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Miguel Navascués, Solenn Stoeckel, Stéphanie Mariette

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1 **Genetic diversity and fitness in small populations of partially asexual, self-**
2 **incompatible plants**

3

4 Miguel Navascués^{1,2}, Solenn Stoeckel³ and Stéphanie Mariette⁴

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6 ¹Unidad de Genética, Centro de Investigación Forestal, INIA, Carretera de La Coruña km 7.5,
7 28040 Madrid, Spain

8 ²Équipe Éco-évolution Mathématique, CNRS, UMR 7625 Écologie et Évolution, Université
9 Pierre et Marie Curie & École Normale Supérieure, 46 rue d'Ulm 75230 Paris Cedex 05,
10 France

11 ³UMR 1099 BIO3P (Biology of Organisms and Populations applied to Plant Protection),
12 INRA Agrocampus Rennes, F-35653 Le Rheu, France

13 ⁴Unité de Recherche sur les Espèces Fruitières, INRA, Domaine de la Grande Ferrade, 71
14 avenue Edouard Bourlaux, BP 81, 33883 Villenave d'Ornon Cedex, France

15 Author for correspondence: Stéphanie Mariette, Tel: (33) 557 122 383, Fax: (33) 557 122
16 439, E-mail: smariett@bordeaux.inra.fr

17

18 **Keywords**

19 Self-incompatibility, asexual reproduction, number of *S*-alleles, linkage disequilibrium,
20 inbreeding depression, mutation load

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23

24 **Summary**

25 How self-incompatibility systems are maintained in plant populations is still a debated issue.
26 Theoretical models predict that self-incompatibility systems break down according to the
27 intensity of inbreeding depression and number of *S*-alleles. Other studies have explored the
28 role of asexual reproduction in the maintenance of self-incompatibility. However, the
29 population genetics of partially asexual, self-incompatible populations are poorly understood
30 and previous studies have failed to consider all possible effects of asexual reproduction or
31 could only speculate on those effects. In the present study, we investigated how partial
32 asexuality may affect genetic diversity at the *S*-locus and fitness in small self-incompatible
33 populations. A genetic model including an *S*-locus and a viability locus was developed to
34 perform forward simulations of the evolution of populations of various sizes. Drift combined
35 with partial asexuality produced a decrease in the number of alleles at the *S*-locus. In addition,
36 an excess of heterozygotes was present in the population, causing an increase in mutation
37 load. This heterozygote excess was enhanced by the self-incompatibility system in small
38 populations. In addition, in highly asexual populations, individuals produced asexually had
39 some fitness advantages over individuals produced sexually (due to the increased
40 heterozygosity, sex produces the homozygosis of deleterious alleles). Our results suggest that
41 future research on the role of asexuality for the maintenance of self-incompatibility will need
42 to (1) account for whole genome fitness (mutation load generated by asexuality, self-
43 incompatibility and drift) and (2) acknowledge that the maintenance of self-incompatibility
44 may not be independent of the maintenance of sex itself.

45 **Introduction**

46 Hermaphroditic plant species reproduce with variable rates of selfing, ranging from strict
47 selfing to strict outcrossing (Barrett, 2002). Self-incompatibility (SI) is a reproductive system
48 that prevents self-fertilization. In the case of heteromorphic self-incompatibility, distinct
49 morphologies result in distinct compatibility groups, whereas in the case of homomorphic
50 self-incompatibility, compatible individuals cannot be distinguished by their morphology (de
51 Nettancourt, 1977). Most SI systems depend on physiological mechanisms that prevent pollen
52 germination or pollen tube growth. In sporophytic self-incompatibility (SSI) systems, the
53 compatibility of a pollen grain depends on the diploid genotype of the plant that produced it.
54 In gametophytic self-incompatibility (GSI) systems, the compatibility of a pollen grain
55 depends on its haploid genotype. GSI is more widespread than SSI (Glémin *et al.*, 2001).
56 Fisher (1941) showed that self-fertilization should have a selective advantage because a
57 selfing genotype will transmit more copies of its genome than a non-selfing genotype (this has
58 been termed the automatic advantage of selfing). However, numerous studies have shown that
59 inbred offspring are less fit than outbred offspring. The relative decrease in the mean fitness
60 of selfed versus outcrossed individuals (inbreeding depression) is generally recognized as the
61 only main factor that counterbalances the selective advantage of selfing (Charlesworth and
62 Charlesworth, 1987).
63 Consequently, the level of inbreeding depression in populations should play a determining
64 role in the evolution of SI systems. Inbreeding depression decreases as population size
65 becomes smaller due to reduced polymorphism for selection to act on (Bataillon and
66 Kirkpatrick, 2000). Charlesworth and Charlesworth (1979) showed that the number of *S*-
67 alleles also plays a role in maintaining SI, since a low number of alleles will limit the number
68 of compatible crosses in the population. A decrease in population size can also cause a
69 reduction in the number of *S*-alleles (Brennan *et al.*, 2003), and a self-compatible mutant can

70 be positively selected for (Reinartz and Les, 1994). Thus, small populations may be
71 particularly prone to the breakdown of SI due to weak inbreeding depression and low
72 numbers of *S*-alleles. However, small self-incompatible populations may maintain high levels
73 of inbreeding depression due to a sheltered load of deleterious alleles linked to the *S*-locus
74 (Glémin *et al.*, 2001). The existence of a sheltered load has been demonstrated experimentally
75 in *Solanum carolinense* by Stone (2004) and Mena-Alí *et al.* (2009).

76 Overall, under a wide range of conditions, SI can evolve to self-compatibility. In effect, the
77 loss of SI systems is very frequent in plant evolution (Igic *et al.*, 2008). However, the reasons
78 for which some species maintain a SI system while other species lose it are not completely
79 understood. It has been suggested that asexual reproduction, “when an individual produces
80 new individuals that are genetically identical to the ancestor at all loci in the genome, except
81 at those sites that have experienced somatic mutations” (de Meeûs *et al.*, 2007), plays a role in
82 the maintenance or breakdown of SI. Two studies suggest that asexuality could relieve the
83 main selective pressures that favour the breakdown of SI. First, Chen *et al.* (1997) showed in
84 Australian Droseraceae that all self-incompatible taxa have effective forms of asexual
85 reproduction, whereas the obligatory sexual annual taxon, *Drosera glanduligera*, is self-
86 compatible. Their interpretation is that self-incompatible forms accumulate recessive lethal
87 polymorphisms, especially in association with biparental inbreeding generated by elevated
88 levels of asexual reproduction. The hypothetical high genetic load constitutes the selective
89 pressure that maintains the outbreeding mechanisms. Second, Vallejo-Marín and O'Brien
90 (2007) hypothesized that asexuality could provide reproductive assurance in cross-fertilizing
91 species subject to pollen limitation. They predicted that cross-fertilizing species subject to
92 pollen limitation would often have some means of asexual reproduction, and they found a
93 strong correlation between self-incompatibility and asexuality in *Solanum* (Solanaceae).
94 Conversely, Young *et al.* (2002) developed a contrasting hypothesis for the case of *Rutidosis*

95 *leiolepis* in which they found SSI and high rates of asexual reproduction. They suggested that
96 increased asexual reproduction causes mate limitation by reducing genotype diversity at the *S*-
97 locus, favouring a breakdown of self-incompatibility.

