

Professor Ben D'Exelle

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My research aims to improve our understanding of individual behaviour and decision-making, and how this is influenced by social interaction within households and communities. I apply this to a variety of domains, such as development, environment, labour, gender, health, and agriculture. Most of my research is conducted in low- and middle-income countries, driven by the need to develop more effective policies that tackle the most urgent problems in these countries. I make ample use of experiments, either in the form of randomized control trials, or lab experiments conducted online, in computer labs or in the field. I have completed projects in Uganda, Tanzania, Burkina Faso, Nicaragua, Colombia, and Peru. I am involved in new fieldwork in Bangladesh, Ivory Coast, and the Dominican Republic.

I am affiliated to the [Centre for Behavioural and Experimental Social Sciences \(CBESS\)](#) and member of the following research groups at UEA: [Behavioural Economics](#), [Behavioural and Experimental Development Economics](#) (BEDERG) and [Environment, Resources and Conflict](#). I am also member of [CSERGE](#), collaborator at the [Norwich Institute for Sustainable Development](#), IZA fellow, and full member of the European Development Research Network (EUDN).

Academic History

2017-present	Full professor of Economics, University of East Anglia, UK.
2013-2017	Associate Professor of Economics, University of East Anglia, UK.
2010-2013	Assistant Professor of Economics, UK.
2011-2012	Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education Practice, UEA (UK).
2008-2010	Post-doctoral researcher, Radboud University (Netherlands).
2004-2008	PhD, Economics, Maastricht University, Netherlands.
2002-2008	Research fellow at the Institute of Development Policy (IOB), University of Antwerp (Belgium).
1998-2002	Resident researcher, Central American University, Nicaragua.
1998	MPhil, Doctoral program in Economics (cum laude), University of Antwerp, Belgium.
1997	MSc. Applied Economics / Engineering Science (cum laude), University of Antwerp, Belgium.

Academic Publications

1. (with R. Habraken and A. Verschoor). "Effort and Social Comparison: Experimental Evidence from Uganda". *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, forthcoming.
2. (with A. Munro & A. Verschoor). "Investment Behavior and Contingency: Experimental Evidence", *World Development*, 173, January 2024.

3. (with L. Ignowski). “Friends in the Village: Do They Matter for Women’s Agency in Household Decisions?”. *Journal of Population Economics*, 2023.
4. (with A. Lepine, R. Bakyono, and L. Tapsoba). “Fertility and Polygyny: Experimental Evidence from Burkina Faso”. *Journal of Development Economics*, volume 164, 103134, 2023.
5. (with A. Verschoor). “Village Networks and Entrepreneurial Farming in Uganda”, *World Development*, 267(July), 2023.
6. (with C. Gutekunst and A. Riedl). “The Effect of Gender and Gender Pairing on Bargaining: Evidence from an Artefactual Field Experiment”, *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, January issue: 237-269, 2023.
7. (with R. Habraken and A. Verschoor) “What Should I Aspire To? Peer Effects in Adolescents’ Friendship Networks”, *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 72(1), 2023.
8. (with C. Ringdal) “Women's Use of Family Planning Services: An Experiment on the Husband’s Involvement”. *Journal of Development Economics*, 2022.
9. (with A. Verschoor). “Probability Weighting for Losses and for Gains among Smallholder Farmers in Uganda”, *Theory and Decision* 92: 223-258, 2022.
10. (with L. Ignowski) “Intra-household Resource Allocation in Rural Tanzania: Why Women Care about Disclosure”, *Journal of Development Studies* 58: 2021-2043, 2022.
11. (with P. Clist and A. Verschoor). “An Endowment Effect for Risk Levels: Evidence from a Ugandan Lab”, *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*: 297-310, 2021.
12. (with H. Fuhrmann and A. Verschoor). “The Role of Preferences for Pro-Environmental Behavior among Urban Middle-Class Households in Peru”, *Ecological Economics* 180, 2021.
13. (with A. Lepine and C. Treibich). “Nothing but the Truth: Consistency and Efficiency of the List Experiment Method for the Measurement of Sensitive Health Behaviours”, *Social Science & Medicine* 266, 2020.
14. (with R. Bakyono, L. Tapsoba, A. Lépine, A. Berthé, P.G. Ilboudo, C.O. Diallo and N. Méda). “Contraceptive Use by Married Women or Concubines Living in Rural Areas in Burkina Faso: A Qualitative Study of Free Voucher Use”, *Pan African Medical Journal* 37(72), 2020.
15. (with A. Riedl). “Gender Inequality and Resource Sharing: Evidence from Rural Nicaragua”, *Journal of Development Perspectives*, vol. 2 (1-2): 62-87, 2019.
16. (with M. Osborne and A. Verschoor). “Truly Reconciled? A Dyadic Analysis of Post-Conflict Social Reintegration in Northern Uganda”, *Journal of Peace Research* 55 (1): 107-121. 2018.
17. (with E. Coleman, and M.C. Lopez). “Community-Driven Reconstruction in Colombia: An Experimental Study of Collective Action beyond Program Beneficiaries”, *World Development* 101: 188-201, 2018.
18. (with J. Westeneng). “Reproductive Health and Bodily Integrity in Tanzania”, *Studies in Family Planning* 48 (4): 323-341, 2017.
19. (with A Verschoor and B. Perez-Viana). “Lab and Life: Does Risky Choice Behavior Observed in Experiments Reflect that in the Real World?”, *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization* 128: 134-148, 2016.

