

## ELEANOR WISEMAN

### Contact Information

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### Employment

**Stanford University:** Postdoctoral Fellow (2023-2025)  
King Center on Global Development & Center for Food Security and the Environment  
**University of Wisconsin Madison:** Assistant Professor (2025)

### Doctoral Studies

University of California, Berkeley  
PhD, Agricultural and Resource Economics, Expected completion May 2023  
DISSERTATION: "Border Trade and Information Frictions: Evidence from Informal Traders in Kenya"

PRIMARY FIELD: Development Economics  
SECONDARY FIELD: Econometrics  
PRIMARY FIELDS OF RESEARCH: Development Economics, Trade, Political Economy

Professor Jeremy Magruder  
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Department of Agricultural  
& Resource Economics

Professor Edward Miguel  
emiguel@berkeley.edu  
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Department of Economics

Professor Elisabeth Sadoulet  
esadoulet@berkeley.edu  
Department of Agricultural  
& Resource Economics

Professor Tavneet Suri  
tavneet@mit.edu  
+1 (617) 2537159  
Sloan School, MIT

### Prior Education

<b>Yale University</b>	MA in International and Development Economics	2012
<b>Universite de Louvain-la-Neuve</b>	BA in Engineering, Economics and Management	2011
<b>University of Cambridge</b>	BA in Economics	2010

### Teaching

<b>UC Berkeley</b>	Department of Economics, <i>Pedagogy</i> , Instructor	2022
<b>UC Berkeley</b>	Masters in Development Practice, <i>Statistics</i> , Instructor	2017-2022
<b>STEG</b>	Macro Dev Course, <i>Barriers in Tech Adoption</i> , TA for Lauren Falcao	2021
<b>UC Berkeley</b>	Department of ARE, <i>Econometrics</i> , TA for Michael Anderson	2019

### Languages

English (native), French (native), Dutch (intermediate)

**Grants,  
Fellowships,  
and Awards**

J-Pal ATAI Grant  
CEGA Development Challenge  
J-Pal GI Grant  
J-Pal GI Pilot Grant  
ARE Travel Grant  
Levin Family Seed Grant  
WEAI Graduate Student Workshop Fellow  
Sidney Hoos prize for best econometrics research paper

**Research:  
Papers**

**"Border Trade and Information Frictions: Evidence from Informal Traders in Kenya" (JOB MARKET PAPER)**

In low- and middle-income countries, a large share of trade is conducted by small-scale informal traders – mostly women – and is missing from official trade statistics. Using the natural experiment of a border closing, a randomized controlled trial, and panel data collection, I study the role of information frictions in traders' choices of markets and border crossings at the Kenyan-Ugandan border and the consequences for livelihoods and prices in agriculture markets. First, I show that traders' choice of markets and routes is sticky. Second, some of this stickiness is driven by limited information about profitable arbitrage opportunities and true (tariff) costs of crossing the border. Third, I build a model incorporating these frictions, which I test using an RCT. I find that giving information on tariff costs and local prices to traders (via a cellphone platform) increases switching across markets and routes, leading to large increases in traders' profits and significant formalization of trade. Consistent with the model, information provision has general equilibrium effects – specifically, a 7% reduction in consumer prices in agricultural markets. Taken together, the results point to the centrality of information frictions in informal trade and highlight the promise of new information technology to ameliorate them.

(Coverage: [World Bank Development Impact Blog](#))

**"Corruption, gender, and small-scale cross-border trade in East Africa: A review"**, with Jacqueline M. Klopp and Melissa Trimble; *Development Policy Review*, 40(5), 2021.

Small-scale, cross-border trade is critically important to livelihoods and food security in East Africa, but bribes, harassment and violence remain a serious problem. This paper critically and systematically reviews a growing and diverse literature on small-scale, cross-border trade, corruption and gender. The aim is to synthesize and assess the current state of knowledge, highlight progress and gaps, and assess the potential of anti-corruption programs to address the needs of traders, lowering bribes and reducing harassment and violence. We found that research is drawing on diverse methods, leveraging ubiquitous cell phones and focusing on trader networks, their gendered interactions with state border actors. More work could focus on state actors and their internal interactions, including the police. Questions remain around what determines how bribes function, the norms around them and their levels as well as how well trader associations, civil society and formal and informal platforms for dialogue between traders and border government actors work to improve conditions. Understanding how traders choose between formal and informal pathways and how dynamics around how these different pathways interact is also critical. We see a growing variety of anti-corruption strategies drawing on the accumulated knowledge, as well as some experimentation in approach, with some successes.

(Coverage: [ODI Blog](#))

**Research:  
Completed  
Working  
Papers**

**"Private Input Suppliers as Information Agents for Technology Adoption in Agriculture"**, with Manzoor H. Dar, Kyle Emerick, Alain de Janvry and Elisabeth Sadoulet; *R&R, AEJ Applied*, 2022.

Information frictions limit the adoption of new agricultural technologies in developing countries. Most public-sector interventions to eliminate these frictions target information directly at selected farmers. We show that an information intervention targeted at private input suppliers increases farmer-level adoption by over 50 percent compared to this public-sector approach. These newly informed suppliers become more proactive in carrying the new variety, informing potential customers, and inducing increased adoption by those most likely to benefit from the technology. Seeking to increase profits via expanded sales offers the most likely motive for these results.

