

Coercion in Peacebuilding

AUTHOR WORKSHOP

Workshop Report

Venue: Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping
Training Centre (KA IPTC), Accra, Ghana

Date: November 15–17, 2023



...where peace begins



IPSS

**Institute for Peace
& Security Studies**
Addis Ababa University





Venue: Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC),
Accra, Ghana

Date: November 15-17, 2023

Organized by:

Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC, Ghana)

Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF, Germany)

Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS, Ethiopia)

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The organizers thank the *Fondation "Avec et pour autres"*, Vaduz, whose generous funding made the workshop possible.

WORKSHOP REPORT: AUTHOR WORKSHOP “COERCION IN PEACEBUILDING”

The Author Workshop “Coercion in Peacebuilding” took place on November 15 – 17, 2023 at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) in Accra, Ghana. The author workshop comes second after an initial kick-off workshop in 2022 and forms part of the joint project “The Role of Coercion in International Peacebuilding: Insights from Africa in an Interregional Perspective”, a collaboration between the three partner institutions, the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC), Ghana, the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF), Germany and the Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS), Ethiopia.

The project explores the role of coercion in peacebuilding and analyzes peacebuilding interventions to uncover the coercive character of such interventions. On the role of coercion in peacebuilding, there is scattered research globally and with a view on Africa in particular. Hence, it is deemed necessary to (1) re-think and conceptualize coercion, and (2) focus on how different types of peacebuilding practices are perceived as coercive by state and societal actors in conflict-affected states. While in 2022, the exchange was aimed at broadly exploring various perspectives on how coercion plays out in peacebuilding, the author workshop in November 2023 aimed at bringing together a more focused set of contributions with the goal of developing a joint book publication. Over the course of 2.5 days, 23 academics and practitioners convened for an author workshop to discuss contributions that all attendees had prepared in advance and presented during the workshop. The participants engaged in discussions aimed at bridging the separate debates surrounding coercion and peacebuilding, exploring the evolving significance of coercion within the context of peacebuilding efforts, as well as the roles played by so-called new and non-traditional actors in peacebuilding.

Each of the three thematic sections featured several chapter presentations and subsequent discussions by a member of the editorial team as well as other participants. All contributions collectively revolved around the central theme of coercion in peacebuilding. The participants grappled with questions such as whether there is a discernible shift toward more coercive approaches in peacebuilding or if the critique of liberal peacebuilding has instead ushered in a trend characterized by a ‘light footprint’ approach, emphasizing local ownership and inclusivity. To date, there has been only scant research conceptualizing and empirically exploring the specific role of coercion in peacebuilding, especially when it comes to the practices of what are being referred to as ‘new’ peacebuilding actors from the Global South. Moreover, in practice, the boundaries between interventions relying on coercive means (such as sanctions or military actions) and those relying on alternative methods have become increasingly blurred. This development has prompted a re-evaluation of longstanding distinctions between *peacekeeping*, *peaceenforcement* and *peacebuilding*. These critical questions served as the focal point for the participants’ contributions in their chapters and discussions.

The conference was officially opened by Air Commodore David Anetey Akrong, Deputy Commandant of the KAIPTC who highlighted the central role coercion assumes in influencing actors’ strategies in peacebuilding. Representatives from the organizing institutions KAIPTC, PRIF and IPSS welcomed the participants and outlined the workshop goal: an edited volume on the role of coercion in peacebuilding. In the ensuing sessions, the editorial team introduced the general idea and structure of the book to the group of authors. Based on this initial introduction, the participants presented their draft chapters and received feedback from discussants as well as the larger group of participants. During workshop dinners and the joint visit to the mausoleum of Kwame Nkrumah, the participants engaged

in networking. The workshop was concluded by a plenary session in which the editing team gave a summary of the discussions and provided some conceptual guidance for all chapters. The editing team together with the participants agreed on a joint timeline and publication strategy for the book project.

Our thanks go to the excellent scholars who contributed their knowledge, time and energy to the workshop and the overall book project. We also thank the entire team of KAIPTC for hosting the workshop. After all, we owe gratitude to the Fondation “Avec et pour autres”, based in Vaduz, Liechtenstein, for their generous funding.



Participants of the author workshop “Coercion in Peacebuilding”, KAIPTC, Accra, Ghana.

