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Canadian-Nigerian International Human Rights Engagements (1999-2011): An Introduction

By

Obiora Chinedu Okafor*

More contemporary Canadian-Nigerian human rights engagements have occurred against the backdrop of a relatively long history of engagement in this area between the two countries, and alongside an even longer history of Canadian-Nigerian relations more generally.¹ These are histories within which one must situate the human rights engagements between these countries during the specific period under study here. As is well known, Canada established diplomatic relations with Nigeria shortly after Nigeria's independence from British colonial rule in 1960.² Nigeria reciprocated in 1973. It is noteworthy that Canada has for several decades now funded or otherwise supported many human rights efforts and struggles in Nigeria (as elsewhere³), including in relation to judicial reform, institution building, democratization, and poverty alleviation. While Nigeria has – over time – more or less remained engaged in this relationship, the evidence suggests that Nigeria has not tended to act in a similar manner toward Canada. While the preliminary evidence suggests that the interventions from Canada have played some kind of role in Nigeria,⁴ the exact nature, attainments, problems, and prospects of such Canadian-

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¹ See High Commission of Canada in Nigeria, "Canada - Nigeria Relations", online: <http://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/nigeria_draft/bilateral_relations_bilaterales/canada_nigeria.aspx?lang=en> [*High Commission*].

² *Ibid.*

³ See e.g. DJ Hornsby & O van Heerden, "South Africa–Canada Relations: A Case of Middle Power (Non) Cooperation?" (2013) 51 *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 153.

⁴ For example, see Rhoda Howard-Hassman, "The Flogging of Bariya Magazu: Nigerian Politics, Canadian Pressures, and Women's and Children's Rights" (2004) 3 *J Hum Rts* 3 [*Howard-Hassman*].

Nigerian human rights cooperation has not been as rigorously studied and widely understood in the scholarly literature as might be expected. The relevant literature (especially its human rights sub-set) is thus relatively inadequate at the moment. Neither Howard-Hassman's very important 2004 piece on the Canadian intervention regarding the flogging of Bariya Magazu by the authorities in one far Northern Nigerian state (province),⁵ nor Sonia Cardenas' excellent exploration of the various ways in which the Canadian Human Rights Commission has sought to assist national human rights bodies around the world,⁶ come close to filling this huge gap in the literature. Similar points can be made concerning work done by the now defunct CIDA,⁷ and the writings of scholars such as Feyisetan;⁸ the Reliefweb;⁹ and Aiyede.¹⁰ As such, it is clear that Canadian/Nigerian policymakers, development practitioners, and scholars will benefit significantly from any additional insight into the afore-referenced questions. So will many among the lettered and relevant segments of the Canadian/Nigerian public. Needless to say, important (albeit preliminary) analogies could also be made from the discussion here in relation to the similarly under-studied aspects of Canada's human rights role in other African and even developing countries generally.

⁵ Rhoda Howard-Hassman, "The Flogging of Bariya Magazu: Nigerian Politics, Canadian Pressures, and Women's and Children's Rights" (2004) 3 J Hum Rts 3 [Howard-Hassman].

⁶ Sonia Cardenas, "Transgovernmental Activism: Canada's Role in Promoting National Human Rights Commissions" (2003) 25 Hum Rts Q 775.

⁷ CIDA, "Sustainable Development Strategy 2007-2009" (Canadian Government Document), online: <[http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/INET/IMAGES.NSF/vLUIImages/Sustainable_development/\\$file/Sustainable%20Development%20Strategy2007%E2%80%932009.pdf](http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/INET/IMAGES.NSF/vLUIImages/Sustainable_development/$file/Sustainable%20Development%20Strategy2007%E2%80%932009.pdf)>

⁸ See Bamikale J Feyisetan, "Implementation of Policies, Programmes and Laws Related to Reproductive Health and Reproductive Rights in Selected African Countries" (Paper for the Third Meeting of the Follow-up Committee on the Implementation of the DND and the ICPD-PA, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 23-25 September 1998, Produced as United Nations Economic and Social Council Doc, No. FSSDD/ICPD/FC.3/98/Inf.4, 16 September 1998), online: <http://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/australia-australie/bilateral_relations_bilaterales/fund-fonds.aspx?lang=eng&view=d>

⁹ See Reliefweb Report, "Canada Continues to Support Conflict Prevention and Resolution" (Reliefweb Updates, May 2001), online: <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/reliefweb_pdf/node-80799.pdf>

¹⁰ See Emmanuel R Aiyede, "United We Stand: Labour Unions and Human Rights NGOs in the Democratisation Process in Nigeria (2004) 14 Development in Practice 224.

