Political Realism and Epistemic Constraints

Ugur Aytac

[Penultimate version. Forthcoming, *Social Theory and Practice*, 2021]

Abstract: This paper argues that Bernard Williams' *Critical Theory Principle* (CTP) is in tension with his realist commitments, i.e. deriving political norms from practices that are inherent to political life. The Williamsian theory of legitimate state power is based on the central importance of the distinction between political rule and domination. Further, he supplements the normative force of his theory with the CTP, i.e. the principle that acceptance of a justification regarding power relations ought not to be created by the very same coercive power. Williams frames this requirement as a method of identifying "subtle forms of coercion" that would make domination possible even when subjects are not aware of their true conditions. However, I contend that the CTP is an epistemic criterion of reflective (un)acceptability which is not strictly connected to the question of whether people are dominated or not. I show that there are cases of non-domination that fail the epistemic requirements of the CTP.

Keywords: Political realism, state legitimacy, Bernard Williams, epistemic criteria

Introduction[1]

Political realism is the methodological view that political philosophy should not be treated as a branch of moral philosophy. Following this, realists contend that there are political norms that are not reducible to moral principles. The realist desideratum requires that political norms are derived from the constitutive features of politics and a given political context rather than universal moral presuppositions. However, the normative force of political realism remains a broadly debated subject (Hall 2015b; Sleat 2016; Prinz and Rossi 2017). The question at hand is how to reconcile a non-moralist understanding of politics with a sufficiently normative outlook providing practical orientation. Bernard Williams presents a particular strategy to strike a balance between the prescriptive capacity of political philosophy and his fidelity to what he takes as facts about politics. Williams constructs the Critical Theory Principle (CTP) to identify the cases in which subjects' acceptance of a power holder's justification is caused by the very same power relations (i.e.

1 I would like to thank two anonymous reviewers and the editors for their constructive criticism and valuable suggestions that helped me improve the previous versions of this paper. I also would like to thank Janosch Prinz, Enzo Rossi, Paul Raekstad, Alice Pinheiro Walla, and Alan Thomas for helpful feedback and discussion. I have benefited from discussions with the audience when an earlier draft of this paper was presented at the panel on "Moralism and Realism" at ECPR 2019. My research was supported by a Dutch National Science Organisation Vidi grant for the 'Legitimacy Beyond Consent' project (grant n. 016.164.351).

self-justification of power). By the CTP, Williams aims to address issues such as indoctrination or implicit threats where power dynamics are not easily detectable. This seems to be a normative move that is not reducible to a morality prior to politics. The CTP ostensibly distinguishes genuine acceptance of a justification from subtle forms of coercion/domination without appealing to moral standards external to the given political context (Williams 2005). Provided that such a criterion is adopted, Williams assumes that the realist desideratum is met. In this paper, I aim to show that the CTP is incompatible with Williams' realist commitments, at least within the context of state power. Specifically, in his theory of state legitimacy, the CTP conflicts with Williams' political rule-domination distinction since it incorrectly defines certain relations of power as instances of state domination. For this reason, even if the CTP is not reducible to pre-political moral considerations, it is not suitable for a realist theory of legitimacy.

My initial claim is that the CTP is an epistemic criterion. It disqualifies every instance of self-justification of power due to the apparent circularity problem in such justifications. This is an epistemic deficiency that ought to be eliminated in a proper deliberative process. According to the CTP, a given justification by a power holder is genuinely accepted insofar as the acceptance itself is not solely created by the same coercive power, e.g. indoctrination via compulsory schooling. This is an epistemic criterion in the sense that it specifies the kind of cognitive procedure that the addressees of a justification ought to avoid in their belief-formation processes.

I then argue that employment of the CTP cannot be sustained if one adopts Williams' realist commitments, i.e. his conceptual claims centred on the political rule-domination distinction. This is because the CTP is not capable of correctly tracking raw domination, i.e. a form of rule in which acceptance of a legitimizing narrative relies on rulers' coercive power over those who accept the narrative. There might be non-coercive by-products of coercive state power which make individuals accept the justification of the state. In other words, not every instance of self-justification of power falls under the category of raw domination while the CTP categorically disqualifies self-justification of power on epistemic-deliberative grounds. By drawing on the social identity literature in psychology, I argue that individuals might accept the justification offered by power holders since the exercise of power constitutes an essential dimension of their social identity. In such situations, their acceptance would collapse into self-justification of power, which is not allowed by the CTP. However, I contend that following the CTP is problematic in cases like this because the influence of social identities on individuals' psychology does not seem to be an instance of coercion. This influence is rather a non-coercive by-product of coercive state power. It is not an instance of domination because coercive power is not exercised over those who are influenced by the by-products. I therefore argue that the CTP should be revised in a way that exclusively filters out instances of domination, including reliance on subtle forms of coercion.

This paper invites readers to rethink how realist political philosophy should treat different sources of normativity, e.g. epistemic or moral. Epistemic forms of ideology critique, inspired by the Frankfurt School, are certainly valuable. However, basing a theory of state legitimacy on reflective acceptability might be too much to ask of a minimalistic approach that relies on the conceptual distinction between political rule and mere state coercion. This could overload the concept of state legitimacy while making other important dimensions of evaluation redundant, such

as justice of the state or legitimacy of the entire social order (Horton 2012). I believe it is beneficial for realism as a research program to keep the theory of state legitimacy minimalistic in terms of how normatively demanding it is. By doing so, it is possible to create the necessary space to formulate more demanding political values.

The paper proceeds as follows: I briefly summarize Williams' realist theory of state legitimacy in the first section. In the second section, I explain why the CTP constitutes an epistemic criterion. In the third section, I argue that the CTP is incompatible with Williams' realist commitments by discussing an example in which the self-justification of power does not imply mere coercion and/or domination over subjects. In the fourth section, I briefly discuss a possible strategy to revise the CTP in a way that would not suffer the weaknesses I indicate.

1. The Theory of Legitimacy in Bernard Williams' Realism

Bernard Williams (2005: 3) identifies the first political question "as the securing of order, protection, safety, trust, and the conditions of cooperation". This question is the *first* political question because without order and cooperation in a society, there would not be a political life in which we could meaningfully discuss further political questions (Williams 2005: 3).[2] While Williams (2005: 3–4) holds that solving the first political question is a necessary condition for political life, he believes that it is not sufficient. A tyranny can "solve" the first political question, i.e. maintaining order and security, by terrorizing people, but rule through brute force or threat is no different than the initial problem politics aims to solve. Williams (2005: 3–4) thus makes a distinction between political power and brute force/credible threats. Williams formulates this distinction through his concept of the Basic Legitimation Demand (BLD). Meeting the BLD is the requirement that a state provides an acceptable justification of its own power to each and every subject (Williams 2005: 4).

Moreover, the BLD is "inherent in there being such a thing as politics" (Williams 2005: 5) because only an acceptable justification of power is able to distinguish political authority from credible threats based on brute-force (Hall 2015a: 467). In other words, he derives his notion of legitimacy from the alleged conceptual distinction between political rule (rule through justification) and warfare/tyranny (rule through brute force).[3] I call this *the political rule-domination distinction*. The notion of legitimacy is inherent to political rule because, if power holders claim that their actions "transcend the conditions of warfare", the state is supposed to provide a legitimation of its own power to the citizens (Williams 2005: 6). The power holders' normative expectation for citizen compliance coupled with the citizens' legitimation demand is different from warfare in which the use of brute force is central.

