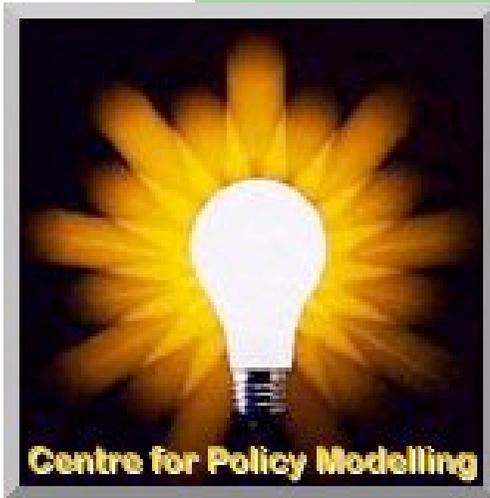


Evolving Specialisation, Altruism & Group-Level Optimisation Using Tags –

The emergence of a group identity?



<http://cfpm.org>

David Hales

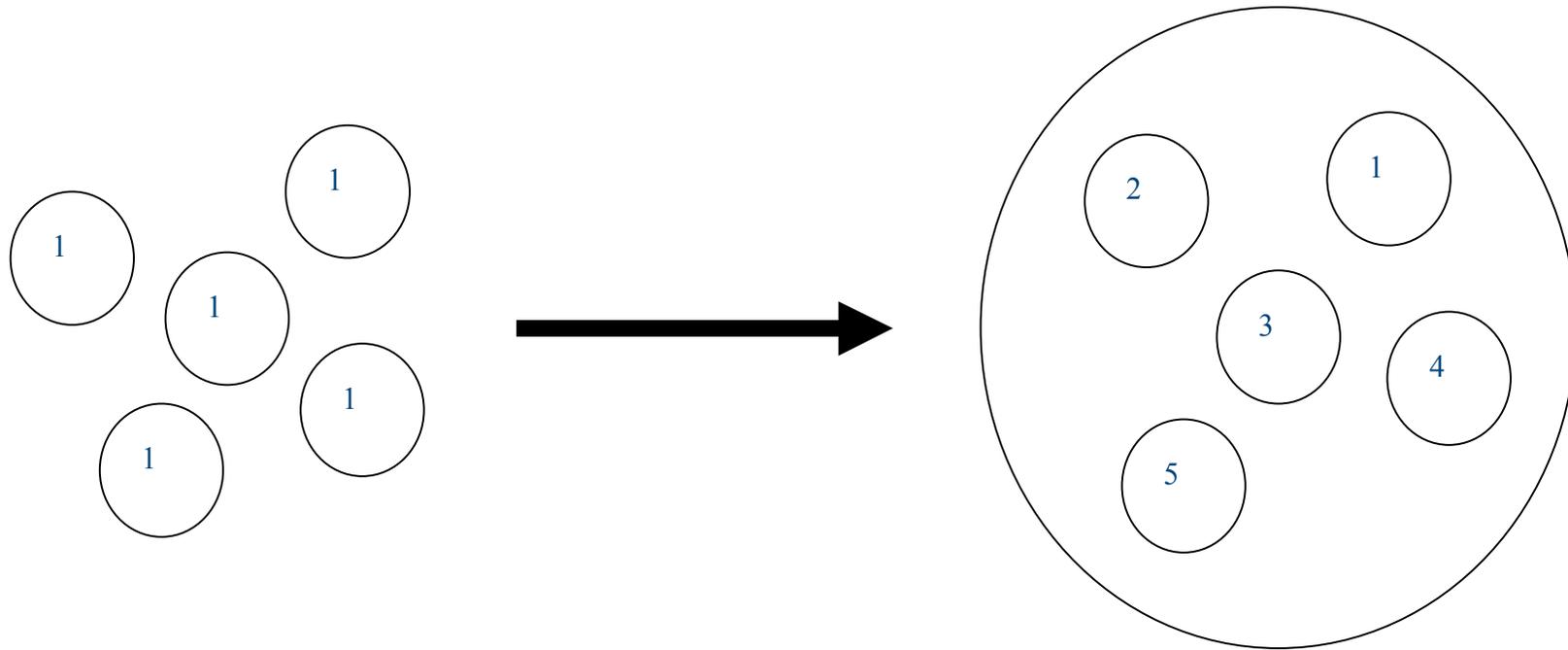
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Workshop on Evolvability and Identity

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The Big Picture



What mechanisms are sufficient to guide a population of “subsistence level” individuals to evolve into symbiotic and specialized relationships with others?

