

## Coercion and Peace: PRIF's New Research Program

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# PRIF REPORT

PEACE RESEARCH INSTITUTE FRANKFURT / LEIBNIZ-INSTITUT HESSISCHE STIFTUNG FRIEDENS- UND KONFLIKTFORSCHUNG



PEACE RESEARCH INSTITUTE FRANKFURT //  
**COERCION AND PEACE**  
**PRIF'S NEW RESEARCH PROGRAM**

PRIF Report 2/2018

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PRIF'S NEW RESEARCH PROGRAM

PEACE RESEARCH INSTITUTE FRANKFURT //

LEIBNIZ-INSTITUT HESSISCHE STIFTUNG FRIEDENS- UND KONFLIKTFORSCHUNG (HSFK)  
PEACE RESEARCH INSTITUTE FRANKFURT (PRIF)

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**Correspondence to:**

Peace Research Institute Frankfurt  
Baseler Straße 27–31  
60329 Frankfurt am Main  
Telephone: +49 69 95 91 04-0  
E-Mail: [wolff@hsfk.de](mailto:wolff@hsfk.de)  
<https://www.prif.org>

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The following report presents the outline of the new research program of the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF). Starting in 2018 and with a duration of at least five years, this program provides the framework for a significant part of the academic research that will be conducted at the institute.

The overall aim of the research program “Coercion and Peace” is to *investigate whether and in what way different types of coercion that aim at enforcing norms and political order succeed, and how this affects peace at the international and intrastate level*. More specifically, key research questions that will be studied in the new research program include:

- What forms and configurations of coercion actually contribute to enforcing or maintaining peace?
- How and to what extent is coercion legitimized and institutionally limited in order to fulfill this role?
- When and under what conditions does coercion become illegitimate, provoke (violent) resistance and/or endanger peace?
- What alternatives to coercion exist that give an idea of how a non-coercive yet peaceful order might look like?

In addressing these questions, PRIF aims at furthering understanding of the ambivalent relationship between coercion and peace with the ultimate goal of contributing to the establishment of peaceful orders that are as non-coercive as possible. Doing so is obviously not only of academic relevance. As the present report argues, the current accumulation of crises that are seriously challenging the liberal, rule-based world order – both in its actual form and, even more strongly, its promise – can be understood as resulting from both *too little* and *too much coercion* at the same time. Studying the complex ways in which coercion and peace relate to each other thus also promises to shed light on the current plight of the international order and its consequences for international and intrastate conflict.

Research programs are like living organisms. They evolve with the discussions and investigations they give rise to. The following outline, therefore, is not carved in stone. Nonetheless, it formulates overarching questions, crucial conceptual clarifications, and important analytical distinctions. In addition, it identifies research gaps and research topics, which will guide the development and implementation of academic studies that seek to shed light on the ambivalent relationship between coercion and peace.



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## 1. INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

Until very recently, the multilateral order as established since the end of World War II was predominantly regarded as sufficient for containing violence and allowing the establishment of peaceful relations between states. The assumption, which became the dominant one in both academic and political debates at least with the end of the Cold War, was that the world was set on a path of ever increasingly complex interdependencies (“globalization”), which were, *inter alia*, giving rise to a progressively denser web of international and transnational institutions aimed at providing global public goods (“global governance”). As a result, or so the expectation, persisting conflicts in the international system would become civilized and enclosed. While the predominant view on this emerging structure of global governance emphasized its non-hierarchical nature (see Dingwerth/Pattberg 2006; Rosenau/Czempiel 1992), scholars also noted that international organizations and regimes were invested with increasing authority (see Lake 2010, 2013; Zürn et al. 2012). With regard to procedures, international organizations developed capacities for monitoring and enforcing norm compliance, as exemplified by the dispute settlement mechanism of the World Trade Organization. In terms of substance, international norms were seen as increasingly binding states to commitments in terms of both individual (human) rights – as in the International Criminal Court and the Responsibility to Protect – and common global responsibilities – as with international climate policy and the ever-expanding global development agenda.

Current events place this narrative in question: The liberal, rule-based order is in serious crisis. Of course, this order was never as liberal or rule-based as its proponents argued. And even in the heyday of the decade following the demise of the Soviet Union it was far from uncontested. However, these days it may be facing a new quality of crisis. Challenges to the global order are no longer merely voiced from the margins, and not “only” constituted by the rise of non-Western powers such as China. Today, it is key Western players and former supporters of the liberal, international order that openly voice fundamental dissent with multilateral organizations and established international norms. In the case of the United States, which has long had an ambivalent relationship to multilateral institutions, president Donald Trump appears to be adopting decidedly unilateralist policies that, more than ever, ignore commitments made by previous governments. As indicated by the criticism of NATO and by the Trump administration’s position vis-à-vis free trade agreements, this challenge even concerns strategic US commitments that have characterized US world order policies since the end of World War II. In Europe, too, established multilateral institutions have come under serious pressure. The UK decided to leave the European Union, and nationalist movements that reject the European integration project are on the rise throughout the region. In some Eastern European countries they have already achieved power. These developments in Europe and the US are part of a broader trend that is discussed as a worldwide “democratic recession” (Diamond 2015; Plattner 2017). At the international level this is reflected in the fact that, across all regions of the world, an increasing number of governments is (once again) openly defending national sovereignty against international commitments,

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<sup>1</sup> The drafting of a research program is a collective process to which the entire staff of the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF) has contributed in one way or another. In addition, comments and suggestions by the members of PRIF’s Scientific Advisory Board were vital in the process of clarifying our thoughts and sharpening our focus.

in general, and the spread of liberal norms, in particular. In recent years, for instance, three African states decided – at least temporarily – to withdraw from the International Criminal Court, a decision that was explicitly endorsed by the African Union, and, in 2017, Venezuela initiated the process of leaving the Organization of American States. At the same time, existing international organizations seem rather ineffective in dealing with contemporary challenges, whether it is the European Union in the case of the persisting financial crisis in the Euro zone, the United Nations when it comes to the internationalized civil war in Syria, or existing arms control regimes in the face of new dynamics of armament and proliferation.

While each of these individual challenges is contributing to national, regional or global instability and thus endangering peace at the international or intrastate level, there seems to be an overarching theme, an inherent ambivalence characterizing the current situation: In a nutshell, the current accumulation of crises seems to be the result of both *too little* and *too much coercion* at the same time. With its new research program, the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF) will shed light on the current plight of the international order and its consequences for international and intrastate conflict by scrutinizing this ambivalence of coercion, focusing in particular on the relationship between coercion and peace.

