

Susanna B. Berkouwer

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Research fields

Primary: Environmental economics, development economics

Secondary: Behavioral economics, political economy

Academic appointments

University of Pennsylvania, The Wharton School

Assistant Professor of Business Economics and Public Policy

2020–

Robert J. Aresty, W'63 Faculty Scholar

2022–2025

National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER)

Faculty Research Fellow, Development Economics Program

2023–

Faculty Research Fellow, Environmental and Energy Economics Program

2023–

Affiliations

Research Affiliate, [International Growth Center \(IGC\)](#)

2025–

Associate Editor, *Journal of Environmental Economics and Management*

2024–

Associate Editor, *Journal of Development Economics*

2023–

Affiliate, [Bureau for Research and Economic Analysis of Development \(BREAD\)](#)

2023–

Affiliate, [Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab \(J-PAL\)](#)

2022–

Fellow, [The Coase Project](#)

2022–

Education

Ph.D., Agricultural and Resource Economics, University of California, Berkeley

2014–2020

M.A., International and Development Economics, Yale University

2012–2013

B.Sc., Statistics (with Economics), University College London

2007–2010

Teaching

Wharton MBA Core: Microeconomics (BEPP 6110)

Fall 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025

Journal publications

Berkouwer, S. and J. Dean. 2026. “Cooking, health, and daily exposure to pollution spikes.” Forthcoming, [American Economic Journal: Economic Policy](#). Available here.

Berkouwer, S., P. Biscaye, E. Hsu, O. Kim, K. Lee, E. Miguel, C. Wolfram. 2023. “Money or power? Choosing Covid-19 Aid in Kenya.” [Energy Economics](#). Available here.

Berkouwer, S. and J. Dean. 2022. “Credit, attention, and externalities in the adoption of energy efficient technologies by low-income households.” [American Economic Review](#). Available here.

Berkouwer, S., P. Biscaye, S. Puller, C. Wolfram. 2022. “Disbursing emergency relief through utilities: Evidence from Ghana.” [Journal of Development Economics](#). Available here.

Berkouwer, S. 2020. “Electric heating and the effects of temperature on household electricity consumption in South Africa.” [The Energy Journal](#). Available here.

Working papers

Berkouwer, S., P. Biscaye, M. Mikdash, S. Puller, and C. Wolfram. “Voltage quality and economic activity.” Revision requested, [Journal of Political Economy: Microeconomics](#). Available here.

Wolfram, C., E. Miguel, E. Hsu, S. Berkouwer®. “Contracting structures in public procurement: Evidence from donor-funded electrification in Kenya.” Submitted. Available here. NBER WP #30948.

Wolfram, C., S. Berkouwer, F. Vial, E. Hsu, O. Kim, E. Miguel®. “The distribution of power: Favoritism, efficiency, and equity in energy infrastructure.” Submitted. Available here.

Berkouwer, S. and J. Dean. “Green subsidies with credit constraints.” Pre-Analysis Plan. Available on request.

Selected research in progress

“Problem representation in technology adoption” with J. Dean. [Pre-Analysis Plan](#).

“Inefficiency in carbon offsets markets” with E. Azevedo, A. van Benthem, P. Mishra, A. Russo and F. Yang

“Morality, offsets, and the global cost of climate change mitigation” with J. Dean

Other publications

Klugman, N. J. Adkins, S. Berkouwer, K. Abrokwah, M. Podolsky, P. Pannuto, C. Wolfram, J. Taneja, and P. Dutta. 2023. “Measuring Grid Reliability in Ghana.” in T. Madon et al (Eds.), *Introduction to Development Engineering: A Framework with Applications from the Field*. Springer. Open Access. [Available here](#).

Klugman, N. J. Adkins, S. Berkouwer, K. Abrokwah, I. Bobashev, P. Pannuto, M. Podolsky, A. Suseno, R. Thatte, C. Wolfram, J. Taneja, and P. Dutta. 2019. “Hardware, Apps, and Surveys at Scale: Insights from Measuring Grid Reliability in Accra, Ghana.” *Proceedings of the 2nd ACM Conference on Computing & Sustainable Societies. COMPASS’19*. [Available here](#).