Tags!

- Holland (1992) discussed tags as a powerful “symmetry breaking” mechanism which could be useful for understanding complex “social-like” processes
- Tags are observable labels or social cues
- Agents can observe the tags of others
- Tags evolve in the same way that behavioral traits evolve
- Agents may evolve behavioral traits that discriminate based on tags

Recent tag models

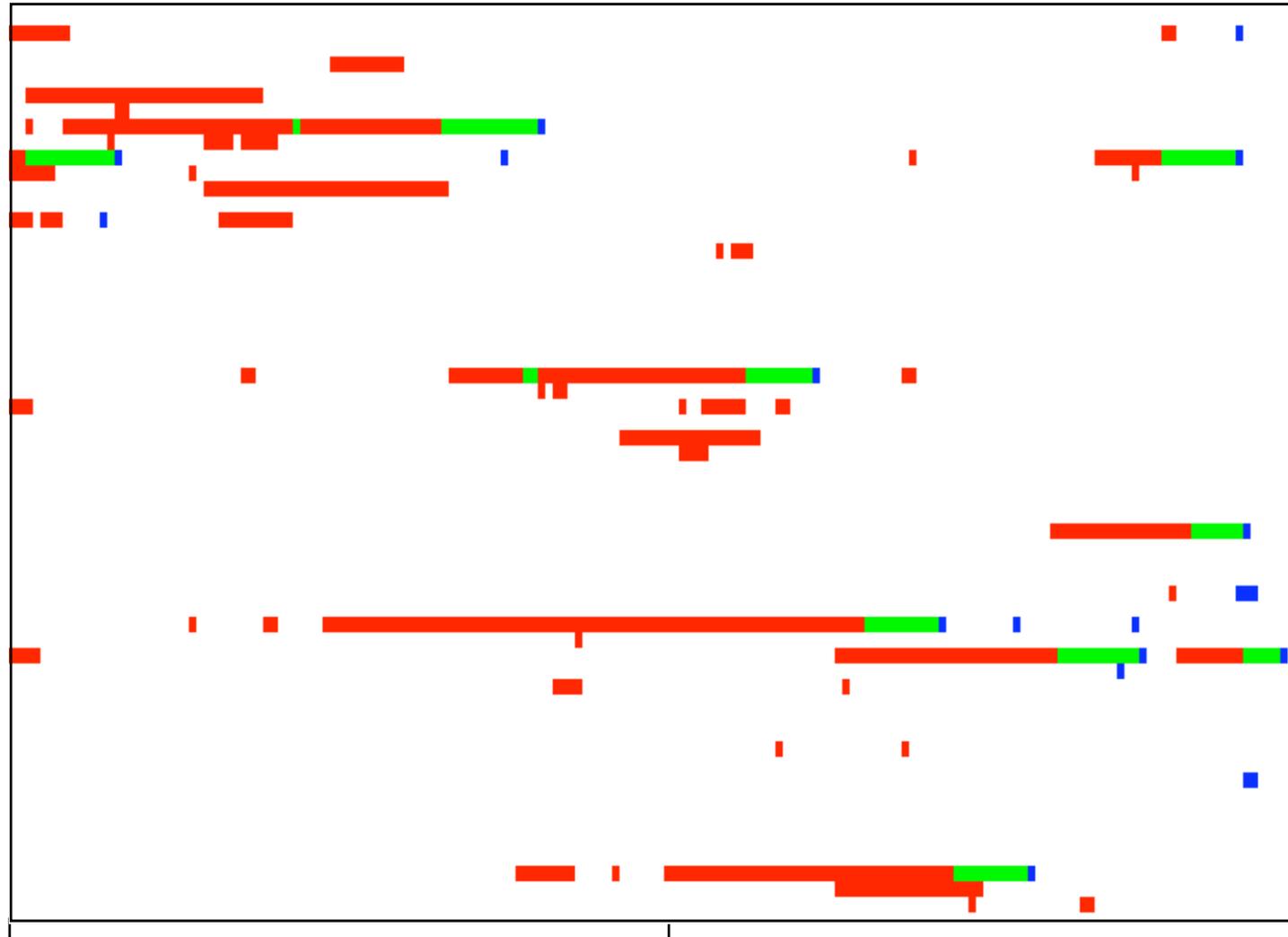
- Tags may be bit strings signifying some observable cultural cue (Sugarscape model, Hales Mabs2000)
- Tags may be a single real number (Riolo, Cohen, Axelrod Nature2001)
- Earlier work by Riolo showed how tags could improve cooperation between agents playing the IPD.
- On-going work (Edmonds and Hales) is focusing on how tags can facilitate altruism and specialisation between highly unrelated individuals.

