

Friday Seminar



Department of Anthropology
The Chinese University of Hong Kong
香港中文大學人類學系

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The Initiative-Killing Machine: The End and the future of Peacekeeping

Jan 26 | 1:00 - 2:30PM | NAH 213

In the 21st century, expectations of UN military peacekeepers have risen. They are supposed to do whatever it takes to protect civilians – including use force. However, the increase in writ has been accompanied by an increase in bureaucracy and risk aversion, putting the soldiers in a bind. My ethnographic research with Rwandan soldiers working as peacekeepers shows the everyday ways that UN peacekeeping has therefore become redundant in the complicated conflict management marketplaces of Central and West Africa today, and is being taken over by bilateral and sub-regional deployments that make no pretense of impartiality. This talk illustrates these points by looking at the problem of command (the philosophy of how to get soldiers to do things), arguing that rather than a command philosophy, the UN has a control philosophy. The result is an initiative-killing machine.



Louisa Lombard is an associate professor of anthropology at Yale University and a member of the editorial collective of *HAU: The Journal of Ethnographic Theory*. She is the author of *State of Rebellion: Violence and Intervention in the Central African Republic* and *Hunting Game: Raiding Politics in the Central African Republic*. She is currently writing a book about how military peacekeepers confront ethical dilemmas in their work.

