# Irene Farah

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# **ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS**

- Assistant Professor, Department of **Urban and Regional Planning**, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC)
- Illinois Distinguished Postdoctoral Research Associate, Department of **Urban and Regional Planning**, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC)

# **ADDITIONAL RESEARCH AFFILIATIONS**

Visiting Research Associate, **Center for Demographic, Urban, and Environmental Studies**, Colegio de México (COLMEX)

#### **RESEARCH AREAS**

My research focuses on **urban governance**, **informality**, and **spatial dynamics**.

**Urban Governance:** With a particular focus on political intermediation and coordination between multiple scales of government, I examine how bureaucracies, nonprofits, and other actors implement laws, and shape access to public goods and services.

**Spatial Dynamics:** Using computational and spatial techniques, I also examine informality and the ways people inhabit urban space, retail dynamics and its impact in the food system.

## **EDUCATION**

Ph.D. City & Regional Planning, University of California, Berkeley, USA, 2019-2024

Dissertation: The Scramble for the City: Street Vending, Politics, and the Governance of Public Space in Mexico City and San Francisco

Committee: Daniel Rodríguez (co-chair), Alison Post (co-chair), and Carolina Reid

M.A. Social Sciences, University of Chicago, Illinois, USA, 2016-2017

Thesis: A Geospatial Analysis of Mexico's Distal Effects on Food Insecurity Advisor: Luc Anselin

B.A. **Political Science**, Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México (ITAM), Mexico City, Mexico, 2009-2013

Thesis: Social Mobility of Women in Technical Schools in Mexico

Advisor: Vidal Romero

#### RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

2019-2020 Graduate Researcher, Institute of Urban and Regional Development, UC Berkeley

- 2016-2019 Research Associate, Center for Spatial Data Science, University of Chicago
- 2014-2015 Research Advisor, National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy (CONEVAL), Mexico City

#### **PUBLICATIONS**

# **Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles**

- Credit, K., **Farah, I.**, Talen, E., Anselin, L., Ghomrawi, H., "The Walkable Accessibility Score (WAS): A spatially granular open-source measure of walkability for the continental US from 1997 to 2019." In: *Environment and Planning B: Urban Analytics and City Science* (in press 2025), pp. 1–18. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/23998083251377116
- Farah, I., Devlin, R. T., Hartmann, C., Harvey, J., Hegel, C., "The Governance of Informal Street Work in San Francisco and New York City." In: *Nature Cities* (2025), pp. 1–6. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1038/s44284-025-00321-y
- Domínguez-Barreto, A. P., **Farah, I.**, López-Olmedo, N., Pérez-Ferrer, C., Ramírez, Y., Langellier, B. A., Colchero, M., Rivera, J. A., Barrientos-Gutierrez, T., Stern, D., "Changes in the healthfulness of food and beverage purchases from 2006 to 2022 by outlet type in Mexico." In: *BMC Medicine* (2025), pp. 1–23. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1186/s12916-025-04036-8
- Ju, Y., Dronova, I., Rodríguez, D., Bakhtsiyarava, M., **Farah, I.,** "Recent Greening May Curb Urban Warming in Latin American Cities of Better Economic Conditions." In: *Landscape and Urban Planning* 240 (2023), pp. 1–11. DOI: 10.1016/j.landurbplan.2023.104896
- Domínguez-Barreto, A. P., **Farah, I.**, López-Olmedo, N., Pérez-Ferrer, C., Ramírez, Y., Barrientos-Gutierrez, T., Stern, D., "Trends in Food and Beverage Purchases in Informal and Formal Outlets in Mexico: ENIGH 1994-2020." In: *Frontiers in Public Health* 11 (2023), pp. 1–12. DOI: 10.3389/fpubh.2023.1151916
- Farah, I., Stern, D., Ramírez, Y., López-Olmedo, N., Pérez-Ferrer, C., Langellier, B., Colchero, M. A., Barrientos-Gutierrez, T., "Food and beverage purchases at formal and informal outlets in Mexico." In: *Public Health Nutrition* 26 (5 2022), pp. 1034–1043. DOI: 10.1017/S1368980022002324