Note that Williams (2005: 5) uses the notion of "successful domination" as the opposite of political rule without explaining how this is different from mere

2 See also Raekstad (2018) for the claim that state formation is not necessary to solve the First Political Question.

3 According to some critics, the conceptual distinction between political rule and warfare do not really show how states have moral rights to rule over individuals (Wendt 2016).

coercion. I take coercion as a relatively narrow category that contains acts of violence, credible threats and other ways of imposing prohibitively high costs on individuals. Given his example of tyrants dominating their subjects through terrorization, I believe that this notion of domination is quite close to my conception of rule through mere coercion. Nonetheless, Williams (2005) avoids giving a full definition of coercion. He further holds that broader understandings of coercion can be plausible in addition to the narrow conception that implies intentional "obstructive activities of others" (Williams 2005: 80). A broader conception of coercion would also include cases that are unintended consequences of institutions structurally limiting "the opportunities of some class of citizens" (Williams 2005: 91). I employ the narrow conception of coercion for now, but will later discuss the implications of adopting a broader conception.

Further, the conception of domination I work with is also determined by the scope of the theory of political legitimacy I focus on. Domination might have many forms, from direct interpersonal relations of power to impersonal domination in which social structures generate a particular type of unfreedom without a specific agent as the power holder. If one discusses the legitimacy of an entire social order, e.g. the basic structure of society, it seems plausible to hold that we need to take impersonal domination into account, e.g. domination generated by the market forces, social norms, cultural patterns, etc. (Postone 1996: 159). Along the lines of Williams' (2005: 1–17) latest writings on political legitimacy, I restrain the scope of my argument to the legitimacy of state power. Rather than assessing the entire institutional architecture in a community, I discuss the ways state power is exercised over subjects. This certainly has an impact on what type of domination is relevant to my argument. Williams (2005: 6) depicts a picture of interpersonal, dyadic relation of power in his theory of legitimate state power: "A coerces B and claims that B would be wrong to fight back". Here state power is an agent-centric phenomenon that relies on a direct relationship between two groups. There is a "discreet and intentional agent" who acts as a dominator (Rahman 2017: 7). There is a sense in which power holders intentionally exercise their power over subjects and explicitly claim that they are the rightful authority to do so. Therefore, I assume that any unjustified instance of such power, i.e. domination, will similarly be dyadic. Domination could be overt or subtle, i.e. violence or indoctrination. However, it should at least be traceable to power holders' intentions to coerce their subjects, which indicates clear interpersonal relationships.[4]

In *Truth and Truthfulness* (Williams 2002: 225–232), the scope of the CTP seems much broader in that any self-justification of power might count as domination of some kind. Williams' (2005: 1–17) later writings on political realism mainly attempt to build a theory of political legitimacy for the exercise of state power. The way he incorporates the CTP into his later writings is also connected with a theory of legitimate state power. The subject matter of this paper is similarly the political legitimacy of state power rather than legitimacy or justice of the entire social order, i.e. the basic structure of society. Therefore, I hold that any instance of domination

4 Williams' conception of domination is different from the republican conception. The mere existence of arbitrary power over a group of individuals is sufficient for the republican conception of domination, regardless of the actual exercise of power (Pettit 2000: 52). In contrast, Williams' conception of domination seems to presuppose an actual exercise of power as discussed in the cases of tyranny and the violations of the CTP (e.g. indoctrination).

that is relevant to the argument of this paper has a dyadic dimension.

The political rule-domination distinction is the core of Williams' realist turn because this conceptual distinction establishes the link between normative outlook and claims regarding the nature of politics. If the constitutive features of politics are to play a central role in realist political philosophy, one needs to show a clear relationship between the essential characteristics of politics and the norms governing political practice. The political rule-domination distinction serves exactly this purpose. It shows why legitimation of power is essential in a properly political order.[5] By doing so, the realist approach delivers a normative standpoint derived from political practice itself rather than the pre-political requirements of morality.

There are two factors necessary to determine what counts as "acceptable" solutions to the BLD; namely, context dependency and the critical theory principle. First, let us examine an acceptable solution being context-dependent (Bavister-Gould 2013). Williams contends that a political justification is acceptable insofar as it *makes sense* (MS) in a specific cultural context (Williams 2005: 10–11). This implies the question of whether a given relation of power makes sense to individuals as an "authoritative order", i.e. where the legitimation appeals to the norms and values of this community (Williams 2005: 11). To put it differently, Williams' MS implies that state power is conceived "as a form of legitimate authority in relation to the beliefs of those who are subject to it" (Sleat 2014: 325). The acceptability of a justification is determined by whether the justification coheres with the value system of a particular society. There are various interpretations of what this could mean. While justifiability in terms of people's beliefs is a common interpretation, Williams sometimes talks about *acceptance* of a justification rather than acceptability, connoting subjects' actual pro-attitudes (Williams 2005: 6–7; Sleat 2013: 117).

The second acceptability criterion is what Williams (2005: 6) calls *the Critical Theory Principle* (CTP). According to the CTP, "the acceptance of a justification does not count if the acceptance itself is produced by the coercive power". For instance, if people accept a state justification *only because* the state brainwashed them through state-owned media and other instruments of indoctrination, Williams claims that these people are still dominated. Their alleged "acceptance" is merely an instance of ideological indoctrination (i.e. the unreasonable adoption of beliefs which are imposed by coercive institutional environments). In such cases of ideological delusion, the state relies on its coercive capacity to indoctrinate its subjects rather than on its abilities to justify its power by appealing to people's values and preferences. Therefore, the justification of power is circular. The power holder, whose power is supposed to be justified, claims to justify herself by that very same power.

It is important to note that Williams' characterization of coercive power is broader than the classical-intuitive definitions of coercion (Nozick 1997). As suggested above, for Williams, coercive power includes not only threats and/or acts of violence but also when a power structure (e.g. the state) shapes the beliefs of its

5 Sleat (2013) argues that political relationships necessarily include a degree of successful domination. According to this, the political rule-domination distinction would seem untenable. However, Sleat's criterion of legitimacy still requires avoiding *mere* successful domination (see chapter 5).

subjects through means of indoctrination (Williams 2002). Nevertheless, the type of coercive power implied by the CTP might still be reconciled with narrower definitions of coercion. After all, imposing an institutional structure to shape individuals' beliefs would require direct and physical instances of coercion at its very foundations. For instance, indoctrination via compulsory schooling would not be successful without credible threats by the state (e.g. forcibly removing children from their home) coercing parents to send their children to such schools.

2. The CTP as an Epistemic Criterion

There seem to be two interpretations about what kind of principle the CTP is. The first interpretation is that the CTP does indeed imply a criterion that is improperly contaminated by moral considerations (Prinz and Rossi 2017). The second interpretation is that the CTP is some kind of epistemic requirement in line with Geuss' characterization of critical theories (Rossi 2019). In his reconstruction of the Frankfurt School, Raymond Geuss (1981: 91) suggests that critical theories are epistemic in that normative beliefs and attitudes are evaluated on the basis of their cognitive merits. The currency of such evaluation is whether certain sets of beliefs and attitudes are "reflectively unacceptable" (Geuss 1981: 91). If agents' beliefs and attitudes are not acceptable upon a proper process of reflection, it follows that they do not have genuine reasons to hold these beliefs and attitudes. On this view, normative critique cannot be based on moral foundations outside agents' context-dependent process of deliberation (Geuss 1996: 199), as what is problematic about beliefs is based on power-induced distortions in the process of reflection. The proponents of the latter interpretation contend that "the distinction between acceptable and unacceptable legitimation stories is not moral but epistemic: ideological legitimation stories just aren't what they purport to be, so epistemic caution requires us to disregard them" (Rossi 2019: 5).

