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EDUCATION

Ph.D. scheduled July 2015. Department of Government and Politics, University of Maryland, College Park

Dissertation: *Seeds of Contestation: Genetically-Modified Crops and the Politics of Agricultural Modernization in Ghana*

Committee: Virginia Haufler (Chair), Ken Conca, John McCauley, Isabella Alcañiz

Dissertation Abstract: Why, after decades of neglect, has transforming African agriculture become a focal point for international action? What struggles over authority, knowledge, and identity define this ‘new Green Revolution’ in Africa? I address these questions through a blend of discourse analysis and ethnographic fieldwork in Northern Ghana. Ghana’s agricultural future is at a critical juncture: according to coalitions of international and domestic actors, increased population pressure and the negative effects of climate change necessitate modifications in farming practices, such as the adoption of genetically modified (GM) seed. The construction of Northern Ghana as a site of “deficiency” that fails to realize its potential creates an opening for such interventions that promote high agricultural productivity. Investment in African agriculture has been further supported by legislative changes that promote investors’ rights alongside the development of ‘pro-poor’ biotechnology. My research views the debates over GM seed and agricultural modernization as contestations between multiple stakeholders over competing imaginaries of development—what it should look like, who should guide it, and whether success means integration into the global market economy. Both proponents and opponents of GM seed deploy discourses of emergency and salvation to usher in, or to resist, biotechnology’s reach in the developing world. Both sides of the debate, in dramatizing future food scenarios, construct conditions whereby small steps, compromises, or piecemeal approaches appear deficient and inappropriate in the face of such urgency. This suggests that preoccupations with ‘feeding the world’ can have the unintended consequence of favoring ready-made, “off-the-shelf” technical solutions controlled by experts, rather than incremental and inclusive approaches to addressing collective food security challenges.

M.A. International Relations (*Summa Cum Laude*), San Francisco State University, June 2007
Thesis: *Indigenous Responses to Economic Globalization: Mobilizations Against Neoliberalism in the Ecuadorian Amazon*

B.A. Global Studies (*Cum Laude*), University of California, Santa Barbara, August 2002

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Global environmental politics
Food politics
Development and globalization studies
International political economy
Technology, politics, and society
Contentious politics

TEACHING

Instructor, University of South Florida, Department of Government and International Affairs

Courses:

- a) Environmental Politics and Policy, Fall 2014
- b) Africa in World Affairs, Spring 2015
- c) Theories of War and Peace, Spring 2015

Instructor, University of Maryland, College Park, Department of Government and Politics

Courses:

- a) Drones, Smart Phones, and Transgenic Seeds: The Politics of Technology in a Globalizing World, Summer 2014 (online)
- b) Politics for a Warming World: Environment, Development, and Food Security, Summer 2013 (online)

Guest Lecturer, University of Maryland, College Park, Department of Government & Politics

Lectures:

- a) "Seeds of Contestation: Genetically-Modified Crops in Ghana," Global Environmental Politics, Spring 2014
- b) "Perceptions of Risk: Genetically-Modified Crops, Biotechnology Outreach, and African Food Security." Advanced Topics in Environmental Policy Analysis, Fall 2013
- c) "Perceptions of Risk: US-EU Regulatory Divergence on Biosafety Policy." Advanced Topics in Environmental Policy Analysis, Fall 2013
- d) "Sustaining the Seas: Trash and Toxicity." Solving Global Problems, Spring 2012
- e) "The Global Distancing of Waste." Introduction to Environmental Politics, Spring 2011
- f) "The Impact of Uneven Development." Introduction to International Political Relations, Fall 2010
- g) "Food Politics: The Global Meal as a Site of Political Struggle." Seminar in Environmental Policy Analysis, Fall 2010
- h) "The Case Against Texaco: Ecuadoran Indigenous Mobilization." Introduction to Environmental Politics, Spring 2010
- i) "The Case Against Texaco." Advanced Topics in Environmental Policy Analysis, Fall 2009

Guest Lecturer, San Francisco State University, Department of International Relations

Lectures:

- a) "Indigenous Responses to Neoliberal Globalization: Indigenous Opposition to Oil Exploitation in the Amazon." Proseminar in Foreign Policy Analysis, Fall 2006

Teaching Assistant, University of Maryland, College Park, Department of Government &

Politics

Courses:

- a) Advanced Topics in Environmental Policy Analysis (Dr. Alcañiz), Fall 2013
- b) Solving Global Problems (Dr. Haufler), Spring 2012
- c) Globalization (Dr. Haufler), Fall 2011
- d) Introduction to Environmental Politics (Beevers), Spring 2011
- e) Introduction to International Relations, (Dr. Haufler), Fall 2010

Teaching Assistant, San Francisco State University, Department of International Relations

Courses:

- a) International Political Economy (Dr. Blanchard), Spring 2006
- b) U.S. Foreign Policy, (Dr. Hanami), Spring 2005

WORKS IN PROGRESS

“Technological Savior or Terminator Gene?: Biotechnology, Food Security, and the Manufacturing of Hype” to be submitted for publication in *Global Environmental Politics*.

“Knowledge and the Power of Persuasion: Biotechnology Outreach in the Developing World” to be submitted for publication in *Global Governance*.

“Transnational Environmental Activism on Water and Plants: Norm De-institutionalization and Norm Contestation.” (Co-authored with Ken Conca).