It is in the hope of contributing to the amelioration of this significant gap that this edited volume, one of the end products of a highly integrated and coherent multi-year, multi-partner, research effort, that was funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), maps, analyzes, discusses and theorises the nature, attainments, problems and prospects of Canadian-Nigerian human rights engagements between 1999 (when Nigeria's current democratic regime was established) and 2011 (a convenient cut-off date).

As hinted to above, the volume also has an important policy role. It is hoped that these articles will also contribute significantly to the policy/practice-oriented debates about Canada's role in the developing world as a whole, in the African continent more generally, and in Nigeria in particular. The insights offered in this volume regarding Canada's human rights role within, and engagements with, the country that is now by a huge margin the largest economy in Africa, and one of its top two most powerful political players, will surely add to the repertoire of knowledge that the policy and practitioner community in Canada, Nigeria, and elsewhere, utilize in their dealings with each other.

At the outset, a number of caveats must be entered and explanations offered. First, it should be noted that the concept of "human rights engagements" that is deployed here is relatively broad. It includes not just engagements over the meaning and application of human rights texts, but also any engagements that are designed to, or have the effect of, advancing the lived enjoyment of human rights. It is equally important to point out that, in order to delimit the scope of this research project, only six human rights sub-themes were focused on in this volume. These sub-themes are democratization, women's rights, children's rights, economic and social rights, international criminal justice and institutions, and refugee protection. In addition to these sub-themes, two background studies, one on "Canada in a World of Human Rights: Ethics,

Commitment and Constraints” and the other on “Nigeria’s Contributions to International Human Rights Praxis” were also included in this volume.

It should also be noted that the particular geographical focus of this volume on Canada and Nigeria bolsters its overall importance in scholarly, policy, and practical terms. For instance, over one quarter of the African population, and over one-half of the West African population, is Nigerian. Further, Nigeria is now Africa’s largest economy by far, being larger than the next two largest economies (South Africa and Egypt) combined. What is more, Nigeria is – at the very least – one of the top two most powerful socio-political actors on the continent.¹¹ However, over time, Nigeria and Nigerian actors have continued to exhibit considerable complexity and duality as, on the one hand, important sites for, and agents of, human rights violations, and on the other hand, as key agents in the efforts to protect human rights in the rest of Africa (e.g. in Cote d’Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Togo, the Central African Republic, Mali, the Congo DRC, and even South Africa). For its part, Canada is a member of the G7 and G20 group of largest economies in the world, and is widely reputed as a supporter and funder of global human rights struggles.¹² Canada and Canadian actors have also exhibited a measure of duality (however differently it manifests) as both a protector and violator of human rights. What is more, Canadian trade interests in Nigeria (one of its largest trading partners in Africa) have exploded in near-exponential terms in the five to ten years before 2015. The volume of that trade grew by almost 50% between 2010 and 2015, and stood at two-point-seven billion Canadian dollars (CDN\$2.7 billion) in 2012.¹³ It was expected by some well-positioned analysts to more than double that

¹¹ See Paul G Adogamhe, “Nigeria’s Diplomacy: the Challenges of Regional Power and Leadership in A Globalizing World” in J. Braveboy-Wagner, ed., *Diplomatic Strategies of Nations in the Global South* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), at 213.

¹² See Edward A Akuffo, *Canadian Foreign Policy in Africa: Regional Approaches to Peace, Security, and Development* (Farnham, U.K.: Ashgate, 2012) at 2.

