

Save the Date: German Conference for Young Scholars in Private International Law 2023

Following successful conferences in Bonn, Würzburg and Hamburg, please save the date for the 4th German-speaking Conference for Young Scholars in Private International Law, which will take place on 23 and 24 February 2023 at Sigmund Freud University in Vienna.

The theme of the conference will be

Deference to the foreign - empty phrase or guiding principle of private international law?

The organisers explain: “As part of the legal system, rules of private international law are bound by the principles of their national jurisdiction, but they also open up the national system to foreign rules. Is the claim of deference to the foreign merely an empty phrase or, at best, a working hypothesis, or can it serve as a meaningful guiding principle of private international law? Are there tendencies within or across specific areas of private international law to move away from deference to, and towards a general suspicion against, the foreign? To what extent does (mutual) trust become the basis of deference to the foreign in the process of internationalisation and Europeanisation? What, if any, is the relationship between deference to the foreign and the methods of private international law?”

We would like to explore these and many other related questions at the 4th German-speaking Conference for Young Scholars in Private International Law. We are inviting contributions from all areas of private international law, including but not limited to contract and tort law, company law, family and succession law as well as international procedural law, international arbitration and uniform law. The written contributions will be published in an edited conference volume. The conference will be held in German, but English presentations are also welcome. The call for papers will be released in spring 2022 and we expect the submission of abstracts until late summer 2022.

We cordially invite all interested scholars to save the date of the conference. Please feel free to contact us with any questions (ipr@sfu.ac.at). Further information on the conference is available at <https://tinyurl.com/YoungPIL>.

Andreas Engel, Florian Heindler, Katharina Kaesling, Ben Köhler,
Martina Melcher, Bettina Rentsch, Susanna Roßbach, Johannes Ungerer.”

For the German text of the note, please consult the attached pdf: Save-the-date-IPR-2023_DE

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Kind regards,

Andreas Engel

Florian Heindler

Katharina Kaesling

Ben Köhler

Martina Melcher

Bettina Rentsch

Susanna Roßbach

Johannes Ungerer

Update: HCCH 2019 Judgments Convention Repository

Rescheduled: “The HCCH 2019 Judgments Convention: Prospects for Judicial Cooperation in Civil Matters between the EU and Third Countries” - Conference on 9 and 10 September 2022, University of Bonn, Germany

In preparation of the Conference on the HCCH 2019 Judgments Convention on 9/10 September 2022, planned to be taking place on campus of the University of Bonn, Germany, we are offering here a Repository of contributions to the HCCH 2019 Judgments Convention. Please email us if you miss something in it, we will update immediately...

Update of 12 January 2022: New entries are printed bold.

Please also check the “official” Bibliography of the HCCH for the instrument.

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III. Recordings of Events Related to the HCCH 2019 Judgments Convention

HCCH	“HCCH a Bridged: Innovation in Transnational Litigation - Edition 2021: Enabling Party Autonomy with the HCCH 2005 Choice of Court Convention”, 1 December 2021 (full recording available here)
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UIHJ; HCCH	“3 rd training webinar on the Hague Conventions on service of documents (1965) and recognition and enforcement of judgements (2019)”, 15/18 March 2021 (full recording available here in French and here in English)
ASADIP; HCCH	“Conferencia Internacional: Convención HCCH 2019 sobre Reconocimiento y Ejecución de Sentencias Extranjeras”, 3 December 2020 (full recording available here and here)
ASIL	“The Promise and Prospects of the 2019 Hague Convention”, 25-26 June 2020 (full recording available here and here)
JPRI; HCCH; UNIDROIT; UNCITRAL	“2020 Judicial Policy Research Institute International Conference - International Commercial Litigation: Recent Developments and Future Challenges, Session 3: Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Judgments”, 12 November 2020 (recording available here)
University of Bonn; HCCH	“Pre-Conference Video Roundtable on the HCCH 2019 Judgments Convention: Prospects for Judicial Cooperation in Civil and Commercial Matters between the EU and Third Countries”, 29 October 2020 (full recording available here)
Department of Justice Hong Kong; HCCH	“Inaugural Global Conference - 2019 HCCH Judgments Convention: Global Enforcement of Civil and Commercial Judgments”, 9 September 2019 (recording available here)
HCCH	“22 nd Diplomatic Session of the HCCH: The Adoption of the 2019 Judgments Convention”, 2 July 2020 (short documentary video available here)

Chronology of Practice: Chinese Practice in Private International Law in 2020

This post has been prepared by He Qisheng, Professor of International Law, Peking University Law School, and Chairman at the Peking University International Economical Law Institute, has published the 7th Survey on Chinese Practice in Private International Law.

This survey contains materials reflecting the practice of Chinese private international law in 2020. First, regarding changes in the statutory framework of private international law in China, three legislative acts, one administrative regulation on the Unreliable Entity List and ten judicial interpretations of the Supreme People's Court were adopted or amended in 2020 on a wide range of matters, including conflict of laws, punitive damages, international civil procedure, *etc.* Second, 11 typical cases involving Chinese courts' jurisdiction are selected to highlight the development in Chinese private international law, involving standard essential patents, abuse of market dominance, declaration of non-infringement of patent, asymmetric choice of court agreement and other matters. Third, nine cases on choice of law questions relating, in particular, to habitual residence, rights *in rem*, matrimonial property regimes and ascertainment of foreign law, are examined. Fourth, five cases involving anti-suit injunction or anti-enforcement injunction are reported and one introduced in detail. Fifth, the first occasion for on international judicial assistance of extracting DNA, as well as three representative cases on the recognition and enforcement of foreign judgments, are discussed. The Statistics of international judicial assistance cases in China is first released in this survey. Finally, this survey also covers five recent decisions illustrating Chinese courts' pro-arbitration attitude towards the uncertainty brought about by contractual clauses referring to both litigation and arbitration.

