

# ALEX FATTAL

alf31@psu.edu

| 201 Carnegie Bldg., State College, PA 18601

| alexfattal.net

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## POSITIONS

PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY, Department of Film-Video and Media Studies,  
Assistant Professor, affiliated with the Department of Anthropology 2016–present

PONTIFICIA UNIVESIDAD JAVERIANA, Faculty of Social Sciences, Postdoctoral Fellow,  
summer 2016, 2017, 2018

UNIVERSIDAD de los ANDES, Anthropology and Art departments, Postdoctoral Fellow, fall  
2015

HARVARD UNIVERSITY, Mahindra Humanities Center, Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow,  
2014–15

## EDUCATION

HARVARD UNIVERSITY, Cambridge, MA, 9/2006–5/2014

*PhD:* Social Anthropology, May 2014

*Dissertation:* *Guerrilla Marketing: Information War & the Demobilization of FARC Rebels*

*Committee:* Jean Comaroff, Michael Herzfeld, Arthur Kleinman, Kimberly Theidon

*Master of Arts:* Social Anthropology, May 2008

*Secondary fields:* Critical Media Practice, Film and Visual Studies

*Certificate:* Latin American Studies

UNIVERSIDAD de los ANDES, Bogotá, Colombia, 9/2001–5/2002

Graduate level coursework, 2001–2002

DUKE UNIVERSITY, Durham, NC, 9/1997–5/2001

*Bachelor of Arts:* Magna Cum Laude; Comparative Area Studies & Spanish; May 2001

*Honors thesis:* *The Role of Photography in the South African Liberation Struggle*

*Semester abroad:* Universidad de Chile, Fall 1999

## HONORS, AWARDS, and FELLOWSHIPS

LASA/Oxfam America Martin Diskin Dissertation Award from the Latin American Studies Association,  
2015

Columbia University, Society of Fellows (alternate), 2015

Wenner-Gren Foundation, Engaged Anthropology grantee, 2014

Harvard University, Film Studies Center, Fellow, 2013–15

United States Institute for Peace, Jennings Randolph Peace Scholar, 2013–14

Cora Du Bois Charitable Trust, Cora Du Bois Fellowship, Summer 2013

Harvard University, Harvard Horizons; one of eight graduate students selected to give an honorary lecture on their “groundbreaking” and “innovative” research findings, May 6, 2013  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jhw1VsRQyEU>

Social Science Research Council, Drugs Security and Democracy Fellowship, Open Society Foundations, 2012–13

Harvard Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Sheldon Traveling Scholarship, 2012–13

Social Science Research Council, Mellon International Dissertation Research Fellowship, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, 2011–12; research featured on the SSRC home page, October 2012

Wenner-Gren, Dissertation Fieldwork Grant, 2011–12

National Science Foundation, Graduate Research Fellowship Program, 2006–10

Swedish Institute, Guest Scholars Program at the University of Stockholm, Latinamerika-Institutet, 2009

Harvard University, Weatherhead Center for International Relations, graduate student associate, 2008–2014

Harvard University, David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, summer research award, 2007, 2008, 2011

U.S. Dept. of Education, Foreign Language Area Studies, Universidade da Amazônia, Belém, Brazil, 2008

Harvard University, Weatherhead Center for International Relations, Graduate Student Research Fellow, 2008, 2010

Duke University, Center for Documentary Studies, Lewis Hine Documentary Fellow, South Africa, 2003–5

Fulbright IIE, Colombia, Universidad Nacional de Colombia; awarded “Exemplary Public Diplomacy” distinction, 2001–2

### PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS [Books]

In preparation:

*Guerrilla Marketing: Information War, Capitalism, and Counterinsurgency in Colombia*

Under review, Peabody Museum Press (distributed by Harvard University Press):

*Shooting Cameras for Peace: Youth, Photography, and the Colombian Armed Conflict.*

### PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS [Articles, Film]

Forthcoming “Definition: Counterpublic” *International Encyclopedia of Anthropology*

Submitted [Revised and re-submitted to *History and Anthropology*] Stealing Bolívar’s Sword: The M19, Publicity, and Revolution — *a la Colombiana* (1974-1990).