¹³ See “Canada Eyes Resources in Nigeria and Ghana as Aid Shrinks”, *The Guardian*, (6 November 2012), online: <<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2012/nov/16/canada-resources-nigeria-ghana-aid>>.

figure by 2015.¹⁴ Yet, the roles that Canada has played or failed to play in the human rights struggles that have occurred in Nigeria, and vice versa, have not been as well understood and acknowledged as it could be, especially in comparison to similar relations between Canada's giant southern neighbour and Nigeria. The scholarly/policy gap in the literature is thus surprising given that controversy, as Howard-Hassman's work shows, has hardly been absent in the human rights relationship of both countries.¹⁵

Against this background, the principal research question outlined above suggested the investigation in this volume of a number of deeply inter-connected sub-questions, including the following:

- (1) What has been the nature/character of Canadian-Nigerian engagements in specific human rights sub-areas, namely: democratization, women's rights, children's rights, economic and social rights, international criminal justice/institutions, and refugee protection? How did such engagements proceed? How have both Canada and Nigeria conducted themselves in these engagements? Also, in their roles as "norm entrepreneurs"¹⁶ was the conduct of the two countries similar or dissimilar? What implications did such similarity or lack thereof have for practice, policy, and theory?
- (2) What were the 'heights attained'¹⁷ as a consequence of such engagements? Did either country significantly contribute to the other's human rights praxis? If so, to what extent?

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Howard-Hassman, *supra* note 4.

¹⁶ See Martha Finnemore & Kathryn Sikkink, "International Norm Dynamics and Political Change" (1998) 52 *International Organization* 887 [*Finnemore & Sikkink*]; and Thomas Risse, Stephen C Ropp, and Kathryn Sikkink, *The Power of Human Rights: International Norms and Domestic Change* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999). See also Hannah Entwisle, "Tracing Cascades: The Normative Development of the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement" (2005) 19 *Georgia Immigration LJ* 369 [*Entwisle*].

¹⁷ It must be kept in mind here that, as will be discussed later on in this volume as well, as it is used here, the conception of the phrase 'heights attained' envisages the contributions made by either country to the human rights struggle in the other one. And so, as it is used here, that phrase does not focus all that much on the actual impact of such struggles. Thus, the principal goal of the discussion of "attainments" in this volume is not so much to offer a

What implications did such contributions, if any, have for constructivist human rights theory,¹⁸ for theories on human rights and state sovereignty,¹⁹ and for Upendra Baxi's theory on the emergence in our time of a trade-related market friendly (TREMFM) human rights paradigm?²⁰

- (3) What were the problems associated with such engagements? For example, have significant charges of human rights imperialism, or of unequal bargaining, or of a one-way human rights traffic, been made and sustained in the context of these engagements? Were there problems of ineffectiveness on either side? Were such engagements troubled by TREMF ideology as theorized by Baxi? Were these engagements substantive enough? Were they visible enough?
- (4) What are the prospects of these human rights engagements? Given the character and orientation of the available evidence, what are the chances that any time soon the problems associated with such engagements will be ameliorated, and the heights attained as a result advanced upon?

finely-grained and precise sense of the extent of the *impact* of Canadian human rights interventions in Nigeria. That kind of impact analysis is beyond the scope/focus of this volume. Rather, the more modest objective here is to map and identify the heights that have been attained – in part at least – as a result of these Canadian interventions in Nigeria (and vice versa); in the sense of observing/analyzing the contributions – broadly speaking – of such interventions to the struggle to advance the enjoyment of human rights in the relevant country during the period under study.

¹⁸ Martha Finnemore & Kathryn Sikkink, "International Norm Dynamics and Political Change" (1998) 52 *International Organization* 887 [*Finnemore & Sikkink*]; and Thomas Risse, Stephen C Ropp, and Kathryn Sikkink, *The Power of Human Rights: International Norms and Domestic Change* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999). See also Hannah Entwisle, "Tracing Cascades: The Normative Development of the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement" (2005) 19 *Georgia Immigration LJ* 369 [*Entwisle*].

¹⁹ For example, see Antony Anghie, *Imperialism, Sovereignty and the Making of International Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) [*Anghie*]; David MacKusick, "Human Rights vs. Sovereign Rights: The State Sponsored Terrorism Exception to the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act" (1996) 10 *Emory Int'l L Rev* 741 [*MacKusick*]; W Michael Reisman, "Sovereignty and Human Rights in Contemporary International Law" (1990) 84 *Am J Int'l L* 866 [*Reisman*]; and Christian Reus-Smit, "Human Rights and the Social Construction of Sovereignty" (2001) 27 *Rev Int'l Studies* 519 [*Reus-Smit*].

²⁰ See Upendra Baxi, *The Future of Human Rights* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006) [*Baxi*].

