The Robot Sophia as a “New Citizen” of Saudi Arabia: what about granting legal personhood, “citizenship” and eventually dignity to non-human entities with artificial intelligence?

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Abstract: The developing of deep-learning machines, furnished by artificial intelligence, and able to interact autonomously with the humans and the environment paves the way to new legal and constitutional problems, as it is quite well known. In the oncoming future, as the case of “Sophia” – a robot to which has been granted Saudis citizenship – or the recent proposal of the EU Parliament demonstrate, androids might be vested of legal personhood or status, and some rights like men. At the same time, there is a tendency to recognize, before the Courts, human dignity and some legal rights also to human beings before they acquire legal personhood, and even before the born living, as in the case of fetuses or embryos. The consequent dissolving of the interweaving between legal personhood, dignity and born living human being, – that the cases above seem to reveal – open new questions: should we grant legal personhood also to not born living entities with artificial intelligence? Should we recognize to them also the right of dignity?

Keywords: Robots, Human dignity, Artificial intelligence, Legal capacity, Rights.