On the one hand, the current state of affairs is the result of a *deficit of coercion* in international peace and security policy, as the lack of commitment to norms and the absence of measures for enforcing them demonstrate. The stalemate in the UN Security Council hinders any joint action in the case of Syria. The failure to effectively prevent the Syrian government from using chemical weapons has led many observers to applaud US unilateral air strikes as an adequate reaction to the breach of the chemical weapons ban by Syria, although these strikes were not sanctioned by international law. The European “refugee crisis” became a crisis because the EU proved unable to collectively deal with the increasing inflow of refugees and migrants. This state of affair has led to renewed interest in the question of coercion, most notably in the area of (US) security studies (Greenhill/Krause 2018; Lindsay/Gartzke 2016; Rabkin/Yoo 2014). In the opening chapter to a forthcoming edited volume aptly entitled *Coercion. The Power to Hurt in International Politics*, Art and Greenhill (2018: 4) observe an increasing scholarly interest in the ways in which “coercion works when using tools other than (or in addition to) traditional military force and by actors other than the [US]” (see also Lindsay/Gartzke 2016). From a different perspective, Jane Mansbridge (2015) has argued that in an increasingly interdependent world we need more coercion in order to guarantee the provision of public goods such as peace, security and wellbeing.

On the other hand, however, it is exactly the *prevalence of coercion* in the multilateral order that has contributed to the emergence of the current crisis. This prevalence of coercion includes, but is not limited to, the unilateral use of coercive tools. It is, for instance, the EU’s power to enforce regulations in many policy fields that makes many Europeans so skeptical of the organization. The international promotion of democracy and human rights and so-called humanitarian interventions are often resisted because they are perceived as instances of illegitimate coercive interference that violate the sovereignty of states and societies’ right to self-determination. In the case of Syria, negative experiences with the Western strategy of coercive regime change in Libya hardened the resistance

among many non-Western states to approving even non-military sanctions against the Syrian regime. Asymmetric arms control regimes have incited criticism of the control of the technology “haves” over the “have-nots,” limiting the opportunities for development of the latter. International financial institutions, such as the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund, are perceived as all-powerful and deeply unjust in their application of conditionality in target societies. Generally speaking, ever since colonization, the Global South has been subjected to “systemic dominance structures” (Wendt/Barnett 1993). And until today, the dramatic inequalities both between and within states are sustained at least in part by coercion, ranging from direct forms of military intervention, economic threats or political repression to what Karl Marx (1976: 899) once called “[t]he silent compulsion of economic relations” (see Anderson 2015; Valentini 2011). To the extent that contemporary resistance to the liberal, rule-based order stems from the very internal contradictions of this order, including its coercive features, the calls for “more coercion” cited above hardly offer a convincing solution. They will be either unrealistic (when it comes to increasing the collective capacity to enforce international norms and commitments) or counterproductive (when it comes to coercion by individual states or “coalitions of the willing”). In general, this reading instead suggests a critical perspective on “the coercive capacities [that are] essential to the construction and maintenance of international and local orders” (Barkawi 2015: 56).

Traditional theoretical debates in International Relations (IR) reflect this ambivalence of coercion. IR scholars have long problematized coercion or rather the lack thereof. Going back to Hobbes, realist and liberal institutionalist theories assume that the absence of coercion in international politics is the reason for recurring conflict. The key difference here is with the emergence of modern national states, in which the accumulation and concentration of coercive means in the hands of states have been accompanied by a relative pacification of intra-societal relations (Tilly 1990). At the international level, as long as there is no superior coercive power that is able to authoritatively solve conflicts among states, states have to take care of their security on their own. The result is a security dilemma in which all states are forced to arm themselves in order to deter potential aggressors, rendering them even more insecure than before (Herz 1974: 39). In the straightforward terms of Waltz (1979: 102): “Because some states may at any time use force, all states must be prepared to do so.” This argument also informs neoliberal cooperation theories which emphasize the necessity of coercive mechanisms to ensure compliance with cooperative agreements (for instance Downs et al. 1996; Fearon 1998).

On the other hand, critical theories and normative theories of peace stipulate that it is the prevalence of coercion that undermines or endangers peace. Here, peace means the absence not only of interstate war and manifest violence, but also the absence of “structural violence” (Galtung 1969), the “freedom from want” (Picht 1971), or at least a process of declining violence and increasing justice (Czempiel 1998). In this understanding, peace is realized by progressively renouncing violence, replacing coercion by cooperation and consent, and implementing human rights, individual freedom and global justice. In a similar way, in current IR debates, international authority is ideal-typically defined as a state of affairs in which coercion is not, or is no longer, needed (Lake 2013: 56–57; Zürn et al. 2012: 86; see also Hurd 1999).

We are thus confronted with two nearly opposite assumptions regarding the relationship between coercion and peace. While one side values coercion as a necessary means for maintaining or achieving peace, the other suggests eliminating coercion to allow peace. Looking at these two positions more closely, it is apparent that both have a ring of truth to them but both also raise more questions than they answer. On the one hand, as long as peace is not reduced to the absence of physical violence but includes a “positive” dimension in terms of procedural legitimation, social justice or individual autonomy, coercion will never coexist easily with peace. At the very least, the presence of coercion does, therefore, harm the quality of the peace it achieves. Yet, peace often does not come about of its own accord, but has to be brokered and, not unusually, actually imposed. Even scholars of non-violent resistance, such as Gene Sharp (2010: 36), defend strategies of “*nonviolent coercion*” in order to enforce regime change upon unwilling dictators. What is more, even when peace is established, it has to be secured and defended against hostile forces by coercive means. Thus, coercion is also an integral element of a peaceful order, as classical political sociology and realist IR theories maintain.<sup>2</sup>

The question then arises, when and under what conditions either side is right: Too little coercion might endanger peace by failing to ensure compliance with basic norms and institutions designed to ensure the autonomy of individuals, and it might fail to bring about peace by being unable to disarm opponents. Too much coercion in turn can cause resistance by depriving individuals of their basic rights, and, in settings where it is perceived as illegitimate, it can even provoke violence. Thus, there is an inherent tension between coercion and peace that the two positions have not yet adequately addressed. PRIF’s new research program *Coercion and Peace* is designed to do exactly this: to analyze how to achieve as much peace as possible with as little coercion as necessary. Taking into account the fact that this is certainly not a simply quantitative question of more or less coercion, the overall aim of the new research program is to investigate *whether and in what way different types of coercion that aim at enforcing norms and political order succeed, and how this affects peace at the international and intrastate level.*