Even though this research is grounded in Canadian/Nigerian evidence, the findings reported in this volume have significant implications for a broader policy and theoretical scholarship audience. In the policy realm, they contribute significantly (in the ways discussed in article ten of this volume) to the knowledge that policy-makers, practitioners and others would need in order to improve on their praxis in the context of Canada/Nigeria human rights relations. The research on which this volume is based provides a large and systematically obtained/analyzed trove of evidence available to policy-makers in Canada, Nigeria, and elsewhere, to which they would otherwise not have had such ready access. Both the heights attained as a result of the relevant engagements and the problems with these engagements that are exposed in this volume, provide a collective pointer to the ways of strengthening Canadian-Nigerian human rights relations. Such scholarly knowledge is extremely important given the strategic position that each country is increasingly assuming, not just generally in the world, but also in each other's foreign policy.²¹ As this is the first relatively comprehensive publicly available research on such an important subject for Canada, Nigeria, and the world, the contribution that it can make to policy-making in either country and beyond is self-evident.

Further, the volume has the potential to make a significant contribution to the scholarly debate on at least three important theoretical frameworks that engage the international protection of human rights. The volume contributes significantly to the literature on the character of the "living" law with respect to the relationship between international efforts to protect human rights and the concept and dramatization of state sovereignty.²² To deploy a Baxian question in this

²¹ See *High Commission*, *supra* note 1.

²² For a range of this extensive literature, see *Anghie*, *supra* note 16; Christine M Wotipka, & Kioyteru Tsutsui, "Global Human Rights and State Sovereignty: State Ratification of International Human Rights Treaties, 1965-2001" (2008) 23 *Sociological Forum* 724; K. Wetterauer, "Sovereignty and its Erosion in the Age of Human Rights" (New York University, 24 November 2003), <online: <https://files.nyu.edu/kmw252/public/images/kamal%20paper.doc>>; *MacKusick*, *supra* note 16; Wade M Cole, "Sovereignty Relinquished? Explaining Commitment to the International Human Rights Covenants, 1966-1999"

context: against the available evidence of Canadian/Nigerian human rights engagements (with all its difficulties), what is “living and dead” in state sovereignty in the specific context of the state practice of these two important global actors? How has sovereignty actually changed or not changed in the state practice of these two key actors? The volume offers some (admittedly geographically limited) indications about the contemporary relationship between human rights and state sovereignty, especially in this era of claims regarding the alleged emergence of a norm in favour of the “responsibility to protect.”²³

The volume also contributes to the exemplification and refinement of two other important theories on human rights. First, it engages with Finnemore and Sikkink’s application of their theory of “strategic social constructivism” to the human rights area, especially their thesis on the centrality of the agency of the “norm entrepreneur” in catalyzing human rights change within

(2005) 70 *Am Sociological R* 472; *Reisman, supra* note 16; *Reus-Smit, supra* note 16; J.W. Dacyl, “Sovereignty versus Human Rights: From Pat Discourses to Contemporary Dilemmas” (1996) 9 *J Refugee Studies* 136; Jost Delbrueck, “International Protection of Human Rights and State Sovereignty” (1981-1982) 57 *Ind LJ* 567; Jürgen Habermas, “Human Rights and Popular Sovereignty: The Liberal and Republican Versions” (1994) 7 *Ration Juris* 1; Karima Bennoune, “‘Sovereignty vs. Suffering’? Re-examining Sovereignty and Human Rights through the Lens of Iraq” (2002) 13 *EJIL* 243; Jianming Shen, “National Sovereignty and Human Rights in a Positive Law Context” (2000-2001) 26 *Brook J Int’l L* 417; Louis Henkin, “Human Rights and State Sovereignty” (1995-1996) 25 *Georgetown J Int’l & Comparative L* 31; Louis Henkin, “That ‘S’ Word: Sovereignty, and Globalization, and Human Rights, Et Cetera” (1999-2000) 68 *Fordham L Rev* 1; Michael Jacobsen & Stephanie Lawson, “Between Globalization: A Case Study of Human Rights versus State Sovereignty” (1999) 5 *Global Governance* 203; J Samuel Barkin, “The Evolution of the Constitution of Sovereignty and the Emergence of Human Rights Norms” (1998) 27 *J Int’l Studies* 229; Allen Rosas, “State Sovereignty and Human Rights: Towards a Global Constitutional Project” (1995) 49 *Political Studies* 61; Richard Falk, *Human Rights and State Sovereignty* (New York: Holmes & Meier Publisher, 1981); and David P Forsythe, *Human Rights and World Politics* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989).