### **Under Review**

- Farah, I. "The Legitimacy Trap: Street Vending Heterogeneity and Selective Enforcement in San Francisco." In: *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* (in press), pp. 1–23
- Farah, I., Kelling, C., Leng, X., Zhao, Y., "Building a Longitudinal Geospatial Dataset of Micro-businesses in Mexico City." In: *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* Environment and Planning B: Urban Analytics and City Science (in press), pp. 1–18
- Farah, I. "Mercado Cananea: resistencia, autogestión y conflicto en la Ciudad de México." In: Mercados públicos, tianguis y comercio informal en América Latina. Ed. by Ma. Susana Rosales and Verónica Crossa. Mexico City, Mexico: CEDUA, Colegio de México. Chap. (under review)
- Farah, I. "La coexistencia de la planeación urbana con el comercio popular en la Ciudad de México." In: *La nueva gobernanza urbana*. Ed. by Susy Keoseyan. Mexico City, Mexico: Bonilla Artiga. Chap. (under review)

#### **Book Chapters**

Hayden, T. B., **Farah, I.,** "Urban Governance and the Regulation of Street Food Vending In Latin America." In: *Urban Food Systems in Latin America: Territories, Mobilities and* 

- Governance. Ed. by Tiana Bakić Hayden and Joaquín Pérez Martín. London: Routledge, 2025. Chap. 1, pp. 1–17
- Anselin, L., **Farah, I.**, "The Life and Death of Retail: Insights from Firm Demography." In: *Streetlife: The Future of Urban Retail*. Ed. by Emily Talen and Conrad Kickert. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2023. Chap. 1, pp. 27–46
- Credit, K., **Farah, I.**, Anselin, L., "The Ups and Downs of Retail, 2000 2015." In: *Streetlife: The Future of Urban Retail*. Ed. by Emily Talen and Conrad Kickert. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2023. Chap. 2, pp. 47–74

# **Book Reviews and Miscellanea**

- Farah, I. Rev. of Forbearance as Redistribution: The Politics of Informal Welfare in Latin America, by Alisha Holland. In: Urban Studies 59.2 (2021), pp. 469–471. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/00420980211058331
- Farah, I., Koschinsky, J., Noel, L., Computing Travel Times and Spatial Access Metrics at Scale. Documentation for Python package spatial\_access 1.0.0. Center for Spatial Data Science at University Chicago. July 2019
- Anselin, L., **Farah, I.**, *Methodological Issues in the Analysis of Local Patterns in the Retail Sector.*Working Paper. Chicago: Center for Spatial Data Science, 2018

#### **TEACHING**

# University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

2025 Cities: Planning & Urban Life

#### University of California, Berkeley

Planning Methods Gateway: Part I (graduate), Graduate Student Instructor.

Maps as Social Justice Interventions, Instructor and created course with Karen Chapple.

2021, 2022 R Geospatial and US Census, Workshops. D-Lab.

2020, 2022 Urban Informatics and Visualization (graduate), Graduate Student Instructor.

Introduction to City Planning, Graduate Student Instructor.

Introduction to Urban Data Analytics, Graduate Student Instructor.

# Colegio de México

2023, 2022 Introduction to Spatial Econometrics (graduate, in Spanish).

#### SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

(\*) = Invited

- Farah, I. "Nonprofits as Political Intermediaries: Street-Level Organizations in the Mission District of San Francisco." In: *Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. 2025
- Farah, I. "Cities on the Edge: Urbanization, Sustainability, and the Future of Development in Mexico." In: *Today in International Politics: Speaker Series (TIPPS)*. Ohio State University. 2025
- Farah, I. "Street Vending Inspectors: Public Administration and the Politics of Public Space in Mexico City." In: *Urban Politics in the Global South*. Luskin Center for Innovation at UCLA, the APSA Urban, and Local Politics section. 2024

