



Policies without Politics

The Missing Link in International Development Co-operation?
Public Lecture and Discussion

Date: 29 January 2014
Time: 7.00 p.m.
Venue: Albert Schweitzer Haus, Großer Saal
Schwarzspanierstraße 13, 1090 Vienna

- **Lecturer**
Prof. Wil Hout, International Institute of Social Studies/ISS, University of Rotterdam
- **Discussants**
Jean Bossuyt, European Centre for Development Policy Management, Maastricht
Waltraud Rabitsch, Austrian Development Agency

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Austrian
Development Cooperation

Policies without Politics

The Missing Link in International Development Co-operation?

Since the turn of the century, different actors and institutions in international development cooperation have undertaken attempts to integrate political economy assessments into their broader decision making processes. This was – inter alia – caused by the increasingly widespread insight that power relations and “informal” patterns of governance are important factors for explaining why well-intentioned reforms had not succeeded, and that a better understanding of the respective issues would be required.

However, institutional players in international development co-operation continue to operate effectively as “anti-politics machines”. They keep pursuing a rather instrumental and technocratic approach to development programmes and projects and thus tend to pay little attention to political struggles and power relations as well as to define governance in predominantly apolitical terms.

Against this background – amongst others – the following questions arise:

- How can the de-politicization of programming, planning and implementation in international development cooperation be explained?
- Why did the various attempts to integrate political economy assessments not result in a substantial change of this situation?
- What are the problems and flaws of the rather technocratic and instrumental approach that currently dominates the practices of many institutions in international development cooperation?
- What are the main arguments for a more profound engagement with politics, and how and by whom could such a strategic re-orientation eventually be fostered?

Wil Hout is Professor of Governance and International Political Economy at the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) in The Hague, which is part of Erasmus University Rotterdam. His research interests relate to international relations, development assistance and issues of (“good”) governance. Prof. Hout has published a large number of articles in highly ranked scientific journals. He is the author of “Capitalism and the Third World” (Edward Elgar, 1993), “The Politics of Aid Selectivity” (Routledge, 2007) and (co-)editor of six volumes and special issues, most recently of “EU Strategies on Governance Reform: Between Development and State-building” (Routledge, 2012). Together with Caroline Hughes, Jane Hutchison and Richard Robison, he has just completed a monograph on the political economy of development assistance, entitled “Political Economy and Aid Industry in Asia” (Palgrave Macmillan, forthcoming, 2014).

Jean Bossuyt is Head of Strategy at the European Centre for Development and Policy Making (ECDPM; Maastricht/Brussels). Focusing on ACP-EU cooperation, he has been involved in policy and practical work on issues related to democratisation and governance; civil society participation; decentralisation and decentralised cooperation; EU cooperation policies and reform processes. He did fieldwork in several ACP countries and published extensively on ACP-EU cooperation.

Waltraud Rabitsch is Senior Expert at the International Programmes Department of the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), the operational unit of the Austrian Development Cooperation, and responsible for the thematic areas of poverty reduction, rural development and decentralisation. She is a member of various expert groups and networks in Austria as well as on the international level.

Venue

Albert Schweitzer Haus, Großer Saal

Schwarzspanierstraße 13
1090 Vienna

U2 („Schottentor“;
5 min. walking distance)

Or tram 43, 44

(to „Garnisongasse“)

or tram 40, 41, 42

(to „Schwarzspanierstraße“)