CONCEPTUALIZING COERCION

The first session was dedicated to conceptually and theoretically discussing coercion in peacebuilding. The concept of ‘coercion’ is part of a complex discussion in the field of peacebuilding to which other concepts such as power or domination belong. In general terms, the concept of coercion is often understood and used in a rather narrow way, as an external influence on an actor, employing a threat or the actual use of force, to bring a behavioral change that would not otherwise occur. Drawing from and extending existing conceptualizations, the PRIF authors Sophia Birchinger, Melanie Coni-Zimmer, Sabine Mannitz, Antonia Witt and Jonas Wolff defined 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”¹. The researchers shared presentations on historical discussions, focused on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, used a gendered lens and offered a conceptual framework of coercion in peacebuilding.

In the opening presentation, **Erin McCandless** offered an exploration into the origins and development of coercion in peacebuilding. She employed a framing analysis that examined two fundamental and contrasting viewpoints: direct, physical violence and structural

¹ Peace Research Institute Frankfurt. 2018. Coercion and Peace. PRIF’s New Research Program. Frankfurt a.M.

violence, rooted in their Liberal and Marxist foundations. Throughout, she set a focus on when, how, and to what extent coercion is considered acceptable in peacebuilding. Meanwhile, she also included the complex interactions between structural and physical violence in the context of shifting geopolitical constellations. The contribution will serve the book as an overview chapter on the evolution of the concept of coercion in the field of peacebuilding. Offering a richness in conceptualizations, the chapter highlights the structural side of coercion.

The following presentation by **Cyril Obi** took a critical look at the transformation from non-coercive to coercive approaches in peacemaking within West Africa preceding and following the COVID-19 pandemic. He investigated how the pandemic influenced the shift from peaceful persuasion, mediation, and sanctions to considering the use of legitimate force or intervention as a means to achieve peace. This transformation occurred in a context where the space and legitimacy of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) were diminishing. This discussion contributes to the book project by tracing the historical development of peacebuilding efforts in West Africa, that have alternated between more and less coercive methods. It spans from the interventions in Liberia and Sierra Leone to the present day.

The third presentation by **Birte Gippert** focused on theoretical underpinnings of coercion by drawing from the fields of peacekeeping and power. She outlined the various factors that influence coercion and explored coercion's impact on the legitimacy of UN peacekeepers. Her exploration theorized the dual perils of overpromise-underdeliver and underpromise-overdeliver and how legitimacy arises or declines from the (mis)match. Drawing on the example of the UN mission in Haiti, she highlighted that coercion cannot achieve a lot on its own, it might buy time but something more substantial, like a political strategy, needs to follow. Overall, she combined conceptual and theoretical insights into practical considerations for peacekeepers on the use of coercion. Thereby, Birte Gippert will contribute to the book's conceptualization of coercion, setting the stage for the examination of regional organizations and so-called new actors of peacebuilding in the subsequent chapters.

Festus Aubyn's and **Osei Baffour Frimpong's** following paper presentation explored normative foundations of coercion in African post-coup peacebuilding. Its specific focus was on the peacebuilding efforts led by the African Union (AU) and ECOWAS. By analyzing recent empirical cases in the central Sahel, the presentation uncovered the intricate challenges and ethical dilemmas faced by these organizations when employing coercion in the aftermath of coups. The authors contribute to the conceptualization of coercion by highlighting the perspectives of African scholars on how coercion intersects with the practice of peacebuilding.

Thereafter, **Cheryl Hendricks** directed the focus onto the agenda of women, peace and security (WPS) and how, in this light, coercion in peacebuilding has been conceptualized. The presentation provided an overview of the evolution of the WPS agenda, highlighted the different conceptualizations and their articulation of coercive organs, instruments and practices. She began to reconceptualize and chart new pathways for women, peace and security by localizing the relationship of WPS to coercion. With her chapter, Cheryl Hendricks contributes a gendered lens of how coercion operates in manifold ways as part of peacebuilding interventions.

The first section was concluded by a presentation of the draft chapter co-authored by **Sophia Birchinger**, **Melanie Coni-Zimmer**, **Sabine Mannitz**, **Antonia Witt**, and **Jonas Wolff**. Building on a review of conceptual literature on coercion, the conceptual framework examines the intricate relationship between coercion and peace (coercion in/to peace) and

delineates diverse manifestations of coercion in peacebuilding (materialist or ideational coercion by actors or structures). The framework was illustrated by an examination of the coercive character of the African anti-coup regime. For the book project, this contribution offers a conceptual framework for studying peacebuilding interventions.