Berkouwer, S., A. Sultan, and S. Yehia. 2014. “Homosexuality in Sudan and Egypt: Stories of the Struggle for Survival.” *LGBTQ Policy Journal*, Vol. IV, pp. 66–76. [Available here](#).

External grants

Weiss Fund for Research in Development Economics, 2025 (\$76,000) with Joshua Dean

IGC-Uganda, 2024 (\$125,000) with Joshua Dean

J-PAL Social Protection Initiative, 2023 (\$7,500) with Joshua Dean

Millenium Challenge Corporation, 2021 (\$1,550,000) with Duncan Callaway and Steven Puller

USAID Power Africa, 2021 (\$55,000) with Edward Miguel

IGC-Sierra Leone, 2020 (\$77,000) with Steven Puller and Catherine Wolfram

IGC-Kenya, 2020 (\$25,000) with Eric Hsu, Oliver Kim, Kenneth Lee, Edward Miguel, Catherine Wolfram

Private Enterprise Development in Low-income Countries (PEDL), 2020 (\$46,500) with Eric Hsu, Kenneth Lee, Edward Miguel, Catherine Wolfram

DFID EEG, 2020 (\$29,000) with Edward Miguel, Catherine Wolfram

International Growth Center-Kenya, 2018 (\$24,300), with Joshua Dean

Weiss Fund for Research in Development Economics, 2018 (\$31,544), with Joshua Dean

DFID EDI, 2018 (\$361,000) with Edward Miguel, Catherine Wolfram

Awards & Scholarships

Wharton Teaching Excellence Award, 2024–25

World Bank Public Institutions Conference, Best Paper in Regulations, 2025

AAEA, Outstanding Doctoral Dissertation, Honorable Mention, 2021

US/International Association for Energy Economics, Best Student Paper Award, 2019

Art Rosenfeld Award for Energy Efficiency, 2018

Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds, 2014

Dr Hendrik Muller’s Vaderlandsch Fonds, 2012

Internal grants

2025 Penn Global (\$150,000), Wharton Behavioral Lab (\$27,000), Mack Institute for Innovation Management (\$15,000), Wharton ESG Initiative Climate Center (\$10,000)

2024 Wharton ESG Initiative (\$10,000), Wharton Global Initiatives (\$8,000)

2023 Tanoto ASEAN Initiative (\$60,000), Wharton ESG Initiative (\$26,042), Kleinman Center for Energy Policy (\$17,570, \$7,500), Global Initiatives (\$13,000), Wharton Dean’s Fund (\$9,000), Wharton Analytics (\$5,000)

- 2022 Penn Global (\$74,000), Mack Institute for Innovation Management (\$62,000), Analytics at Wharton (\$17,000), Kleinman Center for Energy Policy (\$15,000), Wharton Dean's Fund (\$8,500), Chicago DEC/BFI (\$10,000)
- 2021 Ripple Blockchain Research Fund (\$40,000), Wharton Dean's Fund (\$20,000), Kleinman Center for Energy Policy (\$15,000), Mack Institute for Innovation Management (\$10,000), Analytics at Wharton (\$10,000), Wharton Global Initiatives (\$8,000), Wharton Risk Center (\$7,500)
- 2020 Kleinman Center for Energy Policy (\$15,000), Analytics at Wharton (\$15,000)
- 2019 Rocca Dissertation Research Fellowship (\$6,000)
- 2018 Rocca Dissertation Research Fellowship (\$6,000), Xlab Behavioral Research Grant (\$3,000), ARE Graduate Student Travel Grant (\$1,500)
- Prior Rocca Pre-dissertation Research Fellowship (\$4,000), Xlab Behavioral Research Grant (\$3,000), Levin Family Seed Grant (\$2,000), ARE Graduate Student Travel Grant (\$1,500), Graduate Assembly Travel Award (\$300), ARE Graduate Student Travel Grant (\$1,500)

