

Public-Facing “Success Stories” in International Development as Text: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Historicism

Emily Springer¹

Abstract

Political discourse typically focuses on public oratory comments by politicians which are meticulously prepared and framed in advance, representing their political platforms. In the international development sector, there are few opportunities for conventional political discourse. Instead development organizations reach public audiences through manicured “success stories” which detail their programmatic interventions around the world. The focus of this study is on *how* publicly available documentation from international development organizations subtly reinforces a historicist understanding of global difference, with material consequences for which development agendas are able to garner legitimacy. Utilizing critical discourse analysis as a methodology, I use the case of the seven publicly available “profiles of progress” of African agricultural development projects funded by a recent large private foundation. As political discourse, these *re-presentations* of farmers serve political aims for promoting a particular version of agricultural development. I identify two strategies by which these profiles build epistemic legitimacy: (1) “scientizing” the profiles with the inclusion of quantified metrics and (2) using the voices of smallholder farmers to “authenticate” the narratives. I demonstrate that African smallholder farmers are presented in three possible roles: farmer-as-stagnant, farmer-in-modernity, and farmer-as-businessman. These re-presentations normalize the idea of Western superiority, ultimately serving the political needs of development donors to appear as legitimate benefactors. I argue that these profiles are not benign but serve as organizational contributions to an episteme concretizing around a particular political agenda: agribusiness as the solution to 21st century food security.

Keywords: Development, Critical Discourse Analysis, Historicism, Agriculture

¹ Dr. Emily Springer, Social Justice and Human Rights, New College of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences, Arizona State University espringer@asu.edu or spr10075@umn.edu.

Introduction

International development today is premised on the idea that the Global North has something of worth to offer or give the Global South. While racism and sexism are popularly understood, historicism is a less well known – ism. For the purposes of this article, historicism refers to the ideology that progress or “development” unfolds in a teleological historical manner. Using the logic of historicism, the spoils enjoyed in Europe in the nineteenth century are cast as obtainable by all nation states *if* similar steps are followed. In other words, historicism presents capitalism and modernity as global in character but *not yet* everywhere (Chakrabarty, 2000). With this perception of *not yet*, European metropoles validated colonialism with the premise that they were “ahead” of others, positioning assistance to others in achieving “modernity” as a moral obligation. Although the overt and brutal aspects that marked colonialism are no longer present, scholarship posits that colonial power relationships may be reinvented and reconstituted in different forms, presenting international development as a neocolonial task (Baxi, 2007; Douzinas, 2007; Balakrishnan, 2006; Makau, 2008). This study utilizes critical discourse analysis to interrogate how development organizations construct narratives about their work and the people they assist, asking what these representations *do* and for whom?

Political discourse analysis typically denotes the object of research rather than a methodology (Wang, 2016). Through discursive frames, powerful donors are able to exert influence over recipient governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) (McCormick, 2012). Perceiving of development organization “success stories” as *political texts* draws sharper attention to the power dynamics at play, how donors narrate their interaction with “developing” countries, and the micro strategies which reproduce the postcolonial global order. Utilizing the publicly available Profiles of Progress published by the Gates Foundation, I demonstrate that a historicist logic undergirds the narratives constructed in success stories. These stories distill development project impact to lay audiences and are not benign but delineate action and build consensus around technological solutions developed in the West to be utilized in the Global South as the means to achieve development. By reconstituting a historicist logic in success stories, the global order, and its inequalities, are reproduced rather than broken down—the supposed aim of international development.

Food security, and the means to achieve it, has emerged as a core public debate in the 21st century. Coming out of the 2007 and 2008 food crises, there is growing public awareness surrounding the importance of agriculture, food production, and climate change. Land grabs have proliferated and raised new questions about global interdependence in the food supply chain as well as national sovereignty and equity of food access (von Braun and Meinzen-Dick, 2009). Within this context, two contrasting approaches have emerged as the means to increase agricultural productivity: that of agribusiness—the corporatization and large-scale production of food—and agroecology—the mimicking of natural processes to create favorable production conditions (De Schutter, 2010; Thompson and Scoones, 2009). At the same time as social movements such as the organic and food sovereignty movements have thrived (Thompson and Scoones, 2009), governments and corporations have called for a “new green revolution for Africa” to feed the growing global

population (Scoones, 2002). This revolution refers to the current movement to increase agricultural productivity on the continent of Africa in a manner similar to that of Asia during the 1960s and 1970s, namely through improved seed, increased fertilizer, and connection to markets. The agribusiness approach adopted by Gates Foundation and the majority of agricultural development aid by large bilateral donors focuses on kick-starting a smallholder farmer-led revolution, households that have typically practiced agroecology (Odame and Muange, 2011; Scoones and Thompson, 2011). In this context, it is essential that research focus on how power operates through discourse in mundane documentation, altering the stories we tell ourselves about global relationships, and which future pathways are considered valid.

I begin by introducing postcolonial theory and the historicist perspective, linking this to the development sector. I then describe critical discourse analysis and influences from political discourse analysis, followed by a description of the textual dataset. Empirically, I begin by demonstrating how these texts build legitimacy, highlighting the role of quotations and numbers and then demonstrate how these texts present three interlinked types of farmers. Through this analysis, I argue that the layers of discourse bound within the Gates Foundation's "Profiles of Progress" promote and reinforce a historicist ideology, in particular by increasing the facticity of the profiles, narrowing interpretive possibilities about who farmers can be in the 21st century, and ignoring agroecology as an alternative to agribusiness.

1. Postcolonial theory

Applying a postcolonial perspective to the development sector prompts an exploration of *how* development organizations perpetuate the idea that the West is a legitimate development actor despite decades of questionable developmental outcomes (Sachs, 1992). This article uses the postcolonial understanding of historicism—that the West is ahead of other countries and therefore somehow best suited to outline developmental solutions—to unpack how development organizations leverage a historicist narrative to legitimate their own interventions. Postcolonial scholars clarify that "postcoloniality" does not account for a mere understanding of societies since political independence, but rather the term highlights the reconfigurations triggered by colonialism in economic, social, and political spheres. Further it captures the "tension between power and knowledge production in the context of imperial relationships" (Boatcă and Costa, 2010: 15) and the crucial role colonialism played in the formation of "modernity" (Bhabha, 2010). Previous to postcolonial scholarship, the colonial experience was absent, silent, or excluded from social theory.