98 The net effect of asexual reproduction on the maintenance or breakdown of SI systems is
99 therefore still unknown. Moreover, it is unclear to what extent the effects of asexual
100 reproduction discussed by the various authors are actually present in partially asexual, self-
101 incompatible populations. Theoretical studies have described the effects of partial asexuality
102 on the inbreeding depression of self-compatible populations (Muirhead and Lande, 1997) and
103 the number of *S*-alleles (Vallejo-Marín and Uyenoyama, 2008). However, no model has been
104 developed so far to study the joint effect of asexuality, self-incompatibility and drift on the
105 evolution of diversity and fitness parameters for a hermaphroditic species. Using individual-
106 based simulations, we investigated the effect of (i) partial asexual reproduction and drift on
107 diversity at the *S*-locus, (ii) combined asexuality, self-incompatibility and drift on the
108 frequency of deleterious alleles. Thus, our main goal was to characterise the dynamics of two
109 key factors (number of *S*-alleles and inbreeding depression) for the maintenance of SI in
110 partially asexual, self-incompatible populations. It was not the aim of this work to estimate
111 the probability of invasion of self-compatible alleles or other modifiers of reproduction.

112

113 **Materials and Methods**

114 *Genetic model*

115 The model considered in this study was based on the model developed by Glémin *et al.*
116 (2001). This model consists of a population of N (four population sizes evaluated: 25, 50, 100
117 and 1000) diploid hermaphroditic individuals with a GSI system. In addition, our model also
118 included asexual reproduction at rate c (probability that an individual is generated by asexual
119 reproduction, seven values evaluated: 0, 0.5, 0.8, 0.9, 0.99, 0.999 and 1). We considered an

120 asexual reproduction event as the production of a new independent individual that is an exact
121 copy of the parental individual (or only different by somatic mutation) (e.g. de Meeûs *et al.*,
122 2007). As in Glémin *et al.* (2001), each individual genome possessed the *S*-locus, which
123 regulated SI, and a viability locus, whose state determined individual fitness. Two neutral loci
124 were also included for reference. The four loci were considered to be physically unlinked and
125 were inherited independently through sexual reproduction.

126 Sexual reproduction events were controlled by the *S*-locus: crosses between individuals were
127 only possible when the *S*-allele carried by the pollen grain was different from both *S*-alleles of
128 the pistil (i.e. at least three different *S*-alleles were necessary in the population for sexual
129 reproduction to occur). To focus on effects specifically attributable to asexuality on the
130 maintenance and breakdown of SI, we assumed unlimited pollen availability and that sexual
131 crosses were always fruitful. Thus, sexual reproduction was only limited when asexuality and
132 genetic drift reduced the number of *S*-alleles to less than three within a population. In this
133 case, independent of the original rate of asexual reproduction, all individuals reproduced
134 asexually ($c=1$) until mutation introduced a third *S*-allele. Then, c was reset to its original
135 value.

136 Individual fitness, f , was determined by the viability locus, which had two alleles A and a .
137 Strength of the dominance of allele A over deleterious allele a was regulated by the
138 dominance coefficient h , and strength of the selection against a was regulated by the selection
139 coefficient s . Thus, relative fitness of genotypes were: $f_{AA}=1$, $f_{Aa}=1-hs$ and $f_{aa}=1-s$ ($0 < s \leq 1$
140 and $0 < h \leq 1/2$). Three selection regimes at the viability locus were considered: (i) a neutral
141 case, to be able to study the effects of the interaction between SI and asexuality without the
142 interference of selection, where parameters s and h were set to zero; (ii) a case of mildly
143 deleterious and partially recessive mutations, for which values assigned to s and h were

144 respectively 0.1 and 0.2; and (iii) a case of highly recessive lethal mutations, values assigned
145 to s and h were respectively 1 and 0.02.

146 Mutations were allowed in all loci. Neutral loci mutated at rate $\mu_N=10^{-3}$, following a k -allele
147 model ($k=100$). Mutation at the S -locus followed an infinite-allele model (Kimura and Crow,
148 1964) with rate μ_S ; three values were considered for this rate ($\mu_S=10^{-3}$, 10^{-4} and 10^{-5} as in
149 Glémin *et al.*, 2001). Mutations at the viability locus occurred at rate $\mu_1=10^{-3}$ from A to a and
150 at rate $\mu_2=10^{-4}$ from a to A .

151

152 *Individual-based simulations*

153 Forward-time simulations of a population of N diploid individuals with no overlapping
154 generations were performed. Simulations started with all individuals carrying two unique
155 alleles at the S -locus ($2N$ different S -alleles in the whole population), alleles A or a randomly
156 assigned (with equal probability, 0.5) to the viability locus and any of the k alleles ($k=100$)
157 randomly assigned (with equal probability, $1/k$) to the two neutral loci.

158 At each generation, the number of individuals generated by asexual reproduction, x , was
159 drawn from a Poisson distribution with mean Nc , and the remaining $N-x$ individuals were
160 generated by sexual reproduction (parents contributing to these two types of offspring were
161 not determined in this step). Genotypes of the N individuals were generated one by one. If a
162 given individual originated by asexual reproduction, a genotype i was randomly drawn from
163 all individuals of the previous generation. That genotype was assigned to the individual with a
164 probability equal to the fitness of genotype i ; this will be called the selection step. If the
165 genotype was not successfully assigned, the genotype draft and the selection step was
166 repeated until a genotype passed the selection step. If the individual originated by sexual
167 reproduction, the simulation followed a different procedure. First, an individual from previous
168 generation was randomly drawn to act as a mother and the ovule haploid genotype was

169 randomly generated. Then, a second individual was drawn to act as a father and the pollen
170 haploid genotype was randomly generated. If the S -allele at the pollen grain was not different
171 from both S -alleles of the mother (i.e. incompatible pollen), the pollen was discarded. New
172 fathers and pollen grain genotypes were generated until a compatible cross was obtained (i.e.
173 pollen availability was unlimited). Then, a diploid genotype i was generated from the haploid
174 genotypes of the ovule and the pollen. The selection step was carried out on genotype i as in
175 the case of asexual reproduction; if the genotype was not assigned the process was repeated
176 by drawing two new parents until a genotype was able to pass the selection step. Once all N
177 genotypes were selected, mutations were applied to each individual. The numbers of mutants
178 at the S -locus and at the two neutral loci were drawn from Poisson distributions with means
179 $2N\mu_S$ and $2N\mu_N$ respectively. At the viability locus, a mutant was formed with a probability μ_1
180 if the allele was A and a probability μ_2 if the allele was a . The rate of asexual reproduction
181 was a fixed parameter of our model and did not change with the selection process.

182

183 *Monitored genetic indices*

184 Simulations were run for 50 000 generations before beginning to monitor the genetic indices,
185 this allowed monitored indices to become stable and avoided the influence of initial
186 conditions in their values (Glémin *et al.*, 2001). From generation 50 000, indices were
187 calculated every 3 000 generations until 107 000 generations (i.e. 20 times). For the same
188 combination of parameters, 50 replicates of the simulations were performed providing 1 000
189 (indices calculated 20 times in each of the 50 replicates) evaluations of the monitored
190 variables for each set of parameter values. Indices were calculated from all genotypes of the
191 population (i.e. they were not estimates, but the true values of the population).

192 Genetic diversity indices: For each locus we calculated the number of alleles (n_a), allele

193 frequencies, effective number of alleles ($n_e = 1 / \sum_{i=1}^{n_a} p_i^2$, where p_i was the frequency of allele),

194 expected heterozygosity ($H_e = 1 - 1/n_e$), observed heterozygosity (H_o , proportion of
 195 heterozygous individuals) and the inbreeding coefficient ($F_{IS} = (H_e - H_o)/H_e$). Theoretical
 196 predictions for some of these indices were obtained from the work of several authors for some
 197 of the scenarios considered:

198 a) Vallejo-Marín and Uyenoyama (2008) studied the effects of partial asexuality in the
 199 number of alleles of the S -locus using a diffusion approximation and found that the number of
 200 common alleles (n_c , which is approximately equivalent to the effective number of S -alleles,
 201 n_e , Takahata, 1990) is determined by:

$$202 \quad (1) \quad 1 = \theta \frac{2Mn_c}{2Mn_c - \theta(n_c - 1)(n_c - 2)} e^{\frac{2Mn_c}{(n_c - 1)(n_c - 2)} - \theta} \frac{\sqrt{2\pi(n_c - 1)}}{\sqrt{Mn_c + \theta(n_c - 1)}} \left\{ \left[1 + \frac{\theta(n_c - 1)}{Mn_c} \right] \frac{n_c - 2}{n_c} \right\}^{\theta + Mn_c/(n_c - 1)}$$

203 where $M = N(1 - c)$ and $\theta = 2N\mu_S$. This equation was solved numerically to obtain the
 204 expected effective number of S -alleles in the simulations without selection on the viability
 205 locus.

