy, justification and resistance suggest that the ways in which coercion is perceived by the coerced is a key issue when it comes to understanding the *relationship between coercion and peace*. From the perspective of the coerced, an act or relationship of coercion is problematic to the extent that he/she claims the kind of freedom of political action that is negatively counteracted by the coercer. Bridging our new research program on *Coercion and Peace* and its predecessor *Just Peace Governance*, we can thus argue that it is the gap between the perceived entitlement to freedom of political action on the part of the coerced and the denial of such freedom by the coercer that makes coercion normatively problematic and shapes its empirical (il-)legitimacy and effects in a given context.[15] Empirically, however, this perceived entitlement to freedom of political action is not a constant, but varies in space and time: States differ in their emphasis on sovereignty and non-interference; individuals in different societal contexts hold different notions of personal autonomy; and political communities claim varying degrees of collective self-determination. The same act or relationship of coercion, therefore, means different things to different collective or individual actors – and these varying meanings will plausibly shape the legitimacy and the effects of coercion. This suggests an additional analytical perspective that studies coercion through the lenses of ideational frames that invest the respective acts of coercion with (culture-)specific narratives, which in turn interact between groups at the international, transnational, national and local level.

2.3 COERCION AND PEACE

When investigating whether and in what way different types of coercion that aim at enforcing norms succeed, and how this affects peace, a great deal also depends upon the concept of peace. Peace research generally distinguishes a static conception, according to which peace is a state of non-violent coexistence of formally constituted actors, and a dynamic conception, according to which peace is understood as a process of decreasing violence and increasing social justice (see Czempiel 1998, 2006; Brock 2002). A narrow concept of peace, as it is understood from pacifist positions, but also

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13   In this sense, Jane Mansbridge (1997: 407–408) distinguishes between "raw" and "legitimate" coercion (but later adds that coercion can never be fully legitimate, see below).

14   See the controversy in the Journal of the German Association for Political Science (PVS): Daase/Deitelhoff 2015; Zürn 2015.

15   A key concern of PRIF's previous research program Just Peace Governance was to study the role of (diverging) conceptions of justice and related claims to perceived entitlements (justice claims) in the escalation, negotiation and settlement of international and intrastate conflicts. See Daase/Humrich (2011) and Müller/Druckman (2014).

in political realism, emphasizes the threat to peace emanating from the application of force, i.e., the destabilization of the existing order (understood on the one hand as a system of law, on the other as a balance of power). By contrast, a broader concept of peace, as it is understood by liberal or critical approaches, would be more interested in transformative aspects, including the further development of law or the enforcement of norms and values not founded on specific laws. Because both perspectives are important for analyzing the relationship between coercion and peace, it does not make sense to make a commitment to either a broad or a narrow concept of peace. In general terms, when analyzing the consequences and the legitimacy of coercion, the research program will have to examine both the short-term and the long-term effects of coercion as well as its impact on both the level of physical violence and on the quality of peace in a broader sense.

2.4 TOWARDS AN OPERATIONALIZATION OF COERCION

The concept of coercion, as defined above, constitutes an ideal type (given that freedom can never be entirely eliminated). In our empirical research, we will choose different ways of operationalizing and applying coercion – in line with the specific aims and questions of the individual research projects. Projects may, for instance, simply define the use of a specific instrument (say, the use of military force) as an exercise of coercion, without establishing empirical benchmarks that make this instrument "truly" coercive according to our definition. Other projects, however, might be interested in comparing different usages of the same instrument in coercive and non-coercive ways and, therefore, define such benchmarks (in the sense, for instance, that economic sanctions, in order to be considered coercive, have to affect a certain share of the coerced country's overall trade or GDP). In other contexts, coercion may instead be defined by the perception of the coercer (is it meant to eliminate the freedom of the other actor?) or of the coerced (is it perceived as such an attempt?). This list of options is certainly not exhaustive and will be expanded and improved when designing individual research projects.

3. OVERVIEW OF EXISTING RESEARCH

All major discussions of the origins of political order identify coercion as its basic foundation. The creation of political order responds to chaos and violence, and it succeeds to the extent that it disarms individuals and groups, subjects them to discipline, and *forces* them to coexist – more or less peacefully – according to some general rules. This is most easily seen in the form of the state as a leviathan which, through the exercise of absolute power, forces the individual to abandon the natural state and acknowledge law and justice.[16] However, the image of the leviathan also reveals the ambivalent character of coercion. It is not only the fundamental basis of order, but also the abyss on the edge of which order stands. For when coercion is imposed outside a framework of law and reason,

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16 "Therefore before the Names of just and unjust can have Place, there must be some coercive Power, to compel Men equally to the Performance of their Covenants, by the Terror of some Punishment, greater than the Benefit they expect by the Breach of their Covenant, and to make good that Propriety, which by mutual Contract Men acquire, in Recompence of the universal Right they abandon: and such Power there is none before the Erection of a Commonwealth. […] Therefore […] the Validity of Covenants begins not but with the Constitution of a Civil Power, sufficient to compel Men to keep them […]." (Hobbes 1750: 158).