The sociological canon was founded upon and assumed an idea of evolutionary and historical "progress" moving from primitive to advanced societal arrangements, which took this "global difference" as the central focus of scholarship and theorizing (Connell, 1997). Europe and the West are held up as self-made, developed, rational, scientific societies that are "ahead" of all others. Chakrabarty (2000) argues that a historicist interpretation of time underscores all theoretical and scholarly thought regarding relationships between nation-states. Taking hold in the nineteenth century, a historicist perspective presents capitalism not as originally global, based upon the

contributions of the colonies to the metropole, but *becoming global over time*. By rendering the colonial experience and the relational aspects of the metropole-colonies absent, sociological theory has served to reproduce and perpetuate ideas of “modernity” and “development” as *internal* to the nation-state (Chakrabarty, 2000). Mignolo (2007) notes that the making of “modernity” (better understood as modernity/coloniality) was further racialized, encoded as “white.” The result of colonialism’s erasure was a narrative that Europe was self-made and colonies were presented as external to modernity, rather than essential to it (Bhambra, 2010; Quijano 2003), greatly impacted epistemological diversity in our understanding of global difference (De Sousa Santos, Boaventura, Nunes, Meneses, 2007). Sociological research must attend to these relational aspects and interrogate how these inequalities are reproduced in new forms.

Yet rather than perceive geographies as “behind” the West, Said (1979) argues the West utilized other locales in the making of its *own* identity (Said, 1979). Stoler (2002a) argues in the colonial context, individuals work to actively police themselves, particularly white settlers, and those around them, in a constant condition of proving their whiteness—who is white? Who is native? In this manner, the colonial encounter is conceived of as less a rigid political formation but rather a *blurry* set of rules that in practice are in a constant state of unfolding. Stoler offers the micro-level counterpart to Chakrabarty’s historicism at the state level: co-production is essential to identities in maintaining a historicist logic.

Both postcolonial theory and critical discourse analysis (CDA) centralize relationality, power, and co-constitution. Despite the failures of the development sector, development organizations persist, prompting questions of how the Western development organization maintain legitimacy. Critical discourse analysis is an appropriate methodology to uncover such dynamics.

2. Critical discourse analysis as methodology

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) begins from the premise that discourses perpetuate unequal relationships and are utilized by those in positions in power to reproduce their dominance. While discourse analysis can focus on the micro-grammatical strategies embodied in a text, CDA typically is concerned with not only how discourses have subjects, objects, create epistemes, and are historically located, but also how discourses serve to support the material bases of institutions, reproduce power relationships, and have ideological effects (Parker, 1992; Teo, 2000). Therefore, critical discourse analysts should seek to understand and expose how “privilege is discursively positioned, contested, reified and to use this understanding to construct new knowledge” (Groscurth, 2011). CDA moves beyond descriptive analysis of discourses to explorations and explanations of how and why discourses are produced and perpetuated. Critical discourse analysts perceive discourse as both socially constituted and socially constitutive. CDA adds value by assessing the dialectical relationship between discourse and larger social forces, often ignored by text-focused discourse analysts. Through a critical discourse analytic, we can articulate which discourses are being normalized and who is benefitted by the discourse.

Moving beyond van Dijk’s (2009) premise that absence relies on the knowledge of the reader to fill in blanks, recent efforts have focused on bringing absence more systematically into discourse

analysis (Schröter and Taylor, 2018). Absence may take different forms—traces and masks within the text—yet a void represents a full thematic absence which requires looking external to the texts at hand. Voids are not omissions because they exist as relevant and the failure of their inclusion cannot be epistemologically justified (Venkataraman, 2018). Adopting this view, discourse analysis must look both for presence and absence.

Critical discourse has been used to explicate social realities of many types, yet only a few apply this methodology to international development: global health crisis (Ney, 2012), Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers in Tanzania (Vavrus and Seghers, 2010), education policies in aid-recipient countries (McCormick, 2012), Red Cross volunteers (Groscurth, 2011), and agricultural development (Dixon and Hapke, 2003; Janker, Mann, and Rist, 2018). However, to my understanding, no scholarly analysis of “success stories” as text has occurred. Designed for consumption by laypeople, benefactor or donor “success stories” provide simplified “soundbites” of development projects. Representations matter because they delineate the stories we tell about the world and the relationships within it (Mohanty, 2003) and outline our argumentative reasoning for what we should *do* and how to *act* (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012). Therefore, “success stories” constitute an important textual basis for analysis.

Taken in total, what do sets of texts construct, justify, and delineate for future decision-making and action in development? My aim is to create a meso-level reading, situating textual analysis within a macro socio-political context—a focus on how language works within power relations (Graham, 2011). Development organizations sit “in the middle” between transnational discourse and expectations, such as the Sustainable Development Goals, and the lived realities of development’s beneficiaries. In taking this approach, I analyze what is “made up” by these texts. Stoler (2002b) asserts “the task is less to distinguish fiction from fact than to track the production and consumption of those facticities themselves” (85). Combining Stoler (2002b) with explanatory discourse analysis (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012), which focuses on how social structures and inequalities are maintained and reproduced, I analyze the production of a dominant narrative around agribusiness. Thus, I view development organizations’ success stories as distillations of the ontological and epistemological assumptions regarding agricultural development. The focus is not on what these texts say, but what these sayings do and what effects they elicit.

3. Profiles of progress as dataset

Within the development landscape, benefactors are entities which give money away to beneficiaries. Well known benefactors include bilateral aid between countries, and multilateral aid between regional blocks, such as the European Union. The Gates Foundation was selected as the benefactor for this study due to its growing role in the international development industry (Schurman, 2019) and status as a private philanthropy, meaning it has greater flexibility than bi- or multilateral institutions. The Gates Foundation has recast the Global South as an experimental laboratory, embracing discourse of finding “what works,” in ways that may undermine Global South participation (Fejerskov, 2017). As a private institution and as a new organizational actor within the development landscape, the Gates Foundation had a rare opportunity to break the mold

for “success stories.” Despite this, the Gates’ “profiles of progress” take a form similar to that of mainstream development actors, like that of [USAID](#), [DFID](#), and [UNDP](#). Although each organization has different editorial guidelines, the emphasis on showcasing the impact of their intervention is key: for example USAID’s guidance to development partners to author success stories included the following: “The formula is simple: use powerful statistics; communicate progress; and bring it to life with a personal narrative... sprinkle in a beneficiary quote or two”² Taken in total, all contribute to the production of a larger development episteme that validates development intervention.

Scholars have argued Europe’s “grand escape” from hunger is inextricably linked with global inequality (van Haute, 2011) and donors continue to understand agrarian transformation akin to Europe’s is possible for other countries (Li, 2008). Historicism is present in agricultural development, making it a meaningful case for critical discourse analysis. The Gates Foundation moved into Global Health Development in 2006, when the Gates Foundation partnered with the Rockefeller Foundation to provide \$150 million to launch Africa-based and African-led Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA). Since 2006, the Gates Foundation has continued to provide financial support for agricultural development projects, largely focusing on instigating a “new green revolution for Africa” (Foundation Website, 2011). As of 2019, Gates Foundation reported investing \$286 million into African agricultural development across thirty-four organizations and an additional \$626 million into AGRA³. This investment portfolio demonstrates a commitment to *action* (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012), which interplays with discursive constructions.