206 b) Glémin *et al.* (2001) obtained the expected F_{IS} for a neutral locus linked to the S -locus as:

$$207 \quad (2) \quad F_{IS} = -\frac{(1 + 2f_S)(n_c - 1)}{1 + n_c^2 + 2f_S(n_c - 1)(4Nr' + n_c - 1)}$$

208 where f_S is the scaling factor of the genealogy of the S -locus and r' is the net recombination
 209 rate between the two loci. For the case of partial asexuality, the number of common alleles

210 was given by Equation 1 and the scaling factor was $f_S = \frac{n_c^2(n_c - 1)(n_c - 2)}{4\theta[2Mn_c - \theta(n_c - 1)(n_c - 2)]}$

211 (Vallejo-Marín and Uyenoyama, 2008). To correct for the reduction of recombination due to
 212 asexuality, we used $r' = r(1 - c)$, where r was the recombination rate during sexual
 213 reproduction (i.e. $r = 0.5$ for unlinked loci). This approach ignored mutation on the neutral
 214 locus.

215 c) Finally, an expression of the expected F_{IS} of a neutral locus in a self-compatible, partially
 216 asexual population was derived following Balloux *et al.* (2003):

$$217 \quad (3) \quad F_{IS} = \frac{\gamma[(1-c)Ns - 1]}{2N + \gamma[1 + cN(s - 2) - Ns]}$$

218 where $\gamma = (1 - \mu_N)^2$ and s is the selfing rate. Selfing rate in Balloux *et al.* (2003) model is
 219 defined as the rate of self-fertilization of individuals; thus a fertilization event between two
 220 individuals from the same genet is considered an outcrossing event. Under random mating,
 221 $s=1/N$ and for negligible mutation rates, $\gamma=1$.

222 Linkage disequilibrium: The linkage disequilibrium between pairs of loci (S -locus-viability
 223 locus and the two neutral loci) was studied with the correlation coefficient between two loci,
 224 R_{GGD} , developed by Garnier-Géré and Dillmann (1992) which is particularly appropriate for
 225 partially asexual diploids (de Meeûs and Balloux, 2004).

226 Fitness: Mean fitness of the population (\bar{W}) was calculated from the genotype frequencies as
 227 $\bar{W} = f(AA) \times 1 + f(Aa) \times (1 - hs) + f(aa) \times (1 - s)$, and the average fitness of individuals
 228 potentially produced by selfing (W_s), outcrossing (W_o) and asexuality (W_a) were calculated as

$$229 \quad W_s = f(AA) \times 1 + f(Aa) \times \left[\frac{1}{4} \times 1 + \frac{1}{2} \times (1 - hs) + \frac{1}{4} \times (1 - s) \right] + f(aa) \times (1 - s),$$

$$230 \quad W_o = 1 \times p_A^2 + (1 - hs) \times 2 \times p_A \times p_a + (1 - s) \times p_a^2 \quad (\text{where } p_A \text{ and } p_a \text{ are the frequencies of alleles}$$

231 A and a) and $W_a = \bar{W}$. Inbreeding depression (δ) and mutation load (L) were calculated as

$$232 \quad \delta = 1 - (W_s / W_o) \quad \text{and} \quad L = 1 - \bar{W}.$$

233 In addition, we compared the fitness of individuals produced
 234 by asexual reproduction (W_a) to the fitness of individuals produced sexually, using the ratio
 235 W_o / W_a . W_s , W_o and W_a were calculated as the fitness of potential offspring if all individuals
 236 were produced by selfing, by outcrossing and asexually, respectively. However, these modes
 of reproduction might not be actually present in the different scenarios considered (e.g. in

237 self-incompatible populations, no selfing occurs, but potential W_s and inbreeding depression
238 can be calculated).

239 Fixation probabilities: To interpret the results, we calculated the probabilities of four events:
240 fixation of alleles A and a in the viability locus, ‘fixation’ of viability locus heterozygote (Aa)
241 and fixation of a genotype in the S -locus (reduction of number of S -alleles to two, this was
242 only monitored in self-incompatible populations). These fixation probabilities were estimated
243 on 1 000 evaluations of the monitored variables as the proportion of times in which $p_a=0$,
244 $p_a=1$ and $H_o=1$ for the viability locus, or $n=2$ for the S -locus.

245

246 **Results**

247 *Effect of asexuality and drift on linkage disequilibrium between loci*

248 Probably the most obvious effect of partial asexual reproduction was the reduction of
249 recombination. Asexuality generated identical genotypes in offspring, so allele associations
250 were transmitted in the same way that they would be transmitted if they were physically
251 linked throughout the whole genome. In fully asexual populations, maximum linkage
252 disequilibrium was expected (equivalent to the linkage disequilibrium between fully linked
253 loci) and in partially asexual populations, recombination was reduced proportionally to the
254 rate of asexual reproduction. Figure 1 shows how non-random associations of alleles
255 increased with asexual reproduction rates. Linkage disequilibrium levels also depended on
256 population size because drift produced a departure from the expected values of frequencies of
257 allele combinations (Figure 1). Strong drift might have even caused some combinations of
258 alleles to be absent in the population.

259 In small populations, some generations with complete allelic association started to appear at
260 asexual reproduction rates of 0.8 and were predominant at rates of 0.99 and higher. In larger
261 populations, complete allelic association was only found in the fully asexual scenario. These

262 associations of alleles were observed between loci subject to selection and between neutral
263 loci, which showed that linkage disequilibrium was not a product of selective processes
264 (Figure 1a and Figure 1b).

265 Physical linkage between the *S*-locus and loci with deleterious alleles can decrease the
266 number of *S*-alleles (Uyenoyama, 2003). It can also dramatically increase inbreeding
267 depression in small populations (Glémin *et al.*, 2001). Therefore, for the present model, it was
268 important to discern whether the linkage disequilibrium generated by asexual reproduction is
269 sufficient for the selective forces of the *S*-locus to interact with the viability locus. The results
270 are presented below taking this perspective into account.

271

272 *Effect of asexuality and drift on diversity parameters: number of S-alleles and heterozygote*
273 *excess*

274 The effective number of *S*-alleles decreased with asexuality (Figure 2) as shown analytically
275 by Vallejo-Marín and Uyenoyama (2008). Balancing selection on the *S*-locus only occurred
276 during sexual reproduction events. Since these events were scarce at high rates of asexual
277 reproduction, the influence of balancing selection (which promotes high allelic diversity) on
278 the population diminished. This can temporarily stop sexual reproduction by reducing the
279 number of *S*-alleles to two (i.e. fixation of an *S*-locus genotype, Table 1).

280 No significant differences in the number of *S*-alleles were found among the three different
281 selection regimes for the viability locus (frequency distributions of the number of *S*-alleles
282 among different selection regimes were undistinguishable in a Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, *P*-
283 value>0.98). It must be noted that small populations (with high linkage disequilibrium) were
284 fixed for the wild type allele *A* most of the time (Table 2b) and this may explain the weak
285 influence of deleterious alleles on the *S*-locus.

286 Another general effect of partial asexual reproduction in diploids was the reduction of allele
287 segregation. This can increase heterozygosity by the independent accumulation of mutations
288 on the two alleles of an asexual lineage (Pamilo, 1987; Birky, 1996). To quantify this effect,
289 we measured the inbreeding coefficient F_{IS} , which compares observed and expected
290 heterozygosities.

