The consensus among philosophers and bioethicists is that coercion essentially involves threats as opposed to offers (Wertheimer 1987, 2010, Ch. 4). Nevertheless, many, including many IRB members (Largent et al. 2012), believe that *offers* to participate in research may sometimes be coercive. Some try to explain away these intuitions (Largent et al. 2013). In contrast, Millum and Garnett (Forthcoming) try to salvage the intuitions by distinguishing two senses of coercion: *coercion-as-subjection* from *consent-undermining coercion*. The former is what Garnett (2018) calls a *eudaimonic* sense of coercion, on which the coercee is ‘subject to a foreign will’ and thereby, made worse off—at least in some respect—and the latter is what he calls a *deontic* sense of coercion, particularly one on which coercion, analytically, implies that the token consent of the coerce is undermined. They take the standard view of coercion to explain *consent-undermining coercion*, but suggest that authorities are invoking *coercion-as-subjection*. Though we admire the attempt to salvage these intuitions, we doubt they are successful. Nevertheless, we wish to follow their attempt to save the intuitions.

The chief problem for their view is that there does not seem to be a non-deontic sense of coercion. When an agent claims to have been coerced by another, they do not merely claim that their welfare has been reduced, but instead that they have been *wronged* in some respect. Those doing conceptual work on coercion, as reviewed by Garnett (2018, 546-550), share this view. So too do those doing empirical work on views about coercive offers as evidenced by the fact that they ask IRB members whether various activities were coercive, but ask research participants if similar activities were impermissible (Largent et al. 2012), appearing to assume these to be roughly equivalent questions. Further, the foundational documents of research ethics, on which IRB members rely, such as the Nuremberg Code and the Belmont Report (Emanuel et al. 2003, 39 and 36-37), suggest a strong conceptual link between coercion and impermissibility. Hence, it seems *prima facie* safer to assume that members took coercive offers to be a deontic notion rather than that they were operating with a previously unrecognized *eudaimonic* notion.

Millum and Garnett might invoke the duty of non-maleficence, claiming that whenever there is some *harming* there is also some *wronging* (Garnett 2018, 566n2)*.* But the duty of non-maleficence is not so simple. Compare beneficence. There are myriad minor ways we could improve others’ utility. One might think beneficence provides us with reason to find all people with hard to reach itches and give them back scratchers. Yet, even if so, there is no duty to do so. So too with non-maleficence. I might have a reason to not offer a competitive applicant a job because I know that another institution soon will, and I will thereby deprive that institution of an excellent employee, but I have no *pro tanto* duty to not offer the job. Duties, unlike other practical reasons, appear to *at least* have a presumptive ability to defeat other practical reasons, and the general duties of beneficence and non-maleficence appear to acquire this ability only when very specific content is fleshed out with further context.

Is there another way to salvage IRB members’ intuitions about coercive offers? We believe that considering appeal to cases helps justify the general notion of coercive offers. Consider David Zimmerman’s case of an individual that strands another on a deserted island and then *offers* unfair wages to him in order to prevent starvation makes a coercive offer. Zimmerman contrasts this with a case of an agent who happens across an individual stranded on a desert island and then offers them unfair wages for labor (1981, 133 et passim). The latter merely exploits—that is, roughly, gains unfair benefits from a transaction (Wertheimer 2010, Ch. 5)—while the former exploits and coerces.

We can likewise imagine cases of medical paternalism, which are particularly helpful because they remove the distraction of possible exploitation. Paternalistic acts are generally ones where an agent acts for the benefit of another, not themselves, and hence, generally not ones where an agent unfairly gains more from a transaction. Consider the following.

*Early Medication Offer*. *Provider A* is holding an incapacitated patient against their will because they are at threat of self-harm. *A* knows that the patient is becoming increasingly agitated, that to medicate the patient currently against their will would be unethical, but that *Provider B* will soon assume care of the patient and administer intramuscular medication at higher doses than necessary, leading to unnecessarily prolonged sedation. Finally, *A* knows that receiving medication at the appropriate dose now is *in the patient’s interests* because quicker treatment will lead to the patient more quickly being able to return to normal life (*e.g*., returning to work, paying their bills, *etc*.) *A* thus makes an offer to the patient to receive oral medication now or risk receiving intramuscular medication later. The patient accepts.

*Early Medication Offer* seems like a coercive offer. Yet, it seems permissible as well, and it does not seem to violate any of the patient’s *all-things-considered rights*. Moreover, no consent is undermined in *Early Medication Offer* as the patient’s consent in that case appears valid.