Source material for CDA often details an asymmetrical relationship which may “embody manipulative strategies that seem neutral or natural to most people” (Teo, 2000: 12). With historicism as an acknowledged episteme of global inequality, let us make strange the textual practices of success stories. The documents analyzed here include all “Profiles of Progress” published by the Foundation about their early work in African agricultural development. The Foundation’s website offers a searchable database of their publications by content, program, year, region, and topic⁴. In total, there are 7 “Profiles of Progress” which describe projects in agricultural development on the African continent. I collected documents in 2011 and 2012 through searches on the Gates Foundation website, which provided search options in the form of check boxes: “Research and Evaluation” or “Progress Reports.” It is interesting to note that some Profiles of Progress were catalogued as “Progress Reports” which is true to their content, whereas some Profiles were catalogued under “Research and Evaluation.” This demonstrates that even carefully crafted promotional narratives of projects are sometimes understood by staff as more scientific or empirical explorations of project impact, eliding constructed narratives with scientific documentation. Afterwards the Foundation decreased the amount of information publicly available online, therefore these documents offer a meaningful peek into the organizational narratives of a key development actor.

² See: [Success Story Guidelines for USAID Partners](#)

³ Author tallied based on Foundation Website search “Awarded Grants” (April 2019)

⁴ <https://www.gatesfoundation.org/How-We-Work/Quick-Links/Grants-Database>

Table 1. Profiles of progress dataset

<i>Project</i>	<i>Intervention</i>	<i>Year</i>
1 Farm Radio	Improved Seed	2010
2 Ghana	Improved Seed	2010
3 Cowpea Storage	Legume Storage Bag	2010
4 Drought-Tolerant Maize	Improved Seed	2010
5 East Africa Dairy Development	Cross-bred Cows and Cooperative Development	2012
6 Purchase for Progress	Assured Market for Produce	2012
7 Tropical Legumes II	Improved seed	2012

Given the recent interest in making women “go to work” for developmental outcomes (Chant, 2016; Chant & Sweetman, 2012; Roberts & Soederberg, 2012), one would expect the texts would construct masculine or feminine notions of farming and labor. However, no *narrative* differences were observed in the Profiles between those which featured men farmers versus women farmers. This advances the argument that historicism is the underlying logic, rather than gendered narratives, in promotional materials. Of the 7 Profiles, 4 featured women and 3 featured men. Additional research is needed as to whether or not this is both an accurate proportional representation of Gates Foundation activities in agricultural development and if or how their programs incorporate gender.

Situating the development sector’s interest in agricultural development within the greater macro concerns of climate change and food security, I ask: What is it that this discourse promotes and how is power reconstituted through discourse?

4. Critical discourse analysis of development success stories

I demonstrate the purposeful presentation of a singular narrative structure, explore the mechanisms that make these narratives authoritative documents, and then describe the three farmer archetypes constituted by the narratives.

Figure 1. Exemplary Profiles of Progress formatting and presentation

FARM RADIO
PROFILES of PROGRESS

One Sunday evening, after a long day tending her fields of maize, pepper, and okra, Faustina Klutse switched on her radio.

What she heard changed her life.

A new farming show was on the air encouraging listeners to plant a drought- and disease-resistant rice variety that would thrive in Ghana and fetch good prices at the market.

Like many farmers in Ghana, Faustina was reluctant to experiment with new crops. But after listening to the program, she decided to give it a try. Week after week, she tuned into the show to hear farmers and government agricultural extension agents offer advice on where to buy the seed, how to prepare the soil, what to plant, and how to tend the rice fields. She joined a listening group where she could share advice with other farmers.

When it was time to harvest, her crop was in high demand at the local markets, giving her the opportunity to make a handsome profit. For the first time in her life, Faustina, a 46-year-old mother of two, suddenly had money to spare.

"There is now happiness in my house. I never had enough money. Now I'm able to send my children to school, and I have enough income to eat," Faustina says.

Faustina had turned into a new kind of radio show created by Farm Radio International, a Canadian-based nonprofit organization.

Farm Radio has already reached **39 million farmers**, providing them with vital agricultural knowledge.

In Africa, many governments lack resources to educate farmers about new agricultural practices and technologies that can help them increase their productivity and incomes. In Nigeria, for example, there is one government agricultural extension agent for every 3,000 farmers, giving each farmer less than 30 minutes of time with an agent per year. But more than 70 percent of Africa's rural population has access to radio, making it a reliable way to reach farmers.

There is now happiness in my house. I never had enough money. Now I'm able to send my children to school, and I have enough income to eat."

—Faustina Klutse, smallholder farmer and Farm Radio listener, Ghana

In 2007, Farm Radio, with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, launched the African Farm Radio Research Initiative, a project aimed at exploring how to use radio to help rural farmers improve their lives. Working with five partner radio stations in Tanzania, Uganda, Mali, Ghana, and Malawi, Farm Radio has already reached 39 million farmers, providing information on disease-resistant crops, composting, animal housing, soil and water management, and a range of other vital agricultural issues.

In Ghana, where the radio campaign promoted the high-yielding rice, New Rice for Africa (NERICA), to smallholder farmers like

Farm Radio Research Initiative

Goal: To research the best ways to use radio to share vital agricultural information with African farmers

Partners: Farm Radio International (www.farmradio.org)

Progress: Working with five partner radio stations in Tanzania, Uganda, Ghana, Mali, and Malawi, Farm Radio has reached 39 million farmers with new information on a range of agricultural techniques. Some key successes include:

- In Uganda, farmers who listened to the program planted 57 acres more of an improved cassava variety than in 2008, an increase of 510 percent.
- In Ghana, the radio show generated widespread interest in a high-yielding rice variety, NERICA, nearly doubling demand for the seed in 2009 over 2008, exhausting the Ministry of Food and Agriculture's supplies.

Faustina, the demand for the seeds nearly doubled in 2009 over 2008, exhausting the Ministry of Food and Agriculture's supplies.

The key to the success of the seeds, listeners say, is that they focus on the needs and concerns of smallholder farmers themselves. "Hearing about the needs from other farmers made it more convincing," Faustina says.

In Ghana, the radio campaign to promote NERICA rice was also a breakthrough for the government, which had struggled to get farmers to adopt the underperforming rice due to the country's water shortages. Many farmers had resisted trying the new crop not only because it was unfamiliar but also because the government didn't have the resources for follow-up information or guidance.

Richard Yaw, a government agricultural extension agent, has spent years bumping along dirt roads on his motorcycle trying to meet with more than 2,850 farmers in his district in eastern Ghana. He's never had enough time to reach everyone.

But when Farm Radio sponsored a show at his local radio station, Richard decided to take his extension work on the air. To his surprise, many of his farmers were listening. Now every Thursday and Sunday he parks his motorcycle and takes a seat in the radio studio. Reading glasses perched on the edge of his nose, he sits hunched over a microphone taking calls from across the region. Some from far away. The radio show also helped推广新品种，Nathan from Attorkepe asks how to use cow manure as fertilizer. "TT" from Lekpongonor is seeking advice on how to improve his pepper crop.

