

JESSICA A. BREITFELLER, PHD

Education

- 2024 **Doctor of Philosophy, Anthropology**
University of Maryland, College Park, MD
Dissertation: *Beyond Consultation: Rethinking the Indigenous Right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent in Costa Rica*
Advisor: Dr. Janet M. Chernela
- 2013 **Dual Master of Arts, International Affairs; Natural Resources and Sustainable Development**
American University, Washington, DC
United Nations Mandated University for Peace, San José, Costa Rica
Thesis: *The Last of the Kings: The Socio-political Implications of Hydroelectric Development in the Naso Territory, Bocas del Toro, Panama*
Advisor: Dr. Rob Fletcher
- 2009 **Bachelor of Arts, Double Major: Anthropology and Environmental Studies**
University of Vermont, Burlington, VT
Honors Thesis: *Promises and Pitfalls: An Ethnographic Case Study of Community-based Ecotourism in Gales Point Manatee, Belize*

Research Interests

Environmental anthropology; political ecology/ontology; climate governance; forest conservation; indigenous and human rights; anthropology of development; Central America

Awards, Fellowships, and Honors

- 2023 Ann G. Wylie Doctoral Dissertation Completion Fellowship, University of Maryland (\$15,000)
- 2020 - 2022 National Science Foundation, Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant (DDRIG), Cultural Anthropology Program, Award #1948867 (\$21,206)
- 2020 - 2021 College of Behavioral and Social Sciences (BSOS) Dean's Graduate Research Relief Award, University of Maryland (\$9,560)
- 2019 Graduate Summer Research Fellowship, University of Maryland (\$5,000)
- 2018 - 2019 Climate Change Graduate Fellow, American Anthropological Association (Fellowship included travel stipend to attend and conduct research at the COP24 United Nations climate negotiations in Katowice, Poland)
- 2017 National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship, Honorable Mention
- 2016 - 2018 Dean's Fellowship, University of Maryland (\$20,000)

- 2012 School of International Service Graduate Research Award, American University (\$1,000)
- 2008 Undergraduate Research Endeavors Competitive Award (URECA!), University of Vermont (\$1,500)

Publications

Articles and Book Chapters

- 2025 **Breitfeller, Jessica**, Eileen Joseph, and Jan Breitling. "Feast or Famine? Food (In)Security and Livelihood Resilience during COVID-19 in Costa Rica." 2025. In *Cultivating Sustainability: Food Systems Cases, Challenges, and Solutions from Costa Rica*. Edited by Olivia Sylvester and Mary Little. San José, Costa Rica: University for Peace Press.
- 2014 **Breitfeller, Jessica**. 2014. "The Last of the Kings: The Political-Cultural Implications of Hydroelectricity in Naso Territory, Bocas del Torro, Panama." *Journal of International Service* 23(2) 1-19.

Manuscripts In Preparation

- In preparation* **Breitfeller, Jessica**. "Contested Consultations: The Ontological Politics of REDD+ in Southern Costa Rica."
- In preparation* **Breitfeller, Jessica**. "Consultations as Participatory Spaces of Resistance: On (Re)negotiation and Refusal."

Professional Reports

- 2024 Fiske, Shirley J., **Jessica Breitfeller**, Kyla Cools, and Emilia Guevara. 2024. *Rock Creek Park Ethnographic Overview and Assessment*. Washington D.C.: National Capital Region, National Park Service.
- 2016 Wolosin, Michael, **Jessica Breitfeller**, and Brian Schaap. 2016. *The Geography of REDD+ Finance: Deforestation, Emissions, and the Targeting of Forest Conservation Finance*. Washington, DC: Forest Trends.
- 2015 Silva-Chavez, Gus, Brian Schaap, and **Jessica Breitfeller**. 2015. *REDD+ Finance Flows 2009-2014: Trends and Lessons Learned from REDDX Countries*. Washington, DC: Forest Trends.
- 2014 Canby, Kirsten, Gus Silva-Chavez, **Jessica Breitfeller**, et al. 2014. *Tracking REDD+ Finance: 2009-2012 Financial Flows in Seven Countries*. Washington, DC: Forest Trends.
- 2012 Goers-Williams, Lauren, **Jessica Breitfeller**, and Celine Lim. 2013. *The Governance of Forests Initiative (GFI) Guidance Manual: A Guide to Using the GFI Indicator Framework*. Washington, DC: World Resources Institute.