(Coverage: [Vox Dev](#))

**"Poisoned by Policy: The Impact of the Flint Water Crisis on Political Participation"**, with Kate Pennington, *Submitted*, 2022.

We study changes in voting, new voter registration, and candidate choice in response to a criminal government failure which exposed one in twelve households in Flint, MI to lead in their tap water. We compare changes in outcomes for voters who received home lead test results just before versus just after an election. We find that Flint water crisis, widely understood as the result of institutional racism, caused stark racial divergence in political participation between Black and White voters. Black voters increased turnout, accelerated registration, and rejected the incumbent, while White voters did not change their voting behavior.

**Research:  
Completed  
Working  
Papers  
(cont.)**

**"Inter-dependencies between Formal and Informal Trade: Border Restrictions and Corruption in Kenya"**, 2021.

*{Previously circulated as: "Trade, Informality and Corruption: Evidence from Small-scale Traders in Kenya"}*

Using Covid-19 trade restrictions as a shock, I shed light on the role informal trade plays in the economy, the characteristics of the traders who engage in such trade, the costs/intermediaries they face and how this affects their behaviors. I also explore the relationship between formal and informal trade channels: beyond contributing to the literature that looks at the elasticity of informal trade with respect to tariffs, I look at the inter-dependencies between equilibrium costs incurred along formal and informal trade routes, including bribes. Collecting over 10 rounds of high frequency panel data, I show that over the course of a month, trade restrictions drove over 20% of traders out of business, while a majority of cross-border traders switched to domestic supply chains. The remaining cross-border traders shifted to using informal border crossings and I estimate a resulting increase in the incidence of corruption, amount of bribes paid and harassment by officials and the police; reinforcing the existence of inter-dependencies between formal and informal crossings and the need to consider both sectors when designing policy. I also show heterogeneity in resilience based on gender, industry and trader type.

(Coverage: [IGC Blog](#))

**"Should Voters be Allowed to Register Anywhere: Evidence from Kenya"** with Rahul Deb and Tavneet Suri, 2017.

*{Previously circulated as: "Do People Register and Vote Strategically: Evidence from the 2013 Kenyan Election"}*

This paper examines the role played by tribalism in voting behavior in Kenya. Using the 2013 Kenyan General Elections as context, this paper studies whether individuals register to vote in different counties to where they live, to make their vote count. As individuals in Kenya tend to vote along tribal lines, strategic registration implies registering in counties where their vote can affect the election outcome of the candidate of their own tribe. Using variation in the share of individuals' tribes in different counties, the paper shows how differential tribal shares in own county affects their decision to move to register in another county. Individuals have a higher probability of moving to register in a different county than their own if they either belong to a large majority or a small minority tribe in their county. Moreover, individuals' probability of choosing to register in a county increases with their own tribal share in that county, until the tribal share is past the majority (70-80%); at which point the probability of registering in that county decreases with individuals' tribe share. Both of those results provide evidence that individuals register to vote strategically: not only they avoid registering in their own county when their vote does not count but also strategically choose to register in counties where they can make a difference.

**Research in Progress**      **"The Effect of Cash Transfers and Village Savings Groups on Youth"** with Jeremy Magruder and Ben Krause  
(Data Collection & Data Analysis completed)  
[Abstract](#)

**"Bargaining for a Bribe: an Audit Study with Traders"**.  
(Data Collection & Data Analysis completed, Draft in progress)  
[Abstract](#)

**"Diffusion Mechanism in Technology Adoption: How do Entry Points Matter?"** with Elisabeth Sadoulet and Alain de Janvry.  
(Data Collection & Data Analysis completed, Draft in progress)  
[Abstract](#)

**"Market Integration, Contracts and Value Chain: Winners and Losers"**.  
(Data Collection completed)

**"You Leave, You Lose: the Value of Stall Placement in Kenyan markets"**.  
(Data Collection completed)

<b>Prior Employment</b>	<b>UC Berkeley</b> , Graduate Student Researcher (Prof Jeremy Magruder)	2018 - 2020
	<b>UC Berkeley</b> , Graduate Student Researcher (Prof Elisabeth Sadoulet)	2016 - 2017
	<b>McKinsey and Co</b> , Junior Associate	2014 - 2015
	<b>J-Pal</b> , Project Manager (Prof Tavneet Suri)	2012 - 2014

<b>Talks</b>	2022	UC Berkeley ARE Seminar, UC Berkeley Development Seminar, UC Berkeley Development Workshop, UC Berkeley Development Lunch, UC Berkeley Trade Lunch, NEUDC
	2021	IPES, UC Berkeley Trade Lunch, WIDER, UC Berkeley Development Workshop, UC Berkeley Development Lunch
	2020	WEAI, UC Berkeley Development Lunch, SANEM, UC Berkeley Development Workshop, BESSBEC, NEUDC, UC Berkeley PERL, CEGA
	2019	UC Berkeley Development Lunch, UC Berkeley Development Workshop, MIT Development Lunch
	2018	UC Berkeley Development Lunch, KU Leuven

**Refereeing**      *Journal of Development Economics, Economic Development and Cultural Change*

**Activities**      2020 - 2021    Member of the DEI committee  
2017 - 2019    Leadership Board, [Women in Economics at Berkeley](#)