Richard answers each question, extending the broadcast an extra hour to be able to accommodate more callers. He doesn't mind the extra time. It's a lot easier than riding his motorcycle to visit them all.

"With just one person on the air, you can reach all the farmers in the area," he says.

Over 70 percent of Africa's rural population has access to radio.

GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM | SEPTEMBER 2010 **www.gatesfoundation.org | 1**

GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM | SEPTEMBER 2010 **www.gatesfoundation.org | 2**

Source: Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. 2010. Global Development Program. Accessed Profiles of Progress from publicly searchable foundation interface in 2010-2012.

4.1. Building discursive legitimacy

The featured Profiles of Progress all follow a similar format of two pages, with photo headers on both pages, and a grant summary with succinct details of the goal, partners, progress beneath the photo header on the second page. Within the body of the text, there is a highlighted and bolded headline, one or more featured quotes, and one or more featured metrics—which I discuss in more detail below. Font size and bolding serves to highlight particular aspects of the profiles; headlines are larger font and bolded; quotes are the largest font and bolded; and metrics are placed in the center off-setting the two columns of text, are bracketed, and often have a metric bolded. Within each narrative, one beneficiary is featured and the impact of the project in their lives is described. Most narratives introduce supporting characters, often a mid-level character, such as an agricultural extension agent, a government employee, or a manager of a project. See Figure 1 above as an example of careful editorial presentation. The profile for “Ghana” as a country is an exception, reaching four pages. As the profiles are constructed under strict space and length specifications, careful and selective editing becomes primary and the resulting product is carefully presented.

Headlines are meaningful data because they establish the directionality of interpretation. In other words, headlines orient the reader. The lexical choices used in the headlines generate an interventionist mentality through the use of temporal subjunctives or material changes. Both of

which serve to build the importance of the benefactor's intervention. See Table 2 for how headlines establish the importance of the development intervention in each story.

Table 2. Profiles of progress headlines

1	One Sunday evening, after a long day tending her fields of maize, pepper, and okra, Faustina Klutse switched on her radio. What she heard changed her life.
2	In the mid-1980s, hunger stalked Ghana.
3	Balarabe Kausani, a smallholder farmer in northern Nigeria, is earning enough money to make improvements to his home, install an irrigation system on his farm, and pay school fees for his four children. The secret to his success? A bag.
4	For Sharifa Numbi, a smallholder farmer in Tanzania, maize is life.
5	Paul Kimeni Muchai's quiet character belies his ambition. A 40-year-old farmer with a wife and three children, Paul lives just outside Ol Kalou in central Kenya. He owns three dairy cows and a tidy three-acre farm where he grows fodder for his livestock and potatoes, beans, peas, and maize for his family.
6	Odetta Mukanyiko is a single mother with two children. She lives on the eastern side of Rwanda, farming a half hectare of land, feeding her family with what she grows, and selling the rest to local traders. She's been working the same tiny plot of land for 20 years, making less than a dollar a day. A visit from the World Food Program changed Odetta's life.
7	Temegnush Dhabi's two-hectare farm in East Shewa in central Ethiopia looks very different today than it did three years ago. Back then, she grew mostly teff, a popular type of cereal grown in Ethiopia. Teff fetched a reasonable price at market, but demanded hard labor and expensive fertilizer.

Temporally, these headlines emphasize intervention by interrupting an ongoing action, presented in the past progressive form, with a direct past tense. "after a long day tending her fields... Faustina switched on her radio. What she heard changed her life" and "She's been working the same tiny plot of land for 20 years... A visit from the World Food Program changed Odetta's life." This is also accomplished by a specific mention of historical time in the past tense, implying the situation is different today: "In the mid-1980s, hunger stalked Ghana." If the intervention is not highlighted through temporal subjunctives, it is highlighted in possession of objects: a bag, maize, and dairy cows. These items are essential elements of the benefactor's project.

These headlines are reinforced through the use of two additional featured elements: a quote from a beneficiary and a metric. I identify these featured elements as strategies by which each Profile of Progress builds epistemic legitimacy through authenticating the Profile using the voice of a beneficiary and scientizing the Profile by presenting numbers as objective, irrefutable statistics. I explore both of these strategies in turn. See Table 3 for how each profile would appear to a reader "at a glance."

Table 3. Profiles of progress – highlighted features

#	Featured Quote(s)	Featured Metric(s)
1	<p>“There is now happiness in my house. I never had enough money. Now I’m able to send my children to school, and I have enough income to eat.” —Faustina Klutse, smallholder farmer and Farm Radio listener, Ghana</p>	<p>Over 70 percent of Africa’s rural population has access to radio.</p> <p>Farm Radio has already reached 39 million farmers, providing them with vital agricultural knowledge.</p>
2	<p>“The government called on the youth, especially the youth, to go to the farms. I heard that call.” —Peter Owoahene Acheampong, smallholder farmer in Ghana’s Ashanti region</p> <p>“Whether in developed or developing countries, agriculture needs support. Period.” — Samuel Kojo Dapaah, chief technical advisor to Ghana’s minister of food and agriculture</p>	<p>Ghana is on track to become the first country in Africa to achieve the Millennium Development Goal of halving poverty and hunger from 1990 levels.</p> <p>Child malnutrition in Ghana has almost halved since the end of the 1980s, and the fraction of underweight infants fell from 30 percent in 1988 to 17 percent in 2008.</p>
3	<p>“Because of the quality of the cowpeas, you can add 20 percent to the price. We are making more money.” —Balarabe Kausani, smallholder farmer in northern Nigeria</p>	<p>Ghana commits nearly 10 percent of its budget to improving agriculture, putting it among the top investors in the sector in Africa. Spending on agricultural research and development more than doubled between 2002 and 2008.</p>
4	<p>“We have been working hard, and the harder we work, it gives us more hope that in the future maybe we can be better off.” —Sharifa Numbi, smallholder farmer in Tanzania</p>	<p>By 2012, 1.7 million households in West and Central Africa are expected to increase their annual incomes by an average of \$150 by using the bags.</p>
5	<p>“Dairy farming is a way of living with so much promise, I hope my son will follow in my footsteps.” —Paul Kimeni Muchai, Kenyan dairy farmer</p>	<p>By 2016, the drought-tolerant maize program is expected to boost maize yields by as much as 30 percent for up to 40 million African farmers.</p>
6	<p>“People here used to grow maize in despair. Now we see the value in what we’re doing.” —Christient Biziayaremyi, president of the local farming cooperative</p>	<p>Since the project began, EADD has sold 304,000 liters of milk a day through chilling plants (a 102 percent increase from 2009).</p> <p>Started in 2008, Purchase for Progress has contracted to buy 190,000 metric tons of food directly from farmers’ organizations and small and medium traders, or through innovative marketing platforms.</p>