Here are the links to the article:

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Golan v. Saada: A New Hague Child Abduction Case at the U.S. Supreme Court

Last week, the Supreme Court of the United States agreed to hear a case concerning Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction. Amy Howe has an excellent summary of the case on her blog, [Howe on the Court](#).

Under the convention, children who are wrongfully taken from the country where they live must be returned to that country, so that custody disputes can be resolved there. The convention makes an exception for cases in which there is a “grave risk” that returning the child would expose him or her to physical or

psychological harm.

In *Golan v. Saada*, a U.S. citizen married an Italian citizen in 2015; they had a child, born in Milan, in 2016. The husband was allegedly abusive toward the wife throughout the marriage, but he did not directly abuse their son. In 2018, the wife took the child to the United States and did not return, remaining in a domestic-violence shelter in New York. The husband went to federal court there, trying to compel the child's return to Italy.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 2nd Circuit ruled that, when a district court concludes that a child's return would pose a grave risk of harm, the district court must consider measures that would reduce that risk. This holding clashes with the holdings of other courts of appeals, which do not mandate the consideration of such measures, particularly in cases involving domestic violence. The case then went back to the district court, which ordered the child's return to Italy with a variety of protective measures in place - for example, mandatory therapy and parenting classes. The Supreme Court agreed to decide whether courts are required to consider all measures that might reduce the grave risk of harm if the child were to return home.

The case will be argued in the Spring and decided before June 2022; the docket and publicly available filings can be accessed [here](#).

JPIL-SMU Virtual Conference on Conflicts of Jurisdiction on 23 to 24 June 2022 and postponement of the biennial JPIL Conference until

2023

The Journal of Private International Law and the Singapore Management University will hold a virtual conference on 23 to 24 June 2022. The theme of the conference is Conflicts of Jurisdiction. The conference is designed to assist with the ongoing work of the Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH) on Jurisdiction. The speakers are leading private international law scholars and experts, many of whom are directly involved in the ongoing negotiations at the HCCH. Registration to attend the conference will open nearer the time.

The biennial Journal of Private International Law Conference has been delayed until 2023 in order to enable it to take place in person at the Singapore Management University. This conference will be based on a call for papers. We will announce further details in due course.

Conference on Conflicts of Jurisdiction

23-24 June 2022

Organised by the Journal of Private International Law and the Singapore Management University

(SGT=Singapore Time; BST=British Summer Time)

Day 1

Session 1 Thursday 23 June 2022 - The Common Law Approaches to Conflicts of Jurisdiction

Chair: Professor Jonathan Harris (QC) (King's College London)

Time	Speaker	Topic
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18.00-18.05 SGT 11.00-11.05 BST	Professor Jonathan Harris (QC) (King's College London)	Welcome by Chair
18.05-18.10 SGT 11.05-11.10 BST	Dean of Yong Pung How School of Law, Singapore Management University	Opening comments
18.10-18.35 SGT 11.10-11.35 BST	Professor Campbell McLachlan QC (Victoria University, New Zealand)	Overview of some key issues in relation to conflicts of jurisdiction
18.35-19.00 SGT 11.35-12.00 BST	Dr Ardavan Arzandeh (National University of Singapore)	The Scottish, English and Singapore approach of forum non conveniens in conflicts of jurisdiction cases
19.00-19.25 SGT 12.00-12.25 BST	Professor Ronald Brand (University of Pittsburgh)	The US approach to forum non conveniens in conflicts of jurisdiction cases
19.25-19.50 SGT 12.25-12.50 BST	Professor Mary Keyes (Griffith University)	The Australian approach to forum non conveniens in conflicts of jurisdiction cases
19.50-20.05 SGT 12.50-13.05 BST	Q&A	
20.05-20.20 SGT 13.05-13.20 BST	Break	

Session 2 Thursday 23 June 2022 - Civilian Approaches to Conflicts of Jurisdiction

Chair: Professor Kei Takeshita (Hitotsubashi University and Chair of the HCCH Working Group on Jurisdiction)

Time	Speaker	Topic
20.20-20.25 SGT 13.20-13.25 BST	Professor Kei Takeshita (Hitotsubashi University and Chair of the HCCH Working Group on Jurisdiction)	Welcome by Chair
20.25-20.50 SGT 13.25-13.50 BST	Professor Tanja Domej (University of Zurich)	The EU and Lugano Convention approaches to conflicts of jurisdiction for internal cases (ie within the EU or between Contracting States to the Lugano Convention)
20.50-21.15 SGT 13.50-14.15 BST	Professor Geert Van Calster (KU Leuven)	The EU approach to conflicts of jurisdiction with non-EU and Lugano States (Articles 33 and 34 of Brussels Ia Regulation)
21.15-21.40 SGT 14.15-14.40 BST	Professors Nadia De Araujo and Marcelo De Nardi (Brazil)	Latin American approaches to conflicts of jurisdiction in international cases
21.40-22.05 SGT 14.40-15.05 BST	Professor Zheng (Sophia) Tang (University of Wuhan and Newcastle University)	Chinese and some other civilian approaches in Asia to conflicts of jurisdiction