Conference Presentations

- 2022 COVID and (Eco)tourism: Examining Resilience and Adaptation Strategies in Osa and Monteverde, Costa Rica. [Conference rescheduled due to COVID-19]. Co-authored paper for the Political Ecology Network (POLLEN) Biennial Conference, June 28-30, 2022, Durban, South Africa.
- 2021 Consultation as Negotiation: Reimagining Indigenous Payments for Environmental Services (PES) in Costa Rica. Paper presented virtually at Royal Institute for Anthropology conference on Anthropology and Conservation, October 29, 2021.
- 2019 A Platform for Whom? Indigenous Participation and Knowledge Sharing within the UN Climate Negotiations. Paper presented at the 79th Annual Meeting of the Society for Applied Anthropology, March 19-23, 2019, Portland, Oregon.
- 2018 Safe Passage: Conservation and the Role of Culture in the African Vulture Trade. Co-authored paper presented at the Society for Ethnobiology meetings, June 3-7, 2018, Madison, Wisconsin.
- 2017 Climate, Culture, and Consent: Indigenous Consultation Processes in Costa Rica. Paper presented at the 77th Annual Meeting of the Society for Applied Anthropology, March 28-April 1, 2017, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Teaching Experience

Instructor of Record

Winter 2021 Changing Climate, Changing Cultures, University of Maryland

Teaching Assistantships

- 2022 Qualitative Research Methods, United Nations University for Peace
- 2021 - 2022 Environment, Conflicts, and Sustainability, United Nations University for Peace
- 2019 - 2020 Changing Climate, Changing Cultures, University of Maryland
- 2019 Immigration Policy, Immigrant Lives, University of Maryland
- 2018 Conservation and Indigenous Peoples in Latin America, University of Maryland
- 2017 - 2018 Introduction to Socio-Cultural and Linguistic Anthropology, University of Maryland
- 2009 Introduction to International Environmental Studies, University of Vermont

Professional Research Experience

- 2020 Research Assistant, *Rock Creek Park Ethnographic Overview and Assessment*, University of Maryland/National Parks Service (NPS) - National Capital Area. Managed study outreach, recruitment, and interviews; conducted

preliminary participant observation and semi-structured interviews; oversaw the project ethics review and data management.

- 2016 REDD+ Consultant, Sustainable Development Technologies, Washington DC. Carried out a literature review and desk study on national climate forest mitigation strategies in Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Ghana, Liberia, Mexico, and Vietnam.
- 2013 - 2016 Senior Associate - Latin American Forest Trade, Policy, and Finance, Forest Trends Association, Washington DC. Designed and implemented climate finance tracking studies in Mexico, Ecuador, Peru and Colombia in partnership with national ministries of environment; piloted community-level gaps and needs analyses with partners in Mexico and Colombia.
- 2013 Research Assistant, Governance of Forests Initiative, World Resources Institute (WRI), Washington DC. Conducted research on best governance best practices for forest laws, policies, and processes; drafted technical background explanations and methodological guidance for the GFI Framework of Indicators Manual by incorporating lessons learned from country pilot assessments in Brazil, Indonesia, and Cameroon.
- 2012 Graduate Research Fellow, Social Policy and Environmental Management, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), San José, Costa Rica. Devised and implemented a month-long field study in the Naso indigenous territory regarding the impacts of the Bonyic hydroelectric dam; wrote and developed concept proposals on rights-based approaches to conservation, customary governance in protected areas, and climate change adaptation strategies in indigenous territories.

Service and Leadership

- 2021 - 2024 Visiting Researcher and Graduate Student Mentor, Department of Environment and Development, United Nations Mandated University for Peace
- 2018 - 2019 Coordinator, Graduate Resources for the Outside World (GROW), College of Behavioral and Social Sciences, University of Maryland
- 2018 - 2019 Co-chair, Graduate Mental Health and Well-being Committee, College of Behavioral and Social Sciences, University of Maryland
- 2017 - 2019 Department Representative, Dean's Graduate Student Advisory Council, College of Behavioral and Social Sciences, University of Maryland
- 2016 - 2020 Programming Coordinator, Center for Research and Collaboration in the Indigenous Americas (CRACIA), University of Maryland
- 2016 - 2017 Undergraduate Mentor, Department of Anthropology, University of Maryland
- 2015 - 2016 Member, Global Environmental Politics Alumni Council, American University

Professional Membership

American Anthropological Association (AAA)
 Anthropology and Environment Society Section
 Association for Political and Legal Anthropology
Society for Applied Anthropology (SfAA)

Skills

Foreign Language – Advanced reading, writing, and oral proficiency in Spanish; elementary proficiency in French

Software Packages – Proficient in NVivo; R; UCINET