- Farah, I. "Multilevel Governance: The Regulation of Street Vendors in Mexico City." In: *Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning*. Seattle, Washington. 2024
- Farah, I. "The Scramble for the City: Beyond Clientelism: Street Vendor Bodies as a Form of Territorial and Political Power in Mexico City." In: *Latin American Studies Association*. Bogotá, Colombia. 2024
- Farah, I. "Street Vending Governance: Comparative Insights from Mexico City and San Francisco." In: *Urban Affairs Association*. New York City, New York. 2024
- Farah, I. "The Scramble for the City: Street Vending and the Politics of Public Space in Mexico City." In: *Urban and Regional Planning Program's lunchtime seminar*. University of Michigan. 2023
- Farah, I. "Lightning talk: Street Vending Intermediation and Political Transformations in Mexico City: Exploring Urban Governance Dynamics." In: *Urban Politics in the Global South Workshop*. Luskin Center for Innovation at UCLA, the APSA Urban, and Local Politics section. 2023
- Farah, I. "Using Location-based Data to Understand the Governance Implications of Street Vendors' Location in Mexico City." In: *Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning*. Chicago, Illinois. 2023
- Farah, I. "Understanding the Travel Behavior of Street Vendors Using Location-Based Data and its Impact on the Regulation of Public Space in Mexico City." In: *Movilidad urbana, sustentabilidad y justicia social en América Latina: saberes, prácticas y políticas*. Mexico City, Mexico. 2023
- Farah, I. "Governing the Governable: The Political Economy of Street Vending in San Francisco." In: *Urban Affairs Association*. Nashville, Tennessee. 2023
- Farah, I. "The Regulation of Informal Work in Mexico City and San Francisco: Analyzing Recent Shifts in Governance Structures." In: *Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning*. Toronto, Canada. 2023
- Farah, I. "Beyond Informal Politics: The Regulation of Work in Public Space." In: *American Political Science Association*. Montreal, Canada. 2022
- Farah, I. "Food & Beverage Purchases by Store Type in Mexican Cities." In: *Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning*. Online. 2020
- Farah, I. "Local Patterns of Co-Location in the Retail Sector: A Descriptive Study of Spatial Firm Demography." In: *American Association of Geographers*. Washington, D.C.. 2019
- Farah, I. "Mexico's Distal Effects on Food Insecurity." In: Western Regional Science Association.
  Napa, California. 2019
- Farah, I. "The Death and Life of Mom and Pop: A Preliminary Analysis of Small Scale Retail in Chicago." In: *North American Regional Science Association*. San Antonio, Texas. 2018
- Farah, I. "Intergenerational Educational and Occupational Mobility: A Descriptive Study of the Impoverished in Mexico." In: *Human Development and Capabilities Association*. Washington, D.C.. 2015

#### **AWARDS**

#### **Awards and Honors**

- 2024 Political Economy Network Fellow, Network for a New Political Economy, UC Berkeley
- 2023 Graduate Student Fellow, Institute for the Study of Societal Issues, UC Berkeley
- 2023 Student Travel Scholarship, ACSP
- 2022 Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor Award, UC Berkeley
- 2022 Michael B. Teitz Fellowship, UC Berkeley
- 2021 Graduate Student Fellow, Berkeley Food Institute, UC Berkeley
- 2021 Graduate Student Fellow, D-Lab, UC Berkeley

Tinker Field Research Grant, CLAS, UC Berkeley

Summer Research Grant, Global Metropolitan Studies, UC Berkeley

Outstanding Reviewer, Housing Policy Debate

Fellowship, University of Chicago

Award *La Flecha Al Aire* for BA thesis on education, ITAM

Scholarship on Social Mobility Research, Centro de Estudios Espinosa Yglesias (CEEY), Mexico

# **ACADEMIC SERVICE**

## **Sessions Organized**

- Co-organizer: The Role of Political Intermediaries in Urban Governance in the United States. Five sessions. **Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning**, Minneapolis, Minnesota (with Ryan Devlin).
- Co-organizer: Housing and Land Regulations in the Political Economy of Urban Latin America. Five sessions. **Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning**, Seattle, Washington (with Flávia Leite).
- Co-organizer: Urban Governance of Informal Work: Perspectives Across the North-South Divide. Five sessions. **Urban Affairs Association**, New York City, New York (with Ryan Devlin).
- Organizer: Computational Approaches to Urban Planning and Management: Innovations and Challenges. Four sessions. **Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning**, Chicago, Illinois.
- Co-organizer: Informal Work and Public Space during COVID-19. Five sessions. **Urban Affairs Association**, Nashville, Tennessee (with Ryan Devlin)

# **Manuscript Reviewer**

Berkeley Planning Journal (co-editor 2021-2022); Environment and Planning B: Urban Analytics and City Science; Regional Studies, Regional Science; Food Security; Journal of Urbanism: International Research on Placemaking and Urban Sustainability; Journal of Planning Education and Research; Housing Policy Debate; Transportation Review Board; Geographical Analysis

## Memberships

Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP) Urban Affairs Association (UAA) American Political Science Association (APSA) Latin American Studies Association (LASA) American Association of Geographers (AAG)

#### **Volunteer Work**

| 2020-2023 | Women Leaders in STEM (US-Mexico Leaders Network), Mentor |
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| 2018      | CompileHer (UChicago Tech Capstone), Instructor           |
| 2018      | Scopeathon (South Side Civic), Community Outreach         |
| 2005      | Alfabetiza! (ADECO), Instructor and Organizer             |

#### **SKILLS**

Statistical Analysis and Computation: Python, R, STATA, PostgreSQL, Google Cloud Console Spatial Analysis and GIS: GeoDa, QGIS, ArcGIS, PostGIS, Google Earth Engine General Tools: MS Office, LaTeX, Git Languages: Spanish, English, German (A2), French (A1)