Recent tag models – Altruism with strangers

- In Hales (Mabs2000) high levels of cooperation evolved using tag game biasing in the single round PD.
- In Riolo et al (Nature2001) high levels of altruistic donation evolved using a tag toleration mechanism.
- However, in both these models the agents effectively either “cooperate” or “defect”.
- In both, groups of agents sharing the same tag form cooperative groups.
- There is a dynamic formation and dissolution of such groups – groups break down when agents invade them that do not cooperate and exploit them

Visualising the process (mabs2000)

250350Cycles45 CoopDefectMixedEmpty



What else can tags do?

- These previous models show that cooperation can evolve in groups with tags – overcoming commons dilemmas
- But, can tags support the formation of groups in which agents perform specialised functions – supporting each other to exploit the environment as a “team” or “productive unit”
- We extended the Riolo et al model to test this

The model

- Agents consist of a tag (real number), a tolerance (real number) and a skill (integer)
- Each agent is awarded some number of resources in each cycle.
- Resources are associated with a randomly selected skill
- An agent can only “harvest” a resource matching it’s own skill
- If it can not harvest the resource, it may donate the resource to another agent (if it can find one) that matches its tag

The model

- An agent is considered to “match” the tags of another if the difference between the tag values is no more than the tolerance value
- So a high tolerance means “donate to any agent” and a low tolerance means “only donate to those with similar tag value”
- When an agent attempts to make a donation it selects another agent from the population compares tags for a match and then passes the resource if the receiving agents has the required skill value

