

Susanna B. Berkouwer
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Research fields

Development economics, environmental economics

Academic appointments

University of Pennsylvania, The Wharton School	
Assistant Professor of Business Economics and Public Policy	2020–
Robert J. Aresty, W'63 Faculty Scholar	2022–2024
National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER)	
Faculty Research Fellow, Development Economics Program	2023–
Faculty Research Fellow, Environmental and Energy Economics Program	2023–

External affiliations

Affiliate, [Bureau for Research and Economic Analysis of Development \(BREAD\)](#)
Affiliate, [Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab \(J-PAL\)](#)
Fellow, [The Coase Project](#)
Fellow, [Energy for Growth Hub](#)

Internal affiliations

Fellow, Penn Environmental Innovations Initiative	
Affiliated faculty, Wharton Climate Center at the Wharton ESG Initiative	
Affiliated faculty, Penn Program on Regulation	
Affiliated faculty, Penn Development Research Initiative	
Affiliated faculty, Analytics at Wharton	
Scholar, Wharton Risk Center	2020–2022
Graduate Student Affiliate, Energy Institute at Haas	2015–2020

Education

Ph.D., Agricultural and Resource Economics, University of California, Berkeley	2014–2020
M.A., International and Development Economics, Yale University	2023–2013
B.Sc., Statistics (with Economics), University College London	2007–2010

Teaching

Microeconomics for Managers (MGEC 6110, Wharton MBA core)	Fall 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023
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Journal publications

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

Berkouwer, S. and J. Dean. 2022. “Credit, attention, and externalities in the adoption of energy efficient technologies by low-income households.” *American Economic Review* 122(10)1–41. [Available here](#).

Berkouwer, S., P. Biscaye, S. Puller, C. Wolfram. 2022. “Disbursing emergency relief through utilities: Evidence from Ghana.” *Journal of Development Economics* 156(C)102826. [Available here](#).

Berkouwer, S. 2020. “Electric heating and the effects of temperature on household electricity consumption in South Africa.” *The Energy Journal* 41(4)209–230. [Available here](#).

Working papers

Berkouwer, S. and J. Dean. 2023. “Pollution exposure and health: The role of private actions and environmental externalities in Nairobi”. [Available here](#).

- Wolfram, C., E. Miguel, E. Hsu, S. Berkouwer[Ⓔ]. 2023. “Donor contracting conditions and public procurement: Causal evidence from Kenyan electrification.” *Submitted*. [Available here](#). NBER WP30948.
- Berkouwer, S., M. Bariya, G. Flaspholer, M. Odero, J. Adkins, N. Klugman. 2023. “GridWatch: Revealing the nature of power quality and reliability challenges across urban and rural Africa at scale.” *Submitted*.
- Berkouwer, S., P. Biscaye, M. Mikdash, S. Puller, and C. Wolfram. 2023. “Voltage quality and economic activity.” Pre-analysis plan at [3ie RIDIE ID 928](#). Available upon request.
- Wolfram, C., S. Berkouwer, F. Vial, E. Hsu, O. Kim, E. Miguel[Ⓔ]. 2023. “Decomposing political favoritism in Kenyan mass electrification.”

Research in progress

- “Mitigating climate risk through parametric insurance,” with J. Dean
- “Economic inefficiency, morality, and the global cost of climate change mitigation,” with J. Dean
- “Understanding financial decision-making,” with J. Dean
- “Home energy improvements for low-income Philadelphia homeowners”

Other publications

- Klugman, N. J. Adkins, S. Berkouwer, K. Abrokwhah, 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. Abrokwhah, 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

- Private Enterprise Development in Low-Income Countries (PEDL), 2023 (\$50,000) with Joshua Dean
- J-PAL Social Protection Initiative, 2023 (\$7,500) with Joshua Dean
- Weiss Fund for Research in Development Economics, 2022 (\$87,209) 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
- International Growth Centre–Sierra Leone, 2020 (\$77,000) with Steven Puller and Catherine Wolfram
- International Growth Centre–Kenya, 2020 (\$25,000) with Eric Hsu, Oliver Kim, Kenneth Lee, Edward Miguel, and Catherine Wolfram
- Private Enterprise Development in Low-income Countries (PEDL), 2020 (\$46,500) with Eric Hsu, Kenneth Lee, Edward Miguel, and Catherine Wolfram
- DFID Energy for Economic Growth, 2020 (\$29,000) with Edward Miguel and 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 Economic Development and Institutions, 2018 (\$361,000) with Edward Miguel and Catherine Wolfram

Awards & Scholarships

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

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 Mack Institute for Innovation Management (\$62,000), Penn Global (\$74,000), 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)

Blog posts and policy briefs

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

6. Climate Crisis: Who does climate change hit the hardest? [The Ripple Podcast](#), 4/18/2023
5. Research spotlight: 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

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@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

Seminar and conference presentations (*scheduled)

- 2024 *St. Andrews
- 2023 *Calgary; *Yale; *IPA at Northwestern; *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; AEW; 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); CECA 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

Conferences & events

- 2023 *Speaker*, Energy Policy Fireside Chat, Penn Undergraduate Economics Society
2022 *Moderator*, [Are Industry Regulators Ready for the Climate Transition?](#), the Kleinman Center
Speaker, [Wharton Climate Prof](#), Wharton ESG Initiative
Panelist, Workshop on Global Climate Finance, Perry World House & Wharton Climate Center
Panelist, [Developing and managing a research agenda](#), AERE
Moderator, Clean Energy in Africa: Unfair & Impractical? [Wharton Africa Student Association](#) and the [Wharton Energy & Climate Club](#)
2021 *Speaker*, [Coffee Break Webinar](#), Energy for Growth
Judge, Best Student Paper award, US Association for Energy Economics
Panelist, [Wharton Climate Prof](#), Wharton Risk Center
Panelist, Womxn's Faculty and Alumni panel, Economists for Equity at Berkeley
2020 *Panelist*, LGBTQ Job Market panel, American Economic Association
Panelist, Women in Energy Event, Wharton Undergraduate Energy Group

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– 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*

Journal refereeing

American Economic Review, Journal of Political Economy, AEJ: Applied Economics, AEJ: Economic Policy, 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 Public Economics, Journal of the Association of Environmental and Resource Economists, Journal of the European Economic Association, Management Science, Nature Climate Change, Review of Economics and Statistics, Utilities Policy, World Bank Economic Review

Grant & conference reviewing

J-PAL King Climate Action Initiative (K-CAI), Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, Fund for Innovation in Development (FID), Private Enterprise Development in Low-Income Countries (PEDL)

Prior employment

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)

September 9, 2023