A Combination of Positive and Negative Niche

Construction Favors the Evolution of

Cooperation

TODO

5 Abstract

Through their interactions, their activities, and even their mere presence, organisms change the environment for themselves and others. This "niche construction" process becomes particularly interesting when it creates evolutionary feedback, whereby selective pressures are altered in response to environmental change. Here we consider how niche construction influences the evolution of cooperation, which has been a long-standing challenge to evolutionary theory. We simulate populations of individuals that cooperatively produce a public good that permits increased growth in a stressful environment and investigate how local- and global-scale niche construction affects the ability of these populations to resist invasion by non-producing cheats. We find that niche construction profoundly impacts the evolution of cooperation by creating new opportunities for adaptation. Cooperators are able to escape subversion

- by cheats as long as niche construction clears these paths of adaptation.
- This work provides a crucial step towards understanding how evolution
- occurs in complex environments like those found in nature.

22 Introduction

Cooperative behaviors are common across all branches of the tree of life. Insects divide labor within their colonies, plants and soil bacteria exchange essential nutrients, birds care for others' young, and the trillions of cells in the human body restrain their growth and coordinate to provide vital functions. Each instance of cooperation presents an evolutionary challenge: How can individuals that sacrifice their own well-being to help others avoid subversion by those that do not? Over time, we would expect these defectors to rise in abundance at the expense of others, eventually driving cooperators—and perhaps the entire population—to extinction. Several factors can prevent this tragedy of the commons (Hamilton, 1964; Hardin, 1968; Nowak, 2006; West et al., 2007b). For example, cooperators must benefit more from the cooperative act than others. This can occur when cooperators are clustered together in spatially structured populations (Fletcher 35 and Doebeli, 2009; Nadell et al., 2010; Kuzdzal-Fick et al., 2011) or when co-36 operators use communication (Brown and Johnstone, 2001; Darch et al., 2012) or other cues (Sinervo et al., 2006; Gardner and West, 2010; Veelders et al., 2010) to cooperate conditionally with kin. Interestingly, cooperation can also be bolstered by genetic linkage with self-benefitting traits (Foster et al., 2004;

Dandekar et al., 2012; Asfahl et al., 2015), setting the stage for an "adaptive race" in which cooperators and defectors vie for the first highly-beneficial adaptation (Waite and Shou, 2012; Morgan et al., 2012). Hammarlund et al. (2015) recently showed that in spatially structured populations, cooperators can gain a substantial leg up on defectors in an adaptive race. Specifically, cooperative behavior increases local population density, thus increasing the likelihood of acquiring beneficial mutations. By hitchhiking along with these adaptations, the cooperative trait can rapidly rise in abundance. Nevertheless, this advantage is fleeting. As soon as the opportunities for adaptation are exhausted, cooperators are once again at a disadvantage against defectors. However, Hammarlund et al. (2015) demonstrated that cooperation can be maintained indefinitely when frequent environmental changes produce a steady stream of adaptive opportunities. Although organisms typically find themselves in dynamic environments, change might not occur at a rate that provides sufficient adaptive opportunities to ensure long-term cooperator persistence.

In this work, we demonstrate how cooperation can be maintained indefinitely by niche construction. We expand upon the model presented in Hammarlund et al. (2015) to allow populations to alter their local environment. As environments change, so too does selection. This creates an eco-evolutionary feedback whereby selection is dependent on current genotypes, and the composition of genotypes is dependent on selection. Niche construction can be positive or negative, depending on whether the environmental change increases or decreases the fitness of the niche-constructing individual. Although niche construction

occurs independently of cooperation in our model, the increase in density that
results from cooperation has a profound effect on how populations evolve in
the presence of selective feedbacks. First, these populations exert greater influence on their environments, which better enables them to benefit from positive niche construction. And as environments change, either through negative
niche construction or external influences, these larger populations can adapt
more quickly. We show that it is the combination of these factors that allows
cooperation to persist.