Seminar and conference presentations (scheduled*)**

- 2026 *Penn State, *Columbia, *UCSB, *Calgary
- 2025 London School of Economics, Princeton, Coase Conference at Chicago, World Bank, IGC-Uganda, ETHOS Conference, IFPRI
- 2024 Michigan, UC San Diego, Michigan State, NBER (EEE), Coase Conference at Chicago, sustainable development conference at GW/UVA/WB, Energy Camp at UC Berkeley, environmental economics workshop at LSE/Imperial World Bank, St. Andrews
- 2023 Yale, NEUDC at Harvard, IAP at USC, PEDL at MIT, Energy Camp at UC Berkeley, Coase Conference at Chicago, EPIC Workshop at Chicago, NBER (EEE), University of Arizona, Inter-American Development Bank, UPenn (PDRI, One Health@Penn)
- 2022 Coase Conference at Chicago, Columbia, BREAD at UCL, Energy Camp at UC Berkeley, Occasional Workshop at UC Santa Barbara, Arizona State, CMU/Pittsburgh, NBER (EEE-discussant), Resources For the Future, Center for Global Development, Busara Center for Behavioral Economics, Working Group on Kenyan Political Economy, Strathmore University, UPenn (Wharton AEW, Africa Symposium, PDRI, Kleinman)
- 2021 Duke, Cornell, University of Hawai'i, Energy Camp at UC Berkeley, IDE Conference at Yale, London School of Economics, Berkeley-Harvard-Yale (EEE), World Bank, ASSA, AERE, GiveWell, PacDev, OSWEET, UPenn (Africa symposium, PDRI)
- 2020 NBER Fall Meetings (DEV), NBER SI (EEE), CEGA E2A (Climate Change & Global Poverty), Early-Career Behavioral Economics, UPenn (Wharton AEW, EEF), Dartmouth, Boston University, Tufts, Sciences Po, University of British Columbia, Johns Hopkins (Carey), World Bank, Stockholm (IIES)
- 2019 NEUDC at Northwestern, WGAPE at University of British Columbia, Occasional Workshop at UC Santa Barbara, Heartland Workshop at UI Urbana-Champaign, USAEE, University of Nevada, Reno, Paris School of Economics (EDI), UC Berkeley (Development Economics, Psychology & Economics, ARE, SEEDEC, X-LAB)
- Prior WGAPE at the University of British Columbia, IPWSD at Columbia, CREEC at Makerere University, Busara Center for Behavioral Economics, UC Berkeley

Journal refereeing

AEJ: Applied Economics, AEJ: Economic Policy, American Economic Review, AER: Insights, Climatic Change, Economic Development and Cultural Change, Economic Journal, Economics Letters, Energy Journal, Energy Economics, Environment and Development Economics, Journal of Development Economics, Journal of Development Economics (pre-results review), Journal of Health Economics, Journal of Human Resources, Journal of Political Economy, Journal of Political Economy - Microeconomics, Journal of Public Economics, Journal of the Association of Environmental and Resource Economists, Journal of the European Economic Association, Management Science, Nature Climate Change, Quarterly Journal of Economics, Review of Economics and Statistics, Review of Economic Studies, Utilities Policy, World Bank Economic Review

Grant & conference reviewing

Penn Global, NSF Economics Program, J-PAL King Climate Action Initiative, Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, Fund for Innovation in Development, Private Enterprise Development in Low-Income Countries (PEDL)

