DAMAGES IN INTERNATIONAL INVESTMENT LAW

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with
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Thus the party to a contract will choose to breach it when its gain from the breach is higher than the loss from paying the damages (provided the latter is based on the other party's loss). This is economically efficient. But this efficiency would be undermined if one measured damages on the basis of enrichment rather than the loss.

As far as *lawful* expropriation is concerned, it would not seem appropriate ever to rely on the unjust-enrichment method for the simple reason that the respondent's financial gain (even if it exceeds the claimant's loss) cannot be deemed unjust. Expropriation, being expressly allowed under international law, is a legitimate transfer of wealth and the requirements for compensation are specifically based on the value of the assets taken. As the Tribunal noted in *Amoco International Finance v Iran*:

[I]t would be difficult to understand why an enrichment resulting from a lawful act—a lawful expropriation—would be 'unjust,' except, precisely, if it were the consequence of the refusal adequately to compensate the expropriated party for the loss it sustained.⁹⁵

Note also that there is some authority for the proposition that the *absence* of *any* enrichment of the respondent State as a result of its wrongful interference may be taken into account as a compensation-limiting factor.⁹⁶

Conclusion

In sum, in investment disputes to date, unjust enrichment has not been accepted as a basis for determining compensation. Tribunals have focused on the primary function of compensation, which is to wipe out the consequences of the unlawful act for the claimant rather than prevent unjust enrichment of the respondent. It appears, at the same time, that unjust enrichment may be helpful as a yardstick for measuring compensation in circumstances where there are difficulties in estimating the claimant's loss, while the amount of enrichment can be established with greater certainty. There is also some indication that the amount of unjust enrichment may be taken into account as an equitable factor, to the extent that application of equitable considerations is permitted by law.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Amoco International Finance Corp v Iran, Award of 14 July 1987, 15 Iran-US CTR 189, 269, para 259.

⁹⁶ See section 8.5.1.

⁹⁷ On equitable considerations, see section 5.1.8.

5.3 CAUSATION AND REMOTENESS

A State responsible for an internationally wrongful act is under an obligation to make reparation only for the injury *caused* by that act. In other words, reparation (including compensation) is conditioned upon the existence of a causal link between the wrongful act and the damage suffered. The issue of causation is thus central to the scope of compensation.

5.3.1 Factual and Legal Tests of Causation

Legal scholars have emphasized the distinction between the factual test of causation (or causation in fact) and the legal test of causation (or legal causation). Under the factual test of causation, the issue is whether the wrongful conduct played *some* part in bringing about the harm or injury or was irrelevant to its occurrence. In domestic legal systems, this is also known as the *conditio sine qua non* or the 'but-for' test (ie, would the harm have occurred but for the unlawful conduct?)

On the other hand, under the legal test of causation, the key issue is whether the wrongful conduct was a *sufficient*, *proximate*, *adequate*, *foreseeable* or *direct* cause of the harm or injury. The legal test(s) of causation may be qualified by different adjectives, in positive or negative terms (such as 'direct vs indirect', 'sufficient vs insufficient', 'proximate vs remote', etc) emphasizing a particular underlying theory of causation. Equally, the relevant legal test may at times use several of these concepts interchangeably: for example, in some common law countries, the causation test revolves around the 'remoteness of damages', according to which recoverable losses must be 'reasonably foreseeable' (tort law) or 'reasonably contemplated' (contract law). Both factual and legal causation are relevant in determining the existence of the required causal relationship between the wrongful act and the injury, but factual causality alone is insufficient.

The central point to be emphasized is that the legal tests of causation are used to limit the amount of legally relevant, and thus recoverable, damages to the extent that it would be just and consonant with legal

⁹⁸ AM Honoré, 'Causation and Remoteness of Damage' in A Tunc (ed) *International Encyclopedia of Comparative Law* (Tübingen, Mohr, 1983) Vol XI, ch 7, 9.

⁹⁹ For example, while the directness standard makes a strict conceptual distinction between direct and indirect losses based on whether or not there was an intervening event that broke the chain of causation, the proximate cause theory distinguishes between proximate and remote causes in terms of whether the alleged loss can be reasonably considered the defendant's fault.

¹⁰⁰ See for the UK, see T Weir Tort Law (OUP, Oxford, 2002) chs 4-5; for Canada, see J Cassels Remedies: The Law of Damages (Irwin Law Inc., Toronto, 2000) ch 11.

policy. 101 As clearly described by Professor Honoré in his seminal work on comparative tort law:

[A]n aggrieved party who has suffered harm which in law amounts to injury may fail to recover compensation for it either because the alleged tortfeasor did not cause it or because, though he did, some reason of policy or justice prevents recovery. In either of these cases the damage is said in Common Law systems to be 'too remote' or 'not proximate'. These expressions are not taken literally. They do not refer to what is far or near in space or time. They are simply shorthand used to denote all those considerations, causal or other, which may make the connection between the tortfeasor and the damage legally insufficient. In German law and related systems the non-recoverable damage is said not to be 'adequately' caused. In French and related systems the irrecoverable damage is often called 'indirect'. 102

It will be apparent that if the test of causation is also based on notions of justice and legal policy, whatever the terminology used, the adjudicator enjoys a relatively broad margin of appreciation in determining in each specific case whether the wrongful act is the proximate (direct, foreseeable, etc) cause of the harm suffered.

5.3.2 Causation in General International Law

In 1953, on the basis of an examination of international jurisprudence, Cheng reached the following conclusion on the topic of 'the principle of proximate causality':

[I]t may be said that the principle of integral reparation in responsibility has to be understood in conjunction with that of proximate or effective causality which is valid both in municipal and international law. By virtue of the latter principle, the duty to make reparation extends only to those damages which are legally regarded as the consequences of an unlawful act. These are damages which would normally flow from such an act, or which a reasonable man in the position of the wrongdoer at the time would have foreseen as likely to result, as well as all intended damages. ¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Honoré (n 98) Vol XI, 16.

¹⁰² ibid 4.

¹⁰³ Cheng (n 4) 253 (footnote omitted).