I will now argue that the CTP constitutes an epistemic criterion for two reasons. First, it specifies a certain type of normative belief-formation that is deemed improper or undesirable. The epistemic threshold employed by the CTP is negative (detecting epistemic deficiencies) rather than positive (specifying the ideal epistemic desideratum). The type of cognitive fallacy it aims to eliminate is epistemic circularities in relation to the legitimation of state power. Second, in the CTP the addressees of a justification are considered to be quasi-epistemic agents whose success is evaluated by their deliberative performance in belief-formation within the practical contexts of action.

According to the CTP, the acceptability of a justification is taken as the normatively positive property that successful legitimation stories have. As I discussed in the first section, there *ought to* be an acceptable justification of state power in Williams' theory of legitimacy. However, the acceptability threshold requires more than subjects' actual pro-attitudes toward the justification offered by the state. It seems that there are three elements that are indicative of a desirable relationship between a power holder and subjects: the subjects' accepting that state is legitimate (actual pro-attitudes), their acceptance being justifiable in terms of the subjects' beliefs, and some kind of warrant that subjects *genuinely* have reasons to accept this justification.

The first two elements are covered by Williams' notion of MS: "What (most) MS to us is a structure of authority which we think we should accept" (Williams 2005: 11). Given that Williams shows a link between *making sense* and our first-order normative preferences, it would be fair to say that acceptability and/or acceptance of a justification are somehow associated with subjects' actual pro-attitudes. Further, the Williamsian conception of legitimacy requires that we do not take actual pro-attitudes as the sufficient condition of acceptability. The notion of MS goes beyond mere acceptance when it poses an interpretative task which focuses on the justifiability of actual pro-attitudes within the broader local belief system in a social context (Williams 2005: 11). However, the first and the second elements combined are also not sufficient for acceptability of a justification. In *Truth and Truthfulness*, Williams (2002: 227) explicitly contends that assessing the quality of a justification in terms of individuals' current set of beliefs is inadequate as a proper test for normative validity. Hence, the third element becomes essential in determining if a justification of state power is sufficiently good.

How can it be warranted that subjects *genuinely* have reasons to accept a justification? This task requires a distinction between good and bad reasons to accept certain premises to be true. A sense of "(un)acceptability" is needed since acceptance and justifiability in terms of given beliefs are not adequate. The type of belief-formation that is to be avoided is specified in Williams' following words:

> "… if one comes to know that the sole reason one accepts some moral claim is that somebody's power has brought it about that one accepts it…, one will have no reason to go on accepting it" (Williams 2002: 231).

Only a certain type of normative belief-formation, that has not solely been brought about by somebody's power, can genuinely legitimize normative claims about power relations. In other words, subjects have *genuine reasons* to accept a justification only if these reasons are not created by the state power which is supposed to be justified. The CTP determines the cognitive requirements of normative belief-formation on which a practical judgment about state legitimacy can be based.

The cognitive error that the CTP eliminates is a subtype of an epistemic fallacy, which is circularity. Excluding power-induced endorsement from the domain of acceptability means avoiding a circular belief-formation process. In self-justification of power, individuals accept that power holders are legitimate only because the latter trained (or indoctrinated) the former accordingly (Williams 2002: 227–228). However, the reliability of power holders' claims is not assessed by independent standards (Williams 2002: 228). One does not really know if power holders are in a good position to make those claims. Hence, accepting power holders to be reliable can only be "justified" by circularly assuming them to be reliable in the first place. This is extremely similar to how epistemologists define epistemic circularity:

> "Suppose I form a belief -either inferentially or noninferentially- in the trustworthiness of one of my belief sources, X. If, in the formation of that belief, I *depend upon X,* then that belief is infected with epistemic circularity" (Bergmann 2004: 710).

In *Truth and Truthfulness*, Williams' (2002) discussion of the CTP focuses on how

the self-justification of power constitutes a circularity problem as described above. This is a form of epistemic circularity because individuals cannot appeal to independent standards of justification which are *not* derived from the presupposition that power-holders are reliable:

> "… the justice of the system, the authority of the instructors, and hence their own reasons for accepting the justice of the system all hang together. Suppose they now turn to asking whether they have any independent ways of assessing the instructors' authority" (Williams 2002: 228)

The fact that their acceptance itself is created by coercive power is problematic insofar as it reveals agents' cognitive shortcomings, i.e. them having no genuine reasons to accept the justification or trust the instructors. The real problem is caused by the lack of genuine reasons to accept the justification that are not contaminated by the problem of circularity. This is fundamentally a deliberative shortcoming in the belief-formation procedure. Put differently, what determines whether a reason is genuine or not is whether it constitutes epistemic circularity in the legitimation of state power.

Further, it is important to clarify that the CTP is not an overarching epistemic principle that eliminates all sorts of cognitive deficiencies. It filters out *a specific kind of epistemic deficiency* in the belief-formation process. Epistemic circularities in relation to state power are only a subset of possible epistemic deficiencies. Williams seems to be quite permissive when it comes to other types of failures of rationality. For instance, Williams (2002: 226) opposes the idea of employing a universalist conception of rationality to critique all sorts of beliefs that could be fallaciously generated by the contextual circumstances.

Secondly, the CTP implies an epistemic criterion in that it conceives the addressees of a justification as quasi-epistemic agents. Individuals are supposed to interact with a particular justification mainly through a deliberative process relying on reasons and the assessment of their current set of beliefs. This process is resonant of a cognitive procedure. According to Williams, acceptance of a justification ought to be a reasonable judgment that reflects a proper process of deliberation:

> "We need a schema by which we start with the people's current beliefs and imagine their going through *a process of criticism*, a process in which the [CTP] test plays a significant part. We can think of the disadvantaged as asking a series of *reflective questions* about their situation. Our picture of this will of course be *artificial rationalization*, but something like it does actually happen on a social scale" (Williams 2002: 227, italics added).

The objective of the CTP here is presented as providing a normative test that relies on a deliberative process. The addressees of a justification are hypothetically invited to undergo a process of criticism that concentrates on the quality of reasons they previously took for granted, i.e. reflective questions about their current beliefs. Following this, normative assessment becomes possible by rationally reconstructing agents' faculty of judgment. This reconstruction points out the gap between what agents do indeed accept and what they are supposed to reject given the distinction between genuine and pseudo-reasons to form and/or affirm beliefs. The CTP is built upon the centrality of epistemic considerations in that the

abovementioned process focuses on eliminating and/or revising problematic normative beliefs. Williams' process of criticism aims to disqualify a particular kind of bad "cognitive performance" in the process of belief- or acceptance-formation: the inability to distinguish genuine reasons from the mere effects of power (Turri 2009). This is a matter of cognitive performance rather than volitional performance because the purpose of the test is to end up with reasonable beliefs rather than having the motivation to do the right thing. So, even if the agents hypothetically assess their normative beliefs in this process of criticism, what they are subject to is still a cognitive procedure. This perhaps could even be considered an epistemology of moral beliefs. The focus of the principle is the procedural quality of belief-formation rather than intrinsically moral properties of agents' intentions.