73 Stuff to be cut/integrated above

As populations construct unique niches, they potentially decrease the threat
of invasion from neighboring patches. This occurs when the traits that were
advantageous in an immigrant's home niche are maladaptive elsewhere. Because environmental change is influenced solely by non-social phenotypes in
this model, this change of invasibility affects cooperators and defectors equally.
Here again, however, populations containing a greater number of cooperators
may have an advantage. The greater number of individuals that emigrate from
these larger populations allow them to "export" their niche—and thus reduce
the fitness of neighboring competitors—at a higher rate. We explore whether
the range expansion that this process enables provides additional opportunities
for cooperation to hitchhike.

Finally, we demonstrate how *negative* niche construction, where populations change their environment in ways that reduce fitness, can further support

cooperation. Even though the niche construction process creates selective feedbacks, we would expect the magnitude of these feedbacks to decrease as populations evolve. Once individuals can no longer gain adaptations that compensate for the costs of cooperation, they are then outcompeted by non-cooperators. However if populations construct their environment in a way which decreases fitness, cooperation can still hitchhike when this change also creates the opportunity to gain compensatory adaptations.

94 Methods

We build upon the model described in Hammarlund et al. (2015), in which cooperators and defectors compete and evolve in a metapopulation (a collection
of populations). Individuals in each of the populations reproduce, mutate, and
migrate to neighboring populations. Importantly, adaptation that is independent of cooperation can occur. In our model here, we further allow populations
to modify their local environment, and these modifications feed back to affect
selection.

102 Model Description

Our simulated environment consists of N^2 patches arranged as an $N \times N$ lattice (see Table 1 for model parameters and their values), where each patch can support a population. Each individual in a population has a genotype, which is an ordered list of L+1 integers (loci). The first L loci are adaptive

loci, and are each occupied by 0 or an integer from the set $A \equiv \{1, 2, \dots, a_{max}\},\$ 107 where a_{max} is the number of alleles conferring a selective benefit. Specifically, 108 the presence of a non-zero allele at any of these loci represents an adaptation 109 that confers fitness benefit δ . A binary allele at locus L+1 determines whether 110 or not that individual is a cooperator. Individuals with allelic state 1 at this 111 locus are cooperators, carrying a cost c, while individuals with allelic state 0 112 are defectors. When $\delta \geq c$, a minimally adapted cooperator recoups the cost 113 of cooperation. Equation 1 defines function n(a, l), which gives the number 114 of individuals in the population with allelic state a at locus l. $I_x(y)$ indicates 115 whether the allelic state y matches allelic state x (1) or not (0), and $\gamma(i)$ is 116 the genotype of individual i. 117

$$n(a,l) = \sum_{i \in P} I_{a_{g,l}}(a_{\gamma(i),l}) \tag{1}$$

Organisms also influence their environment, which, in turn, influences selection. We model this as a form of density dependent selection. Specifically, 119 the selective value of adaptive allele a at locus l increases with the number 120 of individuals in the population that have allele a-1 at locus l-1. We 121 treat both adaptive loci and allelic states as "circular", so the allelic state 122 at locus 1 is affected by the allelic composition of the population at locus L, 123 and the selective value of allele 1 at any locus increases with the number of 124 individuals carrying allele a_{max} at the previous locus. To make this circularity 125 mathematically crisp, we define a function giving the integer below x in the 126 set $\{1, 2, \dots, X\}$

$$\beta(x,X) = \operatorname{mod}_X(x-2+X) + 1 \tag{2}$$

Where $\operatorname{mod}_Y(y)$ is the integer remainder after dividing y by Y. Thus, the value of adaptive allele a at locus l increases with the number of individuals that have allele $\beta(a, a_{max})$ at locus $\beta(l, L)$. The slope of this increase is ϵ , which specifies the intensity of niche construction. Consider a genotype g with allelic state at locus l given by $a_{g,l}$; its fitness is defined as:

$$W_g = z + \delta \sum_{l=1}^{L} I_A(a_{g,l}) + \epsilon \sum_{l=1}^{L} n(\beta(a_{g,l}, a_{max}), \beta(l, L)) - ca_{g,L+1}$$
 (3)

where z is a baseline fitness, and $I_A(a)$ indicates whether an adaptive allele is non-zero:

$$I_A(a) = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } a \in A \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$
 (4)

As a consequence of this form of density dependent selection, genotypes with sequentially increasing allelic states will tend to evolve. Because mutations are random (see below), each population will evolve different consecutive sequences. These different sequences represent the unique niches constructed by populations.