2014 *Guerrilla Marketing: Information War and the Demobilization of FARC Rebels in Colombia*. PhD Dissertation for the Department of Anthropology, Harvard University, May 13. Winner of the 2015 LASA/Oxfam America Martin Diskin Dissertation Award from the Latin American Studies Association.

- 2014 “Hostile Remixes on YouTube: A New Constraint of Pro-FARC Counterpublics in Colombia.” *American Ethnologist*, 41(2):320-335. Reviewed by *Anthropology Now*.
- 2014 *Dreams from the Concrete Mountain*. A 30-minute film in fulfillment of the capstone requirement for the secondary field in Critical Media Practice at Harvard University, May 13.
- 2013 “Los Traumas Pos-Conflicto”: Líneas de Fuga y Sueños para Interpretar. *Sextante*, 2.
- 2013 Review of *The Migrant Image: The Art and Politics of Documentary during Global Crisis*. “Reinventing Documentary.” *Public Books*, an online supplement to *Public Culture*, August 20.
- 2012 “Facebook: Corporate Hackers, A Billion Users, and the Geo-politics of the ‘Social Graph.’” *Anthropological Quarterly*, 85(3):927-956.
- 2012 “Introduction: Social Buzz, Political Boom? Ethnographic Engagements with Digital Militancy.” *Anthropological Quarterly*, 85(3):885-892; guest editor of special collection, “Ethnographic Engagements with Digital Militancy,” pages 885-955, with Charles Hirschkind and Rebecca Stein.
- 2012 Review of *Under the Men’s Tree*. “The Quick: David MacDougall and Reflections on Relative Speed.” *Sensate* (an online, peer-reviewed, multimedia journal), electronic document, <http://sensatejournal.com/2012/04/review-alex-fattal-on-under-the-mens-tree/>.
- 2009 “Trees Tropiques,” an experimental documentary video shot in Pará, Brazil. Distributed by Berkeley Media.

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Mentor for senior thesis research about Diego Rivera, “Abandoned Pan-American Ambitions,” in the Department of History and Literature, Harvard University, 2014-15

*Camión Cámara: Intervención Fotográfica, una Práctica* (Truck Camera: Photographic Intervention, a Practicum). Universidad de los Andes, Departamento de Antropología, spring 2013

*Narrativas de los Desmovilizados y Historias de las FARC* (Narratives of the Demobilized and Histories of the FARC). Universidad de los Andes, Departamento de Antropología, spring 2013

*Amnistía, Indulto, Desmovilización: 1953–2013* (Amnesty, Pardon, Demobilization: 1953–2013). Universidad de los Andes, Departamento de Antropología, fall 2012

*M-19 y su Propaganda Armada: Análisis Histórico y Simbólico* (M-19 and its Armed Propaganda: Historical and Symbolic Analysis). Universidad de los Andes, Departamento de Antropología, fall 2012

Language and Culture: Linguistics and Pragmatics, Harvard University, Department of Anthropology, Teaching Fellow for Steven Caton, fall 2008

## SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

University of Chicago, Center for Contemporary Theory, book workshop for the Series in