One might contend that the link between denouncing self-legitimation of power and interpreting the CTP as an epistemic criterion is not obvious. Perhaps, one may argue, Williams' approach is still a moral critique rather than an epistemic one since moral reasoning also works with notions such as rationality, reasons and justification. Although Williams (2002: 230) explicitly states that his critical method aims to provide "a theory of error" rather than that of moral truth, it is possible to define the CTP as a general principle of normativity which contains moral considerations. However, even when we agree that moral and epistemic considerations are highly intertwined with one another in the domain of practical reasoning, we have reasons to believe that epistemic critique is in some sense more fundamental for Williams. In his famous paper "Internal and External Reasons", he explicitly designs the criterion for having a practical reason through a falsity-aversive epistemic criterion (Williams 2001: 79). According to this, the *prima facie* practical reason to Φ is undermined only if either a false belief is the cause of the motivation to Φ or the agent's belief "in the relevance of Φing to the satisfaction" of that motivation is false (Williams 2001: 79). Williams (2001: 79) explicitly suggests that an "epistemic consequence" follows from the failure of practical rationality, according to which an agent "may falsely believe an internal reason statement about himself." In other words, poor deliberative performance leads to a cognitive error, which makes agents fallaciously believe that they have a practical reason to Φ. This is indeed what the CTP aims to show in the context of political life: avoiding those cases in which agents falsely believe that their state is legitimate.

Another objection to my epistemic reading would be to contend that epistemic deficiencies are problematic only because they, themselves, are instances of domination. Hence, it would not be plausible to conceptually isolate the epistemic requirement embedded in the CTP from the Williamsian distinction between political rule and domination. I agree that a violation of the CTP and domination often overlap. However, within a theory of legitimate state power, there is no such necessary link between reflective unacceptability and domination. This is because the type of domination imposed by state power is dyadic: one group exercising power and claiming authority over the other. There could be many other side effects of such power that promote epistemic circularities in the legitimation of state power without interpersonal, dyadic relations of domination. For instance, as I will discuss in the sections below, certain individuals' deliberation can be distorted due to coercive power exercised over third parties.

3. How the CTP Is Not Compatible with Williams' Realist Commitments

3.1 The CTP and The Realism Constraint

Even when one accepts that the CTP is an epistemic criterion, one still needs to specify what kind of epistemic criterion it is according to Williams. Is it a free-standing epistemic requirement, merely checking the plausibility of subjects' beliefs about a particular subject, or an epistemic criterion that reveals a political truth, such as discovering how people are actually treated? Adopting the first interpretation, one might contend that a subject forms unacceptable beliefs which do not meet some minimal standard of rationality without her necessarily being dominated by power holders. In contrast, the second type of epistemic assessment aims to construct the political rule-domination distinction as it focuses on the way people are treated, i.e. whether they are dominated. Before arguing that the CTP is not compatible with Williams' realist commitments, let me explicate why it is appropriate to evaluate the CTP by the standards of the second interpretation rather than the first one.

One might argue that there is nothing wrong with the CTP being a free-standing epistemic principle whose normative authority is not derived from the notion of politics. Principles can be borrowed from either epistemic or moral domains, unless they undermine the realist outlook which focuses on the constitutive features of politics. As long as one respects the constraints of realism, anything goes.[6] Following this line of reasoning, one would contend that it is not necessary for the CTP to be derived from the political rule-domination distinction or from similar considerations regarding the way people are treated by power holders. The CTP could be conceived as an additional criterion which is different from Williams' requirement of non-domination. Consequently, one would hold that a violation of the CTP is not necessarily an indicator of raw domination. Instead, additional to the political rule-domination distinction, it might function as a secondary criterion of acceptability.

I will respond to this objection in two steps. First, Williams himself defines "targets of *the critical theory principle*" as "accepted social and institutional understandings which increasingly come to appear … as more subtle forms of coercion" (Williams 2005: 14). According to Williams, although self-justification of power *prima facie* looks like the acceptance of certain beliefs based on individuals' reasons, the CTP functions to identify "subtle forms of coercion" which are employed to influence these individuals' beliefs. This principle investigates the role of coercion in maintaining power relations. Hence, the task of the CTP (i.e. identifying reliance on subtle forms of coercion) seems to be inherent in making the political rule-domination distinction. This is at least what Williams intends to achieve when he employs the principle in the context of his theory of legitimacy.

In addition to the textual evidence from Williams' writings, there is a more theoretical reason why the CTP should not be interpreted as a free-standing epistemic principle. Employing the CTP as a purely epistemic criterion would replace the question "how are political agents treated?" with the question "are political agents' beliefs warranted?" This is because epistemic principles

6 See (Sleat 2016) for a specification of realism constraints.

concentrate on agents' evidential considerations. When the CTP is interpreted in purely epistemic terms (i.e. without expecting its violation to be an instance of domination), what matters is whether subjects have genuine reasons to form a particular judgment. Conversely, the first question seems to be more suitable for a political enquiry in that it pertains to authority and power relations in a society. People are always "treated" in a particular way within a political context where conflict and collective action are ineliminable (Mouffe 2005; Krause 2012). These are the fundamental dimensions of a realist conception of politics (Sleat 2016: 255).

One might contend that we can employ both questions; using the CTP as a purely epistemic criterion would allegedly not create a conflict between these two questions. However, once the conceptual link between the epistemic and treatment-related (e.g. non-domination) requirements is broken, there are possibilities in which certain relations of power meet treatment-related criteria while failing epistemic criteria. Such cases would lead to the controversial conclusion that there is an illegitimate polity with subjects who are not dominated by the power holders. This kind of unrestrained influence of epistemic requirements would be controversial for realists because epistemic deficiencies seem to be another constitutive feature of politics. Without knowing how to limit epistemic requirements from within politics, free-standing epistemic criteria may easily collapse into an unrealistic conception of politics. This would count against the realists' commitment to accurately portray facts about politics. In what follows, I explain why epistemic deficiencies are a constitutive feature of politics.

As Mouffe argues, one reason why epistemic deficiencies are a constitutive feature of politics is that affective attitudes are essential for a proper conception of "the political" (Mouffe 2000: 24; Mihai 2014: 32). According to Mouffe (2000: 24), the emergence of collective identities in political life entails that individuals are sensitive to the affective attitudes that are linked with the conflicting distinction between "us" and "them". Insofar as the conflictual nature of political life fosters hegemonic power struggles among competing social groups, political passions, stemming from the existence of rival collective identities, are significantly relevant to making sense of political action (Mihai 2014: 33). The influence of passions and other sorts of affective attitudes on belief-formation processes is undesirable from an epistemic point of view as these attitudes promote cognitive biases (Kahan 2013). Furthermore, time constraints inherently play a significant role in politics, curbing political agents' epistemic capabilities. The problem is that political actions are always taken under time constraints (Zohlnhöfer and Rüb 2016: 3). Even if one assumes that there are universal and knowable truths, there is simply not enough time to converge towards those truths within a predefined time frame.