Cooperators produce a public good that is equally accessible to all members of the population. This public good increases the carrying capacity at that

patch, allowing the population to reach greater density. This benefit increases

linearly with the proportion of cooperators. Thus, if p is the proportion of cooperators in a population at the beginning of a growth cycle, then that population reaches the following size during the growth phase:

$$S(p) = S_{min} + p(S_{max} - S_{min}) \tag{5}$$

The function S(p) reflects the benefit of public good production. A population composed entirely of defectors reaches size S_{min} , while one composed entirely of cooperators reaches size S_{max} (with $S_{max} \geq S_{min}$). During growth, individuals compete for inclusion in the resulting population. The composition of population P with cooperator proportion p after growth is multinomial with parameters and S(p) and $\{\pi_1, \pi_2, \ldots, \pi_{|P|}\}$, where:

$$\pi_i = \frac{W_{\gamma(i)}}{\sum_{j \in P} W_{\gamma(j)}} \tag{6}$$

Here, $W_{\gamma(i)}$ is the fitness of an individual i with genotype $\gamma(i)$ (see Equation 3). The value π_i therefore reflects an individual's relative reproductive fitness. For simplicity, we apply mutations after population growth. Mutations occur independently at each locus and cause the allelic state to change. Mutations occur at each adaptive locus at rate μ_a , in which a new allele is chosen at random from the set $\{0\} \cup A$. At the binary cooperation locus, mutations occur at rate μ_c . These mutations flip the allelic state, causing cooperators to become defectors and vice versa. Therefore, the probability that genotype g mutates into genotype g' is given by:

$$\tau_{g \to g'} = \mu_a^{H_a(g, g')} (1 - \mu_a)^{\{L - H_a(g, g')\}} \mu_c^{H_c(g, g')} (1 - \mu_c)^{\{1 - H_c(g, g')\}}$$
(7)

where $H_a(g, g')$ and $H_c(g, g')$ are the Hamming distances between genotypes gand g' at the cooperation locus and adaptive loci, respectively. The Hamming 162 distance is the number of loci at which allelic states differ (Hamming, 1950). 163 After mutation, individuals emigrate to an adjacent patch at rate m. The 164 destination patch is randomly chosen with uniform probability from the source 165 patch's Moore neighborhood, which is composed of the nearest 8 patches on the 166 lattice. Because the metapopulation lattice has boundaries, patches located 167 on an edge have smaller neighborhoods. 168 Metapopulations are initiated in a state that follows an environmental change. 169 First, populations are seeded at all patches with cooperator proportion p_0 and 170 grown to density $S(p_0)$. An environmental challenge is then introduced, which 171 subjects the population to a bottleneck. For each individual, the probability 172 of survival is μ_t , which represents the likelihood that a mutation occurs that 173 confers tolerance. Survivors are chosen by binomial sampling. Because indi-174 viduals have not yet adapted to this new environment, the allelic state of each 175 individual's genotype is set to 0 at each adaptive locus. Following initializa-176 tion, simulations are run for T cycles, where each discrete cycle consists of 177 growth, mutation, and migration. At the end of each cycle, populations are 178 thinned to allow for growth in the next cycle. The individuals that remain are 179 chosen by binomial sampling, where each individual persists with probability 180

d, regardless of allelic state.

181

Source Code and Software Environment

The simulation software and configurations for the experiments reported are available online (Us, 2015). Simulations used Python 3.4.0, NumPy 1.9.1, Pandas 0.15.2 (McKinney, 2010), and NetworkX 1.9.1 (Hagberg *et al.*, 2008). Data analyses were performed with R 3.1.3 (R Core Team, 2015).