Opening ceremony. From left to right: Antonia Witt (PRIF), Air Commodore David Anetey Akrong, Deputy Commandant of the KAIPTC, Emma Birikorang (KAIPTC), online: Fana Gebresenbet Erda (IPSS).

REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

On day two, the focus was set on regional organizations as actors of peacebuilding and coercion. Recently, scholars have initiated investigations into the expanding involvement of what are commonly referred to as 'new', 'non-traditional', 'emerging', or non-Western actors in the realm of peacebuilding. These studies are primarily focused on examining the objectives and methodologies that define the peacebuilding initiatives undertaken by individual nations as well as regional organizations. These two branches of research are closely interrelated as they seek to determine, first, whether emerging peacebuilding actors from the Global South employ distinctive approaches that diverge from the established norms of peacebuilding, as originally conceived by international organizations and major donors from the Global North. Secondly, they examine to what degree the conventional peacebuilding paradigm is being questioned or transformed due to the growing involvement of these 'new' actors. The discussions of regional organizations were focused on African organizations, dealing with African-led stabilization initiatives, ECOWAS and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

In the first presentation of the day, **Andrew E. Yaw Tchie** discussed the concept of 'stabilization' in the context of African peace efforts. By employing regime complexity theory, he delved into the diverse peacebuilding activities undertaken by the AU, Regional Economic

Communities (RECs) and Regional Mechanisms (RMs). The overarching goal was to offer a fresh theoretical perspective on African-led stabilization and ascertain whether these efforts align more with a conceptual framework for African-led stabilization or a well-organized, practical response to the security challenges in Africa. For the book project, this chapter contributes a discussion of the AU's approach to stabilization, its understanding of the concept, how it links with the existing framework and whether (or not) it is discernible from international stabilization approaches.

In the subsequent session, **Emma Birikorang**, **Fana Gebresenbet**, and **Naila Salihu** focused on analyzing the experiences of ECOWAS in maintaining regional peace in the face of threats and actual interventions by the regional Standby Force to address Unconstitutional Changes of Government (UCGs). The authors used the cases of The Gambia and Niger to illustrate the inconsistent application of ECOWAS norms: while in the case of The Gambia, one could observe the progressive and strategic deployment of the ECOWAS Standby Force, the bloc's response to the coup in Niger remained fragmented and inconclusive. Their comparative analysis highlighted the importance of establishing predictable norms and cumulative enforcement mechanisms for coercive peacebuilding to be effective. For the edited volume, the authors contribute an analysis of ECOWAS' experiences in coercive peacebuilding.

In a similar vein, **Fiifi Edu-Afful** portrayed ECOWAS's foray into sub-regional interventions. In his presentation, he focused on the agency of ECOWAS member states and started from the widespread assumption of a lack of agency as well as passive and vulnerable states. Based on the case studies of Mali and Côte d'Ivoire, he demonstrates that ECOWAS member states in fact showed considerable agency in applying the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) norm. Fiifi Edu-Afful also referred to the shift from non-intervention to non-indifference and acknowledges ECOWAS' interventionist role, whereby the national sovereignty of member states comes with responsibility and requires member states to decide over coercive means in a deliberative process.

The last presentation on regional organizations by **Yohannes Tekalign** explored whether IGAD has used coercive power in its regional peacebuilding endeavors in the Horn of Africa. Building on case studies, Yohannes Tekalign argues that IGAD has rarely and indirectly used coercive power in its regional peacebuilding efforts but its effectiveness has been constrained by many factors. Although IGAD has attempted to forge regional peace and development by engaging in many peacebuilding activities, coercion plays a marginal role. With his chapter, Yohannes Tekalign provides a case study of IGAD and, by unpacking the organization, discusses whether and how IGAD uses coercion in its approach to building peace.

BILATERAL SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION IN PEACEBUILDING

After these four insights into the use of coercion by regional organizations in peacebuilding efforts, we turned to bilateral South-South cooperation in building peace on the continent. As with regional organizations, these discussions delved into the unique approaches and objectives of 'new' actors in peacebuilding. These actors are those often termed 'non-traditional', 'emerging', or originating from the Global South. The following discussions examine whether the 'new' actors challenge or reshape the established peacebuilding norms defined by international organizations and major donors from the Global North.