Blog posts and policy briefs

23. Building to Last: Impacts of a Philadelphia energy-efficiency housing rehabilitation program for low-income households, [Kleinman Center Policy Digest](#), 4/24/2024
22. Strengthening the electricity grid in Ghana, [MCC Evaluation Brief](#), 3/2024
21. Improving voltage quality through transformer construction in Accra, Ghana, [Kleinman Center Policy Digest](#), 3/21/2024
20. The health impacts of average vs peak pollution exposure: Evidence from cooking in Kenya, [VoxDev](#), 2/22/2024
19. Private actions in the presence of externalities: The health impacts of reducing air pollution peaks but not ambient exposure, [Becker Friedman Institute Research Brief](#), 10/3/2023
18. Improved cookstoves halve air pollution peaks, but ambient exposure dampens health benefits, [Kleinman Center Policy Digest](#), 10/2/2023
17. How do multilateral agencies' contracting structures affect the quality, timeliness, and cost of large-scale infrastructure projects? [Penn Program on Regulation](#), 8/2023
16. How contracting structures affect project outcomes in public procurement, [VoxEU](#), 8/2023
15. Comparing two approaches to procurement, [NBER Digest](#), 5/2023
14. Power quality in donor-funded infrastructure projects, [Energy for Growth Hub memo](#), 2/2023
13. "Lights on, Lights off": Evaluating outages, voltage, and economic impacts of grid investments in Accra, Ghana, [Center for Effective Global Action](#), 8/12/2022
12. Emergency utility subsidies can help citizens weather economic crises, but may exclude the poorest citizens, [World Bank - Sustainable Energy for All](#), 7/18/2022
11. Money or Power? Financial infrastructure and optimal policy, [Private Enterprise Development in Low-Income Countries](#), 4/22/2022
10. Parametric hurricane protection in Dominica: Insights from initial adopters, [Wharton Risk Center blog](#), 2/11/2022
9. What's reliability without voltage quality? [Energy for Growth Hub memo](#), 11/29/2021
8. Barriers to energy efficiency adoption in low-income communities, [Kleinman Center Policy Digest](#), 12/9/2021
7. Money or power? Choosing Covid-19 aid in Kenya, [International Growth Centre Blog](#), 5/25/2021
6. Does donor conditionality improve infrastructure construction quality? [DFID Economic Development & Institutions Blog](#), 3/1/2021
5. Subsidizing electricity during a pandemic: Lessons from Ghana, [Energy Institute at Haas Blog](#), 7/20/2020
4. Can energy efficiency subsidies improve welfare in low-income countries? Evidence from Kenya says yes, [VoxDev](#), 5/25/2020
3. What causes under-adoption of profitable energy efficient technologies in Kenya? [World Bank Blog](#), 11/26/2019
2. How do credit and psychology affect the adoption of profitable energy efficient technologies in Kenya? [International Growth Centre Policy Brief](#), 8/1/2019
1. Can cell phones help improve electricity reliability? [Energy Institute at Haas Blog](#), 2/18/2019

Media

8. Research Webinar, Wharton ESG Initiative 3/19/2025
7. Cooking, health, and daily exposure to pollution, [The Backstory Podcast](#), 8/19/2024
6. Climate Crisis: Who does climate change hit the hardest? [The Ripple Podcast](#), 4/18/2023
5. Data analytics for economic efficiency in energy policy, [Analytics at Wharton](#), 10/5/2022
4. Achieving UN SDG #1: No poverty, [UPenn Earth Day Teach-in](#), 4/18/2022
3. Climate policy is anti-poverty policy, [UPenn 1.5°C Minute Climate Lectures](#), 9/22/2021
2. **Power for the people: How should governments develop electric grids?** [DFID Economic Development & Institutions](#), 11/21/2019
1. Kenya races toward goal of electrifying every household, [PBS NewsHour Weekend](#), 5/20/2017

Written coverage

8. Will High-Efficiency Cookstoves Save Lives? [Chicago Booth Review](#), 9/17/2024
7. The overlooked causes of air pollution, [Knowledge at Wharton](#), 2/19/2024
6. Cookstoves reduce charcoal use by 40%, [The Carbon Herald](#), 2/8/2024
5. Wharton study finds energy-efficient technologies can help families save money, [The Daily Pennsylvanian](#), 12/9/2021
4. How to drive energy efficiency among low-income households, [Knowledge at Wharton](#), 11/22/2021
3. Fuel efficient cookstoves, [Giving Green Recommendations](#), 11/2020
2. Could easier credit speed the adoption of energy efficiency? [Chicago Booth Review](#), 9/29/2020
1. Closing the energy efficiency gap for low-income households, [Energy Institute at Haas](#), 10/21/2020