187 Results

We use the model described earlier to follow the evolution of cooperation in a 188 metapopulation of populations that are connected by spatially-limited migra-189 tion. Individuals in these populations gain a limited number of adaptations 190 that confer selective benefits. Adaptation is independent of cooperation. How-191 ever, because cooperation increases population density, these populations have more mutational opportunities to gain adaptations. Cooperation can hitchhike 193 along with these adaptations, which compensate for the cost of public good 194 production. During this process, individuals also alter their environment based 195 on the genotypes present in the population. This niche construction process 196 can be either positive or negative, depending on its effects on fitness. Here, 197 we explore how niche construction can favor the evolution of cooperation. Our 198 simulation environment is defined by the parameter values listed in Table 1.

Niche Construction Maintains Cooperation

Without the opportunity for adaptation (L=0), cooperators are swiftly elim-201 inated in competition with defectors (Figure 1). Despite an initial lift due to 202 increased productivity, the cost of cooperation becomes disadvantageous as 203 migration mixes the initially isolated populations. With adaptive opportuni-204 ties $(L = 5, \epsilon = 0)$, cooperators are maintained transiently (Figure 1B). Here, 205 the additional mutational abilities provided by their larger sizes allows coop-206 erator populations to more quickly adapt to their environment. As previously 207 described by Hammarlund et al. (2015), however, this advantage diminishes 208 as defector populations become equally adapted, and cooperators are outcom-209 peted. When populations affect their environment and these changes feed 210 back on selection, we find that cooperation can persist, perhaps indefinitely 211 (Figure 1C, 3A). In these environments, cooperators maintain higher fitness 212 than cooperators, which enables survival (Figure 3A). 213

214 Fitness Increases do not Support Cooperation

In our model, niche construction provides additional selective benefits. To determine how these selective effects contribute to our results, we performed simulations in which the selective effects of niche construction were removed ($\epsilon = 0$). As compensation, we increased the fitness benefits conferred by adaptation ($\delta = 0.6$). Here, the selective effects of niche construction are exaggerated, as a fitness benefit of 0.3 (our increase in δ) is the maximum value possible (see 3). To quantify cooperator success and permit comparison, we

use the area under the cooperator proportion curve. This measure of *coop-*erator presence increases as cooperators rise in abundance or remain in the
population longer.

We find that higher selective values do not provide a significant increase in cooperator presence (Figure 2, column C). As shown in Figure 3, cooperators gain adaptations more quickly than defectors, which provides a fitness advantage. However, the cost of cooperation puts defectors at an advantage once these populations become fully adapted.

Positive Niche Construction Prolongs Cooperation but is not Sufficient

We first focus on the effects of positive niche construction by removing the allelic conflict that leads to negative niche construction $(L=5, a_{max}=5)$. In the absence of this conflict, cooperator presence is significantly increased (Figure 2, column D). Within these environments, we find that positive niche construction prolongs the fitness advantage that cooperators have over defectors (Figure 3C). Nevertheless, cooperators are eventually driven to extinction once defectors gain the fitness advantage.

Negative Niche Construction is not Sufficient

To determine how negative niche construction influences the evolution of cooperation, we maximize the allelic conflict $(L=1, a_{max}=6)$. However, selection

for increasing allelic states among the stress loci means that any allelic state will not be greater than at the previous allele (itself), and thus there will always be opportunity for adaptation. Despite this constant opportunity, niche construction does not increase cooperator presence (Figure 2, column E). Here, defectors rapidly gain the fitness advantage.

NC Enables Cooperator Spread

Figure 4 - if not, could be why thinning is a must.