20. (with A. Verschoor). "Investment Behavior, Risk Sharing and Social Distance", *Economic Journal* 125(585): 777–802, 2015.
21. (with A. Lahno, M. Serra-Garcia, and A. Verschoor). "Conflicting Risk Attitudes", *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization* 118: 136-149, 2015.
22. (with J. Westeneng). "How Economic Empowerment Reduces Women's Reproductive Health Vulnerability: Evidence from Northern Tanzania", *Journal of Development Studies* 51(11): 1459-1474, 2015
23. (with B. Van Campenhout and E. Lecoutere). "Inter-Temporal and Spatial Price Dispersion Patterns and the Well-Being of Maize Producers in Southern Tanzania", *Journal of African Economies* 24(2): 230–253, 2015.
24. (with E. Lecoutere and B. Van Campenhout). "Equity-Efficiency Optimizing Resource Allocation: The Role of Time Preferences in a Repeated Irrigation Game", *Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics* 77(2): 234–253, 2015.
25. (with E. Lecoutere and B. Van Campenhout). "Sharing Common Resources in Patriarchal and Status Based Societies: Evidence from Tanzania", *Feminist Economics* 21(3): 142-167, 2015.
26. (with M. van den Berg). "Aid Distribution and Cooperation in Unequal Communities", *Review of Income and Wealth* 60(1): 114-132, 2014.
27. (with P.C. Ilboudo and S. Russell). "Long Term Impact of Obstetric Complications for Women and Their Households in Burkina Faso", *PLOS ONE* 8(11) (November), 2013.
28. (with B. van Rijsbergen). "Delivery Care in Tanzania: A Comparative Analysis of Use and Preferences", *World Development* 43 (March): 276-287, 2013.
29. (with A. Riedl). "Resource Allocations and Disapproval Voting in Unequal Groups", *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 57(4) (August): 627-652, 2013.
30. "Conflicting Views of Fairness in Aid Distribution: Evidence from Rural Nicaragua", *European Journal of Development Research* 25(1): 112-128, 2013.
31. (with E. Lecoutere and B. Van Campenhout). "Equity-Efficiency Trade-Offs in Irrigation Water Sharing: Evidence from a Field Lab in Rural Tanzania", *World Development* 40(12): 2537–2551, 2012.
32. (with B. Van Campenhout and E. Lecoutere). "Modernization and Time Preferences in Tanzania: Evidence from a Large-Scale Elicitation Exercise", *Journal of Development Studies* 48(4): 564-580, 2012.
33. (with N. Holvoet). "Gender and Network Formation in Rural Nicaragua: A Village Case Study", *Feminist Economics* 17(2): 31-61, 2011.
34. (with G. Cecilia Aryeetey, C. Jehu-Appiah, E. Spaan, I. Agyepong, R. Baltussen). "Identification of the Poor for Premium Exemptions in Ghana's National Health Insurance Scheme: An Empirical Analysis of Three Strategies", *Tropical Medicine and International Health* 15(12): 1544-1552, 2010.
35. "Excluded Again: Village Politics at the Aid Interface", *Journal of Development Studies* 45(9): 1-18, 2009.
36. (with T. De Herdt). "Fairness", in: Peil, J. & van Staveren, I. (eds.) *Handbook of Economics and Ethics*, Edward Elgar Publishing, pp.152-158, 2009.
37. *Inequality, Networks and Exclusion: Distributive Decision Making in Small-scale Societies*, Maastricht University Press, 2008.

