

AJIL

American Journal of International Law

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AMERICAN JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL LAW

Vol. 115

July 2021

No. 3

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Lead Articles

The Rule of Advice in International Human Rights Law *Jorge Contesse* 367

Advisory jurisdiction is a ubiquitous feature of international human rights adjudication. Yet the attention of legal scholars is almost entirely devoted to contentious jurisdiction. This Article aims to fill that gap in the literature. By introducing two models of advisory jurisdiction, and analyzing the example of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights—the world’s most active international advice-giver—the Article shows how international human rights courts may utilize advisory proceedings to influence state conduct, in a mechanism the Article calls “ruling through advice.” The Article also shows how human rights courts may attempt to guide states and national courts by means of an “anticipatory adjudication” mechanism. Using the Inter-American Court’s groundbreaking advisory opinion on same-sex marriage as a case study, the Article argues that, despite the domestic implementation of its opinion, the Court misused its advisory powers, putting the regional human rights system at risk. The insights that both the conceptual model and the case study offer contribute to a broader conversation about international courts’ advisory role.

Climate Change Mitigation as an Obligation Under Human Rights Treaties? *Benoit Mayer* 409

Judges and scholars have interpreted human rights treaties as obligating states to mitigate climate change by limiting their greenhouse gas emissions, an argument instrumental to the development of climate litigation. This Article questions the validity of this interpretation. A state’s treaty obligation to protect human rights implies an obligation to cooperate on the mitigation of climate change, the Article argues, only if and inasmuch as climate change mitigation effectively protects the enjoyment of treaty rights by individuals within the state’s territory or under its jurisdiction. As such, human rights treaties open only a narrow window on the applicability of general mitigation obligations arising under climate treaties and customary international law.

Are There “Inherently Sovereign Functions” in International Law?

Frédéric Mégret

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Privatization of functions that were traditionally considered sovereign has reached new heights. International lawyers have responded mostly by seeking to limit some of the consequences of that phenomenon, by, for example, ensuring accountability of states for outsourcing. International law has sometimes appeared agnostic, however, about the very legality of privatization. This Article explores a more radical take, namely the possibility that certain state functions could be seen as “inherently sovereign” under international law. International law can be understood this way, the Article argues, despite its general deferral to sovereignty (including the sovereignty to outsource), the fact that historically all kinds of functions that we have come to associate with the state have been exercised privately, and international law’s own role in legitimizing privatization in our era.

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AJIL (ISSN: 0002-9300) is published quarterly (January, April, July, October) in print and digitally by Cambridge University Press (One Liberty Plaza, 20th floor, New York, NY 10006) on behalf of the American Society of International Law. Periodicals postage rate paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes in the USA, Canada, and Mexico to: *American Journal of International Law*, Cambridge University Press, Journals Fulfillment Department, One Liberty Plaza, 20th floor, New York, NY 10006. Send address changes elsewhere to *American Journal of International Law*, Cambridge University Press, Journals Fulfillment Department, UPH, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8BS, England.

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115 *AJIL* 219 (2021)

ISSN: 0002-9300

E-ISSN: 2161-7953

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