NC Prevents Defector Invasion

Figure 5

How Public Good Fuels all of this

To directly explore how the increase in population size affects evolutionary outcomes, we vary the maximum size that a population can reach $(S_{max}, \text{ see})$ Equation 5). Figure 6A shows the result of these simulations. (TODO description of results)

To address how migration affects the evolutionary process in this system, we vary the rate at which migration occurs (m). As seen in Figure 6B, cooperation decreases as migration rate increases. This is likely because migration defines the spatial structuring in this system. As migration increases, the population

becomes more like a well-mixed system, where defectors are better able to

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exploit the benefits of cooperation (Griffin et al., 2004; Kümmerli et al., 2009).
    # Discussion
262
       • summary of results
263
            - niche construction helps. but how?
264
            - the extra fitness that it provides does not account for it
                 * in fact, cooperators never get to max fitness!
266
            - negative niche construction plays a role
267
            - negative niche construction alone does not help
268
       • similarities/differences from previous work
269
            - Schwilk and Kerr (2002)
270
            - 10.1073/pnas.0812644106
271
       • negative/positive NC
            - laland1996evolutionary
273

    public goods as niche construction

274
       • future QS or other environmental sensing
275
       • Facultative cooperation
276
            - Rodrigues (2012)
277
            - Dumas and Kümmerli (2010)
278
            - Kümmerli and Brown (2010)
279
            - Darch/Diggle
280
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- QS?

281

- Environmental Sensing? (Koestler and Waters, 2014, Bernier et al. (2011))
- Negative Niche construction as a stragegy? would those that create this constant pressure (L=5, A=6) do better than those that do not (L=5, A=5)?
- Niche construction and selective feedbacks Niche construction and other social interactions
- The production of public goods has played a central role in all of the results that
 we have presented. By enabling populations to reach larger sizes, these public
 goods have effectively increased the rate of evolution for these populations. As
 a result, larger populations are able to gain adaptations more quickly, both in
 response to their environment and the environmental changes brought about
 by niche construction. Additionally, these larger populations more effectively
 "export" their niche. As more individuals migrate to neighboring patches, these
 emigrants exert greater selective pressure. Here, we examine how population
 size and migration rate influence these processes.

Public Goods

- TODO: merge this in with the "Cooperative Niche Construction" section

 TEST
- By their very nature, public goods benefit populations by making their environment more hospitable. For example, bacteria produce extracellular products

that find soluble iron (Griffin et al., 2004), digest large proteins (Diggle et al., 303 2007; Darch et al., 2012), and reduce the risk of predation (Cosson et al., 2002), 304 among many others (West et al., 2007a). While many studies have explored 305 how the environment affects the evolution of cooperative bahviors, relatively 306 few have examined how those behaviors affect the environment and the result-307 ing change in evolutionary trajectories. Lehmann (2007) demonstrated analytically that when niche construction act benefits future generations, cooperation 309 is favored due to reduced competition among kin. When rate-benefitting and yield-benefitting altruistic acts co-evolve, Van Dyken and Wade (2012) showed 311 that "reciprocal niche construction", where the selective feedbacks produced 312 by one act benefitted the other, can lead to increased selection for both traits. 313 While these studies have focused on the niche constructing effects of cooper-314 ation, we instead focus our attention here on how niche construction enables 315 cooperators to escape defection by hitchhiking along with non-social traits.

Primacy/Recency

In our model, alterations to the environment were immediately echoed by changes in selection. However, decoupling the timescales on which these processes occur can have substantial effects (Laland *et al.*, 1996). By integrating past allelic states into Equation 3, we can begin to explore how the cumulative effects of niche construction affect the creation of non-social adaptive opportunities and the benefits that they offer cooperation. Here, how these past allelic states are integrated will play an important role. For example, when

the effects of earlier generations are weighted more heavily, the influence of migration may be diminished. While this will reduce the threat of emigration by defectors, cooperator populations will also be less effective at exporting their niche.

329 Cooperative Niche Construction

While our focus for this work has been on the eco-evolutionary feedbacks created by non-social traits, it would also be interesting to explore how this 331 system is affected by the timescale at which carrying capacity at a given patch 332 is increased by public goods. In natural settings, a multitude of factors in-333 cluding protein durability (Brown and Taddei, 2007; Kümmerli and Brown, 334 2010), diffusion (Allison, 2005; Driscoll and Pepper, 2010), and resource avail-335 ability (Zhang and Rainey, 2013; Ghoul et al., 2014) influence both the rate 336 and the degree to which public goods alter the environment (and thereby selec-337 tion). Lehmann (2007) demonstrated that a cooperative, niche constructing 338 behavior can be favored when it only affected selection for future generations, 339 thus reducing the potential for competition among contemporary kin. The 340 evolutionary inertia that this creates, however, may ultimately work against 341 cooperators. When public good accumulates in the environment, cooperators 342 must reduce their investment in production to remain competitive (Kümmerli 343 and Brown, 2010). 344

TODO: wrap up. Facultative cooperation requires sensing.