Considering that serious epistemic deficiencies are an ineliminable aspect of politics, the proper realist strategy would be to contextualize epistemic requirements. By this, one can make epistemic requirements harmonious with the realities of political life. However, there seems to be more than one contextualization strategy. One can opt for immanent critique which criticize all sorts of political beliefs by the local epistemic standards of the community. Alternatively, one can decide to employ a less demanding epistemic criterion that only rules out instances of epistemic circularities. This would make the epistemic inquiry more responsive to contextual circumstances such as the current set of beliefs in the community. Thirdly, the CTP is even more restricted in that it

exclusively focuses on epistemic circularities in relation to the justification of state power. All these three options are different ways to contextualize epistemic values under imperfect circumstances. However, there seems to be no non-arbitrary explanation of why we should prefer one of these options to others. Realism as a general approach to political philosophy does not specify what degree of contextualization we need to adopt. For this reason, Williams' interest in building a context-dependent political philosophy is not a sufficient explanation of why he specifically focuses on a particular subset of epistemic deficiencies. The first interpretation of the CTP is therefore at an impasse.

In contrast, Williams' choice makes sense when we adopt the second interpretation, i.e. the CTP as an epistemic principle revealing treatment-related truths.[7] If the task of epistemic requirements is defined as detecting whether state power dominates subjects, then exclusively focusing on epistemic circularities in relation to the justification of state power seems to have a plausible rationale. According to this, the lack of genuine reasons to accept a justification would be considered as domination because the agents' epistemic shortcomings would overlap with the causal influence of state power on their *prima facie* acceptance. In other words, as the exclusive causal role of state power can be singled out in the formation of acceptance, the CTP would be the proper way to contextualize epistemic requirements, identifying how individuals are situated vis-à-vis state power. Hence, the second interpretation explains why Williams opts for the CTP rather than other contextualized epistemic principles. Williams is interested in this kind of epistemic requirement because he believes that it says something important about the practical relationship between state power and subjects. Within the context of *the Basic Legitimation Demand*, the CTP as an epistemic requirement is constrained within politics since its only function is to elicit the political truth regarding how subjects are treated by their state, whether it be genuine legitimation or domination. Given this interpretation, I believe that it is legitimate to assess the CTP by checking if it is genuinely capable of tracking instances of domination. After all, it is the task of this principle to identify power holders who rely on "subtle forms of coercion". Adopting the second interpretation by no means implies that the CTP is a genuine principle of non-domination. This is because the link between this particular type of epistemic circularity and domination is far from obvious. The second interpretation only presents two important insights. First, it helps us understand the intended function of the CTP in the broader system of Williams' theory of legitimacy. Second, it gives us a yardstick that can be used to assess the CTP and decide if it is able to deliver on its promises, i.e. successfully revealing truths about domination.

3.2 A Violation of the CTP Does Not Necessarily Imply Raw Domination

After establishing the link between the CTP as an epistemic criterion and its task to correctly identify subtle forms of domination, I will now contend that this principle is not capable of fulfilling its task, at least in its current form. This is because there are cases in which the CTP falsely categorizes certain relations of power as instances of domination. Relying on social identity theory in psychology, I contend that certain instances of self-justification of power (violations of the

7 As I already suggested, treatment-related questions ask how subjects are treated, dominated or not.

CTP) do not necessarily lead to domination as the subjects' acceptance of the justification might be produced by non-coercive by-products of state power. These are cases in which subjects and power holders share a particular type of social identity because of the way power is exercised over the third parties. In this way, if subjects accept the power holders' justification only because of their shared identity, this would be a plain cognitive bias or epistemic incompetence rather than a subtle form of coercion.[8]

Let me first give a concise outline of social identity theory. Social psychologists working on this theory contend that there are two important factors in explaining human behaviour: interpersonal and intergroup dynamics (Tajfel and Turner 1979 34). Interpersonal behaviour as an analytic category focuses on "interactions between two or more individuals that are *fully* determined by their interpersonal relationships and individual characteristics" (Tajfel and Turner 1979: 34). Conversely, intergroup behaviour refers to interactions "which are *fully* determined by their respective memberships in various social groups or categories…" (Tajfel and Turner 1979: 34). Of course, these two are ideal types. Human behaviour is usually a mixture of interpersonal and intergroup factors in reality.

The second important aspect of social identity theory is the claim that intergroup behaviour is largely explained by the influence of individuals' social identity rather than by conflicts of interest or the incongruence of beliefs among social groups. "Even when there is no explicit or institutionalized conflict or competition between groups, there is a tendency toward ingroup-favouring behaviour" (Tajfel 1982: 24). Social identity theorists argue that ingroup favouritism and discrimination against outsiders are produced largely by individuals' intrinsic motivation to "protect, enhance, preserve, or achieve a positive social identity for members of the group" (Tajfel 1982: 24). According to Tajfel (1981: 255), social identity is "that part of the individuals' self-concept which derives from their knowledge of their membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance of that membership." Moreover, empirical evidence suggests that even minimal social categorization is sufficient to instigate ingroup favouritism and discriminatory behaviour towards outsiders (Billig and Tajfel 1973). Lastly, it is known that the intrinsic motivation to protect and enhance one's social identity also generates cognitive biases (Cohen 2003; Sherman and Cohen 2006; Kahan 2013). Hence, the emotional commitments individuals have in relation to their social group not only influence the way they treat other individuals but also distort the way they form their own beliefs.

Drawing on the insights of social identity theory, I contend that self-justification of power without domination is possible. Consider the following example: some individuals in a community, call them the insiders, have a strong belief that their ruler's justification of her power is acceptable. This justification is also coherent with the insiders' current set of beliefs. Their acceptance is, however, a product of an emotion-led bias. The insiders and the ruler share a particular type of social identity. They hold an *affective* connection with the ruler. As an extension of their

8 Finlayson (2018: 791) contends that the heavy emphasis on cognitive biases is problematic since it functions as an individualist narrative, overshadowing how ideologies function within social structures. In contrast, the type of bias I discuss is caused by the dynamics of socialization.

ingroup favouritism, insiders suffer from a cognitive bias that leads them to accept the justification in question. Moreover, imagine that their shared social identity is established by the ruler's exercise of power. For instance, the ruler has constructed this emotional connectedness by discriminating against another group, the outsiders. This discriminatory treatment constructed and affirmed the insiders' social identity in relation to the outsiders. Given the findings of social identity theory suggesting that even minimal social categorization is sufficient for intergroup dynamics to emerge, the exercise of state power would be quite an influential way to initiate such a process. There are many ways state power can be used to influence social groupings: the distribution of economic advantages and/or burdens, changing the way diverse social groups are supposed to interact with each other (e.g. interactions between workers and employers through labour law), overemphasizing the inter-group cultural differences in policy-making, etc.[9] These instances are conducive to creating new types of social categorizations or deepening the existing ones. Hence, the way state power is exercised might lead to the emergence of new identities or increase the perceived importance of pre-existing social identities. This may be to the extent that individuals' psychological propensities are significantly influenced.[10]

In such a setting, it would clearly violate the CTP if insiders accept the justification of the power holder only because of their shared social identity, which is in and of itself constructed by the way state power is exercised. From an epistemic point of view, the way subjects form their beliefs regarding the acceptability of the justification is certainly unhealthy. The cognitive procedure through which subjects accept the relevant justification does not meet the requirements of "not-too-bad-evidence". This is because their acceptance would be caused solely by "the effects of power", which are supposed to be filtered out by the CTP (Williams 2002: 226). Power-induced emotional attitudes cause subjects to accept the claims of power holders while their bias-free reasoning would not to accept the same justification. This is the sort of epistemic circularity which the CTP intends to avoid. The reliability of power holders' claims are not ratified by the independent standards which are irreducible to the psychological influence created by the same power.