²³ For a range of this burgeoning literature, see Anne Orford, *International Authority and Responsibility to Protect* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Alex J Bellamy, *Responsibility to Protect: The Global Effort to end Mass Atrocities* (Cambridge: Polity, 2009); Jutta Brunnée, & Stephen J Toope (with the Canadian Institute of International Affairs), *Norms, Institutions and UN Reform: The Responsibility to Protect* (Toronto: Canadian Institute of International Affairs, 2006); Cristina G Badescu, *Humanitarian Intervention and the Responsibility to Protect: Security and Human Rights* (London: Routledge, 2011); Rama Mani & Thomas G Weiss, *Responsibility to Protect: Cultural Perspectives in the Global South* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2011); and Ramesh Chandra Thakur, *The United Nations Peace and Security: From Collective Security to the Responsibility to Protect* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Ramesh Chandra Thakur, *The Responsibility to Protect: Norms, Laws, and the Use of Force in International Politics* (Milton Park: Routledge, 2011); Agnès G Huwitez, *The Collective Responsibility of States to Protect Refugees* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); and Gareth Evans, *The Responsibility to Protect: Ending Mass Atrocity Crimes Once and For All* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2008).

something they termed the “norm life cycle.”²⁴ According to these two scholars, in the context of international relations (e.g. as between Canada and Nigeria), human rights change is produced when a norm life cycle is completed, in part, as a result of the behaviour/impetus of a norm entrepreneur. The norm life cycle is “comprised of three linked stages: emergence, cascade, and internalisation” which are catalysed by the behaviour of the relevant norm entrepreneur(s).²⁵ When a ‘critical mass’ of agents has accepted the new ideas as appropriate, then Finnemore and Sikkink claim that a norm has emerged.²⁶ In the cascade stage, the norm acceptance rate rapidly increases and a form of norm contagion ensues.²⁷ In the internalisation stage, the norm becomes taken for granted, and conformance with its dictates is no longer (or at least rarely) questioned.²⁸ But most importantly, at least for our purposes in this volume, as Hoffman has correctly noted, these scholars have theorized that:

“Norm entrepreneurs work to persuade other agents to alter their behavior in accordance with the norm entrepreneur's ideas of appropriate behavior. For constructivists, this means that a norm entrepreneur is attempting to alter other agents' perceptions of the social context—alter what an agent thinks is appropriate behavior. How this alteration takes place is currently a matter for debate among constructivists....”²⁹

To what extent is any aspect of this theory borne out or refuted by the available evidence on Canadian/Nigerian human rights engagements? For e.g., how exactly, if at all, has the process of human rights norm entrepreneurship proceeded in the Canadian/Nigerian context? And what

²⁴ See Finnemore & Sikkink, *supra* note 14; and Obiora C Okafor, *The African Human Rights System, Activist Forces and International Institutions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) at 28-29.

²⁵ See Finnemore & Sikkink, *ibid.* See also Entwistle, *supra* note 14; and Matthew J Hoffman, “Entrepreneurs and Norm Dynamics: An Agent-Based Model of the Norm Life Cycle,” online: <http://www.indiana.edu/~workshop/papers/hoffman091200.pdf> [Hoffman].

²⁶ See Finnemore & Sikkink, *ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ See Hoffman, *supra* note 22.

are the implications of the answers to these questions for both scholarly knowledge and policy/practice?

Second, the volume has much relevance for Upendra Baxi's germinal theory on the emergence and increasing dominance globally of a "trade-related market-friendly human rights" (TREMf) paradigm/discourse.³⁰ As stated by Baxi himself, his overarching TREMF theory is that: "the paradigm of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is being steadily, but surely, supplanted by that of trade-related, market-friendly human rights. This new paradigm seeks to reverse the notion that universal human rights are designed for the attainment of dignity and well-being of human beings and for enhancing the security and well being of socially, economically and civilisationally vulnerable peoples and communities."³¹ More specifically, in the course of fleshing out his thought-provoking TREMF thesis, Baxi developed a number of distinguishable but intimately related main sub-claims.³² The first such sub-claim is that the emergent TREMF paradigm (unlike the UDH paradigm which it is supplanting) insists on promoting and protecting the collective rights of various formations of global capital mostly at the direct expense of human beings and communities.³³ The second sub-claim is that, much more than in the past, the progressive state – or at least the progressive "Third World" state – is now conceived as one that is a good host state to global capital; as one that protects global capital against political instability and market failure, usually at a significant cost to the most vulnerable among its own citizens; and as one that is in reality more accountable to the IMF and the World Bank than to its own citizens.³⁴ The third Baxian sub-claim is that in the new global order, a

³⁰ See *Baxi, supra* note 17 at 234-75.