346 Host-Symbiont

In many instances of cooperation, the environment is itself a biological entity, which can produce additional evolutionary feedbacks. As the host population changes, so too will selection on their symbiont populations. Here, evolutionary outcomes depend greatly on the degree of shared interest between the host 350 and symbiont. For example, the cooperative production of virulence factors by 351 the human pathogen P. aeruqinosa in lung infections is harmful to those with 352 cystic fibrosis (Harrison, 2007). Conversely, cooperative light production by A. 353 fischeri is vital for the survival of its host, the Hawaiian bobtail squid (Ruby, 354 1996). It was recently argued that incorporating the effects of niche construc-355 tion is critical for improving our understanding of viral evolution (Hamblin et356 al., 2014) and evolution in co-infecting parasites (Hafer and Milinski, 2015). 357 Incorporating host dynamics, co-evolution, and the feedbacks that they pro-358 duce into models is likely to be equally important for gaining an understanding 359 of how cooperative behaviors evolve in these host-symbiont settings.

${f Acknowledgments}$

• TODO: Organizers?

363

• TODO: lab comments

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Figures $\mathbf{Figures}$

Figure 1

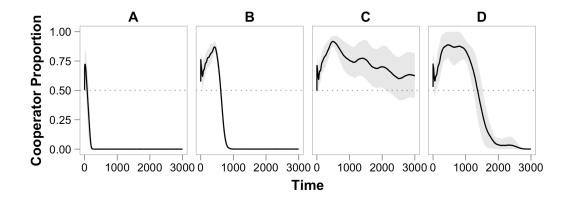


Figure 1: Adaptation, niche construction, and the evolution of cooperation. Curves show the average cooperator proportion among replicate
populations, while shaded areas indicate 95% confidence intervals. Unless otherwise noted, parameter values used are listed in Table 1. (A) When there
is no opportunity for adaptation (L, the number of adaptive loci, is zero),
cooperation is quickly lost. (B) When adaptation can occur (L = 5), but populations do not alter their environment (ϵ , the intensity of niche construction,
is zero), cooperators temporarily rise in abundance before eventually going
extinct. (C) Selective feedbacks from niche construction allows cooperation to
be maintained in 13 of 18 replicate populations. (D) While it does contribute
to success, positive niche construction alone does not maintain cooperation
(A = 5).

