

# NATALIE WENZELL LETSA

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## ACADEMIC POSITIONS

University of Oklahoma, 2017-  
Wick Cary Assistant Professor of Political Economy, Department of  
International and Area Studies  
Stanford University, 2018-2019  
Postdoctoral Scholar, Center on Democracy Development and the Rule  
of Law

## EDUCATION

Cornell University, 2017  
Ph.D., Government  
Dissertation: *Voting for the Devil You Know: Understanding Electoral  
Behavior in Authoritarian Regimes*  
Reed College, 2009  
B.A., Political Science

## PUBLISHED WORK

- Forthcoming. "The Mechanisms of Direct and Indirect Rule: Colonialism  
and Economic Development in Africa" (with Martha Wilfahrt).  
*Quarterly Journal of Political Science*.
2020. "Expressive Voting in Autocracies: A Theory of Non-Economic  
Participation with Evidence from Cameroon." *Perspectives on  
Politics*, 18 (2), 439-453.
2019. "The Political Geography of Electoral Autocracies: The Influence of  
Party Strongholds on Political Beliefs in Africa." *Electoral Studies*,  
Volume 60.
2018. "Popular Support for Democracy in Autocratic Regimes: A Micro-  
Level Analysis of Preferences" (with Martha Wilfahrt). *Comparative  
Politics*, 50 (2), 231-250.
2017. "'The People's Choice': Popular (Il)Legitimacy in Autocratic  
Cameroon." *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 55 (4), 647-679.
2017. "Voting for Peace, Mobilizing for War: Post-Conflict Voter  
Turnout and Civil War Recurrence." *Democratization*, 24 (3), p. 425-  
443.

WORKING  
PAPERS

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

IN PROGRESS

**Book Project:** *The Autocratic Citizen: Partisanship and Electoral Behavior under Dictatorship*

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

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

OTHER WRITING

“The Roots of Violence: Cameroon’s Anglophone Crisis” *The Republic* (Nigeria), February 2020.

Book review of *How Autocrats Compete: Parties, Patrons, and Unfair Elections in Africa*, by Yonatan Morse. *Perspectives on Politics*, 17 (4), December 2019.

“What’s Driving the Conflict in Cameroon?” *Foreign Affairs* (online), November 8, 2018.

“Cameroon’s Anglophone Crisis May Intensify Post Post-Poll” *Oxford Analytica Daily Brief*, October 5, 2018.

“Cameroon’s Anglophone Resistance Will Endure” *Oxford Analytica Daily Brief*, July 5, 2017.

TEACHING

University of Oklahoma

*Political Economy of Development*, Master’s (Fall 2020, Fall 2019)

*Political Economy of Development*, Undergraduate (Spring 2020, Fall 2019, Fall 2017)

*African Politics and Society*, Undergraduate (Spring 2020, Fall 2017)

Cornell University

*African Elections* (Freshman Writing Seminar, Fall 2016)

*Protest & Political Participation in Authoritarian Regimes* (Freshman Writing Seminar, Spring 2016)

AWARDS  
& HONORS

OU Faculty Investment Program (Cameroon), 2020

OU Junior Faculty Fellowship (Ghana and Togo), 2019

OU International Studies Faculty Support Grant (Ghana and Togo), 2019 and (France), 2018

African Studies Association Student Travel Award (Ghana and Benin), 2016

Houston I. Flournoy Graduate Fellowship (with Nicolas van de Walle), 2016  
The Mario Einaudi Research Travel Grant (Cameroon), 2014  
Cornell Graduate School Research Travel Grant (Cameroon), 2014  
Department Grant for Language Training (Senegal), 2014

CONFERENCES  
& WORKSOPS

American Political Science Association: 2019, 2017, 2016, 2015  
African Studies Association: 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

INVITED  
TALKS

“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

REFEREE

*American Journal of Political Science, American Political Science Review, Comparative Politics, Comparative Political Studies, Journal of Borderlands Studies, Journal of Politics, Peace and Conflict Studies, Perspectives on Politics, Political Behavior, Political Research Quarterly, Political Studies, Public Opinion Quarterly*

SERVICE

APSA–APCG Africa Research Development Group, co-organizer, 2020  
Secretary, African Politics Conference Group (APCG), 2019-  
Graduate Studies Committee (OU), 2019-  
Founding Organizer, APCG Online Colloquium, 2018-  
Executive Committee, OU African Studies Institute, 2017-  
Expert Witness on 12 Cameroonian asylum cases to the US, 2017-