



In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
Julia C. Bausch

Will defend her dissertation

Farming for What, for Whom?
Agriculture and Sustainability Governance in Mexico City

Abstract

City governments are increasingly incorporating urban and peri-urban agriculture into their policies and programs, a trend seen as advancing sustainability, development, and food security. Urban governance can provide new opportunities for farmers, but it also creates structures to control their activities, lands, and purposes.

This study focused on Mexico City, which is celebrated for its agricultural traditions and policies. The study examined: 1) the functions of urban and peri-urban agriculture that the Government of Mexico City (GMC) manages and prioritizes; 2) how the GMC's policies have framed farmers, and how that framing affects farmers' identity and purpose; and 3) how the inclusion of agrarian activities and lands in the city's climate-change adaptation plan has created opportunities and obstacles for farmers. Data was collected through participant observation of agricultural and conservation events, informal and semi-structured interviews with government and agrarian actors, and analysis of government documents and budgets.

Analysis of policy documents revealed that the GMC manages agriculture as an instrument for achieving urban objectives largely unrelated to food: to conserve the city's watershed and provide environmental services. Current policies negatively frame *peri-urban* agriculture as unproductive and a source of environmental contamination, but associate *urban* agriculture with positive outcomes for development and sustainability. Peri-urban farmers have resisted this framing, asserting that the GMC inadequately supports farmers' watershed conservation efforts, and lacks understanding of and concern for farmers' needs and interests. The city's climate plan implicitly considers farmers to be private providers of public adaptation benefits, but the plan's programs do not sufficiently address the socioeconomic changes responsible for agriculture's decline, and therefore may undermine the government's climate adaptation objectives.

The findings illuminate the challenges for urban governance of agriculture. Farms do not become instruments for urban sustainability, development, and food security simply because the government creates policies for them. Urban governments will be more likely to achieve their goals for agriculture by being transparent about their objectives, honestly evaluating how well those objectives fit with farmers' needs and interests, cultivating genuine partnerships with farmers, and appropriately compensating farmers for the public benefits they provide.

Friday, March 31st, 2017
2:30 pm
Wrigley Hall, Room 481

Faculty, students, and the general public are invited.

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Hallie Eakin, Chair
Dr. Amy M. Lerner, National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), Member
Dr. David Manuel-Navarrete, Member
Dr. Charles L. Redman, Member