<p>7 “I started sowing the improved chickpea variety three years ago, and it was the best decision I made.” —Temegnush Dhabi, Ethiopian farmer</p>	None
---	------

First, given that the largest font in each profile is the featured quote(s), the reader’s eye is drawn to the quotes within the prose. The quotes are firsthand accounts, often but not always, said by the individual featured in the profile. Sometimes, a supporting or mid-level character is quoted. By directly quoting the beneficiaries, the benefactor moves away from a common criticism launched by CDA. Typically, critical discourse analysts focus on the passivization and removal of agency in texts through the failure of the text authors to directly quote certain (often marginalized) populations (Teo, 2000). Yet discourse analysis also posits that discourses shift and change to maintain the power and hegemony of particular groups (Parker, 1992). The direct quoting of African farmers, placed alongside quantified indicators, serves to increase the facticity, authority, and legitimacy of the stories present in the profiles, making contestation difficult. At first glance, it appears to the reader as if African beneficiaries are being provided a prime opportunity to share their views. Yet their views are being put into the service of the benefactor. While beneficiaries may be better off or have greater income as a result of the intervention, the question here is of knowledge production and whose knowledge is represented and allowed to count, which raises an interrogation of absences, what is left unsaid, and which perspectives are not represented here – in the documents available to the lay reader. These Profiles leave absent any contestation around agroecological approaches or conventional agriculture. In this absence, these voices coalesce around and promote conventional agriculture.

As a second strategy for epistemic legitimacy, each Profile of Progress includes a featured metric, which serves to “scientize” the profile. The Gates Foundation’s strong focus on metrics in the profiles demonstrates its commitment to measurement and evaluation. By presenting multiple indicators in each profile, the Foundation demonstrates its own attentiveness to measuring (and ensuring) progress. However, this also serves to increase the facticity of the narrative. By bolding the specific quantified metrics and placing them within the greater narrative of the featured farmer and grant activities, the reader simultaneously takes in a personal and heartfelt story and is persuaded of the truth-like narrative via the highlighted quantified metrics. See Figure 1, noting the bracketed metrics in the center of each page and the bolded numbers in the summary on the second page. Furthermore, despite their importance, the indicators tracked by the Foundation are never defined for the public. This promotes a simplistic understanding of these indicators, presenting them as uncontentious, commonplace, and assumed. The statement, “by 2012, **1.7 million** households in West and Central Africa are expected to increase their annual incomes by an average of **\$150** by using the bags” unproblematically aggregates household level information to the international level. While the Cowpea Storage Project profile begins with the assertion that the problem is harvest *loss* due to weevil infestation, later the emphasis shifts to harvest *quality* as the cause for increases in income. Yet the use of undefined metrics makes indicators appear as objective, unproblematic, and self-apparent.

In summary, the headline and featured elements structure the narrative *around* the programmatic intervention: emphasize the temporal change instigated by the project, claim authenticity through the use of people's voices, and achieve facticity through the use of metrics. What appears as a story of improved livelihoods may also be read within transnational relationships where benefactors build their own legitimacy through the presentation of success.

4.2. Discursive co-constitution of the farmer and the benefactor

In this section, I demonstrate that African smallholder farmers are presented as a single group with shared concerns and demonstrate that these presentations result in three archetypical presentations of farmers in relationship to the benefactor. I argue that these discursive constructions build scaffolding for power structures, such as development donors, to operate on and within.

Generalizations are important to analyze because they make claims that move the experiences of a few to a much larger set of individuals. Through generalizations, individual experiences are flattened and stereotyping is made easier. Therefore, the group being generalized becomes seen as less variable and less complex (Teo, 2000). An analysis of the generalizations posited by the Profiles finds a coalescence of the narratives around "smallholder farmers" and direct claims of generality. See Table 4 for the linguistic choices which allow the featured beneficiary to serve as a stand-in for all smallholder farmers.

Table 4. Generalizations related to "farmers" and featured character as representative

1	smallholder farmers; smallholder farmers; rural farmers <i>Smallholder farmers like Faustina</i> <i>Faustina Klutse, smallholder farmer and Farm Radio listener</i>
2	nation's smallholder farmers <i>Peter Owoahene Acheampong, smallholder farmer</i> <i>Acheampong's success over the past 25 years reflects the significant progress Ghana has made...</i>
3	African farmers <i>Balarabe Kausani, smallholder farmer in northern Nigeria</i>
4	African Farmers; smallholder farmers in Africa; African smallholder farmers <i>Sharifa, Numbi, smallholder farmer in Tanzania</i> <i>African farmers like Numbi</i> <i>for Numbi and millions of other African farmers</i> <i>pushing farming families like Numbi's</i>
5	<i>Paul Kimeni Muchai, Kenyan dairy farmer</i> <i>Like Paul, others have ...</i> <i>makes all the difference to farmers like Paul</i> <i>Paul is just one of the nearly 173,000 farmers...</i>
6	small farmers in the developing world <i>There are hundreds of millions of people whose lives are like Odetta's</i>
7	smallholder farmers <i>Temegnush is one of nearly a quarter million smallholder farmers...</i> <i>Italicized font signals a direct generalization from the featured character to greater population of farmers</i>

Here linguistic patterns build an understanding of farmers as a monolithic category with shared characteristics. The “smallholder farmer” discourse in-the-making here has greater implications, “Put simply, how we categorize a social group affects the way we perceive them and relate to them. The ideological significance of this is that the less evaluative and more factual generalizations appear, the less questionable and more naturalized they become” (Teo, 2008: 17).

But what presentations of farmers are being generalized? I posit three distinct, yet overlapping and blurred categorizations are present: Farmer-as-Stagnant, and Farmer-as-User-of-Modern-Technologies, and Farmer-as-Businessman. I explore each in turn below. The recognition of “farmer-as” categorizations directs attention to an analysis of discourse as *social practice*. By taking this approach to discourse analysis, I assess how power/knowledge relationships that are “external” to these texts are, in fact, reflected in and reinforced by them (Vavrus and Seghers, 2010). These typifications are activated by the Profiles in distinct ways to build up the importance of the agricultural intervention and build an image of the particular type of person who is meant to succeed in agricultural development in the 21st century.

The first archetype is the farmer-as-stagnate, which is applied broadly to all smallholder farmers as a background frame to the featured farmer in each Profile. This background frame presents farmers as stagnated, stuck, and unsure of how to continue smallholder farming successfully. Farmers’ personalities are described as: reluctant, resistant, complaining, and opinionated. They are presented as ignorant or unable to help themselves: didn’t know, couldn’t imagine, cannot remember anything positive, sell at low prices, use hazardous chemicals that sometimes poison people, and experience amazement, e.g. “The farmers are usually quite surprised by the results.” Farmers are said to be risk-adverse on their farms, need to “see to believe,” require convincing or must be persuaded, and spend years fretting and working hard but get nowhere. See Table 5 for quotations from Profiles. These statements construct farmer personality as a barrier to agricultural productivity.