The first insight was given by **Kai Michael Kenkel** who connected rising powers and norm contestation. A key concept for norm contestation is the 'meaning-in-use', highlighting the intersubjectivity of norms. In his chapter, Kai Kenkel explained how rising powers experi-

ence coercion in peacebuilding and whether there is a way to systematize these experiences. In his presentation, he argued that development becomes a greater cause of security issues, especially regarding energy and food security. Regarding the book project, Kai Kenkel's chapter will be a referential element for all chapters on rising powers.

Danilo Marcondes' subsequent talk focused on Brazil's South-South approach as an alternative to coercive peacebuilding in Africa. Although Brazil's armed forces have a history of domestic coercion – e.g., their colonial 'pacification' process, military authoritarian period or public security in urban areas – Brazil has rarely contributed to UN peace operations. This hesitance is due to a large concern of being associated with (robust) coercive UN approaches. Rather, Brazil focuses on engagement and dialogue. An example is the engagements in mobile training teams of instructors to Angola, Mozambique and Namibia to provide 'training of trainers' for future deployment. Thereby, Brazil contributes to coercive practice without taking the political cost of deploying contingents. This insight provides a valuable case study of a BRICS country's approach to coercion in peacebuilding.

Another 'new' actor in peacebuilding – China – was introduced by **Steven Kuo**. He presented an analysis of Beijing's Soft and Hard Power to understand a Chinese approach to peace in the multipolar world order. While the time of the Korean War in the 1950s was also a time for Chinese skepticism concerning China's participation in UN peacekeeping missions, China started to participate in the later 19th century in the mission to Namibia. Following this, China fully embraced multilateralism. Steven Kuo argued that there are three pillars of Chinese peace: sovereignty, stability and infrastructure. Concerning power, Steven Kuo believes China to be most powerful in the economic and security areas. China uses economic punishment (trade) and security threats, e.g., in Taiwan, the South China Sea and the Himalayan mountains. Nevertheless, in Africa, China will follow regional organizations' lead on security. Through the presentation and the chapter, Steven Kuo provides a needed analysis of China's part in coercion in peacebuilding.

Then, we turned to the case of South Africa and the evolving role of coercion in post-apartheid South Africa's peacebuilding. **Aditi Lalbahadur** discussed whether South Africa had exhibited coercive peacebuilding. She argued that South Africa increasingly included coercion in its peacebuilding policy. Furthermore, she linked peace and development through various case examples of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Zimbabwe and Mozambique. South African peacebuilding in the DRC included UN peacekeeping, government training and business elements. Finally, she raised the question of whether there is a difference in how South Africa deals with other countries in the South of Africa than with other more developed countries. The discussion of South Africa's use of coercion in peacebuilding adds a valuable case study of an African country.

Last but not least, **Onur Sazak** presented on the role of Turkey in peacebuilding in Africa. He presented an analysis of Turkey's post-Westphalian approach to peacebuilding and the role of coercion in its conflict resolution strategies. Onur Sazak argued that Turkey's participation in peace operations depends on domestic interests. Since the early 1990s, Turkey has been a visible actor in international peacebuilding operations. While remaining active, three phases can be identified: Troop contribution to high-level missions – ranging from Somalia to Kosovo – from the early to late 1990s; military and civilian capacity contribution to entrenched conflicts in the 2000s; and finally, humanitarian, development, and mediation assistance-focused engagement in acute conflicts around the world. Onur Sazak explained the development by domestic changes, thereby linking coercion in a domestic context and peacebuilding engagement.



Air Commodore David Anetey Akrong, Deputy Commandant of the KAIPTC giving his opening speech.

RETHINKING COERCION IN PEACEBUILDING

To conclude, **Gilbert Khadiagala** offered succinct reflections on the presentations from the past 2.5 days of workshop discussions adding an overarching analysis of coercion in peacebuilding. He presented coercion as an integral theme of peace processes. Therefore, he argued that it is important to ask who does what in what context in the peace processes. Coercion is an invitation to critically rethink peacebuilding. Thereby, the often-assumed sequences of activities from *peacemaking* to *peacekeeping* can be overcome. Gilbert Khadiagala's chapter critically deals with coercion and peacebuilding and carves out new avenues for connecting coercion with *peacekeeping*, *peaceenforcement* and *peacemaking*.