However, as a realist test, the CTP should be able to identify this case as an instance of domination due to the reasons I previously detailed. I argue that this example does not count as an instance of domination, reliance on some form of mere coercion. My claim relies on the distinction between *being influenced by coercive power* and *being coerced by coercive power*. I believe that this conceptual distinction is normatively significant because only the latter implies that coercive power is exercised over an individual in a meaningful way. For instance, imagine three actors: a police officer, an aggressor and an ordinary citizen. If the officer arrests the aggressor despite the latter's resistance, it seems plausible to believe that the aggressor is in some way coerced. Moreover, we can say that the ordinary citizen is influenced by this exercise of coercive power. Knowing that the aggressor has been detained, the ordinary citizen is relieved and changes her daily habits. For instance, she does not mind going out later at night as she predicts that the likelihood of

9 See (LeBas 2006) for a discussion on how politicians' way of conducting politics triggers increasing polarization in the process of identity-formation.

10 See (Cinnirella 1997) for the relevance of social identity framework for large groups such as nations.

being assaulted is now much lower. Further, the ordinary citizen may even develop irrational attitudes such as being careless about her safety, underestimating other possible sources of danger. Nonetheless, even though the ordinary citizen is influenced by the exercise of the officer's coercive power, it would be implausible to say that she is coerced by the very same power. Even if this power causes her to form epistemically unwarranted beliefs (underestimating other sources of danger), this does not mean that she is under the domination of the police officer. In this sense, I hold that there are non-coercive by-products of coercive power when that power is exercised in a relatively complex social environment with more than two agents or groups. Coercion over one group might have non-coercive by-products influencing another group.

Similarly, I believe that the subjects' acceptance of the justification due to the power-induced social identity is a non-coercive by-product of coercive power. It is undoubtable that subjects are drastically influenced by the exercise of power. However, this power seems to mainly be exercised over outsiders rather than insiders. The former is the group whose members are discriminated via various forms of state power. Coercion implies "obstructive activities of other people" which leads to the loss of certain capacities in the coercee (Williams 2005: 80). If we say that coercive power is used to discriminate against outsiders, it makes sense to believe that power holders obstruct certain ways outsiders might act while the same impediments are not in place for insiders. This is how the relational logic of discrimination works. No treatment can be at once universal and discriminatory. A policy is discriminatory when there is another group who does not suffer from the same type of obstructions reducing their capacities. Following this, we have reasons to accept that the way insiders are influenced by state power does not imply an instance of coercion over them. This is because the influence on them is caused by the fact that another group is coerced in a way that they themselves do not experience.

One might contend that insiders' not being coerced *in a particular way* does not mean that they are not coerced at all. An exercise of state power might have two different coercive outputs. The first output would be to coerce outsiders in the narrow sense of the term "coercion" while the second output would be to coerce insiders in the broader sense of the term. Let me restate what I mean by the broad and narrow conceptions of "coercion". The difference is about what counts as coercive restrictions and/or how to specify the nature of the impairment resulting from an instance of coercion. The narrow conception of coercion relies on intentionally employed restraints such as brute force, threats, and fear-inducing activities which aim to pressure the coercee's faculty of judgment. Conversely, the broad conception of coercion also covers restraints that are the by-products of social institutions unintentionally depriving the coercee of certain capacities (Williams 2005: 80). Another possible way to draw a distinction between the narrow and broad sense is to focus on the object of deprivation. For instance, as the narrow conception of coercion is based on means of prevention (e.g. threat or violence) which generate a feeling of compulsion in the coercee's psychology, the object of deprivation is usually taken to be associated with the coercee's actual wants, i.e. preventing someone from doing what she actually desires to do. In contrast, the broad conception of coercion would also involve certain important capacities as a relevant object of deprivation even when the agent is not aware of her condition, e.g. depriving the agent of the capacity for informed decision-making by preventing

her "from hearing of other options" (Williams 2005: 82).

Adopting a broader conception of coercion, one might object to my argument by saying that insiders are coerced in this sense of the term. First, one would argue that unintended by-products of coercive power can also be deemed coercive since such by-products might "structurally limit the opportunities of some class of citizens" (Williams 2005: 91). Even if such an instance of power is not dyadic in the strict sense of the term, it still has a relational dimension. This is because the exercise of state power pertains to a distributive imbalance between advantaged and disadvantaged groups, which are interpersonal relations. In other words, even if insiders are not directly coerced, they could still be deprived of certain important capacities in relation to power holders due to indirect products of the exercise of power.

Secondly, the objector would need to identify the resource or capacity that the insiders are deprived of. This is because an instance of structural domination requires a type of resource or capacity loss that makes agents suffer a particular kind of unfreedom (Cudd 1994: 25). The most plausible object of deprivation seems to be tied to insiders' cognitive capacities since a type of cognitive bias engenders their acceptance of power holders' justification. The objector would then contend that insiders are deprived of an unbiased cognitive perspective as a result of the exercise of power. As social psychological evidence shows, the influence of social identities curb individuals' cognitive capabilities (Kahan 2013). Assuming that cognitive ability to form unbiased judgments is valuable and an essential capacity for individuals, the objector would hold that even insiders are dominated in the political order presented here. They are as dominated as any other social group which is structurally oppressed through the unintended consequences of social institutions depriving them of certain important capacities. Insiders' capacity to form sound judgments via a healthy cognitive procedure is taken away by the exercise of power. As a result, the objector would conclude that both insiders and outsiders are dominated in this order, albeit through different types of coercion which are generated by the same instance of state power. Hence, self-justification of power would again collapse into an order of domination.[11]

Let me now show why this objection fails. In relationships of domination, there has to be a distributive imbalance between the dominant and the dominated regarding the object of deprivation.[12] For instance, when we talk about patriarchal domination, we often refer to how women are systematically deprived of certain capacities in relation to men. In the case of indoctrination as "preventing individuals from hearing about other options", the indoctrinator has a privileged access to sources of knowledge while the indoctrinated is deprived of these same resources. Williams (2005: 91) also emphasizes the relational nature of structural coercive restraints when he defines them as "arrangements which structurally limit the opportunities of some class of citizens…" Deprivation of certain capacities is

11 Certain continental philosophers conceptualize the constitutive influence of power upon the formation of individuals' identities as "subjectivation" (Foucault 1982). I am not denying that such instances of identity-making can be problematic. However, what I am interested in here is whether subjectivation constitutes the appropriate kind of power dynamic which can be criticized within a theory of state legitimacy.

12 Cudd (1994: 25) makes a similar point in that the harms which the oppressed people experience should be conceived in relation to the other groups.

rooted in a social context where a subset of citizens suffers from this lack. This is how one can distinguish deprivation as a political notion from sheer lack of something. Deprivation as a political notion implies a relational phenomenon.

However, there may not be a similar distributive imbalance regarding our object of deprivation (unbiased cognitive perspective) between the power holder and insiders. As previously discussed, both the power holder and insiders share the same type of social identity. There seems to be no reason to assume that power holders are somehow immune to the laws of psychology and have privileged access to a cognitively superior perspective. In cases of manipulation and/or indoctrination, it makes sense to think that there is such a distributive imbalance because power holders know what they hide from their subjects. So, in these cases, subjects are deprived of information in relation to power holders. However, when it comes to the effects of social identities upon individuals, it seems sensible to believe that power holders' cognitive capabilities are at least similarly distorted. Of course, there might be some power holders who are more rational but still act as biased partisans due to strategic considerations. Nonetheless, in that case, the exclusive causal relationship between social identity and acceptance of the justification would be broken. Manipulation would be a second factor explaining why insiders accept the justification of power holders.

