



From contractual serfdom to human rights liberation : doing justice to virtual lives

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Abstract

Analysis of relationships between states and citizens has almost monopolised the Human Rights legal discourse. In my thesis, I start from the position that Human Rights is a philosophical and historical victory of humankind, whose application cannot be limited to dictating norms in traditional forms of governance; Human Rights primarily define the human being as an individual, as a group, as a societal entity. Therefore, when we discuss Human Rights we do not pursue what governing states 'ought' or 'ought not' to do, but how human beings 'should' endure their lives in a dignified manner; how they should be treated independently of who their acting opponent might be. The Internet, on the other hand, has evolved through the years into an uncharted virtual structure of uncounted online operations and services run by private commercial actors. Within this setting, where the online application platform performs as a land parallel and the private commercial host as the de facto ruler, online identity is mirrored into service accounts. Hence the human being's digital existence seems to be depending, to a large degree, on the private initiative – and will. Whilst exploring various relevant themes, the thesis revisits the issue of the application of Human Rights in private relationships through the lenses of online electronic communications and using the example of commercial online virtual worlds. According to my conclusions, a simple projection of the state/citizen model onto ISPs/users relationships does not give sufficient ground for contesting Human Rights within that context. What we need is to deconstruct predominant dogmas in modern Human Rights theory and legislation and to readjust our focus back on the human being and its universal manifestations.

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binding: when governments ratify human rights agreements, they accept a formal duty to implement the commitments they have thereby made. The work of the Olivier de Schutter, the UN's outgoing special rapporteur on the right to food, demonstrates what can be achieved. On a more human level, I have many times seen how understanding that they have rights can be a life-changing 'lightbulb moment' in people's lives. IIED and Natural Justice have recently produced a discussion paper setting out who has human rights obligations in a conservation context – further info is available here:<http://www.iied.org/human-rights-standards-for-conservation-part-i>. September 5, 2014 at 11:08 am. Reply. Parties that did not accept nor ratify the amendment are not subject to the jurisdiction of the ICC (ibid). According to the official website of the ICC, the amendment will not enter into force before 2017; neither will it unless at least 30 state parties ratify the amendment (Coalition for the International Criminal Court). Second, states have a duty to intervene in other states where human rights are violated, providing assistance to heads of states to build around this principle (ibid). Third, they commit to helping the populations suffering from their government's violations in a peaceful way (ibid). Lastly, the responsibility to protect implies the right of the Security Council to use all means necessary to end

human rights violations in a state, as a means of last resort (ibid). Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status. Human rights include the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, and many more. Everyone is entitled to these rights, without discrimination. International Human Rights Law. International human rights law lays down the obligations of Governments to act in certain ways or to refrain from certain acts, in order to promote and protect human rights and fundamental free