

Elizabeth Sheridan Sperber

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Education

2016 Columbia University, New York, N.Y.

Ph.D., MPhil, and MA in Political Science
Recipient of the Doria Award

2006 Brown University, Providence, R.I., high honors

BAs in Africana Studies, History, and Literatures and Cultures in English
Recipient of the Ida B. Wells Award

Academic appointments

2016-	Assistant Professor of Political Science, University of Denver
2020 (Spring)	Visiting Research Fellow, Kellogg Institute for International Studies, University of Notre Dame
2015-2016	Research Fellow, McSilver Institute for Poverty Policy and Research and Wilf Family Department of Politics, New York University

Book manuscript: *Deus ex Machina? The Politics of New Religious 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 sub-Saharan states in recent decades, but not others.

Research in Preparation

1. Sperber, E. and P. Wietzel (DU MA student in Religious Studies). "Midwives of Ongoing Democratization? Comparing Catholic Bishops' Pastoral Messages on Democratization in Malawi and Zambia, 1987-2022." Anticipated submission in Feb. 2023.
 - Presented at the American Academy of Religion (AAR) Annual Meeting (Nov., 2022) and the AAR Rocky Mountain Regional Conference (3/2022).
2. Sperber, E. and G. McClendon. [Tentatively titled] "Encouraging Young Women's Political Participation in African Contexts: Exploring What Works and Why."
3. Sperber, E., "Pastoral *cum* Political Engagement? Contemporary Catholic Church Engagement in East African Politics."
Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion (Nov., 2022).
4. Sperber, E., "Political Economy of Religion Approaches Revisited: Pentecostalism in Sub-Saharan Africa."
Prior versions of this paper were presented at the University of Notre Dame Political Science Research Series (2018), and the annual meetings of the American Academy of Religion (Denver, 2018), the International Society for the Sociology of Religion (Barcelona, 2018), and the African Association for the Study of Religions (Lusaka, 2018).

Peer-Reviewed Publications

1. Sperber, E., G. McClendon, and O. Kaaba. "Disentangling the Roles of Civic Information, Self-Efficacy, and Religious Authority in Youth Political Participation: Evidence from a WhatsApp-Based Experiment in Zambia." *Under Review*.
Between Nov 2021 and October 2022, this paper was presented by invitation at Yale University (Sperber presented) and, by McClendon, at UC Berkeley, the University of Michigan, University College London, WZB Berlin Social Science Center, and MIT.
2. Sperber, E. and E. Hern. (2023). "Comparing the Religious and Political Orientations of Renewalist Christians Across Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*. Firstlook online 2/8/23 at <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/jssr.12830?fbclid=IwAR18skP7Lj8aWBGwXNRfCUd-CJXmfdHhqvsRefRermqCE7iWsUYJYgNKyPs>
Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, 9/2021.
3. Sperber, E., G. McClendon, and O. Kaaba. (2022) "Increasing Youth Political Engagement with Efficacy Not Obligation: Evidence from a Workshop-Based Experiment in Zambia." *Political Behavior*.
4. Sperber, E., G.H. McClendon, and O'Brien Kaaba. (2021) "Estimating the Effect of Christian Messages on Civic Engagement: Preliminary Findings from a Community-Collaborative Study in Zambia." Kellogg Institute for International Studies Working Paper Series #442, University of Notre Dame.
 - Note: This series requires two blind peer reviews and editorial acceptance. Its publications are open access, which facilitates dissemination to Africa-based colleagues.
5. Sperber, E. and Hern, E. "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: 209-228.
6. 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 for best article in *Politics and Religion* in 2018.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. Ssewamala, F., Sperber, E. Blake, C., and Ilic, V. (2012) "Increasing Opportunities for Inner-City Youth: The Feasibility of an Economic Empowerment Model." *Child and Youth Services Review*, 34(1): 218-224.
10. 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.
11. 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.

12. Sperber, E., McKay, M., Bell, C., Petersen, I., Bhana, A., and Paikoff, R. (2008). "Adapting and Disseminating a Community-Collaborative, Evidence-Based HIV/AIDS Prevention Program." *Vulnerable Children and Youth Studies*, 3(2): 150-158.