In *Truth and Truthfulness*, Williams (2002: 222) holds that there could be potential cases "in which the advantaged and the disadvantaged parties both accept the [legitimation] story." Put differently, a violation of the CTP that leads both the ruler and insiders to lack an unbiased cognitive perspective might count as domination. However, there are two possible scenarios under these circumstances: a) rulers are similarly influenced by their own means of indoctrination, with their power being exercised over insiders; and b) both rulers and insiders are ideologically deluded by the effects of power exercised over third parties. The first scenario does not pose a challenge to my point as there is a dyadic power relation between rulers and insiders in the first place. However, in the second scenario, it is not clear how such an instance of domination can meaningfully be conceived as dyadic, which is needed for a theory of legitimate state power. First, the power in question is not directly exercised over insiders. So it is not dyadic in the strict sense of the term. Further, if there is no distributive imbalance of any kind, e.g. relative deprivation of insiders in comparison to rulers, there seems to be no genuine interpersonal relationship at stake. Why not call this an instance of impersonal domination where both rulers and insiders are dominated due to non-agential social forces? It is true that the effect of power is traceable to power holders' coercion over third parties. However, the way both they and insiders suffer from ideological distortion pertains to the broader cultural environment in which social identities, norms and shared beliefs play a key role in the self-oppression of the community. Although it says something important about the legitimacy of a social order as a whole, this is very different from the legitimacy of dyadic power relations in a theory of state power.

Consequently, I believe that it is not plausible to regard power-induced creation of social identities as a broader form of coercion. The influence of social identities is different from indoctrination and manipulation in the sense that even power holders might suffer from the same kind of cognitive biases. So, it is not necessary that there is a distributive imbalance regarding the object of deprivation. Following this, I conclude that the example that I discussed does not constitute an instance

of domination. There could be non-coercive by-products of coercive state power, which might make some individuals accept the justification of power holders. Therefore, the CTP is not able to correctly track political domination.

One might ask "what about the outsiders who are coerced?" Is legitimacy a normative property only in relation to those who accept the legitimation story? Williams seems to believe that an acceptable legitimation should be offered to *each subject*, not only a subset of them. First, the fact that insiders accept the justification of state power due to coercion over outsiders does not say anything about how outsiders normatively relate to the same state. It could be that outsiders accept the justification offered by power holders for some other reason. There might be two parallel legitimation processes. Even if it is not the ideally just state for the outsiders, they can still think that it is minimally legitimate due to certain benefits associated with the regime such as a degree of security and economic prosperity etc. Second, relying on Williams' (2005: 10) contention that legitimacy is a non-binary property, one can bite the bullet and say that legitimacy is always realised "with respect to those to whom the order can be legitimated" (Hall 2015a: 473). Of course, this would imply that outsiders are being subordinated. However, there is still a sense in which such a political system is partially legitimate.

4. How to Revise the CTP

I am not able to present a full-fledged account of how the CTP should be revised due to space constraints. Nonetheless, I offer a possible reformulation of the CTP and expound some of the basic desiderata that the revised version needs to satisfy. It is important to note that my revision aims to improve the CTP in a direction that Williams would approve. Hence, it is a kind of modification of the original principle rather than a complete replacement. Given that the inadequacy of the CTP is caused by its inability to distinguish non-coercive by-products of power from coercion, the revised version should be able to identify when the influence of coercive power implies coercion over the influencee. One possible formulation could be the following:

> CTP`: The acceptance of a justification of power does not count (i) if acceptance is solely created by the very same power and (ii) if the power is directly or indirectly *exercised over the addressees of the justification* whose acceptance is at stake.

By adding the second condition, one would implicitly draw the important distinction between being influenced by coercive power and being coerced by coercive power. Individuals can still be influenced by coercive power that is exercised over others. However, if we cannot explain how this instance of power is also exercised over the individuals in question, then it is not clear how they are coerced or dominated. When one is not able to present a plausible causal story regarding how they are coerced, it seems that their acceptance is caused by a non-coercive by-product of power. By filtering out potential cases like this, the revised version of the CTP (CTP`) would provide a sound epistemic criterion which correctly identifies instances of domination, namely, political orders based on mere coercion over those whose acceptance is at stake.

Let me specify two desiderata which the CTP` needs to satisfy. First, the CTP`

should rule out indoctrination through disciplinary state institutions. Although indoctrination is often thought to be a form of soft power, disciplinary institutions fundamentally rely on some narrow sense of coercion. For instance, indoctrination of a group of people via compulsory schooling usually requires some sort of threat or physical force to keep the indoctrinated within the institutional setting until indoctrination has become successful. Hence, indoctrination through these institutions is more than a non-coercive by-product of power. Second, the CTP` should exclude products of coercive power that can be used to manipulate others. For instance, if individuals' acceptance solely relies on power holders' preventing them from having undistorted information regarding certain important issues, then ordinary individuals are limited in their opportunities in relation to power holders. This is because power holders would have privileged access to sources of information while others are deprived of the capacities linked with having complete information. On the other hand, they are not directly coerced in the narrow sense of the term. This relationship resembles the broad conception of coercion I previously discussed since the manipulated subjects are deprived of the capacity of informed decision-making as a result of the exercise of coercive power. Considering the asymmetry of information, power holders have the manipulative means to limit others' freedom to form an opinion. To be able to incorporate broader conceptions of coercion into my account, I assume that the CTP` should also account for the illegitimacy of such cases.

I believe that the CTP` is indeed a good candidate to satisfy these two desiderata. The first desideratum refers to the cases where disciplinary institutions such as compulsory schooling rely on direct forms of coercion. For instance, the state often threatens to take away a child from her parents if they do not send her to school. Alternatively, the child is disciplined via threats and even physical impediments (e.g. walls of a boarding school, several ways to punish students, etc.) in the school before she is fully indoctrinated, i.e. accepting the justification. Since these instances show how coercive power is exercised over the addressee of a justification, the CTP` would rule them out through its second condition.

The second desideratum would also be satisfied because the CTP` excludes the ways coercive power is indirectly exercised over the addressees of a justification.
Here, there is an act of coercion, C, which intimidates alternative media outlets and enforces a policy of censorship. Moreover, there is a product of C, call this P, which gives the state special powers to manipulate other individuals due to asymmetric information. P would certainly limit the available options for the manipulated individuals, hence imposing a type of unfreedom, because they do not have access to undistorted information. I believe that P alone would count as an instance of domination through indirect coercion over the addressees of the justification whose acceptance is at stake. First, the manipulated individuals are deprived of certain capacities in relation to power holders. Hence, unlike the case of social identities, there is a true distributive imbalance of freedom between the manipulated and the manipulator. Second, power holders can deliberately use this manipulative power in a particular direction. So, there is an element of intentional control which is very different from causing random effects. P is a strategic tool employed in imposing unfreedom upon subjects rather than a trivial by-product of C. Third, this power rests on the coercive capacity of the state. Manipulative power, P, is created by coercion in the narrow sense, C. Without enforcing a policy of censorship in the first place, one would not be able to gain manipulative powers.

For these reasons, it makes sense to hold that the manipulated individuals are indirectly coerced by state power. If the combination of these features could not count as an instance of indirect coercion or coercion in the broad sense of the term, then nothing would. Capacity deprivation, intentional control and original act of coercion (C) seem to be sufficient to call this phenomenon indirect coercion. Consequently, the CTP` would rule out this case because its second condition does not permit coercive power to be indirectly exercised over the addressee of a justification.

