

XENOS

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LIMITING SOVEREIGNTY OR PRODUCING GOVERNMENTALITY? HUMAN RIGHTS AS A DOUBLE-EDGED CONCEPT NICOLAS GUILHOT

Dept. of Sociology / Centre for the Study of Human Rights, LSE

Tuesday 5 June, 5.00pm, Room 308
Richard Hoggart Building, Goldsmiths,
New Cross, London SE14 6NW

All welcome - email [Xenos@gold.ac.uk](mailto:xenos@gold.ac.uk) to reserve a place

The sociology of international norms has often focused on human rights in order to illustrate the 'power of ideas' to inform policies: as the story goes, the successful institutionalization of human rights principles under the Carter administration forced the Reagan administration to adjust its policies to principles it could not uproot or use for purely legitimating purposes. These approaches ignore the contested nature of political-legal concepts and the fact that their very definition is the stake of struggles between contending groups of actors seeking to use such concepts in order to legitimate different policy courses. In the late 1970s-early 1980s, the concept of human rights recovers two different definitions, each corresponding to specific social groups and policy interests: one that sees human rights as a limitation of sovereignty through legal instruments; another that turns human rights into an anti-judicial concept primarily concerned with the production of democratic forms of governance. This latter version, promoted by neoconservatives and leading to ambiguous policies of democracy promotion, is still with us today.

THE DEMOCRACY MAKERS



HUMAN RIGHTS
AND THE POLITICS OF GLOBAL ORDER

NICOLAS GUILHOT

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