

NATALIE WENZELL LETSA

729 Elm Avenue
Farzaneh Hall, Room 315
Norman, OK 73019

nwletsa@ou.edu
www.natalieletsa.com
209.304.5459

Academic Positions

University of Oklahoma
Assistant Professor, Department of International and Area Studies, 2017-
Affiliate Faculty and Member of the Executive Committee, African Studies Institute, 2017-

Stanford University
Postdoctoral Scholar, Center on Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law, 2018-2019

Education

Ph.D. Government, Cornell University, 2017
Dissertation: Voting for the Devil You Know: Understanding Electoral Behavior in Authoritarian Regimes

B.A. Political Science, Reed College, 2009

Research Interests

African politics, public opinion, political behavior, authoritarianism, survey methodologies, political economy of development, historical legacies

Publications

Peer-Reviewed Articles

6. Letsa, Natalie Wenzell. 2020. "Expressive Voting in Autocracies: A Theory of Non-Economic Participation with Evidence from Cameroon." *Perspectives on Politics*, 18 (2), 439-453.
-Recipient of APSA's Heinz I. Eulau Award for best article published in *Perspectives on Politics* in 2020.
5. Letsa, Natalie Wenzell and Martha Wilfahrt. 2020. "The Mechanisms of Direct and Indirect Rule: Colonialism and Economic Development in Africa." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, 15 (4), 539-577.
4. Letsa, Natalie Wenzell. 2019. "The Political Geography of Electoral Autocracies: The Influence of Party Strongholds on Political Beliefs in Africa." *Electoral Studies*, Volume 60.
3. Letsa, Natalie Wenzell and Martha Wilfahrt. 2018. "Popular Support for Democracy in Autocratic Regimes: A Micro-Level Analysis of Preferences." *Comparative Politics*, 50 (2), 231-250.

2. Letsa, Natalie Wenzell. 2017. “‘The People’s Choice’: Popular (Il)Legitimacy in Autocratic Cameroon.” *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 55 (4), 647-679.
1. Letsa, Natalie Wenzell. 2017. “Voting for Peace, Mobilizing for War: Post-Conflict Voter Turnout and Civil War Recurrence.” *Democratization*, 24 (3), p. 425-443.

Other Publications

6. Book review: *The Autocratic Middle Class: How State Dependency Reduces the Demand for Democracy*, by Bryn Rosenfeld. *Political Science Quarterly*, 137 (1): Spring 2022.
5. Letsa, Natalie Wenzell. “The Roots of Violence: Cameroon’s Anglophone Crisis” *The Republic* (Nigeria), (February 2020).
4. Book review: *How Autocrats Compete: Parties, Patrons, and Unfair Elections in Africa*, by Yonatan Morse. *Perspectives on Politics*, 17 (4): December 2019.
3. Letsa, Natalie Wenzell. “What’s Driving the Conflict in Cameroon?” *Foreign Affairs* (online), (November 8, 2018).
2. Letsa, Natalie Wenzell. “Cameroon’s Anglophone Crisis May Intensify Post Post-Poll” *Oxford Analytica Daily Brief*, (October 5, 2018).
1. Letsa, Natalie Wenzell. “Cameroon’s Anglophone Resistance Will Endure” *Oxford Analytica Daily Brief*, (July 5, 2017).

Current Projects

Book Projects

The Autocratic Voter: Partisanship and Political Socialization under Dictatorship

Legacies of British and French Colonialism in sub-Saharan Africa (with Martha Wilfahrt)

Working Papers

“Autocratic Legalism, Partisanship, and Popular Legitimation in Authoritarian Cameroon” with Yonatan Morse (Presented at ASA 2021). *Under Review; R&R.*

“Judge, Landlord, Broker, Watchman: Assessing Variation in Chiefly Duties in the Ghana-Togo Borderlands” with Martha Wilfahrt (Presented at APSA 2021). *Under Review.*

“Social Networks and Partisanship in Electoral Autocracies” (Presented at APSA 2021).