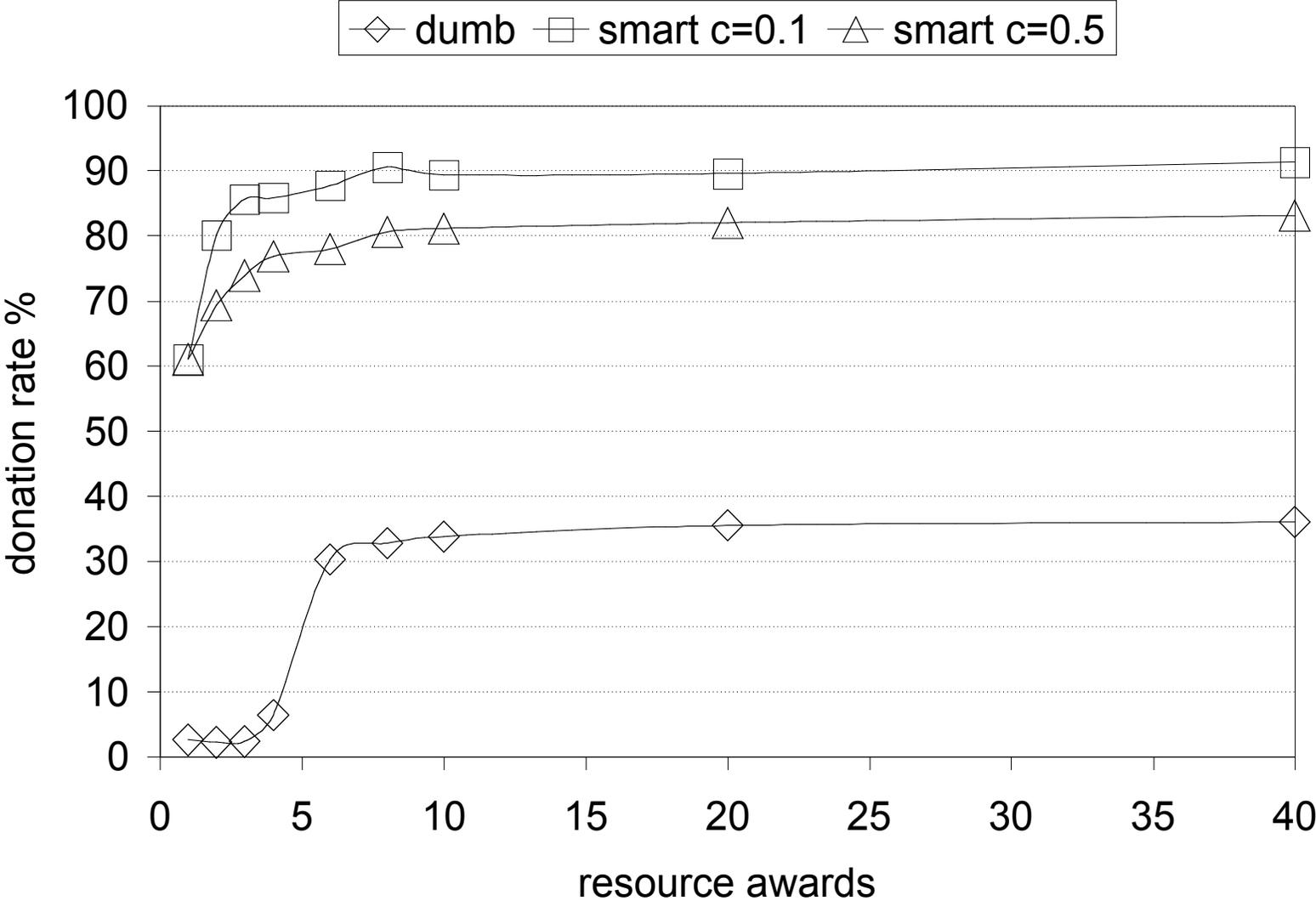
The model

- In the initial model, there are 2-skills, 100 agents, partner selection involves a single random selection from the population
- When agents make a successful donation they incur an energy cost (0.1)
- When an agent successfully harvests a resource it gets a unit of energy (1)
- After each cycle a tournament selection process based on energy, increases the number of successful agents (high energy) over those with low energy
- When successful agents are copied, mutation is applied to both tag, tolerance and skill

What will the results tell us?

- *If* the donation rate (over time) is non-zero, then we can conclude that:
- Agents are forming tag groups with a diversity of skills
- Agents are behaving altruistically, since donation produces immediate costs but does to produce immediate returns
- Therefore agents (from a myopic individual bounded rationality) form internally specialised altruistic teams