To do this, we will focus on the concept of coercion and not, as has mostly been the case until now, on those of force or violence. As the discussion in this introduction has already shown, and as will be further elaborated in the following sections, the use of force or physical violence is only one mechanism through which individuals and collectives may be coerced into complying with a given political order. Key areas of study in the new research program will therefore include:

- What forms and configurations of coercion actually contribute to enforcing or maintaining peace?
- How and to what extent is coercion legitimized and institutionally limited in order to fulfill this role?
- When and under what conditions does coercion become illegitimate, provoke (violent) resistance and/or endanger peace?
- Which alternatives to coercion exist that may point towards the ideal of a non-coercive and yet peaceful order?

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2 In Gramscian terminology, the argument is that even if hegemony allows the coercive element of the capitalist state to take a backseat it remains “protected by the armour of coercion” (Gramsci 1971: 263).

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.<sup>3</sup>

Robert Nozick was the first to establish a conceptual framework for investigating coercion in terms of its necessary and sufficient conditions (Nozick 1969).<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup> 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).<sup>6</sup>
- Coercion is *non-arbitrary* in the sense that it either reflects the intentions of a coercing actor<sup>7</sup> or the systematic features of a coercive structure.<sup>8</sup>
- Coercion, as an *attempt* or a *tendency* to force an actor (or several actors) into doing something, can fail.<sup>9</sup> An actor's freedom of action is never entirely eliminated.<sup>10</sup>

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 through both the *threat* and the actual *imposition* of costs.<sup>11</sup>
- 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).<sup>12</sup> 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;

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.<sup>13</sup> 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.<sup>14</sup> 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.<sup>15</sup> 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.<sup>16</sup> 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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<sup>16</sup> “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).

the obligation of subjects to be true to the law is dissolved and resistance against the illegitimate order is justified.<sup>17</sup>

Also outside the framework of the state, coercion is studied as a decisive component of political order. Even though there is no central power of compulsion in the international system, there are various forms of more or less decentralized coercion. Examples include mediation in disputes between parties to a conflict by more or less robust peace missions (peacekeeping), the monitoring of the implementation of and compliance with international agreements (verification), the threat and imposition of negative consequences in the name of peace and security, democracy and human rights (sanctions), the enforcement of “weak” international law (international jurisdiction), or the use of military force in order to enforce peace or respond to security threats (military interventions). At the same time, these examples demonstrate the potential threat to peace intrinsically present in coercion. This becomes all the more clear when taking into account that coercion in the international system is frequently not exercised by an overarching multilateral authority (such as the United Nations) but by individual states or alliances that, even if justifying the use of coercion in line with international norms, usually (also) pursue other purposes. Therefore, even more strongly than in the context of the national state, in the international system the question of the legitimacy and effectiveness of coercion as an element of a peaceful global order arises.

### 3.1 THE NORMATIVE DEBATE

When it comes to normatively assessing coercion, there are two opposing views. The first position regards coercion principally as a violation of rights, and as problematic for this reason (Wertheimer 1987). Any restriction of a person’s free will and limitation of freedom of choice violates individual rights and undermines the authenticity of behavior and the stability of social interactions. For this reason, many theories of peace and political order regard reduction of coercion, absence of coercion or even freedom from domination as the normative ideal (see above). But not only normative theories of peace, legitimacy and authority operate on the basis of this fundamental assumption – theories that are more strongly empirical and analytical do so as well. Governance approaches, for example, emphasize the legitimacy of models of control based on “soft” forms of control, such as deliberation and learning, and eschew coercion; theories of democracy treat the reduction in state coercion as an indicator of democratization; and development theories call for local negotiation of political interventions in order to maximize internal ownership and minimize external coercion.

The second position regards coercion as normatively neutral or even as necessary for social and political orders to function and produce public goods. Coercion only becomes problematic when it is employed to achieve problematic ends (Zimmerman 2002; Sachs 2013).<sup>18</sup> Empirically and analytically

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17 “Wherever law ends, tyranny begins [...]; and whosoever in authority exceeds the power given him by the law, and makes use of the force he has under his command, to compass that upon the subject, which the law allows not, ceases in that to be a magistrate; and, acting without authority, may be opposed as any other man, who by force invades the right of another.” (Locke 1824 [1689]: 251 [§ 202]).

18 From this perspective, the key issue (and tension), then “is not between order and justice but between just and unjust coercive orders” (Nardin 2005: 262).

ically, such approaches draw attention to problems that arise as a result of “too little” coercion, for instance when cooperation cannot be achieved because no coercion or no effective coercion exists (tragedy of the commons), agreed upon arrangements are not honored because there is no monitoring, or models of order fail because rival groups cannot agree on their implementation. Against this background, Jane Mansbridge calls for abandoning resistance to coercion based on theoretical reasoning. Otherwise, in our efforts to achieve freedom we would fail to recognize the necessity of coercion and would fail to see that our political orders would be less and less able to fulfill their purpose of providing public goods such as peace, security and wellbeing (Mansbridge 2015).

The research program *Coercion and Peace* aims at contributing to this debate by focusing on the ambivalent role of coercion in establishing and maintaining peace. However, it does this less through means of normative reasoning (although perspectives of legal theory and peace ethics will play a role) and more on the basis of empirical research into the relationship between coercion and peace. The potential of such a research program to generate innovative research depends less upon studying some novel phenomenon or new theses, and much more on the systematic and comparative examination of one of the core concepts of political science in general, and peace and conflict research in particular. For, although coercion is indisputably such a core concept, in much of the mainstream debate it is still only the “other,” which serves as a counterfoil for the researcher’s own interests. Coercion serves either as a negative (coercion as the opposite of peace) or as a positive counterfoil from which there can be deviations (coercion as a set of background conditions for successful peaceful resolution) but is hardly ever itself the subject of research. In addition, most of the time, only specific manifestations of coercion (e.g., military force) are studied, without analyzing them as elements of more complex configurations of coercion that may include non-violent and/or systemic forms.