22.05-22.20 SGT 15.05-15.20 BST	Q&A	
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Day 2

Session 3 Friday 24 June 2022 - Work at the Hague Conference on Private International Law on Conflicts of Jurisdiction

Chair: Professor Paul Beaumont (University of Stirling)

Time	Speaker	Topic
18.00-18.05 SGT 11.00-11.05 BST	Professor Paul Beaumont (University of Stirling)	Welcome by Chair
18.05-18.30 SGT 11.05-11.30 BST	Professor Fausto Pocar (University of Milan)	The work on the Judgments Project in the Hague in the 1990s culminating in the interim text of 2001
18.30-18.55 SGT 11.30-11.55 BST	Professor David McClellan (University of Sheffield)	Lessons from family law notably the provisions on conflicts of jurisdiction including transfers of jurisdiction in the Child Protection Convention 1996
18.55-19.20 SGT 11.55-12.20 BST	Dr João Ribeiro- Bidaoui (First Secretary, HCCH)	The revived Jurisdiction Project in the Hague - from Experts' Group to Working Group - possible solutions on conflicts of jurisdiction

19.20-19.45 SGT 12.20-12.45 BST	Professor Matthias Lehmann (University of Vienna)	Challenges and opportunities for a new binding global instrument on conflicts of jurisdiction
19.45-20.00 SGT 12.45-13.00 BST	Q&A	
20.00-20.15 SGT 13.00-13.15 BST	Break	

Session 4 Friday 24 June 2022 - Work at the Hague Conference on Private International Law on Conflicts of Jurisdiction (continued)

Chair: Dr Adeline Chong (Singapore Management University)

Time	Speaker	Topic
20.15-20.20 SGT 13.15-13.20 BST	Dr Adeline Chong (Singapore Management University)	Welcome by Chair
20.20-20.45 SGT 13.20-13.45 BST	Professor Trevor Hartley (London School of Economics)	Balancing forum non conveniens and lis pendens (same parties and same subject matter) in a new global instrument on conflicts of jurisdiction
20.45-21.10 SGT 13.45-14.10 BST	Professor Yeo Tiong Min (Singapore Management University)	Dealing with related actions in a new global instrument on conflicts of jurisdiction

21.10-21.35 SGT 14.10-14.35 BST	Professor Franco Ferrari (NYU)	Conflicts between courts and arbitration in international cases and how to resolve them in a new global instrument on conflicts of jurisdiction
21.35-22.00 SGT 14.35-15.00 BST	Justice Anselmo Reyes (Singapore International Commercial Court and Doshisha University)	International commercial courts' approaches to conflicts of jurisdiction and how they fit with a new global instrument on conflicts of jurisdiction
22.00-22.15 SGT 15.00-15.15 BST	Q&A	
22.15-22.20 SGT 15.15-15.20 BST	Professor Jonathan Harris, Professor Paul Beaumont, Dr Adeline Chong	Closing remarks

**2021 UNCITRAL ASIA PACIFIC
DAY UNCITRAL RCAP-UM JOINT
CONFERENCE 2021 CONQUERING
THE COVID: ENHANCING**

ECONOMIC RECOVERY THROUGH HARMONIZATION OF LAW GOVERNING MSMEs

On 17 December 2021, the UNCITRAL RCAPUM Joint Conference, an event celebrating the 2021 UNCITRAL Asia Pacific Day, is scheduled in the University of Macau (Macau SAR) under the title “Conquering the COVID: Enhancing Economic Recovery through Harmonization of Law Governing MSMEs”. This is the annual conference rising from the successful cooperation between the UNCITRAL Regional Centre for Asia and the Pacific (RCAP) and the University of Macau since 2014. The UNCITRAL RCAP-UM Joint Conference 2021 intends to bring together a group of distinguished experts and scholars to analyze contemporary issues related to the current agenda of UNCITRAL impacting MSMEs and the legal instruments resulting from its previous works. The conference will focus on the following tracks: 1. MSMEs formation: simplification of practices in business registration and transformation of business establishment procedures. 2. Creating congenial legal environment for MSMEs in special economic zones through legal harmonization: regional developments including the Guangdong-Macao in-depth Cooperation Zone. 3. MSME Financing: Financial support, access to credit, and sustainable finance for MSMEs & MSE insolvency, further efforts of UNCITRAL to simplify insolvency procedures, and unify insolvency law. 4. Promotion of viable dispute resolution mechanisms for MSMEs through adaptation of arbitration and mediation. 5. Contemporary legal developments facilitating the establishment and the successful operation of the MSMEs.

As the core legal body of the United Nations system in the field of international trade law, the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) seeks to progressively harmonize and modernize trade laws by preparing and promoting the adoption and use of legislative and nonlegislative instruments in several key areas of commercial law. UNCITRAL RCAP (Incheon, Republic of Korea) was inaugurated in 2012 to promote the work of UNCITRAL in the Asia-Pacific region and provide technical assistance to the states concerning the implementation and uniform interpretation of UNCITRAL texts, thereby diminishing legal obstacles to global commercial transactions. University of

Macau, founded in 1981, is the leading comprehensive public university in Macau. It is a resourceful and ambitious educational institution with unique Sino-European heritage and global connections. In 2017, it was ranked within the top-50 universities in Asia by the Times Higher Education Asia University Rankings. It has also been ranked within the top-100 Asian University Rankings in QS World University Rankings. The Faculty of Law of the University of Macau, responsible for organizing the conference, is the oldest law school in Macau. With its diverse multilingual programs and teaching staff of international background, the Faculty has been playing a vital role in promoting legal education and research in Macau and contributing to the build-up of the local legal system. In addition, the Faculty of Law has also successfully held many high-level international conferences and meetings on a range of legal topics.

