University of Birmingham

Dr Jonathan Fisher

Lecturer in International Development

International Development Department

Contact details

Telephone +44 (0)121 414 3492 (tel:+44 121 414 3492)

Email j.fisher@bham.ac.uk (mailto:j.fisher@bham.ac.uk)

International Development Department
School of Government and Society
Muirhead Tower
University of Birmingham
Edgbaston, Birmingham,
B15 2TT, United Kingdom

About

Jonathan's research is focused on the relationship between Western aid donors and developing states. Within this he is particularly interested in how donors 'construct' perceptions of foreign governments and key concepts (eg 'fragile state') in international development. He is also interested in the extent to which these 'knowledge construction' processes are influenced by external actors and bureaucratic structures as well as by policy-makers themselves.

Jonathan is particularly interested in Africa and wrote his doctorate on the Ugandan-donor relationship between 1986-2010. Current research projects he is working on include:

- Uganda as a 'fragile state' in donor agencies and international politics
- 'Enemies' and state-building in eastern Africa
- Donor uses of 'political economy analysis' in policy-making
- Budget support and political conditionality

Qualifications

Postdoctoral Research Fellow in International Development:

- DPhil in International Relations, University of Oxford 2011
- MSc in African Studies, University of Oxford 2007
- BA (Hons) History, University College London (UCL) 2006

Biography

Jonathan joined IDD in 2011 as an ESRC Postdoctoral Research Fellow shortly after completing his doctorate at the University of Oxford. His DPhil focused on the relationship between the Ugandan government and its international aid donors between 1986-2010. The study sought to explore how the Museveni government has 'managed' the ways in which donors perceive it in order to secure greater agency in the international system and looked particularly at Uganda's reputation as an 'ally in the Global War on Terror' since 9/11.

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Teaching

Jonathan co-convenes (with Dr Phil Amis) postgraduate modules on **Aid Management** and (with Dr Martin Rew) on **Critical Approaches to Development**.

He also teaches on two other modules – **Development Politics** (IDD) and **War Torn States and Post Conflict Reconstruction in the South**, a 3rd year undergraduate module at POLSIS.

Postgraduate supervision

Jonathan welcomes new PhD applications in the areas of:

- Donors and the international politics of aid

- Security and conflict in the developing world

- African foreign relations and diplomacy

He has a particular interest in supervising students with a regional interest in sub-Saharan Africa and, particularly in:

- Uganda, Rwanda, Congo and the Great Lakes region

- Somalia, South Sudan and the Horn of Africa

Research

Research Interests:

- The politics of aid, security and donor-recipient relations
- 'Knowledge construction' and the role of 'epistemic communities' in development policy-making
- Bureaucratic politics in international development
- Political Economy analysis
- Budget support and political conditionality
- African foreign policy
- East African politics and diplomacy

Other activities

Between January 2013-January 2014, Jonathan held an Honorary Research Fellowship in the Africa Directorate of the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Since April 2014, Jonathan has been the Admissions Tutor for IDD.

Publications

ARTICLES IN PEER-REVIEWED JOURNALS:

Fisher, J (2014) 'Uganda's war, Obama's advisers and the nature of 'influence' in Western foreign policy-making', **Third World Quarterly** (forthcoming, July 2014)

Fisher, J (2014) 'When it pays to be a "fragile state": Uganda's use and abyse of a dubious concept', **Third World Quarterly**m 35 (2), pp.316-332 (March 2014)

Fisher, J (2013) 'Structure, agency and Africa in the international system: Donor diplomacy and regional security policy in East Africa since the 1990s', **Conflict, Security and Development**, 13 (5), pp.537-568 (November 2013)

Fisher, J (2013) 'The limits - and limiters - of external influence: Donors, the Ugandan Electoral Commission and the 2011 elections', **Journal of Eastern African Studies**, 7 (3), pp.471-491 (August 2013)

Fisher, J (2013) "Some more reliable than others": Image management, donor perceptions and the Global War on Terror in East African diplomacy', **Journal of Modern African Studies**, 51 (1), pp.1-31 (March 2013)

Fisher, J (2012) 'Managing perceptions and securing agency: Contextualizing Uganda's 2007 intervention in Somalia', **African Affairs**, 111 (444), pp.404-423 (July 2012)

WORKING PAPERS:

Fisher, J and Marquette, H (2013) 'Donors doing Political Economy Analysis (TM): From Process to Product (and Back Again?)', IDD Working Paper (January 2013) (available at http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2206474)

BOOK CHAPTERS:

Fisher, J (2014) "Image management" in East Africa: Uganda, Rwanda, Kenya and their donors', in Julua Gallagher (ed): *Image and Africa: Creation, negotiation, subversion* (Manchester University Press, Manchester: forthcoming Autumn 2014)

Fisher, J (2014) 'The limits – and limiters – of external influence: The role of international donors in Uganda's 2011 election', in Sandrine Perrot, Sabiti Makara and Jerome Lafargue (eds): *Uganda's 2011 Multiparty Elections: Towards a Consolidated Democracy?* (Fountain Publishers, Kampala, forthcoming Autumn 2014)

Fisher, J (2013) 'Image management and African agency: Ugandan regional diplomacy and donor relations under Museveni', in William Brown and Sophie Harman (eds), *African Agency in International Politics* (Routledge, London: 2013)

BOOK REVIEWS:

Fisher, J (2013), *Aiding and abetting: foreign aid failures and the 0.7% deception*, by Jonathan Foreman, book review in *International Affairs*, 89 (3), pp.743-744 (May 2013)

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