How can such offers be accommodated? Begin by noting other problems with the standard theory, on which a coercive act is a *threat* to make the coercee worse off relative to a moralized baseline—in particular that of all-things-considered moral entitlements against the coercer (cf. Wertheimer 1987, 2010, Ch. 4, Garnett 2018). As others have noted (Cohen et al. 2015), governments coerce by threatening to penalize with fine or jail time for, among other things, not paying taxes, but in doing so, the government is not *threatening an all-things-considered wrong*. Further, this coercion appears *deontic* in nature, but does not appear to *undermine consent* of the coercee. No consent is involved.

Advocates of the standard view might respond that state coercion is simply different in kind from other coercion, claiming that state’s coercion typically merely reinforces moral reasons that the agent already has (Wertheimer 1987, 255-256). Yet, this is false; I may have reasons to, *e*.*g*., give to the poor, but I do not have reasons to give to the particular mechanisms that the state requires absent the state’s coercion. I could, for instance, have discharged my obligation by giving to an NGO—indeed I might have done so *better than through the state*—but now the state has changed my reasons. Hence, the claim that state coercion is somehow different is unmotivated.

Hence, the standard view encounters problems whether or not one accepts the possibility of coercive offers. We think that the standard account can be improved by appealing to the notion of *pro tanto* wrong. Notably, in threatening jail or fine, the government is threatening a *pro tanto* wrong. We think a similar point can salvage intuitions about coercive offers; *Early Medication Offer* involves violating autonomy rights, but note that these are only *pro tanto* rights because their violation in *Early Medication Offer* is permissible. Hence, we suggest revising the standard account to take coercion as either a threatto make a target agent worse off relative to their *pro tanto* rights *unless* the agent accedes to a demand, or an offer that involves violating their *pro tanto* rights where the alternative to the offer, while *not* involving a rights violation as with threats, is not a reasonable choice for the agent. In *Early Medication Offer*, the physicians helps make it true that the patient has no reasonable choice other than to accept their offer, but the offer itself involves a *pro tanto* rights violation.

Obviously, we cannot fully defend this view here. One challenge is that not just any threat to violate *pro tanto* rights or rights-violating offer should suffice for coercion. For instance, assuming that there is a claim against being exploited, any threat of exploitation or offer involving it would thereby be coercive, but the distinction between exploitation and coercion seems deeper than this. Nevertheless, the problem of outlining the right sorts of rights is not unique to our view, but applies to the standard view as well.

However, to conclude, we can point to the implications it may have for monetary offers to participate in biomedical research. One might think that researchers rarely have *specific obligations qua researcher* to potential participants before the research process begins. For instance, everyone, including researchers, has duties to help the poor and the third world, but those are not duties to do so *through research* and can be discharged in various ways—perhaps, *e.g.,* by giving to charity organizations. Hence, participants are seldom made worse-off relative to their existing *pro tanto* rights, and as such could not meet the standard we suggest. However, others believe that interactions between researchers and subjects do create entitlements of the subjects against the researchers, such as to give ancillary duties, like (Richardson 2012). If so, then any research that violates that right, but creates an offer to incentivize subjects that would not return them to the baseline of such a right may be coercive.

Of course, the means to mitigate such risks is to ensure that their offers do not involve rights violations. Additionally, Millum and Garnett are right that conducting studies in populations where participants are likely to have reasonable alternatives can reduce the likelihood of coercion, and that ample compensation can morally offset the coercion participants suffer. Yet, unlike Millum and Garnett, we do not believe that this avoids coercion by aligning researchers’ and participants’ reasons and do not understand the reasonability of the choice in the subjective terms. Moreover, we would note that the benefits of this strategy must be weighed against the possibility of reducing benefits to developing countries or vulnerable populations by simply avoiding research with them.

Our account has two final, notable results. First, if our account is right, claims of coercion depend on further types of moral wrongs, so deliberating about whether coercion occurs involves looking for other wrongs—which may be sufficient to deem research impermissible. Second, as the cases of government coercion and *Early Medication Offer* show, coercion does not entail *all-things-considered* wrong, on our view. Hence, the mere presence of a coercive offer may not make a trial impermissible; the *pro tanto* wrong may need to be of a certain degree. Hence, claims of coercive offers may not be a broad brush with which to paint research trials as sometimes thought, but a scalpel requiring careful moral deliberation. Nevertheless, this account would save long-held intuitions about cases of coercion and research ethics.

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