Book Reviews

1. Sperber, E. (Invited for publication in 2023.) "Review of *Pastoral Power, Clerical State: Pentecostalism, Gender, and Sexuality in Nigeria*, By Ebenezer Obadare. University of Notre Dame Press, 2022." *Journal of Church and State*.
2. Sperber, E. (2020). "Review of *From Pews to Politics: Religious Sermons and Political Participation in Africa*, By Gwyneth H. McClendon and Rachel Beatty Riedl. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2019." *Perspectives on Politics*, 18(3), 982-984.
3. Sperber, E. (2015) "Review of *Christianity, Islam, and Liberal Democracy: Lessons from Sub-Saharan Africa*," by Robert Dowd. Oxford UP, 2015. *Politics and Religion*, 9, 402-405.
4. Sperber, E. (2009) "China's Role in Africa." *Journal of International Affairs*, 62(2).

Grants, Honors, and Awards

2022	Global Engagement Grant, Office of Internationalization, University of Denver, 2002-2024 (\$2,500).
2022	Dean's Interdisciplinary Research Award (DAIS), University of Denver, 2022-2023. (\$5,000).
2021	PROF grant (\$20,000) to pivot a large, community-engaged study that was initially designed and piloted using face-to-face modalities to entirely remote, COVID-safe modalities. This involved re-designing and implementing a civic engagement course for Zambian young adults via WhatsApp in roughly 6 months, alongside of revised recruitment and payment plans.
2020-2021	Research Extension Grant, Global Religion Research Initiative at Notre Dame University (\$9,950) for community-engaged research in Zambia.
2019-2021	MIT GOV/LAB Research Grant (\$30,000) for community-engaged research in Zambia.
2020	Visiting Research Fellowship, Kellogg Institute for International Studies, University of Notre Dame.
2019	Ted G. Jelen Best Article Award, <i>Journal of Politics and Religion</i> (Cambridge UP).
2018	Internationalization and OSP Grants (\$5,000), University of Denver.
2017	Project Launch Grant through Notre Dame's Global Religion Research Initiative (\$12,000).
2017	Joseph I. Moreland Information Literacy Grant (\$2,500), University of Denver
2017	PROF research grant, DU (\$20,000), University of Denver
2017	Internationalization Grant, DU (\$2,000), University of Denver
2017	CCESL Mini-Grant for community-engaged teaching (\$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 IQRM 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
2006	Ida B. Wells Award for Scholarly Excellence and Commitment to Public Understanding, Brown University

Invited Research Presentations

- Yale University, Department of Political Science. Special colloquium on religion and world politics. Organized by Associate Prof. of Political Science, Kate Baldwin Oct. 7, 2022.
- MIT Gov/Lab Spring Seminar, March 11, 2022, with Gwyneth McClendon. “The Power of Faith in Youth Political Participation: An Experimental Study of Religious Civics Education in Zambia.”
- Innovations for Poverty Action, Christian Churches Monitoring Group and Caritas-Zambia. Research dissemination presentations on March 2, 2022. “Disentangling the Roles of Civic Information, Self-Efficacy, and Religious Authority in Youth Political Participation: Evidence from a WhatsApp-Based Intervention.”
- University of Bergen (Norway) and Christian Michelsen Institute’s “Bergen Global” series (online due to COVID). December 4, 2020. “Divine Intervention: The role of the Pentecostal Church in Democratic Backlash in Africa.”
- Innovations for Poverty Action and Caritas-Zambia. Research dissemination presentations on October 12th and 30th, 2020. “Estimating the Influence of Faith-Based Civic Engagement Training on Local Government Engagement: A Community-Collaborative Study in Zambia.”
- University of Notre Dame, Kellogg Institute for International Studies’ Work-in-Progress Seminar. April 2, 2020. “Estimating the Influence of Faith-Based Civic Engagement Training on Local Government Engagement: A Community-Collaborative Study in Zambia.”
- University of Notre Dame, Department of Political Science Faculty Lecture Series. October 2, 2018. “Patron Saints? How African Ruling Parties Cultivate New Christian Constituencies.”