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

2015 Postdoctoral Fellowship, Provost’s Initiative “Global Change in a Dynamic World,” University of South Florida

2015 Environmental Studies Section Graduate Student Paper Award Nominee, International Studies Association

2014 Program for Society and the Environment Seed Grant, University of Maryland, College Park

2014 International Relations Field Research Grant, University of Maryland, Department of Government and Politics

2013-14 Ann G. Wylie Dissertation Fellowship, University of Maryland, College Park

2013 Goldhaber Grant, University of Maryland, College Park

2012-13 Fulbright Fellowship in Ghana

2012 International Relations Field Research Grant, University of Maryland, Department of Government and Politics

2011 Departmental Grant to attend the Institute for Qualitative and Multi-Method Research at Syracuse University

2007 Distinguished Achievement Award for Academic Excellence, College of Behavioral and Social Sciences, San Francisco State University

CONFERENCE PAPERS AND PRESENTATIONS

Paper: *'Growing Africa': GM Crops, 'Serious Farmers,' and the Politics of Agricultural Modernization in Ghana*, International Studies Association, New Orleans, LA, April 19, 2015

Roundtable participant: *From the Kitchen Table to the Negotiating Table: Global International Relations through the Lens of Food*, International Studies Association, New Orleans, LA, April 19, 2015

Paper: *The Making of a 'Serious Farmer': From Farming as a Way of Life to Farming as a Business*, Western Political Science Association, Seattle, WA, April 19, 2014

Paper: *Technological Savior or Terminator Gene?: Biotechnology, Food Security, and the Global Production of Hype*, International Studies Association Meeting, Toronto, Canada, March 28, 2014

Paper: *The Making of a 'Serious Farmer': From Farming as a Way of Life to Farming as a Business*, Johns Hopkins University African Seminar, December 6, 2013

Paper: *Technological Savior or Terminator Gene?: Biotechnology, Food Security, and the Global Production of Hype*, Northeast International Studies Association Meeting, Providence, RI, November 9, 2013

Paper: *The Making of an Entrepreneur: From Farming as a Way of Life to Farming as a Business*, Northeast International Studies Association Meeting, Providence, RI, November 8, 2013

Paper: *Seeds of Contestation: The New Green Revolution in Africa*, International Studies Association Annual Convention, San Francisco, CA, April 5, 2013

Presentation: *Seeds of Contestation: The New Green Revolution in Ghana* on behalf of the U.S. Embassy, University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana, March 27, 2013

Paper: *The Discursive Politics of GMOs: A Technological Savior or Terminator Seed?* International Studies Association Annual Convention, San Diego, CA, April 3, 2012

Paper: *The Discursive Politics of GMOs: A Technological Savior or Terminator Seed?* Western Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Portland, OR, March 22, 2012

Paper: *Seeds of Contestation: The Discursive Politics of Biotechnology in Ghana*, Johns Hopkins Graduate Student Colloquium, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD, October 13, 2011

Paper: *Who is the "Human" in International Human Rights Law?* Western Political Science Association Annual Meeting, San Antonio, TX, April 23, 2011

Co-authored paper with Dr. Ken Conca, *Transnational Environmental Activism on Water and Plants: Norm De-institutionalization and Norm Contestation*, Department of Government and Politics International Relations workshop, University of Maryland, College Park, April 26, 2010

Co-authored paper with Dr. Ken Conca, *Transnational Environmental Activism on Water and Plants: Norm De-institutionalization and Norm Contestation*, Western Political Science Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco, CA, April 2, 2010

FIELDWORK

Fulbright-funded ethnographic research and interviews in Northern Region and Upper East Region, Ghana, January 2012 and July 2012 – March 2013

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant, Insurgency Research Group, University of Maryland, College Park, under direction of Dr. Paul Huth, Fall 2008-Spring 2010
-Research, coding and development of search protocol for a database cataloguing guerrilla warfare and insurgency from the post-WWII period to present.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Assisting in the curriculum development for the new Global Communities living-learning program, under the direction of Virginia Haufler, University of Maryland, College Park, June 2011-May 2012
-Planning course topics, guest lectures, field trips, and assignments for year-long program for selected entering freshmen emphasizing cross-cultural and applied learning.

Assistant to the Chair John Townshend, Department of Geography, University of Maryland, October 2007-August 2008
-Responsible for departmental research communications including the department's newsletter, *Geograffiti*.

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Institute for Qualitative and Multi-Method Research, Syracuse University, June 13-24, 2011

Member, International Studies Association
Environmental Studies Section

Member, Western Political Science Association

Representative for the University of Maryland, College Park Geography Department at the 2008 Association of American Geographers

ACADEMIC SERVICE

Panel organizer, "The Promise or Peril of the New Green Revolution in Africa,"

International Studies Association, February 19, 2015

Panel organizer, “Why food? Why politics? Why now?,” Western Political Science Association, March 22, 2012

Mentor for students of the Global Communities program, University of Maryland, August 2011-2013

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Intermediate Spanish; working knowledge of Dagbani, Gurene, Bulgarian

REFERENCES

Dr. Ken Conca, (202) 885-6391
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School of International Service,
American University

Dr. Virginia Haufler (301) 405-4122
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Dept. of Government and Politics,
University of Maryland, College Park

Dr. Margaret Keck (410) 516-7536
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Dept. of Political Science,
The Johns Hopkins University

Dr. Isabella Alcañiz (301) 405-0931
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