The registration for the conference is free of charge. Participants should complete registration in advance and obtain confirmation to secure a place at the conference. The deadline for registration is 15 December 2021. The conference will be held on 17 December 2021 in a mixed format (online and offline). The speakers and participants from outside Macau are invited to take part in the conference via Zoom. The conference will start at 9:30 a.m. (Macau time) and may end late in the evening to accommodate speakers and participants from different time zones.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND ENQUIRIES, PLEASE CONTACT US AT
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Conflict of Laws and More at RIDOC 2021

OC 2021: Rijeka
Doctoral Conference

The **RIDOC 2021**: Rijeka Doctoral Conference will be held on Friday 10

December 2021, from 8:30 to 17:30, in 10 sessions (some running parallel), at the University of Rijeka, Faculty of Law and online. The record number of doctoral students and outstanding three-member panels will provide an internationally diverse environment for discussion of various legal topics. Among the topics many of our readers will find something along their interests in conflict of laws, arbitration law, and of course public international law, as the same day we celebrate the international day of human rights.

The special treat is the plenary lecture to be given by the First Advocate General of the CJEU Maciej Szpunar on “The Court of Justice of the European Union and Effects of Research upon its Functioning” which starts at 12:30 at this link.

The programme is available here, and next to each session there is a corresponding link.

Update: HCCH 2019 Judgments Convention Repository

In preparation of the Conference on the HCCH 2019 Judgments Convention on 9/10 September 2022, planned to be taking place on campus of the University of Bonn, Germany, we are offering here a Repository of contributions to the HCCH 2019 Judgments Convention. Please email us if you miss something in it, we will update immediately...

Update of 19 December 2021: New entries are printed bold.

Please also check the “official” Bibliography of the HCCH for the instrument.

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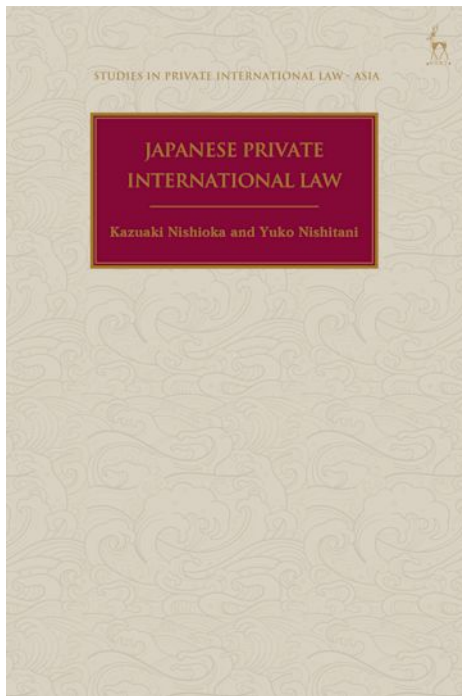
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III. Recordings of Events Related to the HCCH 2019 Judgments Convention

HCCH	“HCCH a Bridged: Innovation in Transnational Litigation - Edition 2021: Enabling Party Autonomy with the HCCH 2005 Choice of Court Convention”, 1 December 2021 (full recording available here)
UIHJ; HCCH	“3 rd training webinar on the Hague Conventions on service of documents (1965) and recognition and enforcement of judgements (2019)”, 15/18 March 2021 (full recording available here in French and here in English)
ASADIP; HCCH	“Conferencia Internacional: Convención HCCH 2019 sobre Reconocimiento y Ejecución de Sentencias Extranjeras”, 3 December 2020 (full recording available here and here)
ASIL	“The Promise and Prospects of the 2019 Hague Convention”, 25-26 June 2020 (full recording available here and here)
JPRI; HCCH; UNIDROIT; UNCITRAL	“2020 Judicial Policy Research Institute International Conference - International Commercial Litigation: Recent Developments and Future Challenges, Session 3: Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Judgments”, 12 November 2020 (recording available here)

University of Bonn; HCCH	“Pre-Conference Video Roundtable on the HCCH 2019 Judgments Convention: Prospects for Judicial Cooperation in Civil and Commercial Matters between the EU and Third Countries”, 29 October 2020 (full recording available here)
Department of Justice Hong Kong; HCCH	“Inaugural Global Conference - 2019 HCCH Judgments Convention: Global Enforcement of Civil and Commercial Judgments”, 9 September 2019 (recording available here)
HCCH	“22 nd Diplomatic Session of the HCCH: The Adoption of the 2019 Judgments Convention”, 2 July 2020 (short documentary video available here)

Out now: Nishioka / Nishitani, “Japanese Private International Law”; Jolly / Khanderia, “Indian Private International Law”