“Echoes of the ‘Hidden War:’ Collective Memories of UPC Violence” with Joseph Lasky (Presented at ASA 2021)

“Contesting Autocracy: Explaining the Origins of Opposition Strongholds in Cameroon” with Leonardo Arriola, David Dow, & Martha Wilfahrt (Presented at APSA, ASA, SPSA, WPSA 2018/19)

Grants

External

2021 West African Research Association Postdoctoral Fellowship

2020 APSA Centennial Center Research Grant

2016 African Studies Association Student Travel Award

University Grants

2021 OU African Studies Institute Mentorship Grant

2021, 2019, and 2018: OU International Studies Faculty Support Grant

2020 OU Faculty Investment Program

2019 OU Junior Faculty Fellowship

2016 Houston I. Flournoy Graduate Fellowship (with Nicolas van de Walle)

2014 The Mario Einaudi Research Travel Grant, Cornell

Fieldwork Experience

Ghana: Summer 2019, Summer 2016, August 2009 - July 2010, August 2007 – June 2008

Cameroon: Summer 2022, August 2015 - July 2016

Togo: Summer 2019

Senegal: Summer 2014

Teaching

Undergraduate

Political Economy of Development

(University of Oklahoma: Fall 2022, Fall 2021, Spring 2020, Fall 2017)

African Politics and Society

(University of Oklahoma: Spring 2022, Spring 2020, Fall 2017)

African Elections, Freshman Writing Seminar

(Cornell University: Fall 2016)

Protest and Political Participation in Authoritarian Regimes, Freshman Writing Seminar

(Cornell University: Spring 2016)

Graduate

Political Economy of Development
(University of Oklahoma: Spring 2022, Fall 2020, Fall 2019)

African Politics and Society (online)
(University of Oklahoma: Fall 2022)

Invited Talks

“The Autocratic Citizen: Partisanship and Political Behavior under Dictatorship” NYU
Comparative Politics Workshop. April 28, 2021.

“Legacies of British and French Colonial Rule in sub-Saharan Africa” UC Berkeley Africa
Colloquium. February 20, 2019.

“Political Geography in Africa’s Electoral Autocracies” Center on Development, Democracy and
the Rule of Law, Stanford University. November 15, 2018.

“Perceptions on Regime Legitimacy and Political Participation in Cameroon,” US Department of
State, Executive Exchange with the Ambassador to Cameroon. November 30, 2017

Conferences & Workshops

American Political Science Association: 2021, 2020, 2019, 2017, 2016, 2015

African Studies Association: 2021, 2019, 2018, 2017, 2016, 2015

Authoritarian Politics Mini-Conference at WPSA: 2019

Southern Political Science Association: 2019

Cameroon Conference - Université Paris Diderot: 2018

Midwest Group in African Political Economy (MGAPE): 2017

Visions in Methodology: 2017

Midwest Political Science Association: 2017, 2016, 2014, 2013

APSA Workshop on Elections and Democracy in Africa: 2009

Service

To the Community

Pro Bono Expert Witness on 11 Cameroonian asylum cases to the US, 2020-

To the Discipline

Secretary, African Politics Conference Group (APCG), 2019-2021

Committee Member, Best Fieldwork Award, Democracy & Autocracy Section of APSA, 2021

Co-Organizer, APSA–APCG Africa Research Development Group, 2020

Founding Organizer, APCG Online Colloquium, 2018-2020

Reviewer: *American Journal of Political Science*, *American Political Science Review*, *Cambridge University Press*, *Comparative Politics*, *Comparative Political Studies*, *Electoral Studies*, *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, *Journal of Politics*, *Peace and Conflict Studies*, *Perspectives on Politics*, *Political Behavior*, *Political Research Quarterly*, *Political Studies*, *Public Opinion Quarterly*

To the University of Oklahoma

Director of Graduate Studies, Fall 2022

Executive Committee, OU African Studies Institute, 2017-

Graduate Studies Committee, 2019-

Chair, Scholarships Committee, 2021

Undergraduate Studies Committee, 2017-2018