38. (with T. De Herdt). “La Vulnérabilité vis-à-vis d'autres Personnes: Leçons pour les Interventions de Pauvreté”, *Mondes en développement* 140(4): 115-124, 2007.
39. (with J. Bastiaensen & T. De Herdt). “Poverty Reduction as a Local Institutional Process”, *World Development* 33(6): 979-993, 2005.
40. (with J. Bastiaensen and M. Alemán). “Microcredit and the Alleviation of Rural Poverty”, in: *Microfinance in Nicaragua*, van Dijck P. [edit.], e.a. Amsterdam, Cuadernos del CEDLA, 22-47, 2004.
41. (with J. Bastiaensen). “The Consolidation of Agrarian Reform in Northern Masaya: Property Rights, Missing Markets and Perspectives for Agricultural Diversification” in Ruben, R. & J. Bastiaensen (eds.) *Markets and Local Governance for Rural Development in Central America*, MacMillan, 1999.

Research Funding

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| 2023-2025 | <p>An impact evaluation of the INAPI program in the Dominican Republic, funded by the World Bank (US\$ 280,000).</p> <p>In collaboration with the government of the Dominican Republic, this project will use a randomized controlled trial (RCT) to evaluate the impact of free childcare on female labour force participation, children’s development, and intra-household dynamics.</p> |
| 2023-2024 | PVC impact funding (UEA) “Childcare in the Dominican Republic” (£5,000). |
| 2020-2021 | <p>Designing insurance to give smallholders a safe way out of poverty, ESRC, £10,000 (Co-PI).</p> <p>In this project, we design new insurance services that are adapted to the needs of poor farmers. Most farmers face extraordinary hazardous environment which make it difficult for them to make the productive investments that provide a way out of poverty. By offering insurance services that deal with investment risks, they can be offered a safe strategy to increase agricultural productivity and earnings.</p> |
| 2020-2021 | <p>GCRF Rapid Response funds. “Boosting Recycling Behavior Amongst Urban Households in Peru – A Field Experiment on the Role of Trending Norms”, £9,095, Principal investigator (PI).</p> <p>This project designs two behavioural interventions to increase participation in a recycling programme in Lima, Peru’s capital. It evaluates the impact of social norms around recycling behaviour on sign-up rates, using an RCT with 1700 respondents. To increase recycling frequency among those who signed up, the effectiveness of reminders is tested with a second RCT with 1400 respondents.</p> |
| 2016-2019 | <p>A Behavioural Economic Analysis of Reproductive Health in Burkina Faso and Tanzania, £493,452. DFID/ESRC. Principal investigator (PI).</p> <p>This project aims to increase our knowledge about the decision-making processes around the use of modern contraceptives in Burkina Faso and Tanzania. For this, we use a set of field experiments to test the effect of the husband’s involvement on the uptake of contraceptives. We also look at the importance of beliefs about spousal preferences (Tanzania), and the role of polygamy (Burkina Faso).</p> <p>https://gtr.ukri.org/projects?ref=ES%2FN014618%2F1</p> |
| 2015 | <p>Consultancy Generali £28,000.00, funded by General Insurance S.p.A</p> <p>This consultancy assisted Generali with the development of its “Human Safety Net” initiative, which intended to enhance resilience and mitigate risk for the population of the developing world. This was part of the company’s corporate social responsibility</p> |

strategy, which intended to make a real difference to communities, as well as engage staff and customers alike.