Practices of Meaning of the University of Chicago Press	May 2016
University of Pennsylvania, Annenberg School of Communication, Project for Advanced Research in Global Communication, Uploading the News after Coming Down from the Mountain	Apr. 2016
Northwestern University, Inventing the New conference, Brand Warfare and the Demobilization of FARC Rebels in Colombia	Apr. 2016
University of Florida, Crimescapes conference, On Surrealist Visual Anthropology: Reflections on <i>Dreams from the Concrete Mountain</i> , a work in progress	Mar. 2016
Princeton University, Department of anthropology, Brand Warfare in Colombia	Dec. 2016
Rice University, Invited speaker and filmmaker, multiple presentations	Nov. 2015
Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Pos-conflicto, Memoria y Cultura Visual	Oct. 2015
University of California, Davis, colloquium, Department of Anthropology, Brand Warfare and the Demobilization of FARC Rebels in Colombia	Oct. 2015
University of California, Santa Cruz, Department of Film and Digital Media, Dreams from the Concrete Mountain and Ethnographic Surrealism	Oct. 2015
Universidad de los Andes, coloquio, Departamento de Antropología, Operation Christmas: Attacking the heart, branding the counterinsurgency	Aug. 2015
Latin American Studies Association, panel (organizer, Toward an Experimental Visual Anthropology in the Andes	May 2015
George Washington University, Department of Anthropology, Anthropocinema, Dreams from the Concrete Mountain	Feb. 2015
University of Chicago, Department of Anthropology, Guerrilla Marketing: On Capitalism and Counterinsurgency in Colombia	
Pennsylvania State University, Department of Film-Video and Media Studies, Guerrilla Marketing: Information War, & Demobilization in Colombia	Dec. 2014
University of California, Santa Barbara, Department of Film and Media Studies, Guerrilla Marketing ... Demobilization in Colombia: Ethnographic Descriptions & Depictions	Dec. 2014
American Anthropological Association, panel (organizer), Media Politics and Radical Democracy	Dec. 2014
Yale University, School of Forestry, The Challenge of Reintegrating Ex-Combatants	Nov. 2014
University of Toronto, invited speaker, Branding Warfare Transnationally	Nov. 2014
Harvard University, Andes Initiative, <i>Posconflicto y Re-Generación Político</i> (moderator)	Sept. 2014
U. de Antioquia, ICESI, U. del Norte, and U. de los Andes, <i>Marketing de Guerrillas</i>	Aug. 2014
Harvard University, Medical Anthropology Seminar Series, Counterinsurgency & Capitalism	Apr. 2014
American Ethnological Society, panel: Visibility and Victimhood in the Andes	Apr. 2014
American Anthropological Association, panel (organizer): Brand Warfare	Nov. 2013
Harvard University, SSRC/DSD invited workshop, The Killable Subject in Latin America	Nov. 2013
United States Institute of Peace, Panel: Ending the Conflict: Armed Actors and DDR	Sept. 2013
Universidad de los Andes, conference (organizer): <i>DDR en un Eventual Firma de Paz</i>	June 2013
Latin American Studies Association, panel: Death, Citizenship, Sovereignty	May 2013
Universidad de Antioquia, <i>Cultura, Violencia, y Territorio</i> , (Culture, Violence, and Territory)	Apr. 2013
University of Pennsylvania, Annenberg School of Communication, Recombinatory Circulation: A New Constraint on Pro-FARC Counterpublics	Dec. 2013
Harvard University, Peabody Museum, curator's talk, Shooting Cameras for Peace	Nov. 2011
American Anthropological Association, panel (co-organizer): Engaging Images	Nov. 2008
Yale University, Order, Conflict, Violence, an interdisciplinary conference	Apr. 2008

University of Pennsylvania, <i>Origins</i> , graduate humanities forum	Feb. 2008
Harvard University, Visible Rights, (São Paulo & Cambridge, MA) Dec 2007	Dec. 2006 &
New York University, Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies	Nov. 2005
University of California, Berkeley, working groups: Violence and Latin America, Colombia	Oct. 2005
Columbia University, Institute for Latin American Studies	Sept. 2005
Harvard University, David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies	Apr. 2005
Duke University, Center for Documentary Studies and Human Rights Initiative	Mar. 2005
Bernard van Leer Foundation, The Hague, The Netherlands	Nov. 2004
University of California San Diego, Institute for Peace and Justice	Jan. 2003

## EXPERIENCE

**Anthropological Quarterly**, 8/2010–present — Editorial assistant who screens submissions, finds reviewers, coordinates social media, and works closely with the editor.

**Human Rights Watch**, August 2012 — Contracted researcher for report on Colombia’s Victims and Land Restitution Law of 2011 (published September 2013).