At the same time, as we show below, research that is directly dedicated to the analysis of coercion is strongly anchored in particular research fields, so that there is only a small amount of cross-field or even interdisciplinary communication and research. The intention of PRIF’s new research program is to provide both: It is focused on the concept of coercion and brings the individual research strands together by means of an analytic approach, which investigates the factors influencing coercion, its forms, consequences and legitimization in achieving and maintaining peace.

## **3.2 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH**

As we pointed out above, coercion is not a new phenomenon, but is studied in several research fields. Consequently, *empirical* findings on coercion will not be reviewed in terms of disciplinary orientations (law vs. social science vs. philosophical approaches), but in terms of these established research fields.

### **3.2.1 COMPELLENCE AND DETERRENCE**

In International Relations, following the seminal study of Thomas Schelling (1966), the concept of coercion is often divided into two types: deterrence and compellence. Whereas deterrence involves forcing an actor *not* to do some particular thing (for example, to fire a nuclear weapon), compellence

induces an actor to do some specific thing (for instance, to withdraw from an occupied territory) (see Art/Greenhill 2018: 5–6). As already suggested by Schelling (1966), this distinction usually goes together with the assumption that it is easier to stop people from doing something (negative) than to force them to do something (positive) (Art/Greenhill 2018: 18). Nonetheless, qualifications have been added which specify that for effective deterrence just as much force must be applied as for successful compellence (Peterson 1986). However, if the different psychology of the two scenarios is kept in mind in the sense of prospect theory, it becomes apparent that with increasing prospects of losses, deterrence requires less coercive effort, i.e., it is easier, than compellence (Schaub 2004). To this should be added the insight that compellence strategies are more likely to lead to war, because they occur in an environment of political escalation. A key question that is at stake in this debate is whether preventive coercion in the sense of deterrence offers the smarter and more promising strategy in dealing with emerging crises than corrective coercion in the sense of compellence (Stein 1992; Sagan 2013).

### 3.2.2 COMPLIANCE AND GOVERNANCE

Coercion is also a central category in the field of compliance research. For a long time, the goal was to show that coercion cannot explain the maintenance of international norms on its own. Whereas the *enforcement school of thought* emphasizes the role of sanctions in guaranteeing compliance with international norms (Downs et al. 1996), the *management school* assumes that in most cases international norms are respected because of their legitimacy (Franck 1990), and that failure to comply with them is often the result of lack of capacity rather than lack of interest (Chayes/Chayes 1993; Mitchell 1993). In addition, the so-called *adjudication school* emphasizes procedural elements, for example legal instruments such as mediation and international courts, for promoting compliance with norms (Abbott et al. 2000). There is also discussion of the extent to which the implementation of norms depends upon more accessible processes for interpreting them at the international level (Wiener 2004, 2008).

However, convincing states to bind themselves to complying with international rules, whether it is a matter of democracy or human rights, is also a core topic of research. Research on socialization and the promotion of democracy has explicitly investigated which strategies promote the adoption of rules. Whereas initially the view was widely expressed that coercion in the form of “conditionality” (i.e., the threat of sanctions or the promise of reward) would explain adoption of rules (Schimmelfennig/Sedelmeier 2004; Kelley 2004), in later debates the discussion was concerned with the view that (1) other mechanisms such as persuasion and teaching might lead to more extensive compliance with norms (see Checkel 2005; Gheciu 2005). At the same time, it was cautioned that (2) coercion and conditionality are quite problematic for normative reasons, and the promotion of democracy and human rights should instead be carried out through dialogue (see Kurki 2013; Wolff et al. 2014).

Against this background, coercion also plays an important role in governance research, even though governance is frequently – with normative connotations – regarded as a form of control which rejects coercion. However, the research field of “governance in areas of limited statehood” in particular has shown that the governance concept depends upon a functioning state’s coercive ap-

paratus as a background condition (Risse/Lehmkuhl 2007). Consequently, a key question of this research agenda was how to conceptualize governance in order to be able to apply it to areas of limited statehood, i.e., areas in which precisely this background condition is in question. This research has produced a number of interesting findings on functional equivalents of coercion, or in the terminology used there of the "shadow of hierarchy," and the PRIF research program will be able to build on these findings (see Börzel 2008; Risse 2011).

### **3.2.3 COERCIVE DIPLOMACY**

The theory of coercive diplomacy as originally formulated by Alexander George (1991) understands non-violent coercion as an alternative to war (see also Art/Cronin 2003). The general idea is to reinforce political demands made of another government with a threat of punishment for non-compliance. If the threat is credible and potent enough, it will persuade the adversary to comply with the demand. If successful, coercive diplomacy promises to secure a peaceful resolution of interstate disputes without the necessity of resorting to war. However, since the theory (and most of the subsequent empirical research) assumes pure rationality, full information and correct evaluation of both, the coercing and coerced actor, and largely ignores values, culture, tradition and psychological factors, the theory has neither exploited its explanatory nor prescriptive potential to the full extent (Lebow 2007: 223ff). There has been heated debate over the effectiveness of coercive diplomacy, especially with regard to economic sanctions. Applied as comprehensive trade embargoes, economic sanctions have rarely achieved their objectives as quantitative and qualitative analyses have revealed (Cortright/Lopez 2000; Hufbauer et al 1990; Hultman/Peksen 2017; Pape 1997). More targeted, so-called smart sanctions seem to yield better results, but doubts remain as to their causal effects on changed political behavior (Drezner 2011). The research on coercive diplomacy in general and economic sanctions in particular suffers from a number of problems, which are both conceptual and theoretical in nature. While research focuses on threats of punishment, in other words, negative sanctions, the promise of reward, or positive sanctions, has largely been overlooked (but see Wallenstein 2005). In addition, the concentration on a narrow concept of effectiveness in terms of changed behavior of the coerced actor seems to overly restrict the meaning and aims of sanctions. Thus a broader understanding of sanctions as tools of coercion could shed new light on sanctioning as a normative practice.