The farmer-as-stagnate is solidified through statements such as “Many farmers had resisted...” “Having shown farmers the possibilities, Borlaug moved on... Today... they are still using... they are still searching... they still haven’t adopted,” and “Changing habits is never easy, and researchers have worked hard to persuade African farmers to try something new”. The use of temporal devices performs a double duty here: it inserts the historicist narrative throughout the text while solidifying the resistive farmer as the problem.

Table 5. Farmer as stagnate

-
- 1 Like many farmers in Ghana, Faustina was reluctant to experiment with new crops. “Hearing about the rice from other farmers made it more convincing,” Faustina says. Many farmers had resisted trying the new crop not only because it was unfamiliar but also because the government didn’t have the resources for follow-up information or guidance To his surprise, many of his farmers were listening.
-

2 “We didn’t know if anything would ever grow again, but we were starving,”

Even with present yields, a frequent complaint of farmers is that markets for some crops haven’t been sufficiently developed to absorb their production.

Villagers bought these curious items with small, low-interest loans and then followed Borlaug’s instructions to plant in straight rows and apply the fertilizer and sprays in regular, judicious doses.

Having shown farmers the possibilities, Borlaug moved on to other villages and other African countries. But in Fufuo, and most everywhere else Borlaug went in Africa, the gains were short-lived. Today, Fufuo is still struggling to return to the heights of the Borlaug years. They are still using the same basic seed varieties. Their efforts to communally grow seed for sale have expanded, but they are still searching for markets. They still haven’t adopted the higher-yielding, more nutritious hybrid maize strains says a good promotional campaign is needed to get farmers to try the hybrids.

“When you plant, you make sure the other farmers see what you are doing. They will see the improved results,”

3 Faced with such devastating losses, many farmers don’t want to risk storing their cowpeas. Instead, they sell their cowpeas at harvest time when prices are lowest. In the off-season, prices can double or triple. Other farmers try to cope with the pests by treating their harvests with hazardous pesticides.

Changing habits is never easy, and researchers have worked hard to persuade African farmers to try something new.

Extension agents return several months later and ask farmers to open their bags in front of the entire village. The farmers are usually quite surprised by the results. “I was thinking that I’d open it up and see lots of pests. But it was free of pests,”

After years of fretting over his cowpea harvest, Balarabe is optimistic about the future.

4 More than 2 million smallholder farmers in Africa are already realizing the benefits of higher yields and incomes from these new maize varieties.

Improved crops can’t help farmers unless farmers want to use them.

The farmers have not been afraid to let their opinions be heard.

5 The hardest thing was getting the knowledge and money to help them produce more milk.

These cooperatives are the glue that holds the farmers together. By pooling their milk, farmers can get more for it.

It’s this reliable place to sell their milk that makes all the difference to farmers like Paul,

6 She’s been working the same tiny plot of land for 20 years, making less than a dollar a day.

So they work hard, but they get no traction, and they usually stay hungry and poor.

For the first time in anyone’s memory, these farmers earned a handsome profit for their harvests.

Nearly everyone in Odetta’s village has a story of changed fortunes,

And for the first time in her life she doesn’t view her small farm as a barrier to a better life.

7 “I would never have thought chickpea could bring me such high returns,” says 50-year-old Temegnush, scooping her hand into the recently harvested legumes.

In addition to helping her test the improved seed varieties “risk free,”

The second categorization is farmer-as-modern in which farmers are encouraged to continue smallholder farming but with new agricultural technologies. Although not immediately obvious, five of the seven profiles portray improved seed as the solution to improving agricultural productivity of smallholder farming. The other two profiles encourage hybrid dairy cows amidst other trainings and cooperative development, and the purchase of a storage bag to prevent infestation. These solutions bring agribusiness into the lives of smallholder farmers. The idea endorsed by the Profiles is that if farmers overcame their resistant personalities and adopted modern agricultural technologies, namely improved seed, their agricultural productivity would increase. Although the Profiles acknowledge drought, disease, and climate change as concerns to productivity, improved seeds are presented as the sole technological solution.

Table 6. Farmer as user of modern technologies

-
- 1** encouraging listeners to plant a drought-and disease-resistant rice variety providing information on disease-resistant crops, composting, animal housing, soil and water management, and a range of other vital agricultural issues. promoted the high-yielding rice, New Rice for Africa (NERICA)
-
- 2** With new seed strains developed by scientists and distributed to farmers, Yields of many crops lag far behind yields in other parts of the world due to an under-use of current technology, such as hybrid seeds and fertilizer, and weak extension services. only a tiny amount of the maize grown in the country is from higher-yielding hybrid seed that has long been common elsewhere in the world. Norman Borlaug, an American crop breeder whose new wheat strains ignited the Green Revolution, tried to plant the seeds of revolution in Africa. In 1986, he traveled to Ghana, bearing seeds of a new variety of maize high in protein. The elderly, white-haired visitor stopped in the village of Fufuo and distributed bags of fertilizer to revitalize the soil and bottles of weed killer to help the farmers till more land. works with farmers to develop the best varieties for them.
-
- 3** introduce African farmers to a simple solution: an inexpensive, triple-layer bag The Purdue Improved Cowpea Storage (PICS) bag is made from two inner high-density polyethylene plastic bags and an outer nylon sack. Sold for about \$2 each, the rugged bags can be triple-tied, providing an airtight seal for long-term, pest-free storage.
-
- 4** New varieties of maize, however, are giving her something once unimaginable: insurance against hunger. The maize varieties can withstand drought, allowing them to thrive—even when there is no rain. these drought-tolerant maize varieties are giving African farmers powerful tools to adapt to the changing climate. Getting these improved maize varieties into the hands of African farmers like Numbi is the product of more than two decades of research
-
- 5** Increasing ownership of cross-bred cows Through cooperative “hubs,” farmers receive training on how to take care of their livestock, and services including artificial insemination and veterinary health care. Financial services through the co-op give them much-needed access to money that they can invest in their
-

farms. Cooperative-hosted chilling plants collect milk from farmers in the area, and it is sold in bulk to the growing formal market.

This reliability of selling and receiving payment is as powerful as the cooperatives

-
- 6 These farming families don't have quality tools, good seeds, reliable markets, or money to get the most from their farms.

If the farmers produced quality maize and beans, WFP would buy it for a premium price and help the farmers find other buyers.

-
- 7 the project also gave her invaluable farming advice, including information about crop rotation, how to obtain improved seed and manage her crop, and marketing techniques.

Working in 10 countries, the project has brought improved varieties of six major grain legumes to smallholder farmers, and much-needed farmer education programs.