Conferences & events

- 2025 *Panelist*, British International Investment: [The Business of Climate Technology Adoption Speaker](#), Wharton Environmental Sustainability and Social Equity alumni event
Speaker, Wharton ESG Initiative: Annual convening
- 2024 *Speaker*, Wharton ESG Initiative: [Wharton Climate Prof](#)
Panelist, AERE: Cutting edge research in environmental and resource economics
Speaker, Wharton ESG Initiative: Annual convening
- 2023 *Speaker*, Wharton Africa Business Forum: Energizing Africa's future
Speaker, Wharton ESG Initiative: [Wharton Climate Prof](#)
Speaker, Penn Undergraduate Economics Society: Energy policy fireside chat
- 2022 *Moderator*, Kleinman Center: [Are industry regulators ready for the climate transition?](#)
Speaker, Wharton ESG Initiative: [Wharton Climate Prof](#)
Panelist, Perry World House & Wharton Climate Center: Workshop on global climate finance
Panelist, AERE: Developing and managing a research agenda
Moderator, Wharton Africa Student Association and Energy & Climate Club: Clean energy in Africa
- 2021 *Speaker*, Energy for Growth: [Coffee Break Webinar](#)
Judge, US Association for Energy Economics: Best Student Paper award
Panelist, Wharton Risk Center: [Wharton Climate Prof](#)
Panelist, Economists for Equity at Berkeley: Womxn's Faculty and Alumni panel,
- 2020 *Panelist*, American Economic Association: LGBTQ Job Market panel
Panelist, Wharton Undergraduate Energy Group: Women in Energy

Guest lectures

- 2023 Wharton Public Policy Certificate Program (Energy and Environmental Policy)
UC Berkeley Summer School in Environmental and Energy Economics
University of Pennsylvania (HIST 1370-401 African Environmental History)
- 2022 Wharton Public Policy Certificate Program (Energy and Environmental Policy)
Strathmore University, Kenya (MS Sustainable Energy Transitions)
Wharton PhD program (BEPP 941 Development Economics)
Wharton Executive Education (Economics of Blockchain & Digital Assets)
- 2021 Virginia Tech (AAEC 3324 Environmental & Sustainable Development Economics)
Swarthmore University (ECON 044 Behavioral Economics)
- 2020 UC Berkeley (MBA 296 Applied Impact Evaluation)
- 2019 Beahrs Environmental Leadership Program (Impact Evaluation)
UC Berkeley (ECON 172 African Economic Development)
- 2016 CREEC, Makerere University, Uganda (Impact Evaluation)

Service

- 2023–2024 Senior/lateral recruiting committee, BEPP, Wharton
- 2022– Co-organizer, [Penn Development Economics Seminar](#)
- 2020– Co-organizer, [Energy Economics & Finance Seminar](#), Kleinman Center for Energy Policy

- 2022 Organizer, Wharton [Applied Economics Workshop](#)
- 2022 Organizer, Penn Development Conference on Climate Change & Environment
- 2021–2022 Junior recruiting committee, BEPP, Wharton
- 2020–2021 Committee on diversity and inclusion, BEPP, Wharton
- 2020–2021 MBA Studies Committee, BEPP, Wharton
- 2017–2018 PhD Admissions committee member, UC Berkeley Agricultural and Resource Economics

Professional activities

- 2023 Mentor, American Economic Association Committee on the Status of LGBTQ+ Individuals in the Economics Profession (AEA CSQIEP)
- 2022 CeMENT Mentee, American Economic Association Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession (AEA CSWEP)
- 2021 Faculty coach, Researcher matching programme, International Growth Centre
- 2017–2019 Leadership board, [Women in Economics at Berkeley](#)
- 2013–2014 Member of the editorial board, *Harvard LGBTQ Policy Journal*

Advising (graduation year and initial placement in parentheses)

- Martín Navarrete, *PhD Second year paper advisor*
- Peter Lughhart, *PhD Committee member*
- Prakash Mishra, *PhD Committee member* (2025: Post-doc at Dartmouth, Faculty at CalTech)

Other positions

- 2023 Yale University, Economic Growth Center – *Short-term visitor*
- 2017 UC Berkeley, Data and Decisions (MBA 200) – *Graduate Student Instructor*
- 2014–2020 UC Berkeley – *Graduate Student Researcher*
- 2013–2014 Harvard University, Kennedy School of Government – *EPoD Research Fellow*
- 2013 Yale University, Economics of Poverty Alleviation (ECON 327) – *Teaching Fellow*
- 2012 Yale University, Economics of Natural Resources (ECON 330) – *Teaching Fellow*
- 2010–2012 Citibank – *Analyst*

Languages

English (native), Dutch (native), French (advanced), Spanish (advanced), Swahili (conversant)

Citizenship

Netherlands (U.S. Permanent Resident)

January 6, 2026