

# Elizabeth Sheridan Sperber

Assistant Professor of Political Science

University of Denver

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## Education

**2016 Columbia University**, New York, N.Y.  
PhD, MPhil, and MA in Political Science  
*Recipient of the Doria Award*

**2006 Brown University**, Providence, R.I., highest honors  
BAs in Africana Studies, History, and Literatures and Cultures in English  
*Recipient of the Ida B. Wells Award*

## Academic appointments

2016-present Assistant Professor of Political Science, University of Denver  
2015-2016 Research Fellow, McSilver Institute for Poverty Policy and Research and Wilf Family Department of Politics, New York University

**Book manuscript:** *Dens ex Machina: The Politics of New Christian Movements in sub-Saharan Africa.*

This mixed methods study helps explain why and how Born-Again Christianity has emerged as a politically salient identity in some – but not all – sub-Saharan states in recent decades.

## Peer-reviewed publications

1. Sperber, E., Hern, E. (2018) “Pentecostal Identity and Citizen Engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa: New Evidence from Zambia.” *Politics and Religion* 11(4): 830-862.  
Winner of the [Ted G. Jelen Award](#) (American Political Science Association, Politics and Religion Section)
2. Sperber, E. “Democratic Backsliding, Religious Institutions and the Constitution of Citizenship in Sub-Saharan Africa,” in B. Bompani and C. Valois (Eds.) *Christian Citizens and the moral regeneration of the African State: The relationship between religion, society and political transformation in Africa*. Abingdon, UK: Ashgate, 2017.
3. Sperber, E., Sensoy Bahar, O., Ssewamala, F. (2018) Implications of Race and Concentrated Poverty for Asset Development Policy. *The Journal of Race and Policy*, 13(1), 20-40.
4. Ssewamala, F., Keun, H.C., Neilands, T.B., Islaymova, L., and Sperber, E. (2010) “The Effect of Economic Assets on Sexual Risk Taking Among Orphaned Adolescents in Uganda.” *American Journal of Public Health*, 100(3): 483-489.
5. Ssewamala, F., Sperber, E., Zimmerman, J., and Karimli, L. (2010) “The Potential for Asset-Based Poverty Alleviation Strategies in Sub-Saharan Africa.” *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 19(4): 433-443.

## Book reviews

1. Sperber, E. (2015) “Review of Christianity, Islam, and Liberal Democracy: Lessons from Sub-Saharan Africa,” Robert Dowd. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2015. *Politics and Religion*, 9, pp. 402-405.
2. Sperber, E. (2009) “China’s Role in Africa.” *Journal of International Affairs*, 62(2).

### Research in progress (available upon request)

1. Sperber, E. and Hern, E. (forthcoming) "Party Politics and Christianity in Zambia's Third Republic," in M. Hinfelaar and C. Kaunda (Eds.) *Religion and Politics in Post-Colonial Zambia*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2020.
2. Sperber, E., "Patron Saints? How Ruling Parties Cultivate New Christian Constituencies in Zambia." Preparing to resubmit
3. Sperber, E. "The co-evolution of African political and religious movements: A comparative historical analysis to contextualize African Born-Again movements." (In preparation.)
4. Sperber, E., *Studying Religion and Democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa: Towards improved data to build comparative understanding*. Working paper.
5. Kyle, J. and Sperber, E. "The Struggle for Control Over Foreign Development Aid." Working paper.
6. Sperber, E. "Divided Development: The politics of foreign development aid allocation in postcolonial relationships" Working paper.

### Research honors and awards

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| 2019-2020 | Visiting Research Fellowship, Kellogg Institute for International Affairs, University of Notre Dame (accepted for spring, 2020).   |
| 2019      | Ted G. Jelen Award, <i>Journal of Politics and Religion</i> (Cambridge UP)   |
| 2017      | Templeton-funded Project Launch Grant through Notre Dame's Global Religion Research Initiative (\$12,000)  |
| 2017      | PROF research grant, DU (\$20,000), University of Denver   |
| 2017      | CCESL Mini-grant (\$3,550), University of Denver   |
| 2015-6    | Faculty Research Fund Grant (\$3000), University of Denver   |
| 2013-15   | Mellon Interdisciplinary Graduate Fellowship, Interdisciplinary Center for Innovative Theory and Empirics (INCITE), Columbia University  |
| 2014      | Travel Grant, Graduate School for Arts and Sciences, Columbia University   |
| 2013      | Mellon Summer Research Grant, INCITE, Columbia University  |
| 2011      | Leitner Family Fellowship for Research in Africa, Institute for African Studies, Columbia University   |
| 2011      | Seed Grant, Center for Democracy, Toleration, and Religion, Columbia University  |
| 2011      | Doria Award for Best Comparative Politics Paper by a Pre-Dissertation Student, Department of Political Science, Columbia University  |
| 2010      | Saltzman Institute for War and Peace IQRN Fellowship for the Study of Mixed-Methods Research Approaches in the Social Sciences, Saltzman Institute of War and Peace Studies, Columbia University |
| 2009      | Carnegie Council "New Leader" in Ethics in International Affairs, Carnegie Council   |
| 2009      | Pre-dissertation Graduate Research Fellowship, Institute for Religion, Culture, and Public Life, Columbia University   |
| 2008      | Faculty Fellow, Department of Political Science, Columbia University   |
| 2006      | Ida B. Wells Award For Scholarly Excellence and Commitment to Public Understanding, Brown University   |

## Conference Presentations

- International Society for the Sociology of Religion, Barcelona, 9-12 July, 2019.
- International Studies Association Annual Meeting, Toronto, 27-30, March, 2019 (declined)
- American Academy of Religion, Annual Meeting Nov., 2018
- African Association for the Study of Religions, Annual Meeting, Aug., 2018 (Zambia)
- American Political Science Association Annual Meetings: September, 2018
  - Other years in which I presented research at APSA include 2011, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2017
- Brown University, Symposium on Democratic Erosion Research and Pedagogy. Founding member of the collaborative, co-designer and leader of conference sponsored by the Social Science Research Council and Brown University, held xxx August, 2018 in Providence, RI.
- African Studies Association Annual Meetings, 2015, 2016, 2017, Nov. 2018 (declined, 2018)
- Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meetings, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017
- Columbia University, various meetings, 2010, 2014, 2015, 2017
- Contemporary African Political Economy Research Seminar (CAPERS) 2012, 2015, 2016
- Southern African Institute for Policy and Research in Lusaka, Zambia, 2013
- Alexander Hamilton Political Economy Graduate Conference at NYU, 2010

## Invited Research Presentations

University of Notre Dame, Department of Political Science Faculty Lecture Series. October 2, 2018.  
“Patron Saints? How African Ruling Parties Cultivate New Christian Constituencies.”

## Service to the Profession

- Journal Referee: *Politics and Behavior*, *Journal of Politics*, *Religions*, *Quarterly Journal of African Studies*; *Qualitative Sociology*, *International Journal of Health Equity*
- Pedagogical Collaborative on Democratic Erosion, founding member 2016-present. Funded by the Social Science Research Council and Brown University. <http://democratic-erosion.com/>
- Contemporary African Political Economy Seminar (CAPERS), Cofounder and rotating steering committee member, tri-state area political science departments, 2009-2015

## University Service

- Faculty Advisor: National Political Honor Society, DU chapter, F 2016-F2018
- Search Committee Member: Comparative Politics/Political Economy, F 2017
- Political Science Library Liaison F 2018 - present

## Languages

- French (intermediate written), Spanish (intermediate written), Luganda (beginner)