5. Conclusion

Through this paper, I argued that Bernard Williams' realism suffers a tension between realist commitments and the epistemic requirements embedded in the CTP. Although the CTP is an epistemic criterion, it is still tasked with identifying instances of domination. Realism as a general approach does not tell us what degree of contextualization we should opt for. The task of identifying domination gives epistemic inquiry a properly contextualized scope. However, I argued that a violation of the CTP does not necessarily imply raw domination. The social identity theory in psychology indicates that minimal social categorization is sufficient to instigate the dynamics of intergroup behaviour which explains an important portion of ingroup favouritism and discrimination. I then showed how self-justification of power via creation of social identities, which violates the CTP, might be possible without being coercive over those who accept the justification. This is because not every by-product of coercive power is coercive in both narrow and broad senses of the term "coercion". Following this, I concluded that those who are influenced by non-coercive by-products are indeed not dominated by the state power. Hence, the violation of the CTP does not imply an order of state domination. Finally, I showed that it is still possible to revise the CTP in a way that is compatible with the basic tenets of realism. I do not claim that my revision is the only way to go about this task. However, my proposal serves the purpose in that it still rules out the worst cases of self-justification of power such as indoctrination and manipulation.

References

Bavister-Gould, Alex. 2013. "Bernard Williams: Political Realism and the Limits of Legitimacy," *European Journal of Philosophy*, 21(4): 593–610. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0378.2011.00464.x

Bergmann, Michael. 2004. "Epistemic Circularity: Malignant and Benign," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 69(3): 709–27. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1933-1592.2004.tb00524.x

Billig, Michael, and Henry Tajfel. 1973. "Social Categorization and Similarity in Intergroup Behaviour," *European Journal of Social Psychology* 3(1): 27–52. https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2420030103

Cinnirella, Marco. 1997. "Towards a European Identity? Interactions Between the National and European Social Identities Manifested by University Students in Britain and Italy," *British Journal of Social Psychology* 36(1): 19–31. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8309.1997.tb01116.x

Cohen, Geoffrey L. 2003. "Party Over Policy: The Dominating Impact of Group Influence on Political Beliefs," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 85: 808–22. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.85.5.808

Cudd, Anne E. 1994. "Oppression by Choice," *Journal of Social Philosophy* 25: 22–44. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9833.1994.tb00347.x

Finlayson, Lorna. 2018. "The Third Shift: The Politics of Representation and the Psychological Turn," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 43(4): 775–95. https://doi.org/10.1086/696624
Foucault, Michel. 1982. "The Subject and Power," in *Michel Foucault: Beyond Hermenutics and Structuralism*, ed. Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, 208–26. Brighton: Harvester Press.
Geuss, R. 1981. *The Idea of a Critical Theory: Habermas and the Frankfurt School*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Geuss, Raymond. 1996. "Morality and Identity," in *The Sources of Normativity*, auth. Christine Korsgaard and Onora O'Neill, 189–99. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Hall, Edward. 2015a. "Bernard Williams and the Basic Legitimation Demand: A Defence," *Political Studies* 63: 466–80. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9248.12070
Hall, Edward. 2015b. "How to Do Realistic Political Theory (and Why You Might Want to Do)," *European Journal of Political Theory* 16(3): 1–21. https://doi.org/10.1177/1474885115577820
Horton, John. 2012. "Political Legitimacy, Justice and Consent," *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 15(2): 129–48. https://doi.org/10.1080/13698230.2012.651015
Prinz, Janosch, and Enzo Rossi. 2017. "Political Realism as Ideology Critique," *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 20(3): 334–48. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13698230.2017.1293908
Kahan, Dan M. 2013. "Ideology, Motivated Reasoning, and Cognitive Reflection," *Judgment and Decision Making* 8(4): 407–24. http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2182588
Krause, Juljan. 2012. "Collective Intentionality and the (Re)Production of Social Norms: The Scope for a Critical Social Science," *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 42(3): 323–55. https://doi.org/10.1177/0048393111399100
LeBas, Adrienne. 2006. "Polarization as Craft: Party Formation and State Violence in Zimbabwe," *Comparative Politics* 38(4): 419–38. https://doi.org/10.2307/20434010
Mihai, Mihaela. 2014. "Theorizing Agonistic Emotions," *Parallax* 20(2): 31–48. https://doi.org/10.1080/13534645.2014.896547
Mouffe, Chantal. 2000. *The Democratic Paradox*. London: Verso.
Mouffe, C. 2005. *On the Political*. London: Routledge.
Nozick, Robert. 1997. "Coercion," in *Socratic Puzzles*, 15–44. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
Pettit, Philip. 2000. *Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Postone, Moishe. 1996. *Time, Labor, and Social Domination: A Reinterpretation of Marx's Critical Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Raekstad, Paul. 2018. "Realism, Utopianism, and Radical Values," *European Journal of Philosophy* 26(1): 145–68. https://doi.org/10.1111/ejop.12193
Rahman, K. Sabeel. 2017. "Democracy Against Domination: Contesting Economic Power in Progressive and Neorepublican Political Theory," *Contemporary Political Theory* 16(1): 1–24. https://doi.org/10.1057/cpt.2016.12
Rossi, Enzo. 2019. "Being Realistic and Demanding the Impossible," *Constellations* 26(4): 638–52. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8675.12446
Sherman, David K, and Geoffrey L. Cohen. 2006. "The Psychology of Self-Defense: Self-Affirmation Theory," *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* 38: 183–242. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(06)38004-5
Sleat, Matt. 2013. *Liberal Realism: A Realist Theory of Liberal Politics*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
Sleat, Matt. 2014. "Legitimacy in Realist Thought: Between Moralism and Realpolitik," *Political Theory* 42(3): 314–37. https://doi.org/10.1177/0090591714522250
Sleat, Matt. 2016. "What is a Political Value? Political Philosophy and Fidelity to Reality," *Social Philosophy and Policy* 33(1-2): 252–72. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0265052516000285
Tajfel, Henry, and John C. Turner. 1979. "An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict," in *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations,* ed. William G. Austin and Stephen Worchel, 33–47. Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Tajfel, Henry. 1981. *Human Groups and Social Categories: Studies in Social Psychology*. Cambridge: CUP Archive.
Tajfel, Henry. 1982. "Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations," *Annual Review of Psychology* 33(1): 1–39. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.ps.33.020182.000245
Turri, John. 2009. "The Ontology of Epistemic Reasons," *Noûs* 43(3): 490–512. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0068.2009.00715.x
Wendt, Fabian. 2016. "On Realist Legitimacy," *Social Philosophy and Policy* 32(2): 227–254. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0265052516000182
Williams, Bernard. 2002. *Truth and Truthfulness.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Williams, Bernard. 2005. *In the Beginning was the Deed: Realism and Moralism in Political Argument*. Oxford: Princeton University Press.
Williams, Bernard. 2001. "Internal and External Reasons," in *Varieties of Practical Reasoning,* ed. Elijah Millgram, 77–98. Cambridge: The MIT Press..
Zohlnhöfer, Reimut, and Friedbert W. Rüb. 2016. "Introduction," in *Decision Making under Ambiguity and Time Constraints*, ed. Reimut Zohlnhöfer and Friedbert W. Rüb, 1–19. Colchester: ECPR Press.