291 Theoretical equilibrium values for F_{IS} at a neutral locus (unlinked to the S -locus) were very
292 similar in self-compatible and self-incompatible populations (Figure 3), and, for large
293 population sizes, the simulated populations followed the same pattern (Figure 3b). However,
294 for small population sizes, drift generated strong linkage disequilibrium between the S -locus
295 and other loci. Thus, balancing selection on the S -locus had a hitchhiking effect on other loci,
296 increasing their heterozygosity. This explained the contrasting F_{IS} values on simulated self-
297 compatible and self-incompatible populations (Figure 3a). Analytical predictions do not
298 reflect this dramatic difference because they do not account for linkage disequilibrium. F_{IS}
299 decreased with asexuality and this decrease was enhanced by self-incompatibility in small
300 populations, particularly noticeable at asexual reproduction rates higher than 0.8. This
301 decrease in F_{IS} observed in neutral loci also occurred at the viability locus (both for the mildly
302 deleterious and lethal recessive cases), which implied an increase in the frequency of the
303 deleterious allele (Figure 4).

304

305 *Effect of asexuality and drift on fitness*

306 For both self-compatible and self-incompatible populations, mutation load globally increased
307 with asexuality and population size, but a greater variance among generations and populations
308 was observed for very small populations (Figure 5). As mentioned above, the frequency of the
309 deleterious allele increased with asexuality in small self-incompatible populations, due to a
310 hitchhiking effect of the S -locus over the viability locus. In the self-incompatibility system,

311 when the population size was small enough, the mutation load increased with asexual
312 reproduction rates; this load resulted from the increase of the deleterious allele frequency
313 (Figure 5a and 5c). Under similar conditions in the self-compatible system, mutation loads
314 were lower than the mutation load observed in the self-incompatible system (Figure 5b and
315 5d). In contrast, inbreeding depression had similar values in self-incompatible and self-
316 compatible populations (Figure 6), showing some increases with asexual reproduction rate for
317 lethal recessive mutations that was more apparent in large populations.

318 The average fitness was higher in sexual populations than in asexual populations due to
319 Mendelian segregation (e.g. Figure 5; Chasnov, 2000; Kirkpatrick and Jenkins, 1989). The
320 relative fitness between individuals produced by sexual and asexual reproduction was
321 influenced very little by partial asexuality in a self-compatible population (Figure 7b and 7d).
322 However, in small self-incompatible populations, the asexual reproduction rate increased the
323 advantage of asexual compared to sexual reproduction (Figure 7a and 7c). These populations
324 consisted mainly of heterozygous individuals (Figure 3). Therefore, asexual reproduction
325 produced mainly Aa individuals, with only slightly lower fitness than the fittest AA haplotype.
326 However, sexual reproduction produced a high proportion of aa individuals, reducing the
327 average fitness of offspring, a reduction that was not compensated by the production of the
328 fittest AA individuals. This could potentially lead to a positive feedback effect on the asexual
329 reproduction rate, but this was not studied in our model where the asexual reproduction rate
330 was a fixed parameter.

331

332 **Discussion**

333 The number of S -alleles and inbreeding depression are considered to be the main factors that
334 influence the maintenance or breakdown of self-incompatibility systems (Charlesworth and
335 Charlesworth, 1979). A decrease in the number of S -alleles is expected to favour the

336 breakdown of self-incompatibility since self-compatible mutants can invade the population,
337 whereas the maintenance of inbreeding depression within populations prevents the breakdown
338 of self-incompatibility. In the present study, we examined how drift and partial asexuality
339 may modify the dynamics of these two key parameters in a self-incompatible population.

340

341 *Drift, combined with partial asexuality, dramatically reduced the number of S-alleles*

342 As already predicted by Yokoyama and Hetherington (1982), we showed that the number of
343 *S*-alleles decreases with the effective size of the population. Thus, in small populations,
344 repeated bottlenecks or founder events may lead to the breakdown of the self-incompatibility
345 system. However, Karron (1987) found no differences in mating systems between rare and
346 widespread congeners across several families (but see also a study on some Brassicaceae
347 species, Kunin and Shmida, 1997). As for the impact of asexuality, our simulation study
348 confirmed a recent result demonstrated analytically by Vallejo-Marín and Uyenoyama (2008).
349 The number of *S*-alleles decreased with asexuality due to the weakened influence of balancing
350 selection in a partially asexual population (Figure 2). In contrast with other effects of
351 asexuality that were only observed for very high rates of asexuality, intermediate asexual
352 reproduction rates were sufficient to significantly reduce the number of *S*-alleles. High rates
353 of asexual reproduction combined with drift produced extremely low numbers of *S*-alleles.
354 This effect was strong enough to even reduce the number of *S*-alleles to two (i.e. fixation of
355 an *S*-locus genotype, Table 1), which stopped all possibility of sexual reproduction until a
356 new *S*-allele arose from mutation or migration. Therefore, in such extreme cases, this drastic
357 effect of asexuality on the number of *S*-alleles should favour the breakdown of self-
358 incompatibility. However, paradoxically, the number of *S*-alleles may not be very relevant in
359 a system where asexuality serves to provide reproductive assurance.

360

361 *Drift, combined with partial asexuality and self-incompatibility, led to an increase in*
362 *mutation load*

363 Drift influenced the level of mutation load. As population size decreased, the frequency of the
364 deleterious allele decreased and mutation load decreased, due to more effective purging. We
365 also observed a much greater variance in mutation load in very small populations (Table 2
366 and Figure 5, $N=25$). In this case, selection was overwhelmed by drift and this caused a higher
367 probability of fixation of the deleterious allele, and an increase in mutation load. Similar
368 results have been described by Bataillon and Kirkpatrick (2000), Glémin (2003) and Haag and
369 Roze (2007).

370 Drift is also a key component of mutation load in asexual populations (Haag and Roze, 2007).
371 Indeed, large asexual and sexual populations showed comparable frequencies of the
372 deleterious allele and comparable mutation loads (Figure 5; see also Haag and Roze, 2007).
373 However, mutation load was greater in small asexual populations than in small sexual ones.
374 This could be explained by the absence of segregation in asexual populations, in which
375 heterozygous individuals are present in high frequencies (Table 2 and Figure 5; see also Haag
376 and Roze, 2007).

377 In this study, we additionally showed that self-incompatibility played a role in increasing
378 mutation load in partially asexual, self-incompatible populations. Partial asexual reproduction
379 and small population sizes produced strong associations (i.e. linkage disequilibrium) between
380 deleterious alleles (on any locus of the genome) and *S*-alleles. Glémin *et al.* (2001) have
381 already shown that deleterious mutations on loci linked to the *S*-locus may be sheltered by
382 balancing selection acting on rare *S*-alleles. Asexuality and self-incompatibility both favoured
383 the increase of the heterozygote genotype *Aa* within the population, leading to an increase of
384 mutation load in small self-incompatible, partially asexual populations.

385

386 *Inbreeding depression remained low in small, partially asexual, self-incompatible*
387 *populations*

388 Inbreeding depression followed different patterns than the ones observed for mutation load.
389 For very small populations, inbreeding depression is expected to decrease (Bataillon and
390 Kirkpatrick, 2000), due to the absence of polymorphism at the viability locus. This was
391 observed in small self-compatible and self-incompatible populations (Glémin *et al.*, 2001, and
392 our own simulations, Figure 6). As for the impact of asexuality, our results showed no large
393 differences between the self-compatible and the self-incompatible cases for small populations.
394 The effect of strong drift, in the presence of strong asexuality, was to reduce genotype
395 diversity. In most cases, populations were fixed at one allele, but sometimes the population
396 was fixed at the heterozygote genotype *Aa*. This mainly occurred in self-incompatible
397 populations (see Table 2). With no or very low genotype diversity, inbreeding depression had
398 very low values, even if deleterious alleles were present at high frequencies in the population.
399 Chen *et al.* (1997) proposed that asexuality would favour the maintenance of SI. Their
400 reasoning was that asexual reproduction would increase a population's genetic load due to
401 lethal recessive mutations, which was confirmed by our simulation results. However,
402 mutation load and inbreeding depression did not show parallel trends, and the high level of
403 mutation load due to the combination of drift, asexuality and SI was accompanied by low
404 levels of inbreeding depression. Nevertheless, inbreeding depression generally tended to
405 increase with asexuality due to the accumulation of deleterious alleles and this should favour
406 the maintenance of SI.

