

UCI DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

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To hear you must appear: Examining the emotional invisibility cloak of internationals in peace-building

Why are “internationals” in peace-building so bad at listening to “local” partners? While much critical scholarship has focused on strengthening voices of marginalized actors, less attention has been paid to how privileged actors can listen better. My research flips the famous question “Can the Subaltern Speak?” to “Can the Subject (Learn to) Listen?” Drawing on cognitive research about the role of emotions in listening, I interview internationals in peace-building about what they do in their daily work and how they feel about it. I find that internationals’ emotional practices work to patch up an “invisibility cloak” that shields them from appearing as political actors in the partnerships and thus restricts their listening. Theoretically, I show how critical feminist work on emotions highlights the loss of privileges that come with opening up to listen. These findings provide openings for new listening practices and better peace-building.

MONDAY, MAY 7
2:00-3:30PM
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