### **3.2.4 PEACE ENFORCEMENT AND MILITARY INTERVENTION**

Research on military coercion focuses on different forms of intervention which partly overlap, such as great power interventions, asymmetrical warfare or interventions in civil wars. Relatively few empirical studies concentrate on the particularly controversial issue of humanitarian military intervention. Most studies on asymmetric wars and counter-insurgency are in agreement that, with the passage of time, military successes of the more powerful parties have become less frequent and that, since 1950, successes by the weaker side predominate (e.g., Arreguin-Toft 2001; Lyall/Wilson 2009; Mack 1975; Paul/Clarke/Grill 2010). In the case of civil wars, military interventions often drag out hostilities, either through weapons deliveries or stationing of foreign soldiers. A more complex picture emerges when a distinction is made according to form, actors and alignment of the intervention (see,

for instance, Cunningham 2010; Regan 2002; Regan 2010). No other subgroup of military interventions has been as intensively studied as the deployment of peacekeepers to civil wars. A substantial portion of quantitative studies credits peacekeepers with having prevented the outbreak of further civil wars (e.g., Fortna 2008; Walter 2002). However, in contrast to this, more recent studies see no such significant effect (e.g., Joshi/Quinn 2015; Walter 2015). Humanitarian military interventions overlap with both the broadly defined category of military interventions in civil wars as well as with the deployment of peacekeepers, without being identical to either of these case types. It is striking that there is only a small number of multi-case studies of success rates and factors determining the success of humanitarian military interventions (e.g., Krain 2005; Seybolt 2007; Wood/Kathman/Gent 2012). Until now, reliable comparative studies on humanitarian military interventions that would study the effects of this type of international coercion on intrastate violence/peace have been lacking.

### 3.2.5 STATE REPRESSION, REGIME STABILITY AND INTRASTATE PEACE

In comparative research on political regimes and their transformation, coercion – as a rule associated with the state – plays a central role but is rarely addressed specifically (but see Tilly 1990). In the 1990s, in line with the governance paradigm, bottom-up dynamics (“civil society”) and horizontal or “soft” forms of control (“good governance”) were at the center of interest. Coercion, taking the shape of political repression, was mainly discussed as the negative “other” that characterizes authoritarian regimes. This changed with the debates on state failure, the return of the authoritarian development state, comparative research on authoritarian resilience as well as on the conflict risk inherent to “uncontrolled” democratization processes and fragile states. Today, scholars, on the one hand, emphasize that a state with coercive capacities is key to preventing civil wars, and building such a state has become a crucial, if problematic, task for international interventions aimed at promoting democracy and peace in post-conflict societies (see Brock et al. 2011; Fearon/Laitin 2004; Giustozzi 2011). On the other hand, research on authoritarian regimes has shifted away from a narrow focus on repression towards analyzing the interrelation between repression, as only one pillar of authoritarian stability, with other mechanisms that sustain authoritarian rule (see Art 2012; Gandhi/Przeworski 2007; Gerschewski 2013). Finally, the revolutions and civil wars provoked by authoritarian regimes (for example, in the Arab world) as well as the global trend of increasing restrictions on civil society (“closing space”) have also drawn renewed attention to the dark side of coercion-based state authority (see Brownlee et al. 2015; Carothers/Brechenmacher 2014; Poppe/Wolff 2017). However, here too there is no comparative agenda – deriving from, for example, the concept of coercion – which systematically investigates the significance and ambivalence of coercion for the organization and transformation of political orders, internal conflicts and peace.

## 4. ANALYTICAL HEURISTIC

In order to pull these largely independently existing research strands together and, as a result, to enable novel research questions and systematic comparative research, the research program will cast light on the relationship between coercion and peace in two central areas, *coercion to peace* and *coercion in peace*. In the first case, the question is whether and under what conditions and with what risks peace can be imposed upon people. In the second case, research looks at the role that coercion plays

in maintaining or undermining a given – more or less – peaceful order. These two core questions can each be broken down into five guiding questions for research, which make it possible to examine the phenomenon in a systematic manner. These questions involve the factors leading to (successful) coercion, its forms, the consequences that coercion brings, the legitimization of coercion and alternatives to coercion (see Table 1).

	<b>Coercion to Peace</b>	<b>Coercion in Peace</b>
<b>Conditions</b>	Under what conditions does coercion contribute to achieving peace?	Under what conditions does coercion serve to maintain peace?
<b>Forms</b>	What forms and configurations of coercion contribute to the establishment of peace?	What forms and configurations of coercion contribute to the maintenance of peace?
<b>Effects</b>	What effects does the imposition of peace have (for example, on the quality and durability of peace, on the formation of resistance)?	What effects does a peace order based on coercion have (for example, on the quality and durability of peace, on the formation of resistance)?
<b>Legitimation</b>	How – and how successfully – can coercion be justified as a means for establishing peace? To what extent does it seem legitimate to those affected?	How – and how successfully – can coercion be justified as a means for maintaining peace? To what extent does it seem legitimate to those affected?
<b>Alternatives</b>	What alternatives are there to imposing peace? How do these differ from coercion in form, legitimation and effect?	What alternatives are there to imposed maintenance of peace? How do these differ from coercion in form, legitimation and effect?

Table 1: Overarching questions

## 5. OUTLOOK: KEY LINES OF RESEARCH

The aim of this PRIF Report is to outline the overall research agenda that will guide a significant part of the institute's scholarly work in the upcoming years. In this final chapter, key research topics and lines of investigation are identified that will be tackled either by individual research departments (5.1) or as cross-cutting themes (5.2).

### 5.1 KEY RESEARCH TOPICS IN PRIF'S RESEARCH DEPARTMENTS

*Research Department I "International Security"* (RD I) deals with peace and conflict at the interstate level. It focuses on how states perceive and confront current and emerging security threats, develop

and implement military strategies, and perform in international organizations and institutional settings. In particular, RD I investigates the impact of geopolitical, technological and normative change on the use of force, arms control and disarmament, as well as nuclear deterrence and non-proliferation. Consequently, in the context of the new research program, RD I will address two kinds of coercion: military and non-military coercion in interstate relations. This distinction roughly corresponds to the basic differentiation between *coercion to* and *coercion in peace* presented in section 4: Non-military coercion, like, for example, sanctions, is usually applied in situations of rising tensions before a war or after a war until the defeated has fulfilled all obligations; military coercion, in contrast, is usually relevant in times of war. But it has to be kept in mind that some military missions, such as intrusion into sovereign territory with drones, while coercive in nature, might not be considered an act of “war” in a strict sense – in the case of drones due to the unmanned nature of the system (see Sauer/Schörnig 2012; Schörnig 2013).<sup>19</sup>

Lacking central authority, international politics has been the realm of mutual, decentralized coercion for centuries. States have tried to influence the fate and decisions of other states by limiting their adversaries’ choices either peacefully by diplomatic means or violently by war (Leng 1993). While the objective of influencing other states’ policies has remained stable, the means and aims of coercion have changed over time due to political, technological and normative transformations: The current shift in power from Western-liberal powers to emerging powers is having a significant impact on world order and will influence the instruments used to enforce this order. New technologies of coercion, such as new weapons systems, have changed the way in which states interact and communicate in order to compel each other to do or deter each other from doing specific things; non-state actors apply strategies such as guerrilla or hybrid warfare and terrorism to coerce states into concessions, and states have adapted to that challenge by developing countermeasures to maintain escalation dominance; finally, normative developments have restricted the use of coercive means and forced states to justify their interference with other states’ internal affairs and the use or threat of force with reference to international norms and values.