407

408 *Evolution of partially asexual, self-incompatible populations: a third possible outcome*

409 Until now, the evolutionary interest of partially asexual, self-incompatible populations has
410 been focused on two possible outcomes: (1) the system is stable and SI is maintained or (2)

411 the system is unstable and SI disappears (Vallejo-Marín, 2007; Vallejo-Marín and O'Brien,
412 2007; Chen *et al.*, 1997; Young *et al.*, 2002). However, a third possible outcome should be
413 considered: being the unstable system, sexual reproduction completely disappears. This type
414 of event was observed in our simulations due to a reduction in the number of *S*-alleles to two
415 (see above). However, we also studied how selection on the viability locus could contribute to
416 the potential loss of sexuality. Our results showed that the fitness of individuals produced by
417 asexual reproduction (W_a) was greater than that of individuals produced by random sexual
418 mating (W_o) in small populations (Figure 7). Fitness of individuals (potentially) produced by
419 selfing (W_s) was also lower than W_a in small self-incompatible populations, suggesting that
420 asexuality may have an immediate advantage over selfing under such circumstances.

421 Therefore, we speculate that asexual reproduction could take over sexual reproduction more
422 easily than self-compatibility over self-incompatibility when low numbers of *S*-alleles reduce
423 mate availability. Despite the effect of asexuality on inbreeding depression and *S*-locus
424 diversity, asexual reproduction may offer an alternative means of reproduction under these
425 adverse conditions and self-incompatibility may be temporarily dormant instead of breaking
426 down. Asexual populations could subsequently recover a sexual self-incompatible
427 reproductive system when new *S*-alleles are introduced in the population (for instance, by
428 migration). However, prolonged periods of asexual reproduction may facilitate the
429 accumulation of mutations affecting sexual traits, including self-incompatibility, since
430 selective pressures are ineffective for these traits (Eckert, 2001). Thus, alternative periods of
431 sexual and asexual reproduction may be necessary for such dynamics, which is probably the
432 case for plants combining asexual and sexual reproduction (Bengtsson and Ceplitis, 2000).
433 Nevertheless, the scenarios described here need to be confirmed by further and more complex
434 simulations and other factors may favour self-compatible sexual reproduction, such as the
435 more effective purging of deleterious mutations.

436

437 *Perspectives*

438 In this study, we used a model with physically unlinked loci and a single viability locus.
439 However, because the linkage disequilibrium produced by asexuality affected the whole
440 genome, population genomic models may be necessary to fully study the effect of deleterious
441 alleles on the *S*-locus for small, partially asexual populations. In addition, physically linked
442 loci with deleterious alleles (which were not studied here) may reduce the number of *S*-alleles
443 (Uyenoyama, 2003) and the strength of that effect may be influenced by the rate of asexuality
444 as discussed by Vallejo-Marín and Uyenoyama (2008). Moreover, in the present study, it was
445 not possible to investigate the evolutionary dynamics of mating system and asexuality
446 modifiers since these were assumed to be fixed parameters. It would be then interesting to
447 develop a model to test the invasion propensity of self-compatible or asexual mutants. Finally,
448 models incorporating migration or population structure are necessary to study more realistic
449 dynamics of partially asexual, self-incompatible populations. Population structure is expected
450 to affect the genetic diversity of viability and the *S*-locus, for instance by introducing a third
451 allele via migration within subpopulations fixed at two *S*-alleles. These models should also
452 take into account the specificities of the different types of asexual reproduction where, for
453 instance, the asexual propagules may have a lower dispersal capacity (e.g. vegetative
454 reproduction) and may create spatial clusters of individuals with the same genotype.

455 Recent theoretical work (Vallejo-Marín and Uyenoyama, 2008) and our own model lead to
456 several predictions about *S*-locus diversity, mutation load and inbreeding depression within
457 partially asexual self-incompatible populations. However, we need more experimental
458 observations to test and validate these theoretical advances. First, as outlined by Vallejo-
459 Marín and O'Brien (2007), if asexuality relieves selective pressures favouring the breakdown
460 of SI, the co-occurrence of asexuality and self-incompatibility should be frequent. Association

461 of self-incompatibility and asexuality has been studied in only a few monospecific studies
462 (*Rutidosia leiolepis*, Young *et al.*, 2002; *Eucalyptus morrisbyi*, Jones *et al.*, 2005; *Prunus*
463 *avium*, Stoeckel *et al.*, 2006). The association was found at a multispecific level by Chen *et*
464 *al.* (1997) in Australian Droseraceae and by Vallejo-Marín and O'Brien (2007) in Solanaceae.
465 More reports on species combining self-incompatibility and asexuality would enhance our
466 understanding of pressures explaining their maintenance. Second, experimental measurements
467 of asexual reproduction rates and number of *S*-alleles in species showing various levels of
468 asexual reproduction would be useful to test predictions from our simulations. Although
469 experimental measurements of inbreeding depression in self-incompatible species are
470 available (Mena-Ali *et al.*, 2008), studies comparing inbreeding depression from different
471 populations with contrasting sizes and rates of asexual reproduction are lacking.

472

473 *Conclusions*

474 This study investigated for the first time the effect of partial asexual reproduction on the
475 fitness of self-incompatible populations. For loci unlinked to the *S*-locus and large
476 populations, fitness values were similar to those of a self-compatible population. However, in
477 small populations, the combination of drift, asexuality and SI increased mutation load due to
478 the accumulation of deleterious alleles. This increase in the mutation load was accompanied
479 by a selective advantage of asexually produced offspring compared to sexually produced
480 offspring. Therefore, future studies addressing the maintenance of SI in partially asexual
481 populations (by studying the invasibility of self-compatible genotypes) will need to (1)
482 account for whole genome fitness and (2) acknowledge that the process may not be
483 independent of the maintenance of sex itself (i.e. will need to establish whether modifiers of
484 asexual reproduction rates invade more easily than self-compatible alleles).

485

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492 disequilibrium estimators.

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577 **Figure legends**

578 **Figure 1** Linkage disequilibrium (R_{GDD} index, Garnier-Géré & Dillmann 1992) at increasing
579 rates of asexual reproduction. Box-plots represent median (black line), first and third quartiles
580 (box) and 5% and 95% percentiles (whiskers) of 1 000 observations from simulations
581 performed at seven rates of asexual reproduction ($c=0, 0.5, 0.8, 0.9, 0.99, 0.999$ and 1) and
582 four population sizes ($N=25, 50, 100$ and 1000). (a) R_{GDD} index between S -locus and viability
583 locus ($s=0.1, h=0.2$); (b) R_{GDD} index between two neutral loci.

584 **Figure 2** Effective number of S -alleles at increasing rates of asexual reproduction. Box-plots
585 represent median (black line), first and third quartiles (grey box) and 5% and 95% percentiles
586 (whiskers) of 1 000 observations from the simulations performed at six rates of asexuality
587 ($c=0, 0.5, 0.8, 0.9, 0.99$ and 1), population size $N=25$ (a) and $N=100$ (b), mutation rate $\mu_S=10^{-5}$,
588 $s=0$ and $h=0$ for the viability locus. Grey line represents the theoretical expected number of
589 common S -alleles obtained numerically from Equation 1 (Equation 3.7 in Vallejo-Marín &
590 Uyenoyama, 2008).