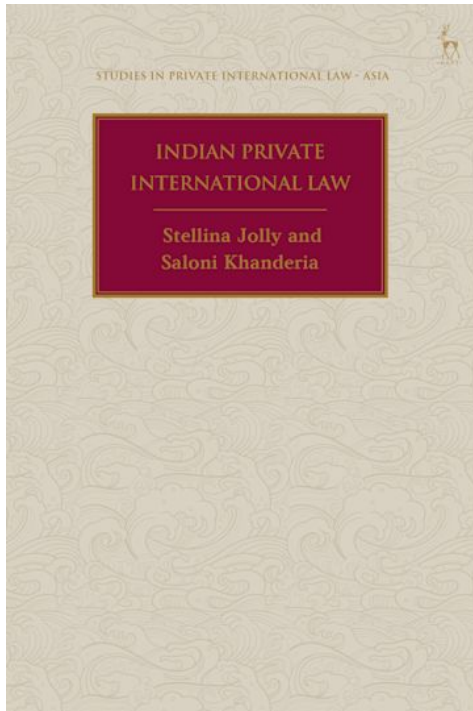


“Japanese Private International Law” certainly contains the currently leading reference to Japanese private international law in English.

The blurb reads: “The chapters systematically cover the whole of Japanese private international law, not just questions likely to arise in commercial matters, but also in family, succession, cross-border insolvency, intellectual property, competition (antitrust), and environmental disputes. The chapters do not merely cover the traditional conflict of law areas of jurisdiction, applicable law (choice of law), and enforcement. The chapters also look into conflict of law questions arising in arbitration and assess Japanese involvement in the global harmonisation of private international law. In addition to summarising relevant principles and scholarly views, the authors discuss case law whenever possible and identify deficiencies and anticipate difficulties in the existing law. The book thus presents the Japanese conflict of laws through a combination of common and civil law analytical techniques and perspectives, providing readers worldwide with a more profound and comprehensive understanding of the subject.”

For those who are particularly interested in unified or harmonized global PIL Chapter 6, still rather short (pp. 258 - 262), is recommended, dealing with Japan’s role in the works of the HCCH, UNICTRAL and UNIDROIT. For all others who are interested in comparative private international law, this book is an indispensable tool and combines most valuable information with most thorough analysis. The text is precisely structured which helps a lot to find one’s way directly to the issue in question. It also covers international alternative dispute resolution, in particular arbitration and mediation. The book is an admirable cooperative effort between Dr Kazuaki Nishioka (full text draft) and Professor Yuko Nishitani

(comments and revision), as is explained in the foreword.



Likewise, “Indian Private International Law” certainly contains the currently leading reference to Indian private international law in English.

The blurb reads: “This book provides an authoritative account of the evolution and application of private international law principles in India in civil commercial and family matters. Through a structured evaluation of the legislative and judicial decisions, the authors examine the private international law in the Republic and whether it conforms to international standards and best practices as adopted in major jurisdictions such as the European Union, the United Kingdom, the United States, India’s BRICS partners - Brazil, Russia, China and South Africa and other common law systems such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and Nepal.

Divided into 13 chapters, the book provides a contextualised understanding of legal transformation on key aspects of the Indian conflict-of-law rules on jurisdiction, applicable law and the recognition and enforcement of foreign judgments or arbitral awards. Particularly fascinating in this regard is the discussion and focus on both traditional and contemporary areas of private international law, including marriage, divorce, contractual concerns, the fourth industrial revolution, product liability, e-commerce, intellectual property, child custody, surrogacy and the complicated interface of ‘Sharia’ in the conflict-of-law

framework.

The book deliberates the nuanced perspective of endorsing the Hague Conference on Private International Law instruments favouring enhanced uniformity and predictability in matters of choice of court, applicable law and the recognition and enforcement of foreign judgments.

The book's international and comparative focus makes it eminently resourceful for legislators, the judges of Indian courts and other interested parties such as lawyers and litigants when they are confronted with cross-border disputes that involve an examination of India's private international law. The book also provides a comprehensive understanding of Indian private international law, which will be useful for academics and researchers looking for an in-depth discussion on the subject." Saloni Khanderia is of course known to CoL readers as one of the blog's editors.

"Japanese Private International Law" (Volume 5) and "Indian Private International Law" (Volume 6) continue Hart's Series on Studies in Private International Law - Asia, run by Anselmo Reyes (editor) and Paul Beaumont (advisory editor), after equally eminent publications (Volumes 1 to 4) on the recognition and enforcement of judgments in Civil and Commercial Matters, edited by Anselmo Reyes, Indonesian Private International Law by Afifah Kusumadara, Chinese Private International Law, edited by Xiaohong Liu and Zhengyi Zhang, and, last not least, Direct Jurisdiction: Asian Perspectives, edited by Anselmo Reyes and Wilson Lui.

All highly recommended!

The Nigerian Court of Appeal declines to enforce an Exclusive

English Choice of Court Agreement

The focus of this write-up is a case note on a very recent decision of the Nigerian Court of Appeal that declined to enforce an exclusive English choice of court agreement.[1] In this case the 1st claimant/respondent was an insured party while the defendant/appellant was the insurer of the claimant/respondent. The insurance agreement between the 1st claimant/respondent and defendant/appellant provided for both an exclusive choice of court and choice of law agreement in favour of England. The claimants/respondents issued a claim for significant compensation before the High Court of Cross Rivers State, Nigeria for breach of contract and negligence on the part of the defendant/appellant for failure to fully perform the terms of the insurance contract during the period the 1st claimant/respondent was sick in Nigeria. The defendant/appellant challenged the jurisdiction of the High Court of Cross Rivers State, and asked for a stay of proceedings on the basis that there was an exclusive choice of court agreement in favour of England. The 1st claimant/respondent in a counter affidavit stated mainly at the trial court that he was critically ill, and the 2nd claimant/respondent (the employer of the 1st claimant/respondent) had serious financial difficulties in paying the 1st claimant/respondent's salaries, so in the interest of justice a stay should not be granted.