Building on previous research on power politics, military strategy, and arms control, RD I will investigate how technological, political, and normative change has affected the coercive capacity of states and, ultimately, the consequences this has on national and international peace and security.

*Research Department II “International Institutions”* (RD II) focuses on international institutions (organizations, regimes and conventions), and investigates their emergence, change over time, and effects for establishing and maintaining peace, both within states and internationally. Traditionally, international institutions are seen as having an important role in establishing and maintaining international peace and security without the need to rely on coercion in the process (Jervis 1982; Lipson 1984; Wendt/Duvall 1989; Haftendorn et al. 1999; Lake 2001). They facilitate coordination and collaboration among states and provide the basis for credible cooperation on a voluntary basis even in situations of conflict, by stabilizing expectations and promising mutually beneficial results (Keohane

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19 In addition, in context of wars, coercion is not only of a military type, but can also include non-military forms (such as sanctions).



1989; Buchanan/Keohane 2006). More recently, however, research has brought to light that international institutions are increasingly also claiming the authority to make binding decisions and that such claims often meet with resistance. Research on the authority of international institutions (e.g., Barnett/Finnemore 2004) – whether institutional, delegated, moral, or capacity-related – has demonstrated that this authority is often compromised, contested, and ambiguous, and can create dissent or even open resistance (Avant et al. 2010; Zürn et al. 2012; Daase/Deitelhoff 2015). Little is known, however, about (1) the means of coercion that international institutions possess for enforcing their claims to authority once they become contested; and (2) about the consequences the actual use of coercive means has for peace and cooperation.

RD II will focus on these two issues in exploring the coercive side of international institutions and its consequences for peace and cooperation: how coercion is institutionalized internationally (i.e., questions of *institutional design*); and what *consequences* the use of coercive means by international institutions has for peace and cooperation. While these means exist and are applied to ensure cooperation and peace, they have the potential to create and exacerbate conflict. Members of international institutions as well as those affected by their policies may hold different views about the justifiable degree of coercion an institution ought to possess, as well as where and how coercion is justifiably applied. This is particularly true in cases where international organizations use force or the threat of force to establish or restore international order (e.g., through military intervention or peace operations) but also in situations where more subtle forms of non-violent coercion are used to enforce international norms, such as through economic sanctions (Drezner 2011) or international tribunals and courts. Hence resistance to international authority may come not only from an organization's member states, but also from non-member states and non-state actors who are more or less affected by the organization's policies, for example, groups in societies subject to liberal peacebuilding (Poulligny 2006; Zimmermann 2017) or transnational environmental groups whose objective to protect biodiversity conflicts with WTO trade regulations (Rosendal 2001; Nazarea et al. 2013). In situations like this where international institutions seek to assert themselves vis-à-vis resistance, the precariousness of institutional authority and the Janus face of coercion become evident: On the one hand, coercion may help to guarantee compliance with and the stability of established norms and rules externally, and may thus help establish peace. On the other hand, it may undermine internal willingness to obey norms and follow rules voluntarily, and thus the sustainability of peace.

The central research questions that RD II will pursue through a number of related projects result from these two issues: the apparent limits of institutional design when it comes to devising coercive means by international institutions; and the ambivalence of the use of those coercive means. What are the *coercive designs* and the means international institutions have at their disposal and how do they vary over time and across issue areas? What is the *effect* of coercion, latent and manifest, on the authority of international institutions? *Under what conditions* does coercion contribute to or undermine peace, both within states and internationally? What *alternatives to coercion* do international institutions offer in order to realize their promise of resolving conflicts and establishing peace and security?

*Research Department III "Transnational Actors" (RD III)* focuses on the transnational dimension of peace and conflict. It aims at exploring coercion in the allegedly non-coercive sphere of transnational politics and its effects on international and domestic peace and conflict dynamics. This is done by analyzing transnational non-state actors both as coerced and coercing actors.

Traditionally, in IR, the transnational sphere is depicted as "free" of coercion. Coercion as well as hierarchical regulation are attributed to states. Indeed, while the regulation of various policy fields has been moved to the supranational and transnational sphere and its legitimation has also become a subject of transnational processes, institutionalized means of coercion have remained, to a large degree, in the hands of states (Leibfried/Zürn 2006; Genschel/Zangl 2008). Transnational politics, broadly understood as cross-border interactions of state and non-state actors or, in some instances, among non-state actors, in contrast, have become virtually synonymous with the concept of global governance. The latter refers to the setting and implementation of norms and rules and the horizontal production of collective goods by a variety of actors, including states and non-state actors, in different forms of co-regulation or private self-regulation (Rosenau/Czempiel 1992; Dingwerth/Pattberg 2006; Avant et al. 2010).

Global governance is often portrayed as the opposite of coercion: Legitimacy is generated by voluntary participation in governance processes and by voluntary agreements (Liese/Beisheim 2011) as well as by the effectiveness and functionality of outcomes (Dingwerth 2007; Wolf 2014). Coercive strategies are deliberately avoided and, instead, non-state actors are invited to voluntarily contribute to regulation (as illustrated in various public-private partnerships and multi-stakeholder initiatives) because of their unique resources (for example, expertise or financial power, Hall/Biersteker 2002, 203–222; Wolf 2008).