³¹ *Ibid* at 234.

³² See Obiora C Okafor, "Assessing Baxi's Thesis on an Emergent Trade-Related Market Friendly Human Rights Paradigm: Evidence from Nigerian Labour-led Struggles" (2007) 1 *Law, Social Justice & Global Development Journal (LGD)*, online: <http://www.go.warwick.ac.uk/elj/lgd/2007_1/okafor>.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

progressive state is also conceived under the TREMF paradigm as a state that is market efficient in suppressing and de-legitimizing the human rights-based practices of resistance of its own citizens, if necessary in a violent way.³⁵ And the last such sub-claim is that unlike the UDH paradigm, the TREMF paradigm denies a significant redistributive role to the state.³⁶ Here, Baxi argues that, in contrast to the UDH paradigm, the emergent TREMF human rights paradigm “denies any significant redistributive role to the state; calls upon the state to free as many spaces for capital as possible, initially by pursuing the three-Ds of contemporary globalization: deregulation, denationalization, and disinvestment.”³⁷ Teasing out analytically the extent to which the politics and orientation of the Canadian-Nigerian human rights relationship exemplifies or departs from these four theses will contribute significantly to scholarly understanding of the validity or otherwise of Baxi’s important TREMF theory, as well as to its greater specification and refinement.

Although edited and authored by legal (human rights) scholars, the volume is inherently multidisciplinary in orientation. As such, an interdisciplinary assemblage of legal and social science techniques were utilized. This is reflected in the ways in which the contributors to this volume jointly gathered the relevant evidence from Canada, Nigeria and elsewhere. In order to develop as full and broad an appreciation and understanding of the actual “living” realities of Canadian/Nigerian human rights engagements as possible, a large number of interviews were scheduled and conducted with the relevant key informants, including diplomats, other government officials, and NGO activists. The interview samples were selected purposively,

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ See Baxi, *supra* note 17 at 248-52. See also Euan MacDonald, “Review Essay - The Future of Human Rights? Theory and Practice in an International Context: Review of Upendra Baxi’s *The Future of Human Rights*” (2004) 5 *German LJ* 969; and Jane Kelsey, “Confronting Trade-Related Human Rights in a GATS-Compatible World” (2007) 1 *Law, Social Justice & Global Development Journal (LGD)*.

rather than randomly. Purposive sampling was preferred here because of the high risk, if random sampling were to have been adopted, of missing most of the valuable evidence that is sought. In-depth unstructured interviews were used as they have proven to be significantly better at eliciting frank and honest responses in the context of human rights research, and because they allow the researcher to offer thicker description and analyses of the relevant phenomena. The interviews in Canada and Nigeria were, in general, conducted by a mixed team of Canadian and Nigerian researchers. Relevant government, international organization (e.g. UN), and NGO documents were identified and analyzed. The relevant information in the mass media was also similarly collected and analyzed. The identified and selected human rights legislation, cases, and treaties, and other kinds of international agreements, as well as the information elicited from interviews, were analyzed with the three theoretical apparatuses that framed the study on which this volume is based (i.e. the “strategic social constructivist,” “sovereignty and human rights,” and “Baxian TREMF” theories). Overall, the approach adopted was to collect all the relevant evidence (whether primary or secondary) and examine their orientation in the light of the relevant theoretical/policy frameworks. Thus, in stage one of the multi-year research that led to, informs and supports this volume, every effort was made to collect all the relevant and available evidence. In stage two, the collected evidence was then, systematically, analyzed against each of the three theoretical/policy frameworks that guided this study. Draft papers were thereafter produced, which over time transformed into the various articles that constitute this volume. These drafts were rigorously reviewed and critiqued at two separate international workshops both by members of the team that contributed to this volume and other scholars/practitioners external to the team. The first such workshop was held at the Osgoode Hall Law School of York

University, Toronto, Canada, in May 2014. The second one was held at the Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, Abuja, Nigeria, in June 2015.