591 **Figure 3** Inbreeding coefficient F_{IS} at a neutral locus at increasing rates of asexual
592 reproduction. Box-plots represent median (black line), first and third quartiles (white and grey
593 boxes, for self-compatible and self-incompatible populations respectively) and 5% and 95%
594 percentiles (whiskers) of 1 000 observations from the simulations performed at six rates of
595 asexuality ($c=0, 0.5, 0.8, 0.9, 0.99$ and 1), mutation rates $\mu_S=10^{-5}$ and $\mu_N=10^{-3}$, and population
596 size (a) $N=25$ and (b) $N=100$. Theoretical equilibrium values for F_{IS} at a neutral locus in a
597 self-compatible, random-mating population (dotted black line, from Equation 3, neglecting
598 mutation) and in a self-incompatible population (continuous grey line, from Equation 2) are
599 also represented.

600 **Figure 4** Frequency of deleterious alleles at increasing rates of asexual reproduction under
601 two selection regimes. Box-plots represent median (black line), first and third quartiles (white

602 and grey boxes, for self-compatible and self-incompatible populations respectively) and 5%
603 and 95% percentiles (whiskers) of 1000 observations from the simulations performed at seven
604 rates of asexuality ($c=0, 0.5, 0.8, 0.9, 0.99, 0.999$ and 1), mutation rates $\mu_S=10^{-5}$ and $\mu_N=10^{-3}$.
605 Population size and viability locus coefficients: (a) $N=25, s=0.1, h=0.2$, (b) $N=25, s=1,$
606 $h=0.02$, (c) $N=100, s=0.1, h=0.2$, and (d) $N=100, s=1, h=0.02$.

607 **Figure 5** Mutation load at increasing rates of asexual reproduction under two different
608 selection regimes according to reproductive system. Box-plots represent median (black line),
609 first and third quartiles (box) and 5% and 95% percentiles (whiskers) of 1 000 observations
610 from simulations performed at seven rates of asexual reproduction ($c=0, 0.5, 0.8, 0.9, 0.99,$
611 0.999 and 1) and four population sizes ($N=25, 50, 100$ and 1000). (a) Self-incompatible
612 population with a viability locus with mildly deleterious allele ($s=0.1, h=0.2$), (b) self-
613 compatible population with a viability locus with mildly deleterious allele ($s=0.1, h=0.2$), (c)
614 self-incompatible population with a viability locus with highly recessive lethal allele ($s=1,$
615 $h=0.02$), and (d) self-compatible population with a viability locus with highly recessive lethal
616 allele ($s=1, h=0.02$).

617 **Figure 6** Inbreeding depression at increasing rates of asexual reproduction and under two
618 different selection regimes according to reproductive system. Box-plots represent median
619 (black line), first and third quartiles (box) and 5% and 95% percentiles (whiskers) of 1000
620 observations from simulations performed at seven rates of asexual reproduction ($c=0, 0.5, 0.8,$
621 $0.9, 0.99, 0.999$ and 1) and four population sizes ($N=25, 50, 100$ and 1000). (a) Self-
622 incompatible population with a viability locus with mildly deleterious allele ($s=0.1, h=0.2$),
623 (b) self-compatible population with a viability locus with mildly deleterious allele ($s=0.1,$
624 $h=0.2$), (c) self-incompatible population with a viability locus with highly recessive lethal
625 allele ($s=1, h=0.02$), and (d) self-compatible population with a viability locus with highly
626 recessive lethal allele ($s=1, h=0.02$).

627 **Figure 7** Fitness ratio between sexually and asexually produced individuals at increasing rates
628 of asexual reproduction under two different selection regimes according to reproductive
629 system. Box-plots represent median (black line), first and third quartiles (box) and 5% and
630 95% percentiles (whiskers) of 1 000 observations from simulations performed at seven rates
631 of asexual reproduction ($c=0, 0.5, 0.8, 0.9, 0.99, 0.999$ and 1) and four population sizes
632 ($N=25, 50, 100$ and 1000). (a) Self-incompatible population with a viability locus with mildly
633 deleterious allele ($s=0.1, h=0.2$), (b) self-compatible population with a viability locus with
634 mildly deleterious allele ($s=0.1, h=0.2$), (c) self-incompatible population with a viability locus
635 with highly recessive lethal allele ($s=1, h=0.02$), and (d) self-compatible population with a
636 viability locus with highly recessive lethal allele ($s=1, h=0.02$).
637

638 **Table 1** Genotype fixation probability at the *S*-locus under two different selection regimes at
 639 the viability locus

Population size	Selection regime	Rate of asexual reproduction						
		<i>c</i> =0	<i>c</i> =0.5	<i>c</i> =0.8	<i>c</i> =0.9	<i>c</i> =0.99	<i>c</i> =0.999	<i>c</i> =1
<i>N</i> =25	Mildly deleterious ¹	0.000	0.000	0.036	0.325	0.784	0.807	0.997
<i>N</i> =25	Lethal recessive ²	0.000	0.000	0.018	0.315	0.790	0.805	0.994
<i>N</i> =50	Mildly deleterious	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.002	0.072	0.117	0.990
<i>N</i> =50	Lethal recessive	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.075	0.090	0.989
<i>N</i> =100	Mildly deleterious	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.001	0.983

640 The probability of genotype fixation at the *S*-locus (only two alleles in the population) was
 641 estimated as the proportion of observations in which this event was recorded. Results in this
 642 table are for populations with a mutation rate of $\mu_S=10^{-5}$ at the *S*-locus.

643 ¹ Viability locus selection and dominance coefficients: $s=0.1$ and $h=0.2$

644 ² Viability locus selection and dominance coefficients: $s=1$ and $h=0.02$

645

646 **Table 2** Fixation probabilities at the viability locus in a self-incompatible population under
 647 two different selection regimes.

Population size	Selection regime	Rate of asexual reproduction						
		$c=0$	$c=0.5$	$c=0.8$	$c=0.9$	$c=0.99$	$c=0.999$	$c=1$
(a) Fixation of deleterious allele a								
$N=25$	Mildly deleterious ¹	0.066	0.049	0.056	0.050	0.085	0.081	0.067
$N=50$	Mildly deleterious	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.001	0.001	0.001
$N=100$	Mildly deleterious	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
(b) Fixation of allele A								
$N=25$	Mildly deleterious	0.670	0.714	0.663	0.519	0.264	0.279	0.082
$N=25$	Lethal recessive ²	0.831	0.783	0.767	0.581	0.293	0.317	0.085
$N=50$	Mildly deleterious	0.583	0.541	0.574	0.507	0.474	0.466	0.139
$N=50$	Lethal recessive	0.661	0.635	0.596	0.564	0.518	0.493	0.150
$N=100$	Mildly deleterious	0.314	0.306	0.320	0.294	0.274	0.290	0.187
$N=100$	Lethal recessive	0.437	0.361	0.318	0.313	0.269	0.296	0.189
(c) Fixation of genotype Aa								
$N=25$	Mildly deleterious	0.000	0.000	0.023	0.184	0.472	0.467	0.723
$N=25$	Lethal recessive	0.000	0.000	0.013	0.212	0.551	0.569	0.879
$N=50$	Mildly deleterious	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.026	0.050	0.585
$N=50$	Lethal recessive	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.032	0.041	0.721
$N=100$	Mildly deleterious	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.230
$N=100$	Lethal recessive	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.317

