

Paul Vanags

Centre for Human Brain Health (CHBH), School of Psychology
University of Birmingham, Birmingham B15 2TT, United Kingdom
paulvanags@gmail.com

Combining substantial experience of commercial / NGO management and leadership with academic excellence to produce research that makes a difference to the world

EDUCATION

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 2022 – 2025 | 1+3 Year Ph.D. in Psychology – Funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (UKRI)
Centre for Human Brain Health, University of Birmingham, UK <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Main topic: Neural and computational mechanisms of prosociality in human social groups• 3-month placement at Institute of Cognitive Science (CNRS), Lyon. Dr. Seongmin Park• Supervisors: Prof. Patricia Lockwood, Prof. Ian Apperly, Dr Jo Cutler |
| 2021 - 2023 | Graduate Certificate in Theoretical Statistics and Probability – Distinction (Grade 95%)
The Open University, UK |
| 2021 – 2022 | M.A. in Social Science Research – Distinction
School of Government, University of Birmingham, UK <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dissertation: <i>Beneficent elders? A global survey of prosociality and age</i> (Distinction) |
| 2020 – 2021 | M.Sc. in Cognitive Neuroscience – Distinction (Grade 90%, highest achieving student and best dissertation awards)
University of Reading, UK <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dissertation: <i>A longitudinal study on the moralisation of e-waste</i> (mark: 95%) |
| 2019 – 2020 | M.Sc. in Psychology – Distinction (Highest grade in cohort student and best dissertation award)
Oxford Brookes University, UK <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dissertation: <i>The importance of moral framing in pro-environmental behaviour – a field study</i> (mark: 90%) |
| 1998-1992 | B.A. in Chemistry – 2:1
University of Oxford, UK |

EMPLOYMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 2018 – 2019 | Director of Fundraising and Marketing
War Child UK <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Board position; responsibilities long-term strategy and organisational structure |
| 2008 - 2017 | Head of Public Fundraising
Oxfam GB <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leading a team of 60+ marketing and fundraising professionals responsible for over £85m p.a. income and annual budget of over £15m• Industry thought-leadership, member of Rogare think-tank focusing on application of Behavioural Economics and psychology of altruism (blog thinkingfundraising.com) |

SKILLS

Programming & Software	Matlab (inc SPM), R, Python, javascript, html/css, Psychtoolbox
Methods	Online behavioural tasks (Gorilla, bespoke web application) and surveys (Qualtrics), fMRI data collection (planned Spring '25) and analysis
Data analysis and visualisation	Using R for publication quality visualisations and model-free analysis e.g. linear mixed models, cluster analysis, mediation, time-series
Academic writing	Three distinction level dissertations and a published paper
Computational modelling	Agent based models and simulation, trial-by-trial parametric modelling

AWARDS

2021	Academic Achievement Award for highest achieving Psychology MSc student (University of Reading)
2021	MSc Psychology Dissertation Award (University of Reading)
2020	Psychology Dissertation Award (Oxford Brookes University)
2020	Psychology Masters Award for highest overall average grade in cohort (Oxford Brookes University)

GRANTS

2024	Guarantors of Brain Travel Grant to attend and present a poster at the Society for Neuroeconomics Meeting in Cascais, Portugal (£600)
2024	ESRC Overseas Institutional Visit 3 months funding for placement at Institute of Cognitive Science, Lyon with Dr Seongmin Park (£3,000)
2022	ESRC 1+3 PhD Studentship covering fees and annual stipend for doctoral research (£85,000)
2021	Reading University Masters fund award to support research costs for dissertation (£200)

PUBLICATIONS

Vanags, P.*, Cutler, J.*, Kosse, F., & Lockwood, P.L. ([in press 2025](#)). Greater income and financial well-being are associated with higher prosocial preferences and behaviors across 76 countries. PNAS Nexus. Pre-print <https://osf.io/z35fm/>

Vanags, P., Cutler, J., Apps, M., Apperly, I., Park, S., Konovalov, A., & Lockwood, P.L. (in prep). Mechanisms of prosociality in human social groups.

- Novel online multi-player game based on social foraging theory. Paper will include online study, replication each with 200+ participants, and an fMRI study with 40 healthy adults

Vanags, P., Francis, K., McNabb, C. (pre-print) A longitudinal study on the moralisation of e-waste. <https://osf.io/nga9u/>

Vanags, P., Baimel, A. (pre-print) The importance of moral framing in pro-environmental behaviour. <https://osf.io/85wa6/>

**equal contributions*

PEER REVIEW

Communications Psychology*
(* in partnership with Early Career Fellow)

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Vanags, P., Cutler, J., Konovalov, A., Park, S., Apps, M., & Lockwood, P.L. (2024, Oct). *Mechanisms of prosociality in human social groups*. [Poster]. ‘En route to social interaction’ seminar, Institute of Cognitive Science, Lyon

Vanags, P., Cutler, J., Konovalov, A., Park, S., Apps, M., & Lockwood, P.L. (2024, Oct). *Mechanisms of prosociality in human social groups*. [Poster]. Society for Neuroeconomics Meeting. Cascais, Portugal.

Vanags, P., Cutler, J., Konovalov, A., Park, S., Apps, M., & Lockwood, P.L. (2024, Oct). *Mechanisms of prosociality in human social groups*. [Short talk]. School of Psychology Research Event. University of Birmingham, U.K.

Vanags, P.*, Cutler, J.*, Kosse, F., & Lockwood, P.L. (2023, Oct.). *Greater income and financial well-being are associated with higher prosocial preferences and behaviors across 76 countries* [Poster]. Motivational and Cognitive Control Conference. Lyon, France.

Vanags, P., Cutler, J., M., & Lockwood, P.L. (2023, June) *New methods in social decision neuroscience: using animal foraging models to understand human prosociality in resource scarce environments*. [Short talk] Midlands Graduate School conference, Aston University

Vanags, P.*, Cutler, J.*, Kosse, F., & Lockwood, P.L. (2023, June.). *Greater income and financial well-being are associated with higher prosocial preferences and behaviors across 76 countries* [Poster]. Midlands Graduate School, Summer Seminar, Warwick

Vanags, P.*, Cutler, J.*, Kosse, F., & Lockwood, P.L. (2023, Jan). *Ageing and prosociality*. [Short talk]. DataFest, University of Nottingham

**equal contributions to the work presented*

ADDITIONAL COURSES AND TRAINING

2023	Introduction to Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (UoB)
2022	Research Project Management (UoB)
2022	Getting published (UoB)
2021	General User training for fMRI (UoB)
2020	General User training for fMRI (University of Reading)

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

2025	Pint of Science Festival <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Do those with more, give more?” (May ’25)
2020	Oxford Psychology Society journal <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opinion piece
2015 – 2017	Fundraising <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personal blog regarding fundraising issues: thinkingfundraising.com• Translational collaboration with LSE (blog)