The third archetype is farmer-as-businessman, which presents the featured, successful farmers as those who have experienced a cognitive, personality shift to a modern business mentality. Therefore, in order for a farmer to increase productivity not only is a modern technical intervention needed but also a cognitive shift away from farming as a way of life to farming as a business endeavor is needed: "Now, people are thinking of farming as an investment, and a business" and "For the first time in her life she doesn't view her small farm as a barrier to a better life. Far from it. It's her ticket to a more prosperous future..." Farming is wealth," she says. Farmers in this category are the opposite of those in Farmer-as-Stagnate: they are instead confident, willing to try new things and take on challenges, hardworking, hopeful, and ambitious. Several of the Profiles highlight farmers who have won local competitions to be "model farmers," highlighting their exceptionalism amongst the backdrop of the stagnate farmers that make up their communities.

The Profiles go further, positing that if farmers could overcome their reluctance to these interventions and adopt new agricultural technologies, they will take on new identities and values: "More than money, however, P4P [Purchase for Progress] has brought something to this community that money cannot buy: an identity. 'People here used to grow maize in despair. Now we see the value in what we're doing.'" The Profiles carry this into the future by addressing the generationality of farming, hoping their children will continue it. Through these processes, the farmers take on the characteristics of businesspeople: interested in competition, accountability, and expanding one's business. These statements construct the idea that if farmers overcome their hesitations, adopt modern technologies in farming, they can be modern businesspeople following in the footsteps of Western countries.

Table 7. Farmer as modern businesspeople

-
- 1 after listening to the program, she decided to give it a try. Week after week, she tuned into the show to hear farmers and government agricultural extension agents offer advice on where to buy the seed, how to prepare the soil, when to plant, and how to tend the rice fields.
"There is now happiness in my house. I never had enough money."
-

2 Acheampong's family has a thriving cocoa business, allowing him to expand and grow more food.

"From the beginning, I've thought of farming as a business"

"All the farmers should introduce these new seeds," says one farmer, inspecting the new varieties. "It will improve our lives."

3 "Because of the quality of the cowpeas, you can add 20 percent to the price. We are making more money."

"When the demand is high, that's when I'll sell them," Balarabe says. "I am confident that even if I wait until next year to sell them, the cowpeas will be fine."

4 "We have been working hard, and the harder we work, it gives us more hope that in the future maybe we can be better off."

The tall, healthy stalks of maize rising from Numbi's fields are one of its best advertisements. Whenever other farmers stop to admire her maize, Numbi says, "I advise them to adopt this variety if they really want to change their lives."

5 Paul Kimeni Muchai's quiet character belies his ambition.

Dairy farming is a way of living with so much promise, Paul explains, that he hopes his son follows in his footsteps.

Unsatisfied, and looking for a better life, he moved home to become a farmer like his father. When he learned about the EADD, and the benefits of joining the Ol Kalou Dairies Cooperative, he signed up. And it has paid off.

"When these groups get together, they can inspire each other to be accountable," says Ambrose, "and there's even a sense of competition among the farmers to be "the best."

"Now, people are thinking of farming as an investment, and a business," says Ambrose.

6 Odetta's local farming cooperative accepted the challenge, and thanks to WFP training, they were able to sell their surplus maize and beans to the WFP and other buyers.

What's more, she's provided part-time employment to eight of her neighbors who help with planting and harvesting.

so they can become competitive players in the marketplace.

"People here used to grow maize in despair. Now we see the value in what we're doing." she doesn't view her small farm as a barrier to a better life. Far from it. It's her ticket to a more prosperous future.

7 Pleased with the results from one of the high-yielding, drought-tolerant, and pest-resistant varieties she tested,

"I started sowing the improved chickpea variety three years ago, and it was the best decision I made."

when all stakeholders work together to meet a healthy market demand.

"The high yields and market value of chickpea last season meant I could buy a second pair of oxen. I lend these to neighboring farmers,"

The historicist agenda then becomes subtly layered: it is not solely an intervention in which the West gives/provides assistance, but Africans themselves must partner with the West and embrace the intervention in order to benefit from the tools, technology, and knowledge. In the Profiles, featured farmers are positioned as adopters in a context of rejecters. Taken in total, the farmers are

presented as having to overcome suspicions, ignorance, risk-averse behaviors in order to benefit from the intervention. Taken together, these categorizations present African farmers in need of modernization in cultural, material, and cognitive—all elements which co-constitute the need for intervention by Western institutions.

Discussion

I demonstrated how these success stories offer a meaningful source of data for critical discourse analysis and understanding how power and knowledge operate in mundane organizational practices. First, I show how headlines, quotes, and numbers are operationalized to build a positive “at a glance” understanding of agricultural development projects which presents the authoring organization as legitimate and authoritative. Secondly, I showed how these stories reinforce a historicist logic through their presentations of farmers. The underlying logic of the stories in the profiles typify smallholder farmers into subjects acting in ways that not only legitimate the benefactor, but reinforce a historicist understanding of the relationship between the global North and South, with the global North as “ahead” of the rest and capitalism and its principles progressively bringing new places and people into the global fold of modernity. The presentation of farmers “in need of modernizing” reinforces the relational role of Westerners and Western technology as the moral and civilizing benefactor. Without the farmer in need of assistance, what *is* the West? What is a “developed” country? When discourses become naturalized, we stop perceiving them as contested, but rather imagine their substantive content as common, normal, and acceptable. Once naturalized, ideologies as expressed through discourse, become taken-for-granted and contradictions to the discourse are considered illegitimate and often marginalized.

Not only do these profiles build discursive constructions of smallholder farmers, but they serve organizational legitimacy and reinforce larger development paradigms as well. Given that “in organizational contexts, discourse functions as both the cause and solution for many of the systemic problems humans face” (Groscurth, 2011: 296), these Profiles highlight the circular nature of the Foundation’s evaluation and documentation processes. For example, in the Purchase for Progress profile the reader is told “these farming families don’t have quality tools, good seeds, reliable markets, or money to get the most from their farms. So they work hard, but they get no traction, and they usually stay hungry and poor.” With this linguistic maneuver, the solution is already defined as tools, seeds, markets, and microfinance, which parallels the Gates Foundation’s strategy in agricultural development. Therefore, the Gates Foundation is able to gain authority by determining the problem, its related solution, and then evaluating its own projects—all self-referential. In presenting Western technology as the solution, this reinforces the historicist mentality that the West is ahead and must assist the incorporation of those *not yet* in the full fold of capitalism. These shifts are made possible by the void of agroecological approaches in the Profiles, resulting in a singular path forward. Relatedly, these Profiles link upwards to larger trends in the agricultural development space, reinforcing macro policy through micro justifications. For example, the Drought-Tolerant Maize Profile endorses a techno-fix for climate change, the Ghana profile supports the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Program (CAADP), and the Farm Radio Program Profile’s unstated purpose is to drive farmer demand for NERICA rice.