Both opposing parties were in agreement throughout the case that it was the Brandon test,[2] as applied by the Nigerian Supreme Court[3] that was applicable in this case to determine if a stay should be granted in the enforcement of a foreign choice of court agreement. Now the Brandon test (named after an English judge called Brandon J, who formulated the test) as applied in the Nigerian context is as follows:

“1. Where plaintiffs sue in Nigeria in breach of an agreement to refer disputes to a foreign court, and the defendants apply for a stay, the Nigerian court, assuming the claim to be otherwise within the jurisdiction

is not bound to grant a stay but has a discretion whether to do so or not. 2. The discretion should be exercised by granting a stay unless strong cause for not doing it is shown. 3. The burden of proving such strong cause is on the plaintiffs. 4. In exercising its discretion the court should take account of all the circumstances of the particular case. 5. In particular, but without prejudice to (4), the following matters where they arise, may be properly regarded: (a) In what country the evidence on the issues of fact is situated, or more readily available, and the effect of that on the relative convenience and expense of trial as between the Nigerian and foreign courts. (b) Whether the law of the foreign court applies and, if so, whether it differs from Nigerian law in any material respects. (c) With what country either party is connected and how closely (d) Whether the defendants genuinely desire trial in the foreign country, or are only seeking procedural advantages. (e) Whether the plaintiff s would be prejudiced by having to sue in the foreign country because they would (i) be deprived of security for that claim; (ii) be unable to enforce any judgment obtained; (iii) be faced with a time-bar not applicable in Nigeria; or (iv) for political, racial, religious, or other reasons be unlikely to get a fair trial (v) the grant of a stay would amount to permanently denying the plaintiff any redress.”

The reported cases where the plaintiff(s) have successfully relied on the Brandon test to oppose the enforcement of a foreign jurisdiction clause are where their claim is statute barred in the forum chosen by the parties.[4] Indeed, the burden is on the plaintiff to show strong cause as to why Nigerian proceedings should be stayed in breach of a choice of court agreement; if not, Nigerian courts will give effect to the foreign choice of court agreement.[5]

The High Court (Ayade J) relying on the Nigerian Supreme Court’s decision on the application of the Brandon tests declined to uphold the exclusive choice of court agreement in the interest of justice. It is fair to say that the trial judge applied a very flexible approach on the issue of whether the exclusive English choice of court agreement should be enforced. Indeed, he was very focused on substantial justice (rather than the strong cause test), thereby stretching the criteria provided in the Brandon test.[6] Ayade J’s judgment is worth quoting thus:

“This Court is fully aware of the principles of party autonomy, freedom and sanctity of contract, the doctrine that parties should be held to their

contract (pacta sunt servanda) and this puts the burden on the plaintiff to show why the proceedings should continue in Nigeria inspite of the foreign jurisdiction clause, which in the opinion of this Court, the plaintiff has rightly done.”[7]

He also interestingly remarked that:

“Let it be remarked that this Court is not unmindful, and there is no doubt that in an area of globalization, the issue of foreign jurisdiction clause and the subject of conflict of laws has a future and one of growing importance, see MORRIS: The conflict of laws, 7th Edition, Sweet and Maxwell, 2010 page 16. This is reflected in the expanded membership of the specialist international bodies such as the Hague Conference on Private International Law: Rome Convention on Contractual Obligations 1980, Convention on Choice of Court, 1965, Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Judgments in Civil and Commercial Matters, 1971, Convention on International Access to Justice, The Brussel Convention and the Lugano Convention, Convention on the Law Applicable to Contractual Obligation, Organization for the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa (OHADA), and the various efforts at Harmonization and Unification of Law are still in the inchoate stage in this part of the world. We shall get there at a time when there shall be one law, one forum and one world.

It is for the above reasons that I am of the view that the current attitude of the Nigerian Courts to foreign jurisdiction clauses remains as stated in the Norwind. Thus, I am inclined to agree that Courts are not bound to stay its proceedings on account of a foreign jurisdiction clause in a Court.”[8]

In the final analysis, he held as follows:

“Applying the law as declared above to the instant case and after due consideration of all the circumstances of this case, and in the exercise of discretion as to whether or not to do so in this case and this Court, which endeavoured always to do substantial justice between the parties. The sole issue raised by the claimants/respondents is therefore resolved in their favour against the defendant/applicant. Accordingly, this application is hereby dismissed.”[9]

On appeal, the defendant/appellant argued that in reality the test the High Court (Ayade J) applied was one of balance of convenience, and did not properly follow the strong cause test as stipulated by the Nigerian Supreme Court in applying the Brandon test.