**Free the Hikers**, 8/2009–9/2011 — Coordinated campaign for the release of my brother and his friends whom Iranian authorities detained on July 31, 2009, for allegedly crossing the Iraq-Iran border. Assertively lobbied the U.S. government and forty other governments to intervene at the highest levels, led a multifaceted media campaign, garnered solidarity statements from public figures such as Desmond Tutu and Muhammad Ali, and oversaw all elements of the campaign.

**Trees Tropiques**, 6/2008–2/2009 — Shot, edited, and produced this documentary video about deforestation in the Amazon and the ethics of documenting it. The ethnographic film is distributed by Berkeley Media and continues to screen at festivals and universities.

**Disparando Cámaras para la Paz | Shooting Cameras for Peace (DCP)**, Bogotá, Colombia, 8/2001–9/2009 — Founded and directed this acclaimed photography project providing youth at risk of recruitment by armed groups the opportunity to express themselves through photography and oral history.

**Lewis Hine Documentary Fellowship**, Durban, South Africa, 2/2003–9/2005, & Summer 2006 — Worked as a documentary researcher for the Children’s Rights Centre, employing participatory photography and oral history to raise awareness of challenges facing children in South Africa.

**The Aja Project**, San Diego, California, intermittently between 9/2002 and 4/2006 — Cofounder, Director of Programs for this NGO dedicated to innovative multimedia education for refugee youth. Served as team leader and exhibition organizer of *Journey*, a participatory multimedia project, with Afghani, Iraqi, Somali, and Sudanese refugees. I continue to play an informal advisory role.

## SERVICE

Reviewer for: *Cultural Anthropology*, *American Ethnologist*, *Anthropological Quarterly*, *Revista Colombiana de Antropología* (ICANH), *Colombia Internacional* (Universidad de los Andes)

Editorial Board: *Boletín de Antropología* (Universidad de Antioquia)

Harvard University, nonresident tutor, Elliot House, 2013–15; Leverett House, 2006–9

Harvard University, coordinated Interdisciplinary Latin American Working Group, 2013–14, 2008–2009

## SELECTED SCREENINGS OF FILMS & EXHIBITIONS OF PHOTO PROJECTS

MOMA/PS1 Screening of Dreams from the Concrete Mountain, as part of a curated collection of works from the Sensory Ethnography Lab	Sept. 20, 2015
Ethnografilm, Cine 13 Theatre, Paris, France	Apr. 20, 2014
Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Dept. de Antropología, Bogotá, Colombia	Feb. 18, 2013
Temple University, Dept. of Anthropology & Visual Communication, Philadelphia	Sept. 5, 2011
Cannes Int'l Film Festival, Short Film Corner, Cannes, France	May 15, 2009
Sapienza Università di Roma, Dipartimento di Antropologie, Rome, Italy	May 8, 2009
Festival International du Film d'Environnement, Paris, France	Nov. 18, 2009
Exploris Museum, Raleigh, NC	Feb. 14–May 28, 2007
Conferencia de Justicia Restaurativa, Cali, Colombia	Feb. 8–Apr. 4, 2005
Constitution Hill, Johannesburg, South Africa	Feb. 15–Mar. 5, 2005
Museo de Bogotá, Bogotá, Colombia	Sept. 15–Oct. 26, 2004
United Nations, General Assembly Building, Main Foyer, New York	July 3–Oct. 18, 2004
National Geographic Society, Explorers Hall, Washington D.C.	June 19–Aug. 6, 2003
University of San Diego Institute for Peace and Justice, San Diego, CA	Jan. 8, 2003

## LANGUAGES

Spanish (fluent); Portuguese (advanced-intermediate)

## NON PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS [popular articles, blog posts]

Forthcoming “For Security or for Peace: How Colombia’s ‘individual demobilization’ program is quietly changing the rules of the game.” *Foreign Policy*.