Conference Presentations from 2018-2022

- Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Baltimore, MD., Fall 2022. Paper presentation: “Pastoral *cum* Political Engagement? Contemporary Catholic Church Engagement in East African Politics.”
- American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, Denver, CO., Fall 2022. Paper presentation: “Catholicism and Democratization in Africa: Presenting a New Archive of Church Documents

and Qualitative Analysis.” Presenting Co-Author with Paige Wietzel (DU MA student in Religious Studies).

- American Academy of Religion Rocky Mountain-Great Plains Regional Conference, University of Denver, March 25, 2022. Paper presentation: “Catholicism and Democratization in Africa: Presenting a New Archive of Church Documents and Qualitative Analysis.” Presenting Co-Author with Paige Wietzel (MA student).
- American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Seattle, WA/Online, October 2, 2021. Paper presentation: “Comparing Renewalist Christians’ Political Orientations in Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa.” Presenting Author; coauthored with Erin Hern.
- American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco, CA/Online, September 12, 2020. Paper presentation: “Estimating the Effect of Christian Messages on Civic Engagement: Preliminary findings from a community-collaborative study in Zambia.” Coauthored with Gwyneth McClendon (lead presenter) and O’Brien Kaaba.
- American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco, CA/Online, September 12, 2020. Invited contribution to a round table entitled “Engaging at the State and Local Level: Community-Collaborative Political Science Education”
- American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco, CA/Online, September 12, 2020. “Ethnopolitism and Politicized Pentecostalism,” *Panel cancelled due to COVID.*
- Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco, CA/Online, September 12, 2020. “Ethnopolitism and Politicized Pentecostalism,” *Panel cancelled due to COVID.*
- American Political Science Association, Washington D.C., August 30, 2019. “The Reciprocal Influence of Ethnopolitism and Politicized Pentecostalism in Sub-Saharan Africa.”
- International Society for the Sociology of Religion, Barcelona, Spain, 9-12 July 2019. “The co-evolution of African political and religious movements: A comparative historical analysis to contextualize African Born-Again movements.”
- *Declined* (FMLA-related): International Studies Association Annual Meeting, Toronto, 27-30, March 2019. “The co-evolution of African political and religious movements: A comparative historical analysis to contextualize African Born-Again movements.”
- *Declined* (FMLA-related): African Studies Association Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA., November 2018. “Patron Saints? How Ruling Parties Cultivate New Christian Constituencies in Zambia.”
- “Patron Saints? How Ruling Parties Cultivate New Christian Constituencies in Zambia.” American Academy of Religion, Annual Meeting Nov. 2018
- “Patron Saints? How Ruling Parties Cultivate New Christian Constituencies in Zambia.” African Association for the Study of Religions, Annual Meeting, Aug. 2018 (Lusaka, Zambia)
- Brown University, Symposium on Democratic Erosion Research and Pedagogy sponsored by the Social Science Research Council and Brown University. Aug. 2018 in Providence, RI.

Conference Presentations Prior to 2018

- American Political Science Association: September 2017, 2015, 2014, 2013, 2011.
- African Studies Association, 2015, 2016, 2017
- Midwest Political Science Association, 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

Service to the Profession

- Section Leader, Politics and Religion Section, 2021 Midwest Political Science Association.
- Book manuscript reviewer, Cambridge University Press (2021-2)
- Journal Referee: *Perspectives on Politics*, *Journal of Politics*, *Comparative Political Studies*, *British Journal of Political Science*, *Politics and Behavior*, *Religions*, *Quarterly Journal of African Studies*, *Qualitative Sociology*, *International Journal of Health Equity*
- Pedagogical Collaborative on Democratic Erosion, 2016-present. Funded by the Social Science Research Council and Brown University. <http://democratic-erosion.com/>
 - Convener and moderator of the publicly accessible virtual roundtable entitled “Disinformation, Media and Democracy,” April 26, 2022. Hosted by Brown University’s Watson Institute.
- Contemporary African Political Economy Seminar (CAPERS), ofounder and rotating steering committee member, tri-state area political science departments, 2009-2015

University of Denver Service

- Faculty Senate, Elected Representative At-Large for CAHSS, F 2022-present
- CAHSS Undergraduate Research Committee, F 2020-present
- Political Science Library Liaison F 2018 – F 2019
- National Political Honor Society Faculty Advisor (DU chapter) F 2016-F2018
- Search Committee Member: Comparative Politics/Political Economy, F 2017

Languages

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