

Abstract Submitted
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Population heterogeneity promotes a preference for blind cooperation¹ ALFONSO PEREZ-ESCUDERO, JONATHAN FRIEDMAN, JEFF GORE, Massachusetts Institute of Technology — Game theory—and common sense—recommend to carefully weigh costs and benefits before deciding on a course of action. Yet we often disapprove of people who do so, even when their actual decision benefits us. For example, we prefer people who directly agree to do us a favor over those who agree only after securing enough information to ensure that the favor will not be too costly. Why should we care about how people make their decisions, rather than just focus on the decisions themselves? Hoffman et al. (2015) have shown that such aversion to information gathering may be beneficial when it is strong enough to increase the level of cooperation. Here we show that the same type of aversion arises in heterogeneous populations, but for a different reason: individuals who seek additional information may reveal themselves to be undesirable partners, since they are less likely to cooperate in the future when conditions change. Aversion to information gathering thus facilitates preferential interactions with blind cooperators, who are more favorable partners. Due to this new mechanism the prevalence of such aversion rapidly increases with population diversity, because partner discrimination is more useful in populations which harbor partners of a more varied quality.

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