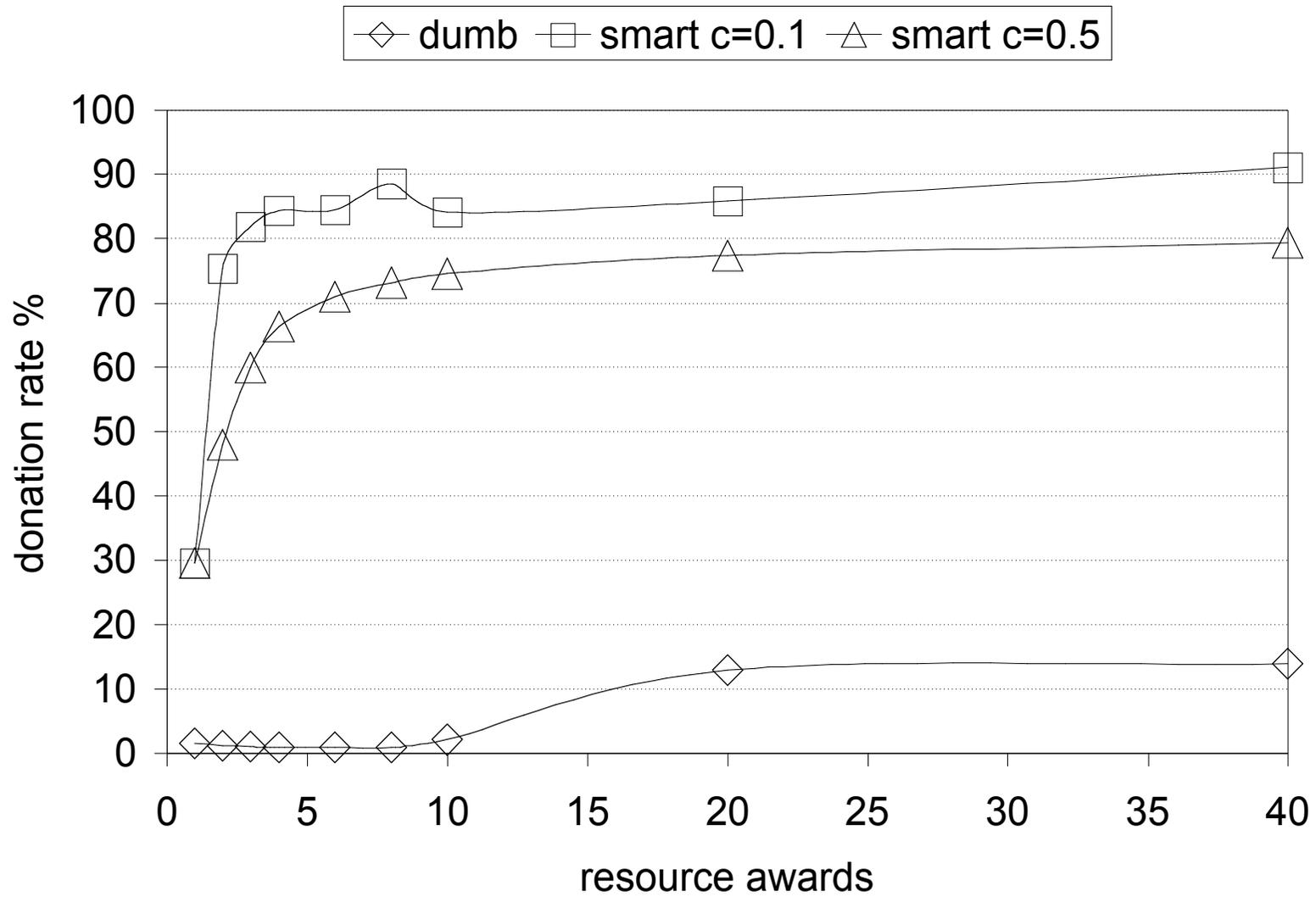
2-skills, averages of 30 runs to 30,000 generations



Results – what does it mean?

- A significant level of donation – confirming specialisation and altruism (of a sort!)
- But not so high, but if, instead of selecting potential donation partners at random, we use a “smart” matching method then significant increases in the donation rate are seen (previous slide)
- This smart matching can even support higher donor costs