2015 #WARONPEACE, @AlvaroUribeVel: The Barking Tweets of Paramilitary Populism // #GUERRALAPAZ, @AlvaroUribeVel: *Los Ruidosos Tweets del Populismo Paramilitar*. *Cultural*

- Anthropology* “Hot Spot,” April 30, <http://www.culanth.org/fieldsights/671-waronpeace-alvarouribebel-the-barking-tweets-of-paramilitary-populism>.
- 2015 with Maria Vidart-Delgado. The Colombian Peace Process: A Possibility in Spite of Itself // El Proceso de Paz en Colombia: Una Posibilidad a Pesar de Sí Misma. *Cultural Anthropology* “Hot Spot,” April 30, <http://www.culanth.org/fieldsights/664-the-colombian-peace-process-a-possibility-in-spite-of-itself>.
- 2015 with Maria Vidart-Delgado. Introduction: The Colombian Peace Process: A Possibility in Spite of Itself // Introducción: El Proceso de Paz en Colombia: Una Posibilidad a Pesar de Sí Misma. *Cultural Anthropology* “Hot Spot,” April 30, <http://www.culanth.org/fieldsights/677-introduction-the-colombian-peace-process-a-possibility-in-spite-of-itself>.
- 2014 “Should Art Imitate Policy?” (Forum) *New America*, October 30.
- 2014 “El Espectro de Ralph Nader y Porque los Colombianos no Deben Votar en Blanco.” *Huffington Post*, June 13.
- 2013 with Juan Felipe Hoyos García. “Hacia una reforma del DDR para la paz: Propuestas desde la academia y las experiencias actuales de desmovilización.” Policy paper submitted to government and FARC negotiators in Havana, Cuba.
- 2011 “Prisoner's Dilemma: Now is the Time for the Obama Administration to Renew its Efforts to Engage with Iran.” *Foreign Policy*, October, 14.
- 2009 “An Outrageous Injustice and Call to Action.” *Huffington Post*, 7/12/2010.
- 2009 “Free the Hikers,” *Newsweek*, 11/14.
- 2009 “Diluting Demobilization: The Confluence of Counterinsurgency and Post-Conflict Intervention.” *Anthropology News*, May 12.
- 2004 “Photography and Therapy.” *ChildrenFIRST*, Issue 56, Durban: South Africa, July/August.
- 2003 “Disparando para la Paz.” In “Colombia: Beyond Armed Actors: A Look at Civil Society. *ReVista, Harvard Review of Latin America*, 2(3). Cambridge, MA: David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies.

#### SELECTED MEDIA COVERAGE, INTEVIEWS:

- 2015 Quoted in, “Colombia’s rebels want peace but fear giving up their guns,” *Washington Post*, 11/15/2015, by Nick Miroff.
- 2014 Screening Room: “Trees Tropiques,” *Cultural Anthropology, Visual and New Media Review*, Aug. 20.
- 2013 *Wired* (UK), selected as part of Smart List 2013 identifying “an emerging talent whose ideas or influence ... will soon be part of our lives.” Dec.

- 2013 “GSAS Celebrates Harvard Horizons Scholars.” *Harvard Magazine*, May 8.
- 2012-13 “A Shot at Peace: A PhD Student Finds a New Angle on Colombia’s Long Conflict, Exploring the Impact of Visual Media.” *Harvard GSAS Bulletin*, Dec./Jan.
- 2012 “Una Cámara Oscura para la Paz (A Camera Oscura for Peace).” *BBC Mundo*, Nov. 6.
- 2012 “Un Camión, la Cámara Mas Grande y Sencilla del País (A Truck, the Largest and Simplest Camera in the Country).” *Semana*, Oct. 27.
- 2008 Artsworld: Shooting Cameras for Peace. *Al Jazeera*, Sept. 27.
- 2005 “In Kids’ Photos, Poetic Reality.” *Miami Herald*, Oct. 14.
- 2003 “For Young Refugees, Fresh Focus.” *Washington Post*, July 1.
- 2003 “Refugees’ Lives Refracted through Arts Project Lens.” *Los Angeles Times*, Jan. 12.
- 2002 “Fotos del Progreso (Photos of El Progreso).” *El Espectador*, Aug. 11.
- 2002 “Con Ojos de Niños (With Children’s Eyes).” *El Tiempo*, June 16.