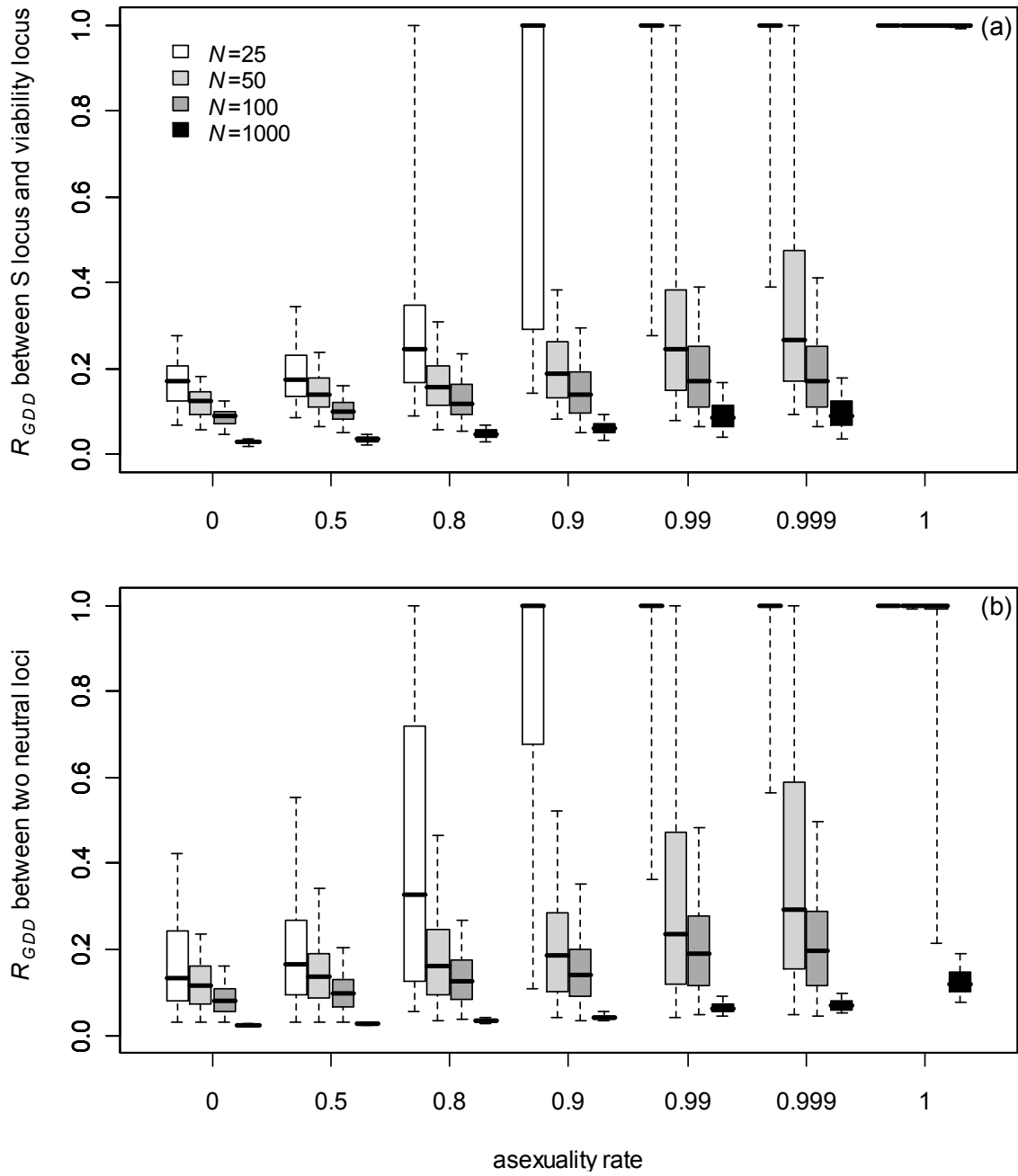
648 The probability of fixation at the viability locus (fixation of genotypes, AA , aa or Aa) was
 649 estimated as the proportion of observations in which fixation was recorded.

