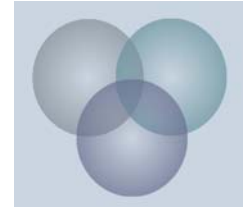




**International Max Planck Research School
'Retaliation, Mediation and Punishment'
(IMPRS-REMEP)**



Conference Call

'On Retaliation'

26 – 29 October, 2011

Venue: Max Planck Institute for Foreign and International Criminal Law, Freiburg

The Concept of Retaliation in the REMEP Research Design

In the research outline of the International Max Planck Research School on Retaliation, Mediation and Punishment (IMPRS-REMEP), the concept of retaliation, which is based on the overall principle of reciprocity, refers broadly to the full range of reactions to circumstances that are perceived to be deviant or socially transgressive. Such a constellation presupposes two opposed, nominally equal parties. Understood in this sense, retaliation occurs at all levels of socio-political organization, from nuclear families to nation states and transnational organizations. Retaliatory reactions run the whole gamut of conflict resolution procedures from consensual settlement via various forms of compensation to violent reprisal and escalation.

Taking this conception of retaliation as our point of departure, we have assumed in our shared research design that the propensity to react violently decreases as social proximity between the parties involved is established or becomes more pronounced. Further significant variables include power differentials among conflicting parties and the institutional arrangements balancing such differentials.

Hence, the propensity to regulate conflict through retaliation, without the intervention of central political authorities or other third parties endowed with power, appears to be characteristic of opposed or at least distinguishable groupings with an intermediate degree of socio-political proximity. The parties must be close enough to each other to share the desire to keep third parties out (this applies especially to "higher" levels of administrative or political organization) and distant enough from one another for violent retaliation to remain a viable option (because without this threat there is no incentive to opt for compensation).

The concept of retaliation, however, also materializes in various conflict scenarios in which central political authorities, states, global governance institutions, and transnational organizations of all kinds (social movements, faith-based organizations, INGOs, etc.) appear as active parties or are opposed to parties that are organized according to different, less complex principles. In such cases, nominal equality may be a contested issue, although it does not necessarily imply a balance of power. Thus, the REMEP research agenda incorporates the analysis of both constellations in which power differentials are reduced or absent and constellations in which these variables come into play in various ways.

Conceptual Framework of the Conference

The conference will be divided into the following two parts.

1. Approaches to and perspectives on retaliation

With reference to recent interest in the principle of retaliation in a number of human sciences, members of REMEP faculty and invited experts representing the disciplines cooperating in the REMEP program will present an inventory of the basic approaches to 'retaliation' and the most recent theoretically informed and innovative research perspectives on this subject. Reflections on basic theorizing with regard to retaliation will also address the various and not always compatible concepts of order which appear to be fundamental to the disciplines united in REMEP.

2. Further elaborations on the concept of retaliation – transdisciplinary perspectives

It would be worthwhile, we suggest, to elaborate on the concept of retaliation and to broaden our perspective in a transdisciplinary effort. Analyzing recent developments without neglecting the historical perspective, our aim is to achieve an upgraded, theoretically informed empirical understanding of the concepts and themes we addressed in the original version of the REMEP program.

Taking this transdisciplinary convergence as common ground, we are particularly interested in scalar arrangements and in the interface between, first, local variability in the ways in which retaliation informs processes of conflict settlement and, second, references to retaliation as a universal normative template at a transnational scale. Recent interventions in arenas of conflict that are affected by transscale entanglements have put discourse on retaliation back on the transnational agenda. In this context, it will be asked how the various normative registers that are inscribed in the nomosphere deal with concrete situations and moments of retaliation

Suggested Topics for Conference Papers

In our continuing efforts to elaborate the REMEP program, we have identified the following fields in which transdisciplinary research might provide promising insights. We welcome contributions to the conference which address one or several of the mentioned fields of research.

Basic approaches to the concept of retaliation:

- When and under what circumstances/social conditions do retaliatory relationships tend to undock capacities in conflict settlement from central political authorities?
- In what way and by whom are relations of retaliation legitimized?
- Under what conditions do boundaries between retaliation informed by political intervention and retaliation based on the unimpeded agency of the parties involved tend to blur?
- In what way do the rhetoric and language of retaliation inform discourses on conflict settlement and dispute management?
- What do historical framings tell us about contemporary retaliatory configurations?
- What role do discourses on retaliation play in fostering collective memory or in the politics of repression?
- What role does the concept of retaliation play in social control and the maintenance of order?
- To what extent may the concept of retaliation serve as a means of deterrence, alliance building, or negotiating solidarities?

Retaliation in a globalizing world:

- Do notions of retaliation materialize in connection with restorative justice, reconciliation councils, peace arrangements, ICCs and tribunals? If so, in what way?
- Does a reference to retaliation help in connecting actors with types of violent behavior: vigilantism, gang violence, tribal conflict, and other form of organized intervention?
- To what extent does the concept of retaliation inform plural legal configurations in contexts of migration? To what extent does it come into play in concepts of legal diversity and multiculturalism, of parallel societies and their judicial systems/normative repertoires, or of traveling models of conflict management?
- What is the relationship between retaliation and special expressions of deviance such as honor crimes?
- How is retaliation connected with a rhetoric of “tit for tat” in international relations between nation-states, global governance institutions and transnational actors?
- To what extent does reference to retaliation help us to understand violent events in terms of the perceived legitimacy of war, civil war, or acts of terrorism?

Speakers will be invited by the organizers on the basis of submitted abstracts. PhD students within the REMEP program are encouraged to submit an abstract. Abstracts should be submitted to Bertram Turner (turner@eth.mpg.de) and Günther Schlee (schlee@eth.mpg.de) by **March 31, 2011**.

A selection from submitted abstracts will be made by early April.

Günther Schlee

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