The claimant/respondent brilliantly filed a respondent's notice to justify the High Court's decision on other grounds. The core argument was that the action will be statute-barred in England if the action was stayed before the Nigerian Court. This argument was clearly supported by the Brandon test as applied by the Nigerian Supreme Court.[10]

The Court of Appeal unanimously dismissed the appeal. Shuaibu JCA in his leading judgment held that:

“In exercising its discretion to grant a stay of proceedings in a case filed in breach of an agreement to refer disputes to a foreign country, the Court would take into consideration a situation where the granting would spell injustice to the plaintiff as where the action is already time barred in the foreign country and the grant of stay would amount to permanently denying the plaintiff any redress.”[11]

In analysing the Brandon test, as applied by the Nigerian Supreme Court he held that:

“It is imperative to state here that the Brandon Test is basically a guideline to judges in exercising their discretionary power to order a stay of proceedings where as in the present case, there is a foreign jurisdiction clause in the contract. It is to be noted however that like every discretion, the judge must exercise it judicially and judiciously based on or guided by law and discretion according to sound and well considered reason. Perhaps, the most noticeable guideline which I consider more novel is that the Brandon Test enjoins Court to exercise its discretion in favour of the applicant unless strong cause for not doing so is shown which places the burden of showing such strong cause for not granting the application on the respondent (claimant).”[12]

After referring to the counter-affidavit of the claimant/respondent where they mainly alleged at the trial court that the 1st claimant/respondent was sick and had

financial difficulties, Shuaibu JCA adopted a similar flexible approach to the Brandon tests as Ayade J. He held that:

“What is discernible from the above is that the evidence on the issues of fact is situated and more readily available, in Nigeria and the lower Court, was therefore right in refusing to adhere to foreign jurisdiction clause on the basis that the case is more closely connected to Nigeria. In effect, the trial Court has taken into account the peculiar circumstances of the case vis-à-vis the guidelines in the Brandon Test and thus exercised its discretion judicially and judiciously in refusing to grant stay of proceedings.”[13]

Owoade JCA in his concurring judgment held that:

“In the instant case, more particularly by paragraphs 6, 7 and 8 of the Respondents counter-affidavit in opposition to the Appellant’s motion for an order for stay, the Respondents have established that they would suffer injustice if the case is stayed. This is more so in the instant case where the Plaintiffs/1st Respondent action was statute barred in the foreign Court and the grant of stay would amount to permanently denying the Plaintiff/1st Respondent any redress.”[14]

It is difficult to fault the decision of the High Court and Court of Appeal in this case, except for Shuaibu JCA’s occasional confusion of choice of court with choice of law (a conceptual mistake some Nigerian judges make). An additional observation is that this procedural issue on foreign choice of court agreement took over 5 years to resolve so far. The issue of delay is something to look into in the Nigerian legal system - a topic for another day.

The standard test for determining if a stay should be granted in breach of a foreign jurisdiction clause is the Brandon test as applied by the Nigerian Supreme Court.[15] I am in total agreement with Shuaibu JCA that the Brandon test is a guideline. In other words, it must not be followed slavishly by Nigerian courts or indeed courts of other common law countries in Africa. A judge should be able to consider the facts of the instant case and decide if there is a strong cause for not granting a stay in breach of a foreign jurisdiction clause. In this case, the fact that the action will be statute-barred was a strong ground not to grant a stay in breach of the exclusive choice of court agreement in favour of England. The financial

difficulties and sickness of the claimant/respondent were also factors that could be taken into account in the interest of justice, although they are not as strong as the claim that the action was statute-barred in a foreign forum. Indeed, I have argued elsewhere that the test of the interest of justice should not be excluded from the Brandon test analysis.[16] Of course, I agree this might create uncertainty and undermine party autonomy in some cases, but this problem can be curtailed if the burden is firmly placed at the door steps of the claimant as to why a foreign jurisdiction clause should not be enforced.

Nigeria is a growing economy, and its lawyers, arbitrators and judges should be able to benefit from international commercial litigation and arbitration business like developed countries such as England. Of course, the best way to do this is to make Nigeria attractive for litigation in matters of speed, procedural rules, content of applicable laws, honesty of judges, and competence of judges to handle cases etc. However, Nigerian courts should not blindly apply party autonomy in the enforcement of choice of court agreements despite the certainty and predictability it offers to international commercial actors.

This brings me to an even more important issue. This case involved an insurance contract. The insured party - the 1st claimant/respondent - was obviously the weaker party in this case. The traditional common law in Nigeria has not created a clear exception for the protection of weaker parties in the enforcement of foreign choice of court agreements. The European Union has done that in the case of employees, consumers and insured persons.[17] Nigeria and the rest of common law Africa's legal system is not an island of its own. We can learn from the EU experience and borrow some good things from them. Indeed, the Nigerian Supreme Court had held that there is nothing wrong with borrowing from another legal system.[18] I will add there should be good reasons for borrowing from another legal system especially former colonial powers.

In this connection, it is proposed that in the case of weaker parties such as insured, consumers and employees, a party domiciled or habitually resident in Nigeria should be able to sue in Nigerian courts in breach of a foreign jurisdiction clause. In addition, the common law concept of undue influence could be applied so that cases where a party is presumably weak in the contractual relationship, such a party should not be bound by the foreign jurisdiction clause. Of course, there is a danger that this could create uncertainty. So I propose that in cases of business to business contracts, Nigerian and African courts should be more

willing to enforce foreign choice of court agreements strictly.

