

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

## **Doctor of Philosophy**

**Sharon Amani**

Will defend her prospectus

### **Harnessing Food Procurement from Smallholder Farmers in Support of Resilient Social-Ecological Systems**

#### **Abstract**

The distribution of food aid to vulnerable populations has come under fierce criticism for inefficiencies of time and cost, as well as for prioritizing donor preferences over recipient food security. In response, new modalities of food assistance, including local and regional procurement (LRP) of food commodities, are being adopted and mainstreamed by humanitarian agencies and national governments in developing countries. This research focuses on the United Nation's World Food Programme's Purchase for Progress (P4P) program, which ran from 2008 to 2013 across 20 countries in Africa and Latin America. The popular LRP pilot project contracted 367,620 metric tons of food staples from smallholder farmers over the five-year period, putting \$99 million directly into the hands of participating suppliers.

To what extent did the project impact smallholder production practices, marketing decisions, dietary diversity, livelihood activities, and net income? Which eligible farmers opted to participate in the program? The first study utilizes quantitative analysis of secondary data emerging from P4P to investigate household-level effects of the program.

How does a sustainability perspective shift our understanding of the goals, mechanisms, and strategies of food assistance? By exploring insights derived from applying a social-ecological model and resilience theory to food assistance interventions, the second study enriches the theory underlying food aid and LRP. The third study translates these concepts into applied tools for use in collecting qualitative and quantitative data from smallholder farmers, to be tested in case study countries.

My research will offer theoretical and empirical insights into the social, economic, and ecological impacts of LRP from smallholder farmers. Anticipated outputs include the development and trial of a community-based process to identify key indicators of social-ecological resilience, the identification of social and environmental indicators to incorporate into food security assessments and monitoring tools, as well as the design of an enhanced framework for selecting appropriate food interventions.

Wednesday, August 27, 2014

10:00 a.m.

Wrigley Hall, Room 323

Faculty, students, and the general public are invited.

Supervisory Committee:  
Dr. Rimjhim Aggarwal, Chair  
Dr. Beth Polidoro, Member  
Dr. Erin Lentz, Member