Discourse reproduces itself while legitimating higher level policy and epistemes. These epistemes narrowly define the solution to agricultural development in the twenty-first century.

References

- Baxi, Upendra. (2007). "The Uncanny Idea of Development." Pp. 76-123 in *Human Rights in a Posthuman World: Critical Essays*. "The Uncanny Idea of Development." New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Bhabha, Gurminder. (2010). *Sociology After Postcolonialism: Provincialized Cosmopolitanisms and Connected Sociologies*. Decolonizing European Sociology. Burlington: Ashgate.
- Boatca, Manuela and Sergio Costa. (2010). *Postcolonial Sociology: A Research Agenda*. Decolonizing European Sociology. Burlington: Ashgate.
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh. (2000). *Provincializing Europe*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Chant, Sylvia. (2016). "Galvanizing Girls for Development? Critiquing the Shift from 'Smart' to 'Smarter Economics.'" *Progress in Development Studies* 16 (4): 314–28.
- Chant, Sylvia, and Caroline Sweetman. (2012). "Fixing Women or Fixing the World? 'Smart Economics', Efficiency Approaches, and Gender Equality in Development." *Gender & Development* 20 (3): 517–29.
- Connell, Raewyn. (2007). *Southern Theory*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- De Sousa Santos, Boaventura, Nunes, and Maria Meneses. (2007). "Opening up the Canon of Knowledge and Recognition of Difference" in *Another Knowledge is Possible*. New York: Verso.
- Dixon, Deborah P., and Holly M. Hapke. 2003. "Cultivating Discourse: The Social Construction of Agricultural Legislation." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 93 (1): 142–64.
- Douzinas, Costas. (2007). *Human Rights and Empire: The Political Philosophy of Cosmopolitanism*. New York, New York: Routledge-Cavendish.
- Fairclough, Isabela, and Norman Fairclough. (2012). *Political Discourse Analysis: A Method for Advanced Students*. Routledge.
- Fejerskov, Adam Moe. 2017. "The New Technopolitics of Development and the Global South as a Laboratory of Technological Experimentation." *Science, Technology, & Human Values*, May.
- Graham, Linda J. (Aug. 2011). "The Product of Text and "Other" Statements: Discourse Analysis and the Critical Use of Foucault." *Educational Philosophy & Theory*, 43(6), 663–74.
- Groscurth, Christopher. (2011). Paradoxes of Privilege and Participation: The Case of the American Red Cross. *Communication Quarterly* 59(3): 296-314.
- Janker, Judith, Stefan Mann, and Stephan Rist. 2018. "What Is Sustainable Agriculture? Critical Analysis of the International Political Discourse." *Sustainability* 10 (12): 4707.
- Li, Tania M. (2008). "Exit from Agriculture: A Step Forward Or a Step Backward for the Rural Poor?" *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 36(3):629-636.
- McCormick, Alexandra. (2012). Whose Education Policies in Aid-Receiving Countries? A Critical Discourse Analysis of Quality and Normative Transfer through Cambodia and Laos. *Comparative Education Review* 56(1):18-47.
- Mignolo, Walter D. 2007. "Introduction." *Cultural Studies* 21 (2–3): 155–67.
- Mohanty, Chandra. (2003). "'Under Western Eyes' Revisited: Feminist Solidarity through Anticapitalist Struggles." *Signs* 28(2): 499-535.
- Mutua, Makau. (2008). "Human Rights in Africa: The Limited Promise of Liberalism." *African Studies Review* 51(1):17-39
- Ney, Steven. (2012). Making Sense of the Global Health Crisis: Policy Narratives, Conflict, and Global Health Governance. *Journal of Health Politics, Policy, and Law* 37(2): 253-295.
- Odame, Hannington and Elijah Muange. (2011). Can Agro-dealers Deliver the Green Revolution in Kenya? *IDS Bulletin* 42(4):78-89.
- Parker, Ian. (1992). "Discovering discourses, tackling texts" in *Discourse Dynamics: Critical Analysis for Social and Individual Psychology*. London: Routledge, pp. 252-261.
- Quijano, Aníbal. 2000. "Coloniality of Power and Eurocentrism in Latin America." *International Sociology* 15 (2): 215–32.
- Roberts, Adrienne, and Susanne Soederberg. (2012). "Gender Equality as Smart Economics ? A Critique of the 2012 World Development Report." *Third World Quarterly* 33 (5): 949–68.

- Sachs, Wolfgang. 1992. *The Development Dictionary*. 2nd ed. London & New York: Zed Books.
- Said, Edward. (1979). *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Schröter, Melani, and Charlotte Taylor. (2018). "Introduction." *Exploring Silence and Absence in Discourse: Empirical Approaches*, edited by Melani Schröter and Charlotte Taylor, Springer International Publishing, 2018, pp. 1–21.
- Schurman, Rachel. 2018. "Micro(soft) Managing a 'Green Revolution' for Africa: The New Donor Culture and International Agricultural Development." *World Development* 112 (December): 180–92.
- Scoones, Ian and John Thompson. (2011). "The Politics of Seed in Africa's Green Revolution: Alternative Narratives and Competing Pathways." *IDS Bulletin* 42(4):1-23.
- Scoones, Ian. (2011). Can Agricultural Biotechnology be Pro-Poor? A skeptical look at the emerging "consensus." *IDS Bulletin* 33(4):114-119.
- Stoler, Ann. (2002a). *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Stoler, Ann Laura. (2002b). "Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance: On the Content in the Form." Carolyn Hamilton et al, eds., *Refiguring the Archive*. David Philip, pp. 83-100.
- Thompson, John and Ian Scoones. (2009). Addressing the dynamics of agri-food systems: an emerging agenda for social science research. *Environmental Science & Policy*, 12, 386-397.
- Van Dijk, T.A. (2009). Society and discourse. How social contexts influence text and talk. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Vanhaute, Eric. (2011). "From Famine to Food Crisis: What History can Teach Us about Local and Global Subsistence Crises." *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 38(1):47-65.
- Vavrus, Fran and Seghers. (2010). Critical Discourse Analysis in Comparative Education: A Discursive Study of "Partnership" in Tanzania's Poverty Reduction Policies. *Comparative Education Review* 54(1): 77-103.
- Venkataraman, Nina. (2018). "What's Not in a Frame? Analysis of Media Representations of the Environmental Refugee." *Exploring Silence and Absence in Discourse: Empirical Approaches*, edited by Melani Schröter and Charlotte Taylor, Springer International Publishing, pp. 241–79.
- von Braun, Joachim and Ruth Meinzen-Dick. (2009). "Land grabbing" by foreign investors in developing countries: Risks and opportunities. *International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) Policy Briefs* No. 13.
- Wang, Jiayu. (January 2016). "A New Political and Communication Agenda for Political Discourse Analysis: Critical Reflections on Critical Discourse Analysis and Political Discourse Analysis." *International Journal of Communication*, 10, 2766–84.