

# MARTHA WILFAHRT

Charles and Louise Travers Department of  
Political Science  
210 Social Sciences Building  
Berkeley, CA 94720

martha.wilfahrt@berkeley.edu  
www.marthawilfahrt.weebly.com

## ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

University of California, Berkeley  
Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, July 2018-

Northwestern University  
Visiting Assistant Professor, Dept. of Political Science, 2017-18  
Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow, Dept. of Political Science, 2015-17

## EDUCATION

Cornell University  
Ph.D., Government, 2015  
Dissertation: *The Historic Origins of Public Goods: Local Distributional Politics in Rural West Africa, 1880-Present*  
Committee: Nicolas van de Walle (chair), Ken Roberts, Christopher Way  
  
Indiana University- Bloomington  
M.A., Political Science, 2008  
  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
B.A., Geography and Political Science (with distinction), 2005

## PUBLICATIONS

### Book

2021. *Precolonial Legacies in Postcolonial Politics: Representation and Redistribution in Rural Africa*. Cambridge University Press (Cambridge Series in Comparative Politics)
- Allan Sharlin Memorial Book Award, Social Science History Association (2022)
  - QMMR Sartori Best Book Award, Honorable Mention, 2022
  - Long-Listed for the Luebbert Best Book Award, 2022

### Peer-Reviewed Articles

2023. "Judge, Landlord, Broker, Watchman: Assessing Variation in Chiefly Duties in the Ghana-Togo Borderlands" (with Natalie Letsa) *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 61(3), pp. 439-462.
2023. "Enumerator Experiences in Survey Data Collection in Sub-Saharan Africa" (with Justine Davis). *Comparative Political Studies* 57(4), pp. 675-709.

2023. “Demanding Recognition: Citizen Perspectives on Clientelism in Africa” (with Jeffrey Paller & Kathleen Klaus) *African Affairs* 122/487, pp. 185-203.
2022. Citizen Response to Local Service Provision: Emerging Democratic Accountability in Decentralized West Africa? *Electoral Studies* 79.
2021. Improving Open-Source Information on African Politics, One Student at a Time (with Kristin Michelitch) *PS: Politics and Society*.
2020. The Mechanisms of Direct and Indirect Rule: Colonialism and Economic Development in Africa (with Natalie Letsa) *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 15(4), pp. 539-577.
2018. Precolonial Legacies and the Contemporary Politics of Public Goods Provision in Decentralized West Africa. *World Politics* 70(2), pp. 239-74.
2018. The Politics of Local Government Performance: Elite Cohesion and Cross-Village Constraints in Decentralized Senegal. *World Development* 103, pp. 149-61.
2018. Popular Support for Democracy in Autocratic Regimes: A Micro-Level Analysis of Preferences (with Natalie Letsa). *Comparative Politics* 50(2).

## WORKING PAPERS

- A Precolonial Paradox: Rethinking Political Centralization and its Legacies (*revise & resubmit*)
- Understanding the Sensitivity of Party Identification Questions in Polarized African Contexts (with Justine Davis) (*revise & resubmit*)
- Colonial Legacies, Collective Efficacy, and Rural Development: Evidence from the Togo-Ghana Border (with Natalie Letsa) (*under review*)
- The Political Effects of Caste in Senegal (with Leonardo Arriola and Dominika Koter) [Pre-analysis plan](#) (*under review*)
- Guns, Garrisons, and Growth: Revisiting State Formation in Africa (with Leonardo Arriola, Igor Kolesnikov & Yosef Tadesse)

## IN PROGRESS

- Endogenous (Re)Districting? The Politics of Subnational Boundary Creation
- Indigenous Slavery and Long-Run Inequality in Africa
- Book Project*: Tropical Subjects: Ethnographies of Experimentation

## OTHER WRITING

2022. [Studying Precolonial Legacies in the Present: Insights from Fieldwork](#). *Broadstreet Blog*.

