Searching more or less:
The impact of value range on search behavior

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We search for...
Searching more when the decision is more important?

• An anecdotal evidence:
  • What I've learned from 10 years of selling wedding dresses? (Caroline Burstein, The Guardian): many women search for a wedding dress more than they searched for a groom…
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- Do people actually search less in more important decisions?
- In real life, importance is difficult to measure, the cost of searching alternatives is varying and not always clear and also the variance of options value is changing…
- Rephrasing the question: Do people search less in higher value environments? (given the same variance of options value and the same search cost)
Lab experiments:

- The secretary problem with absolute values

- Choose

- Next

- This card is worth 414 points

- 414 points
A pre-registered lab experiment:

- The secretary problem with absolute values
  - High value environment $N \sim (4000,200)$
  - Low value environment $N \sim (400,200)$
- 30 rounds in each environment
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  • High value environment $N \sim (4000, 200)$
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• 30 rounds in each environment
• 4 groups (40 participants in each)
  • Blocked – High values first
  • Blocked – Low values first
  • Mixed
  • Simultaneous
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In this round you earned 4135
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### Mean amount of search

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Low Values</th>
<th>High Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BLOCKED</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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![Mean amount of search](image)
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![Mean amount of search](chart.png)
Summary:

• People search *less* in *higher* values environments when alternating between different search environments.

• This bias is reduced and sometimes even reversed when decisions are made repeatedly in the same value environment.
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- Why?
  - Diminishing sensitivity to higher values
  - Fixed threshold: ✔️

High values

Low values

Diagram: <Insert Diagram>
Good luck in your searches!

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