

IDD academic was invited to speak at the OECD-DAC 17th GovNet Network on Governance Plenary Meeting

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Dr Heather Marquette (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/government-society/staff/profiles.aspx?ReferenceId=4495>), IDD's Director of Research and Academic Director of the GSDRC, was an invited speaker on 'Political Economy Analysis: Challenging the Orthodoxy?' at the OECD-DAC 17th GovNet Network on Governance Plenary Meeting, Paris, 24-25 April 2013.

The presentation was based on the paper '**Donors Doing Political Economy Analysis: From Process to Product (and Back Again?)**' (http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2206474) by Johnathan Fisher and Heather Marquette.

Abstract:

This paper refocuses current debate on political economy analysis (PEA) by firstly critiquing existing scholarly tendencies to analyse donors through a particular lens, as a unique analytical category, which does not adequately capture donor officials as the civil servants they are.

Current donor debates which move the purpose of PEA away from 'thinking politically' towards 'managing risk' may thus not reflect failure to mainstream PEA, but instead reflect a logical response from civil servants when faced with a product that exists to flag up risks or potential failure.

Informed by Hood's work (2010) on risk and blame, the paper argues that by understanding donors as blame-averse civil servants, we can better comprehend their continued ambivalence towards PEA. Secondly, the paper responds to a second critique of PEA, which highlights its politically sensitive nature. The paper argues that this sensitivity is not simply an operational matter but instead presents a significant challenge to donor commitments to country ownership.

The paper explores how both of these issues have played-out in the World Bank's evolving work on PEA. Drawing on interview data and participant observation, it is suggested that the Bank may be better placed to navigate these complexities given its apolitical mandate.