- 2012-2015 A Behavioural Economic Analysis of Agricultural Investment Decisions in Uganda, £348,443. DFID/ESRC. Co-PI.
This project uses behavioural economic research methods to advance our understanding of the decision-making habits of poor farmers in Uganda. Specifically, we look at the role of probability weighting, and we investigate how investment behaviour is influenced by anticipated risk-sharing by community members.
<https://gtr.ukri.org/projects?ref=ES%2FJ008893%2F1>
- 2014-2015 The Role of Social Networks in Small-Scale Societies for Coordination and Bargaining in Rural Uganda, £6,453, funded by Maastricht University, Netherlands, Co-PI.
In this project, we use newly designed field experiments to test whether proximity in social networks improves coordination, and whether individual degree in trade networks increases power in bargaining settings.
- 2010-2012 Population, Reproductive Health, and Economic Development, £17,286, funded by Nijmegen Institute for Social and Cultural Research, Netherlands, Co-PI.
In this project, we make use of existing DHS data, LSMS panel data and newly collected data in Tanzania to analyse the bidirectional relation between women's empowerment and reproductive health.
- 2008-2010 Impact of Reproductive Health Services on Socio-Economic Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: Connecting Evidence at Macro, Meso, and Micro-Level. €549,911. Netherlands Science Council (WOTRO) and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation (2008- 2012). Research team coordinator.
This project aims to increase our understanding of the impact of reproductive health services on social and economic development. It analyses the relations and interactions between reproductive health and poverty at individual/household, community, and district level.
- 2008 Research grant from the University of Antwerp to conduct research on smallholder farmers in Tanzania, with Bjorn Van Campenhout and Els Lecoutere, USD 45,000.

PhD Students

1. Judith Westeneng (Radboud University): "Power and Pregnancies: Disentangling Causes and Consequences of Safe Motherhood in Tanzania", defended 2015, supervisor.
2. Matt Osborne (UEA): "Post-Conflict Social Reintegration in Northern Uganda: An Analysis Using Experimental, Social Tie and Conflict Survey Data", defended 2015, supervisor.
3. Jake Lomax (UEA): "Wartime Threats and Displacement Decisions" (2015), internal examiner.
4. Adrian Villasenor (UEA): "Inequality, Relative Deprivation and Human Development Outcomes in Mexico (2015), internal examiner.
5. Martha Ross (Wageningen University): "Leveraging Social Networks for Agricultural Development" (2017), external examiner.

6. Borja Perez-Viana (UEA): “Risk and Development: An Experimental Study of Insurance Demand and Risky Decision Making in Rural Uganda”, defended 2018, supervisor.
7. Rik Habraken (UEA): “Youth Aspirations, Gender, and Peer Influences in Eastern Uganda”, defended 2018, supervisor.
8. Charlotte Ringdal (NHH Norwegian School of Economics, Norway): “Essays on Women’s Bargaining Power and Household Decision-Making”, defended December 2018, external supervisor.
9. Lisette Swart (VU Amsterdam): “Less Now or More Later? Essays on the Measurement of Time Preferences in Economic Experiments” (2018), external examiner.
10. Liz Ignowski (KU Leuven, Belgium): “Essays in Development Economics”, defended June 2020, external supervisor.
11. Ellis Q. Magee (Florida State University): “Essays in the Economics of Mental Health”, external committee member, defended July 2021.
12. Deanna Karapetyan (UEA): “Environmental Degradation and Social Capital”, defended June 2022, internal examiner.
13. Hanna Fuhrman (UEA): “Motivations and Incentives for Pro-Environmental Behaviour in Peru: A Behavioural and Experimental Economics Analysis”, defended November 2022, supervisor.
14. Christine Gutekunst (Maastricht University): “Games on a Network: Experimental Evidence from Rural Nicaragua”, June 2024, external supervisor.
15. Shanali Pethiyagoda (UEA): provisional title “Seaweed Farming and Intra-Household Decision-Making in Zanzibar”, expected 2025, supervisor.
16. Atiya Rahman (UEA): provisional title “Intimate Partner Violence in Bangladesh”, expected 2025, supervisor.
17. Rabea Hinsching (UEA): provisional title “Mining in Africa”, expected 2025, supervisor.