This impression that coercion does not seem to play a role in transnational politics is rather misleading because it disregards the manifold materializations of coercion which RD III aims to investigate. This includes the use of coercion both *against* and *by* transnational non-state actors. The former is most obvious in the case of armed non-state actors, such as rebels and terrorist groups, or criminal non-state actors, such as pirates, the mafia, and human traffickers, against which coercive measures are regularly applied (Jakobi/Wolf 2013). A particular issue in this regard concerns the question of how coercion affects processes of radicalization of non-state actors, in other words processes through which the individual or collective voicing of disagreement turns into disruptive protest or political violence. Currently this question is being discussed primarily in the context of Islamist terrorism (see, for instance, Biene et al. 2016) but it also applies to other forms of political resistance. Transnational governance also relies on more covert forms of coercion, for instance when "voluntary" commitments of multinational corporations are backed or even driven by the implicit threat that states will resort to coercive regulation if corporations fail to solve the problems on their own (Zerk 2006; Vogel 2008). With a view to coercion as exercised by transnational non-state actors, research will investigate how such non-state coercion is related to peace and conflict dynamics. Again, the exercise of coercion by armed groups is the most obvious example; but relevant topics also include the delegation of state coercion to non-state actors such as private security actors (Avant 2005; Dei-

telhoff/Geis 2010) or the use of disruptive tactics by transnational civil society actors (Coni-Zimmer 2012; Daphi 2017a, b; Risse/Sikkink 1999).

*Research Department IV "Intrastate Conflict" (RD IV)* deals with peace and conflict at the intrastate level. Its particular concern is with the relationship between the organization and transformation of political rule, on the one hand, and the escalation or de-escalation of intrastate conflict, on the other. In analyzing this relationship, research in RD IV systematically accounts for the social, economic and international embeddedness of political rule and intrastate peace. This includes investigating the ways in which "external" actors and forces intervene in and shape societal conflicts and political change. In the context of the research program *Coercion and Peace*, RD IV will address two key overall types of coercion: coercion at the intrastate level (internal coercion) and coercion as exercised by external actors or constituted by cross-border relations (external coercion). Both internal and external forms of coercion as well as their interplay will be analyzed with a view to understanding their ambivalent role in keeping the maintenance or undermining of intrastate peace (coercion in peace), on the one hand, and in the establishment and consolidation of intrastate peace (coercion to peace), on the other. In line with the overall aim of this research program, the main question concerning the former dimension is whether and in what way different types of (external and internal) coercion *that sustain a given political order* succeed, and how this affects *the maintenance and sustainability of intrastate peace*. In dealing with the latter, research will assess whether and in what way different types of (external and internal) coercion *that aim at reducing violent intrastate conflict* succeed, and how this affects *the establishment of durable intrastate peace*.

Coercion is a constant theme in research on the external and internal dimensions of peace, violent conflict and political order at the intrastate level – even though existing studies mostly do not explicitly focus on the term coercion. Political repression – that is violence-based coercion as exercised by states – constitutes a key factor when it comes to explaining the stability of authoritarian regimes (Gerschewski 2013), the (violent) escalation of contentious politics (Tilly/Tarrow 2007) or the risks for peace associated with regime change (Hegre et al. 2001). In terms of international influence upon political order and intrastate peace, the use of coercion by military means is an important subject in studies of democracy promotion (Beetham 2009; Downes/Monten 2013; Wolff 2015) as well as of so-called humanitarian interventions and the responsibility to protect (see Bellamy/Dunne 2016; Brock/Deitelhoff 2012; Holzgrefe/Keohane 2003; Jahn 2012). With a view to so-called failed or fragile states and related international activities of state- and peacebuilding, scholars struggle with the question of whether and how to establish a legitimate centralized authority with coercive power, which may be required for a successful transition to peace, but which is itself a difficult and violence-prone process (see, e.g., Giustozzi 2011). A further field of study is research on coercion on the fringes or beyond the state that looks at death squads, vigilantes or armed revolutionary organizations, traditional leaders, religious authorities, or even large corporations; here, studies analyze the interplay of state- and society-based coercion in the establishment of sociopolitical orders with varying consequences for intrastate peace (see, e.g., Kreuzer 2012, 2017)

The focus of existing research on repression, non-state violence, armed resistance and military international intervention implies that the issue of coercion is mostly addressed in terms of an ac-

tor-centered, physical violence-based type of coercion. In the context of the new research program, by contrast, RD IV will systematically include non-violent forms of coercion that are exercised by actors (whether these are states, non-state groups or external actors) as well as structural forms of coercion that are systemic features of intrastate or transnational order and not necessarily "exercised" by any specific actor. Whereas existing research treats such (non-violent and non-actor-centered) features of rule (*Herrschaft*) as categorically different from the actual use of physical violence by identifiable actors, the analytical focus on coercion enables us to investigate their common coercive logic and to study varying configurations of coercive mechanisms. Research in projects RD IV will, therefore, analyze the interplay of violent and non-violent, actor-centered and systemic, external and internal forms of coercion in the establishment, maintenance and undermining of intrastate peace.

*Research department V "Glocal Junctions"* (RD V) aims at unpacking the global connectedness of peace and conflict as studied from the point of view of situated practices. It focuses on scrutinizing the complexity of which diverse local life-worlds form part and interact within the global entanglements of political conflicts and the different forms of their regulation. The "local" is understood as a relational category that only makes sense within a broader picture of contingent and often messy connections which cut across worldly spaces. In line with the concept of "glocalization" (Robertson 1995; Swyngedouw 1997; Soja 2000), the global and the local are seen as mutually constitutive constructions and generally contingent analytical categories: Trans-local junctions permeate the allegedly "micro" phenomena. In this vein, the "glocal" perspective emphasizes that globalization produces fragmented multi-scale realities that are often rife with conflict. Global flows of ideas, information, commodities, knowledge regimes, conceptions of the world or concrete models of social organization and normative political order generate "disjunctures" (Appadurai 1990, 2005) and/or "productive friction" (Tsing 2004) that are sources of new meaning and power arrangements in the cultural economy of the world. Glocal interconnections, in this respect, entail contestations and translations into different local, regional, and global social situations. The aim of RD V is to explore concrete practices in order to disaggregate the very "heterogeneous realities that enter into the fabrication of" (Latour 2005: 142) the glocal. In other words, the level of analysis is concrete situations, not because the local is of interest, but because processes of social formation can only be investigated at the level of concrete interaction.

With this approach, RD V complements PRIF's multi-dimensional approach to studying conflict and peace dynamics in a twofold way: firstly, by exploring the practices of political actors below the state level in relation to conflict lines and peace from an observation-based perspective founded on their glocal situatedness; and, secondly, by positioning this research on "the local" and following its implications in the larger context of intrastate and global interrelationships. Apart from informing research projects of the department, this conceptualization of peace and conflict dynamics as a "glocal" social practice also means that collaboration across PRIF's organizational units will be of eminent concern.