Back to the case at hand, it is not unlikely that this case might come before the Nigerian Supreme Court on appeal. The Nigerian Court of Appeal has applied varied approaches to the enforcement of foreign choice of court agreements in Nigeria. Indeed, I noted three inconsistent decisions of the Nigerian Court of Appeal in this area of the law as recent as 2020.[19] On the one extreme hand, there is the contractual approach that strictly treats a choice of court agreement like any ordinary commercial contract.[20] This approach is good in that it promotes party autonomy, but the problem with this approach is that it ignores the procedural context of a choice of court agreement and might spell injustice due to its rigid approach. On the other extreme hand, there is the ouster clause approach that strictly refuses to enforce a foreign choice of court agreement.[21] Though this approach might favour litigation in Nigeria and other African countries, it dangerously undermines party autonomy, and international commercial actors are likely to lose confidence in a legal system that does not uphold party autonomy. The other approach is the middle ground of the Brandon test, which upholds a choice of court agreement except strong reason is demonstrated to the contrary. This is standard approach the Nigerian Supreme Court has applied.[22]

It is recommended that if this case goes to the Nigerian Supreme Court, it should continue its endorsement of the Brandon test. It should also consider the addition of the interest of justice approach as was utilised by some of the High Court and Court of Appeal judges in this case. What is missing in the Nigerian Supreme Court's jurisprudence is a common law test that protects weaker parties like insured, consumers, and employees, as can be utilised in this case to protect the insured party (the 1st claimant/respondent). The time to act is now.

[1] *BUPA Insurance v Chakraverti & Anor* (2021) LPELR-55940 (CA).

[2] *The Owners of Cargo Lately Laden on Board the Ship or Vessel 'Elftheria' v 'The Elftheria' (Owners), 'The Elftheria'* [1969] 1 Lloyd's Rep 237 (Brandon J).

[3] *Sonnar (Nig) Ltd v Norwind* (1987) 4 NWLR 520; *Nika Fishing Company Ltd v Lavina Corporation* (2008) 16 NWLR 509.

[4] *Sonnar (Nig) Ltd v Norwind* (1987) 4 NWLR 520. See also *Hull Blyth (Nig) Ltd v Jetmove Publishing Ltd* (2018) LPELR-44115 (CA).

[5] *Nika Fishing Company Ltd v Lavina Corporation* (2008) 16 NWLR 509. See also *Captain Tony Nso v Seacor Marine (Bahamas) Inc* (2008) LPELR-8320 (CA); *Beaumont Resources Ltd & Anor v DWC Drilling Ltd* (2017) LPELR-42814 (CA).

[6] Compare *Adesanya v Palm Lines Ltd* (1967) NCLR 133, which is one of the earliest cases where the balance of convenience and interest of justice test was applied in enforcing a foreign choice of court agreement.

[7] Cited in *BUPA Insurance v Chakraverti & Anor* (2021) LPELR-55940 (CA) 3.

[8] Cited in *BUPA Insurance v Chakraverti & Anor* (2021) LPELR-55940 (CA) 3-4.

[9] Cited in *BUPA Insurance v Chakraverti & Anor* (2021) LPELR-55940 (CA) 5.

[10] *Sonnar (Nig) Ltd v Norwind* (1987) 4 NWLR 520.

[11] *BUPA Insurance v Chakraverti & Anor* (2021) LPELR-55940 (CA).21.

[12] *BUPA Insurance v Chakraverti & Anor* (2021) LPELR-55940 (CA).

[13] *BUPA Insurance v Chakraverti & Anor* (2021) LPELR-55940 (CA) 28.

[14] *BUPA Insurance v Chakraverti & Anor* (2021) LPELR-55940 (CA) 30.

[15] *Sonnar (Nig) Ltd v Norwind* (1987) 4 NWLR 520; *Nika Fishing Company Ltd v Lavina Corporation* (2008) 16 NWLR 509.

[16] CSA Okoli, "Analysis of Choice of Court Agreements in Nigeria in the Year 2020" (2021) 21 *Dutch Journal of Private International Law* 292, 305.

[17] See Article 10 - 23 of Brussels I Regulation Recast (Council Regulation (EU) No 1215/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2012 [2012] OJ L351/1.). See also recital 19 to Brussels I Regulation Recast.

[18] *Caribbean Trading & Fidelity Corporation v Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation* (2002) 34 WRN 11 (Ayoola JSC, Mohammed JSC (as he then was), Ejiwunmi JSC).

[19] CSA Okoli, "Analysis of Choice of Court Agreements in Nigeria in the Year 2020" (2021) 21 *Dutch Journal of Private International Law* 292 - 305.

[20] *Damac Star Properties LLC v Profitel Limited* (2020) LPELR-50699(CA). See

also *Conoil Plc v Vitol SA* (2018) 9 NWLR 463, 489 (Nweze JSC), 500-501 (Okoro JSC), 502 (Eko JSC).

[21]*A.B.U. v VTLS* (2020) LPELR-52142 (CA). See also *Conoil Plc v Vitol SA* (2018) 9 NWLR 463, 489 (Nweze JSC); *Sonnar (Nig) Ltd v Partenreedri MS Norwind* (1987) 4 NWLR 520, 544-5 (Oputa JSC); *LAC v AAN Ltd* (2006) 2 NWLR 49, 81 (Ogunbiyi JCA as she then was); *Ventujol v Compagnie Française De L’Afrique Occidentale* (1949) 19 NLR 32; *Allied Trading Company Ltd v China Ocean Shipping Line* (1980) (1) ALR Comm 146.

[22]*Sonnar (Nig) Ltd v Norwind* (1987) 4 NWLR 520; *Nika Fishing Company Ltd v Lavina Corporation* (2008) 16 NWLR 509.