The sequence of analysis in this volume proceeds as follows. Following this introductory article, Udoka Owie's analysis of Nigeria's less well-acknowledged contributions to international human rights praxis provides a background to the rest of the articles. Most of the other articles are primarily devoted to the analysis of the interview and other evidence, each in relation to one of the human rights sub-themes that are focused upon in this volume. Uchechukwu Ngwaba's analysis of Canadian-Nigerian engagements in the area of democratization during the period under study leads off this exercise, and is followed in the same order by Ngwaba and Ifeakandu's consideration of the Children's rights sub-theme; and Izevbuwa Ikhimiukor's discussion of engagements (or the lack thereof) between the two relevant countries in regard to international criminal justice/institutions. These articles set the stage for the discussions in the separate contributions by Obiora Chinedu Okafor and Zachary Lomo of the policy/practice and theoretical contributions of the study on which this volume is based. Obiora Chinedu Okafor's first article reflects on the contributions of the study on which this volume is based to the theories that frame the study. Zachary Lomo's article theorizes state sovereignty more generally armed with evidence produced from the study of Canadian-Nigerian human rights relations on which this volume is based. Obiora Chinedu Okafor's second article provides an overview of the findings of the volume, and of its contributions to policy/practice. It also concludes the volume by offering some pertinent recommendations.

Whatever its implications for broader legal and social science (human rights) debates, it is important, however, that the limitations of this volume be kept in mind. First of all, the volume has a limited geo-political coverage. Its focus – we must repeat – is squarely on Canadian-

Nigerian human rights engagements. No more, no less. As such, many of the claims made here are only really defensible in that narrower context. However, it should also be noted that the results reported in this volume should inform and help shape the broader policy/practice/theoretical debates. It will certainly inform further study by the team that conducted the research at issue here on the much broader geo-political level of the nature, attainments, problems and prospects of the human rights engagements that have for long occurred between Canada and most of the countries of Anglophone Africa. This second larger study is expected to involve at least eight African countries, and an appropriate number of additional partner institutions sourced in the main from those same countries. Against this background, it should be noted that the volume could be read as raising some questions, at least implicitly, about Canada's human rights relations with other states on the African continent (especially regarding the extent to which such relations are in line with the character of its engagements with Nigeria).³⁸ For instance, to what extent – as compared to other countries of the so-called Global North - , has Canada had a much lighter political, economic and social footprint on the African continent, including in Nigeria, with important implications for its human rights relations with these countries?³⁹ And more specifically, is it true that, under the Harper-led conservative government whose now defunct tenure coincided with the period covered by this volume, Canada considered the continent “less important and less worthy of priority attention than the world's larger emerging economies and markets.”⁴⁰ Or is this claim relatively

³⁸ David C Elder, “Canada's Diplomacy in Africa” in Rohinton P Medhora & Yiagadeesen Samy eds., *Canada Among Nations 2013: Canada-Africa Relations – Looking Back, Looking Ahead* (Waterloo, Ontario: Centre for International Governance Innovation & Carleton University, 2013) 23.

³⁹ Victoria Schorr & Paul Hirschfeld, “Canadian Trade and Investment in Africa” in Rohinton Medhora & Yiagadeesen Samy eds., *Canada Among Nations 2013: Canada-Africa Relations – Looking Back, Looking Ahead* (Waterloo, Ontario: Centre for International Governance Innovation & Carleton University, 2013) 133.

⁴⁰ See Grant Dawson, “Player, Partner and Friend: Canada's Africa Policy since 1945” (2013) 50 *Int'l Politics* 412 at 413. See also Sharon L Sutherland, *Supporting Democracy: The South Africa – Canada Program on Governance* (Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 1999).

exaggerated?⁴¹ And although these questions are not directly addressed in this volume, some of the discussions therein do implicitly raise these kinds of broader questions.

Secondly, the claims made in the volume are also limited in the temporal sense. The study on which the volume is based is on those Canadian-Nigerian human rights engagements which occurred between 1999 and 2011 only, and not either before or after that 12 year period. The rationale for this temporal limitation has already been explained, but it remains a limitation nevertheless.

Thirdly, the claims made in this volume are also limited by the fact that, to be manageable, the study had to focus on only a few of a larger number of human rights sub-themes. All of these limitations must be kept in mind.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*