5-skills, averages of 30 runs to 30,000 generations



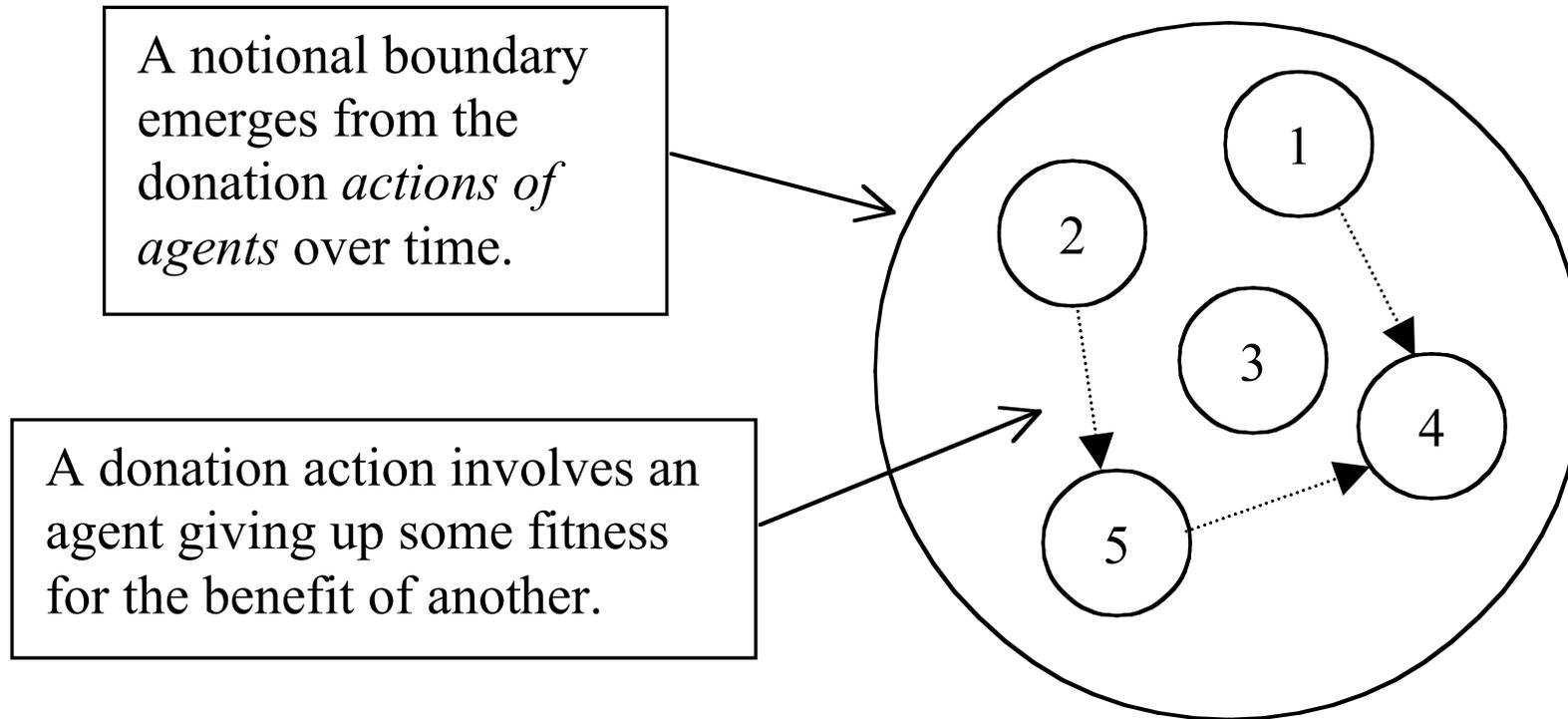
Results – what does it mean?

- The random (or dumb) matching goes lower
- The smart matching goes lower too but still stays high and recovers quickly as the number of resource awards increases
- Hence, it would seem that to support an efficient higher degree of specialisation (more skills) smart matching is required
- Smart matching does evolve (even with higher costs – see Hales MABS2002, RASTA2002).

Conclusions

- Agents form groups based on tag similarity, containing diverse skills, donating resources to between each other, to efficiently exploit the environment – for the good of the group
- This happens even though individuals are selected on the basis of their individual utility
- We question intuitions which claim that evolution produces “selfish replicators”
- Can such models help us to understand how early social groups formed with specialised roles?
- Group distinguishing abilities (smart searching) would appear to be important
- Other work: does smart searching evolve (see RASTA and MABS papers). What about putting agents in social networks = smart is cheap?
- The Tag Clone issue! What are we really seeing here? (Edmonds and Hales forthcoming)

More generally...



Tags are a minimal way of structuring donations as are certain spatial structures.



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