Figure 2

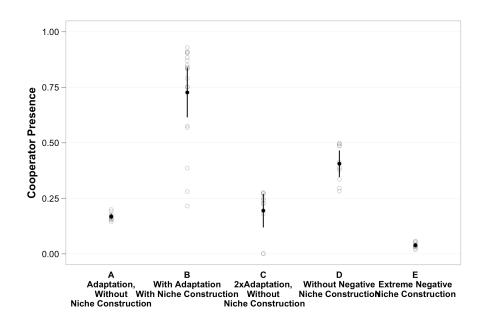


Figure 2: Cooperator Presence TODO

Figure 3

 376 Mean fitness over time for the treatments shown in Figure 2

Figure 3A - Fitness for base case: niche construction

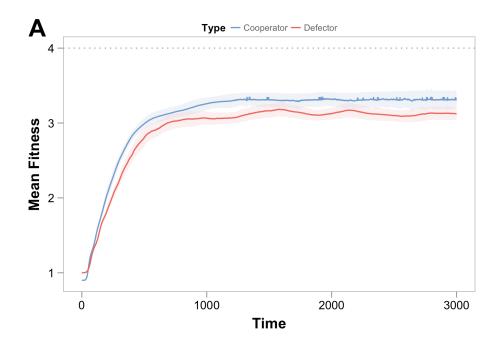


Figure 3: Grand mean Fitness of cooperators and defectors TODO

Figure 3B - Fitness with double delta, no epsilon

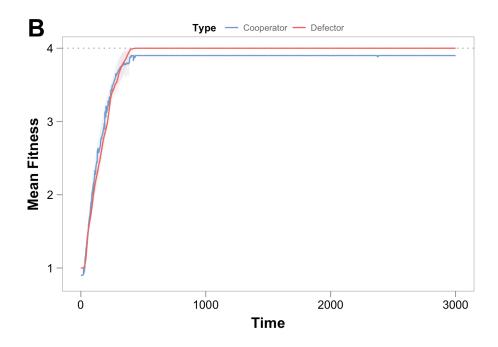


Figure 4: Grand mean Fitness of cooperators and defectors, double delta, no epsilon TODO

Figure 3C - Fitness with no negative niche construction (L=5, A=5)

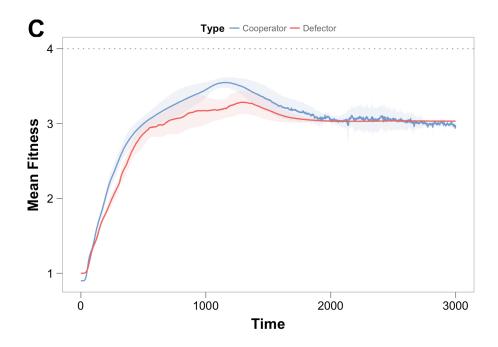


Figure 5: Grand mean Fitness of cooperators and defectors, no negative niche construction TODO

Figure 3D - Fitness with extreme negative niche construction (L=1, A=6)

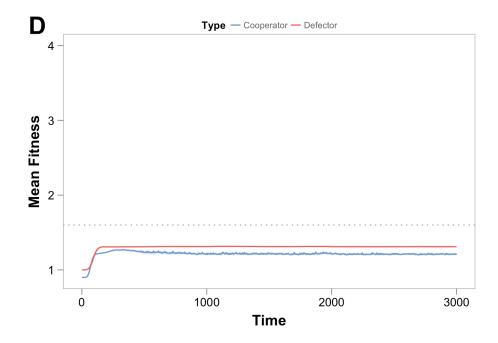


Figure 6: Grand mean Fitness of cooperators and defectors, extreme negative niche construction ${\it TODO}$

Figure 4

383 Cooperators invade from single population

Figure 5

385 Defectors are kept at bay

Figure 6

³⁸⁷ Figure 6A - Effect of Public Good Benefit (Smax-Smin)

Figure 6B - Effect of Migration Rate (m)

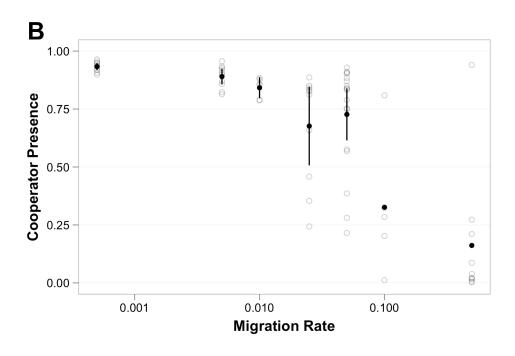


Figure 7: TODO Cooperator Presence for different migration rates

389 Tables

Table 1: Model parameters and their value

Parameter	Description	Base Value
N^2	Number of metapopulation sites	625
L	Number of adaptive loci	5
a_{max}	Number of alleles	6
δ	Fitness benefit, nonzero alleles	0.3
c	Production cost	0.1
ϵ	Fitness benefit, sequential alleles	0.00015
z	Baseline fitness	1
S_{min}	Minimum population size	800
S_{max}	Maximum population size	2000
μ_a	Mutation rate (adaptation)	10^{-5}
μ_c	Mutation rate (cooperation)	10^{-5}
m	Migration rate	0.05
p_0	Initial cooperator proportion	0.5
μ_t	Mutation rate (tolerance to new environment)	10^{-5}
T	Number of simulation cycles	1000
d	Population dilution factor	0.1

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