Against this background, the research department approaches the question of how coercion and peace interrelate by focusing on two particular aspects: firstly, the multiplicity of forms of coercion that affect and interact in concrete localities which are usually marked by the intersection of a great

variety of governance and knowledge regimes; and, secondly a focus on the interactions and dynamics between those addressed by coercion and the various institutions, structures or centers from which coercion is assumed to or does indeed emanate. The analytical starting point is hence not a particular set of actors who are either affected by or the sources of coercion, but instead the social sites in which a multiplicity of coercive effects manifest themselves, and how different actors perceive, relate to, embrace, transform, or seek to resist them. Concretely, this translates into two broad research areas in which RD V will investigate the forms and the effects of coercion: (1) In order to contribute to investigating different *forms of coercion*, research will analyze coercion from the perspective of the *co-production of hegemonial forms of legitimizing coercion*; (2) in order to explore the (local) *effects of coercion*, RD V will investigate *the impact of coercion on "local" power arenas*.

## 5.2 CROSS-CUTTING RESEARCH TOPICS

There are a number of topics that are of interest for several research departments. Researchers from different departments will work together to examine these cross-cutting topics jointly. They will engage in a dialogue about what their individual projects imply for these cross-cutting topics and collaborate in joint projects which will further explore these issues. Although this certainly represents a moving target, four such research topics have been identified so far.

A first key question concerns *the historical development of coercive tools and practices*. All research departments explore different forms of coercion and different ways in which coercion is legitimated in their respective areas of interest. The significance and legitimation of different forms of coercion, however, change over time. This holds for military means of coercion or coercive diplomacy (RD I) as well as for the instruments of coercion institutionalized in international organizations (RD II), applied against or by transnational actors (RD III) or within and against societies and groups (RDs IV and V). The historical evolution of coercive practices has hardly been explored so far: Why do we see different tools and practices of coercion at work in global politics? If we understand coercion as both a set of norm-based practices and a feature of organizational design, the emergence, diffusion, and evolution of these norms, practices, and organizational forms constitute key *explananda*.

A second cross-cutting theme relates to *the role of coercion in international peace interventions*. This topic brings together two key issues that are dealt with in several research departments: the enforcement of peace from the outside (which is dealt with in research departments I, II and IV) and international peacebuilding (which is a key topic in RD II, IV and V). Here, the common theme is the role of coercion as applied by external actors in the context of international peace interventions and its effects on intrastate peace. While, in the case of so-called humanitarian military interventions, coercion is usually seen as predominant, it is generally regarded as mostly marginal and fundamentally problematic in the context of peacebuilding. Yet, military interventions are usually accompanied by non-coercive types of external intervention, and their actual coercive capacity is frequently relatively low, while peacebuilding missions are often far from non-coercive. At the same time, preliminary empirical evidence suggests that coercion has ambivalent effects on peace in both cases – but we know little about the conditions that shape these ambivalent effects or whether these are similar in coercion-to-peace and in coercion-in-peace contexts.

Third, research across the different departments will contribute to shedding light on *new forms of coercion and their impact on order*. For a long time, state actors had only fairly limited options for coercing other states into submission. Often options boiled down to the choice between either engaging in full military conflict or settling for economic sanctions with only limited chances of success. However, with classic interstate war in decline we have seen an increasing differentiation of the spectrum of coercive instruments or forms of coercion more recently, including clandestine operations with Special Operation Forces (SOF), direct and indirect support of insurgents and opposing forces, drone strikes and information operations (Naylor 2015; Bergen/Rothenberg 2015). While many of these “new” instruments are in fact not so new, the increasing need to find scalable instruments paired with advances in technology (especially modern information technology) has opened up the spectrum of tools, and has made these instruments more attractive not only for great powers but for smaller states and even non-state actors as well. This topic constitutes a core issue that is dealt with in RD I, but the general question of whether and how new technologies change the face and the consequences of coercion is of relevance at all levels: from the international to the local.

A final topic of interest to research across the research departments is *the effects of and alternatives to coercion in institutions*. While coercion may contribute to peace, it may also undermine norms and institutions by creating resistance among those who are subjected to coercive measures. This concerns, for example, the reaction of the coerced to new forms of warfare (RD I), of member states or transnational actors subjected to coercion by international organizations (RDs II and III), or of domestic actors and groups subject to internal and external coercion (RDs IV and V). Coercive institutions that provoke such resistance can become destabilized or even disintegrate. The question thus arises whether and under what conditions the disintegration of coercive institutions may actually be a blessing. At times, the coexistence of separate actors or groups may be a more successful strategy for achieving peace than the attempt to force actors together in a common institutional framework.

### 5.3 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Research programs are like living organisms. They evolve with the discussions and investigations they give rise to. This is particularly true for a research program – such as the one presented in this report – that aims at guiding the work of an entire research institute for at least five years. The research agenda outlined in the preceding sections, therefore, is not carved in stone.

With this overall caveat in mind, the present document has put forward overarching questions, crucial conceptual clarifications, and important analytical distinctions that will help us analyze the role of coercion in the creation, maintenance and undermining of peace. In addition, based on a review of existing scholarship, the report has identified research gaps and promising topics and lines of research that will guide the development of individual research projects. We are convinced that, taken together, these conceptual, theoretical, and empirical thoughts lay the foundation for a collaborative research effort that will significantly further our understanding of the ambivalent relationship between coercion and peace – with the ultimate goal of contributing to the establishment of peaceful orders that are as non-coercive as possible.

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PEACE RESEARCH INSTITUTE FRANKFURT //  
COERCION AND PEACE  
PRIF'S NEW RESEARCH PROGRAM

PRIF's new research program started in 2018. For at least the next five years the ambivalent relationship of "Coercion and Peace" will provide the framework for a significant part of the research conducted at the institute. Different research groups will focus on the conditions, forms, effects and kinds of legitimation that characterize coercion to peace as well as coercion in peace. The topic is not merely of academic relevance. By studying the complex ways in which coercion and peace relate to each other the researchers aim at shedding light on the current plight of the international order and its consequences for international and intrastate conflict. The present report outlines the new research program. It identifies overarching questions, crucial conceptual clarifications, and important analytical distinctions, as well as research gaps and research topics.