WORKSHOP CLOSING

The workshop participants appreciated a final visit and words of farewell from Air Commodore David Anetey Akrong, Deputy Commandant of the KAIPTC before the editing team opened the final session of the author workshop. In this last session, the participants deliberated over a joint timeline and publication strategy for the edited volume that is planned for publication by the end of 2024. For updates, follow the social media channels of [KAIPTC](#), [PRIF](#) and [IPSS](#)!

 WORKSHOP PROGRAM

Wednesday, 15 November 2023

- 08.30 – 09.00 Welcome & Group Picture
 09.00 – 09.30 Introduction: Book Proposal

Section 1: Conceptualizing Coercion

- 09.30 – 10.15 Physical & Structural Violence: Shifting Notions of Coercion in Peacebuilding Across Time and Geopolitical Space
Erin McCandless (*Global Institute for Strategic Research / Doha, Qatar*)
- 10.45 – 11.30 From Non-Coercive to Coercive Peacemaking in the Shadow of the Covid-19 Pandemic: A West African Perspective
Cyril Obi (*Social Science Research Council (SSRC) / New York, USA*)
- 11.30 – 12.15 Come Back to Bite You? Coercion in International Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding
Birte Gippert (*University of Liverpool / Liverpool, UK*)
- 13.45 – 14.30 Normative Foundations of Coercion in African Post-Coup Peacebuilding
Festus Aubyn & Osei Baffour Frimpong (*West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) / Accra, Ghana*)
- 15.00 – 15.45 Coercion and the Women Peace and Security Agendas
Cheryl Hendricks (*The Institute For Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) / Cape Town, South Africa*)
- 15.45 – 16.30 Coercion in Peacebuilding: A Conceptual Framework
Antonia Witt & Sophia Birchinger (*Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF) / Frankfurt am Main, Germany*)

Thursday, 16 November 2023

Section 2: Regional Organizations

- 08.30 – 09.15 African-Led Stabilization: A Normative Framework or Organised Practical Response to Insecurity?
Andrew E. Yaw Tchie (*Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) / Oslo, Norway*)
- 09.15 – 10.00 ECOWAS Standby Force in The Gambia and Niger: A Comparative Study of Threats and Actions in Coercive Peacebuilding
Emma Birikorang, Fana Gebresenbet, Naila Salihi (*Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) / Accra, Ghana & Institute for Peace and Security Studies, (IPSS) / Addis Ababa, Ethiopia*)
- 10.30 – 11.15 Coercive Approaches in Peacebuilding: ECOWAS Foray into Sub-Regional Interventions
Fiifi Edu-Afful (*Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) / Accra, Ghana*)

- 11.15 – 12.00 Coercion and Regional Peacebuilding in the Horn of Africa/IGAD Region
Yohannes Tekalign Beza (*Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS) / Addis Ababa, Ethiopia*)

Section 3.1: Bilateral South-South Cooperation

- 13.00 – 13.45 Rising Powers and Coercion in Peacebuilding
Kai Michael Kenkel (*Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro / Rio de Janeiro, Brazil*)
- 13.45 – 14.30 Brazil's South-South Approach as an Alternative to Coercive Peacebuilding in Africa
Danilo Marcondes (*Brazilian War College / Rio de Janeiro, Brazil*)

Friday, 17 November 2023

Section 3.2: Bilateral South-South Cooperation

- 08.30 – 09.15 Chinese Peace in The Multipolar World Order: Understanding Beijing's Soft and Hard Power
Steven Kuo (*University of Cape Town / Cape Town, South Africa*)
- 09.15 – 10.00 The Evolving Role of 'Coercion' in Post-Apartheid South Africa's Peacebuilding: A Vision at Risk of Failure
Aditi Lalbahadur (*Ahimsa Africa / Cape Town, South Africa*)
- 10.30 – 11.15 The Past, Present, and the Future of Turkey's Post-Westphalian Approach to Peacebuilding and the Role of Coercion in its Conflict Resolution Strategies
Onur Sazak (*Medyascope / Istanbul, Turkey*)

Concluding Thoughts

- 11.15 – 12.00 Concluding Thoughts: Rethinking Coercion in Peacebuilding
Gilbert Khadiagala (*University of the Witwatersrand / Johannesburg, South Africa*)
- 12.00 – 13.00 Concluding Plenary: How to move forward?
- 14.00 Organizers Meeting with KAIPTC, PRIF & IPSS

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