## FELLOWSHIPS & AWARDS

African Politics Conference Group Best Paper Award, 2024  
Society of Hellman Fellows, Research Grant, 2023-24  
Kellogg Fellowship, University of Notre Dame, 2023-24 (declined)  
Allan Sharlin Memorial Book Award, Social Science History Association (2022)  
Honorable Mention, Giovanni Sartori Best Book Award, Qualitative and Multi-Method Research Section (2022)  
Undergraduate Research Assistance Program Grant, Northwestern University AY 2016-17  
Janice N. and Milton J. Esman Best Dissertation Prize, Cornell University 2016  
African Politics Conference Group Best Graduate Student Paper 2014-15  
Seed Grant, Center for the Study of Inequality, Cornell University, Fall 2014  
Sage Completion Fellowship, Cornell University, 2014-15  
Boren Fellow (Senegal), 2012-13  
Cornell Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Travel Grant (Senegal), Fall 2012  
APSA Africa Workshop Fellow, University of Botswana, Gaborone, Botswana, July 2012  
Houston I. Flournoy Graduate Fellowship, Cornell University, Summer 2012  
Einaudi Center International Research Travel Grant 2010 (Niger), 2011 (Mali)  
Russell Sage Fellowship, Cornell University, 2008-09  
FLAS (Bambara), Indiana University, 2007-08; 2008-09 (declined)

## PRESENTATIONS & INVITED TALKS

University of Minnesota, Comparative Speaker Series (2024)  
Michigan State University, Eye on Africa Series (2023)  
MIT, Department of Political Science (2023)  
University of Oklahoma, African Studies Institute (2022)  
American Political Science Association (2013-2023)  
International Studies Association (2019)  
Midwest Political Science Association (2014-2018, 2023)  
African Studies Association (2013-2023)  
Governance and Local Development Annual Conference, University of Gothenburg, 2018  
MGAPE, Northwestern University, December 2017  
Post-Intervention Governance & Security in the African Sahel, Northwestern, 2017  
Comparative Historical Social Sciences, Northwestern, April 2017  
Program on African Studies, Northwestern, May 2016

## TEACHING

Political Economy of the Global South (Undergraduate)  
African Politics (Undergraduate, Graduate)  
The Politics of International Aid (Undergraduate)

The Politics of Social Welfare (Undergraduate)  
African Politics through Literature and Film (Undergraduate)  
Major Themes in Comparative Politics (200A) (Graduate)  
Research and Writing (290) (Graduate)

## PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

### UC-Berkeley

Graduate admissions (2022-23, 2021-22, 2019-20, 2018-19); Comparative Politics Colloquium convener (2022-23); Faculty Co-Organizer, Historical Social Science Workshop (2019-2021); Graduate studies committee (2022), Department citation committee (2019); Field exam committee member (Comparative politics: 2023 (2x), 2019; African politics 2019); IIS Simpson Research Grant Award Committee Member (2023, 2020); Regents and Chancellor's Fellowship Interviewer (2023); Philo Sherman Bennett Prize Committee (2023); Center for African Studies FLAS committee (2022, 2020)

### Discipline

American Political Science Association: QMMR Committee Member-at-large (2024-26), QMMR Best Book Award Committee (2023), QMMR Best Article Award Committee (2021), Co-organizer, Research and Development Group African Politics Conference Group, APSA (2020), APCG Finishing-Up Grant Award Committee (2020), APCG Best Book Award Committee (2017)

Midwest Political Science Association: African Politics Section Chair (2023)

Western Political Science Association: Co-organizer, Non-Democratic Politics Mini-Workshop (2023)

Social Science History Association: Sharlin Best Book Award Committee (2023)

Graduate Applications International Network (GAIN): mentor (2020-21)

Reviewer: African Affairs, American Journal of Political Science, American Political Science Review, British Journal of Political Science, Cambridge University Press, Comparative Politics, Comparative Political Studies, Governance, Journal of Development Studies, Journal of Institutional Economics, Journal of Politics, International Journal of Comparative Sociology, International Studies Quarterly, Perspectives on Politics, Political Behavior, Social Policy and Administration, Theory and Society, World Politics, World Development

Book Manuscript Workshop discussant: Dominika Koter, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, April 2023; Noah Nathan, *The Scarce State*, April 2021; Peer Schouten, *Roadblock Politics*, November 2019

## ADVISING

### Graduate

#### *In-Progress*

Jane Mango Angar (Co-Chair)

Sarah Daniel (Co-Chair)

Rachel Fisher (Dissertation Committee Member)

Joseph Greenbaum (Chair)

Dinah Lawan (Committee Member)

Britt Leake (Committee Member)

Andrew Wojtanik (Committee Member)

#### *Completed*

Daniel Balke (Committee Member), 2023

Catlan Reardon (Committee Member), 2022

## RELATED SKILLS & TRAINING

Languages: French (Professional Proficiency), Dutch (elementary)

ICPSR, University of Michigan, 2014

Institute for Qualitative and Multi-Method Research, 2011