650 ¹ Viability locus selection and dominance coefficients: $s=0.1$ and $h=0.2$

651 ² Viability locus selection and dominance coefficients: $s=1$ and $h=0.02$

652

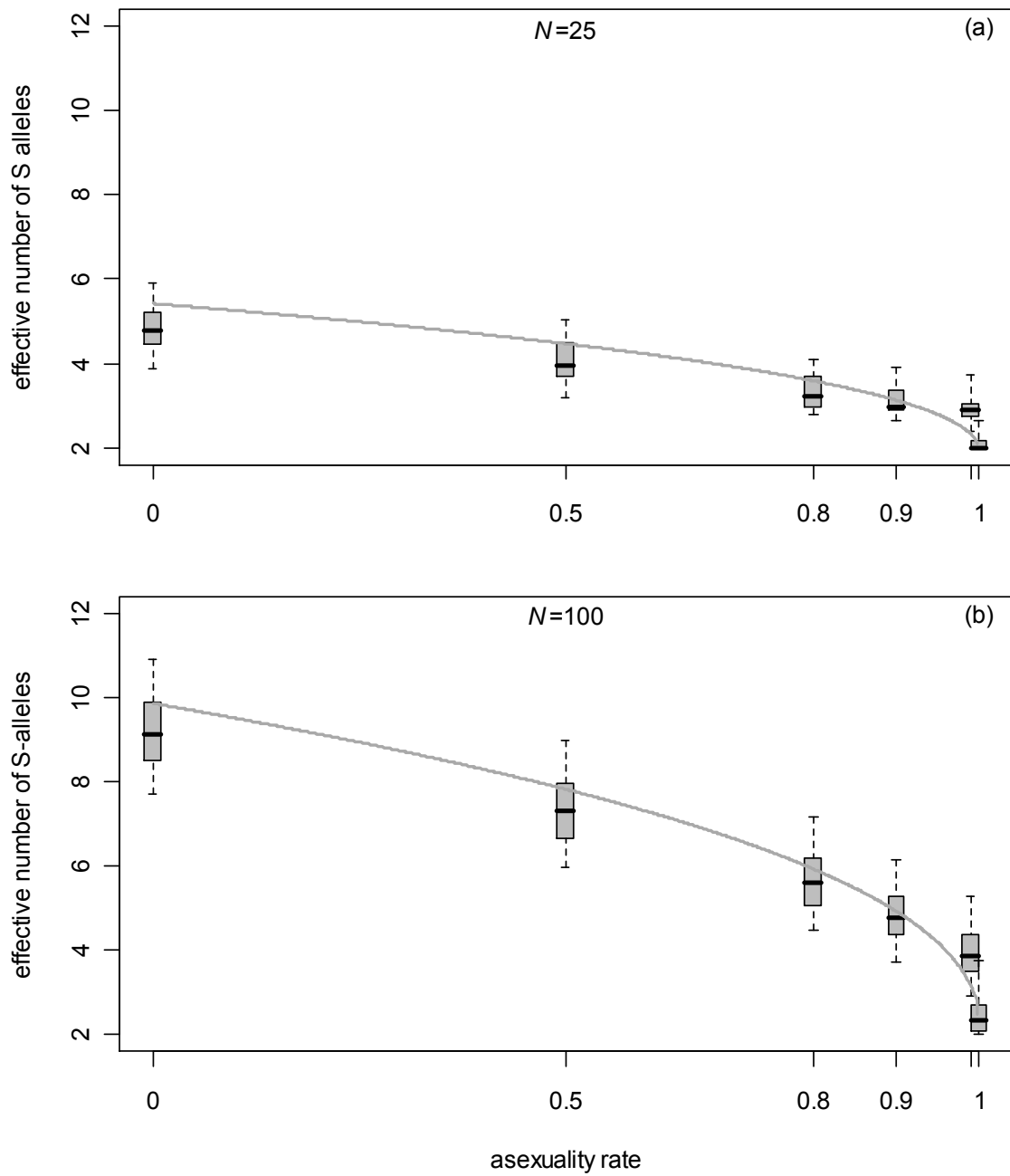
653 **Figure 1**



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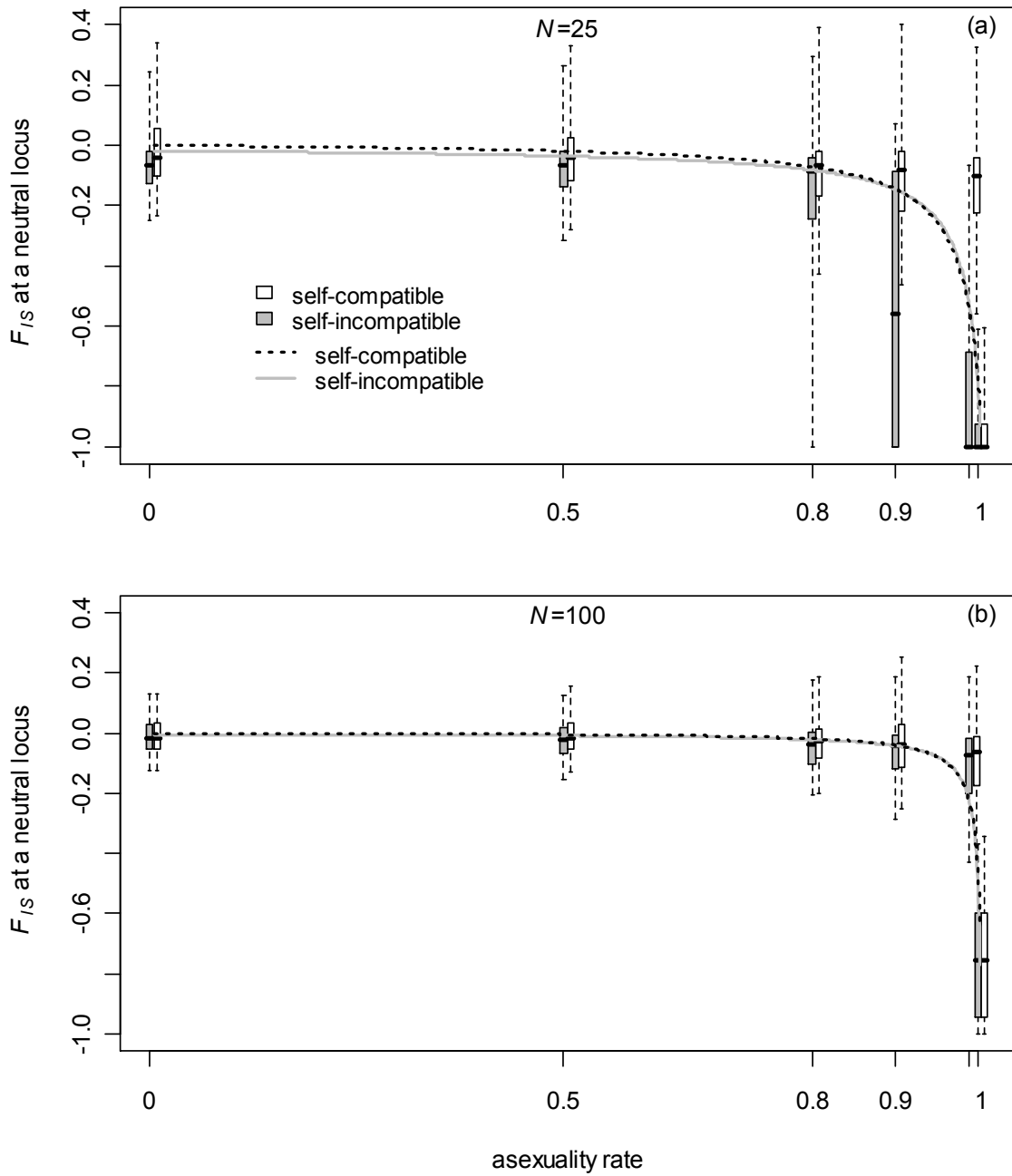
656 **Figure 2**



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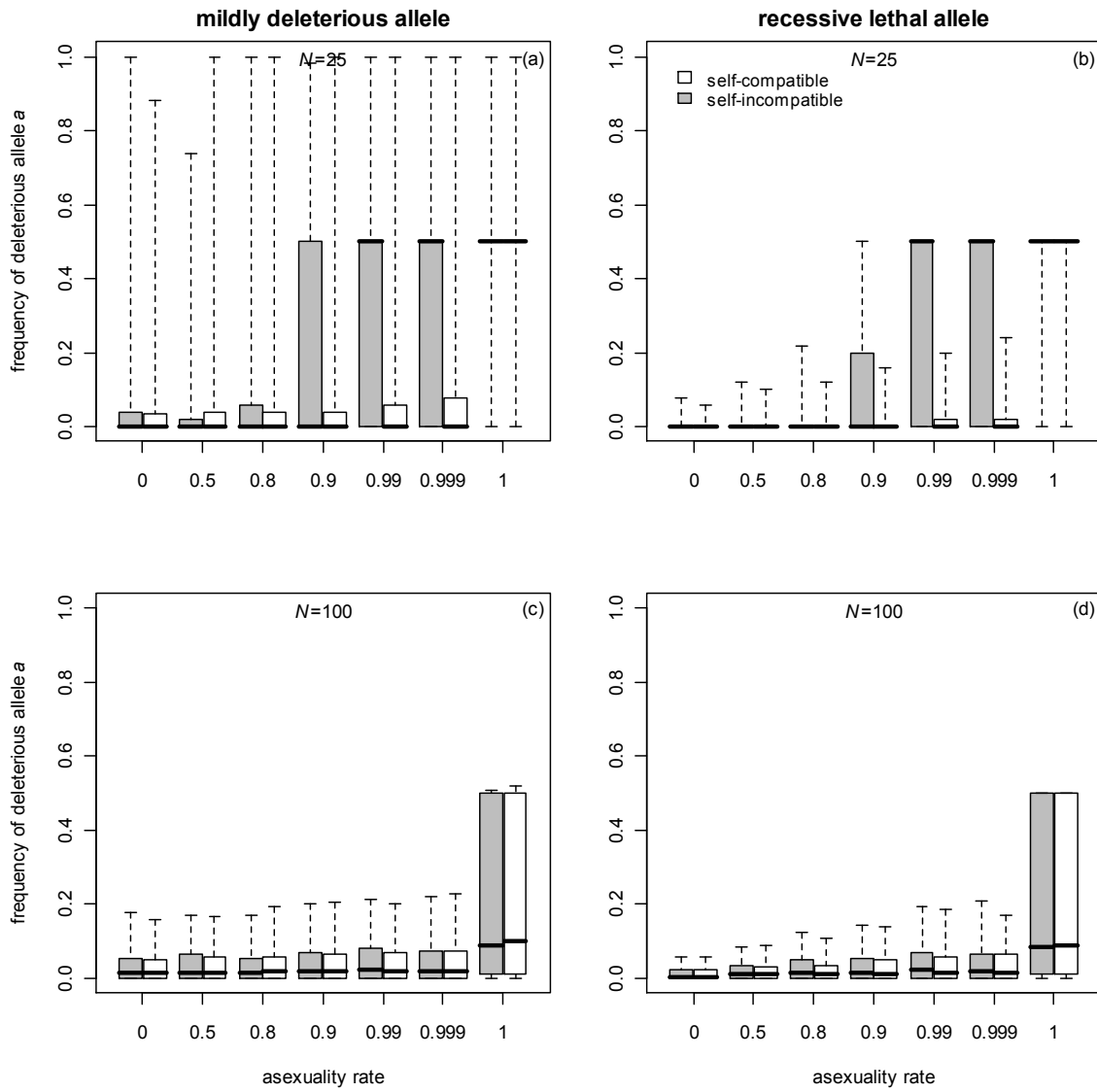
659 **Figure 3**



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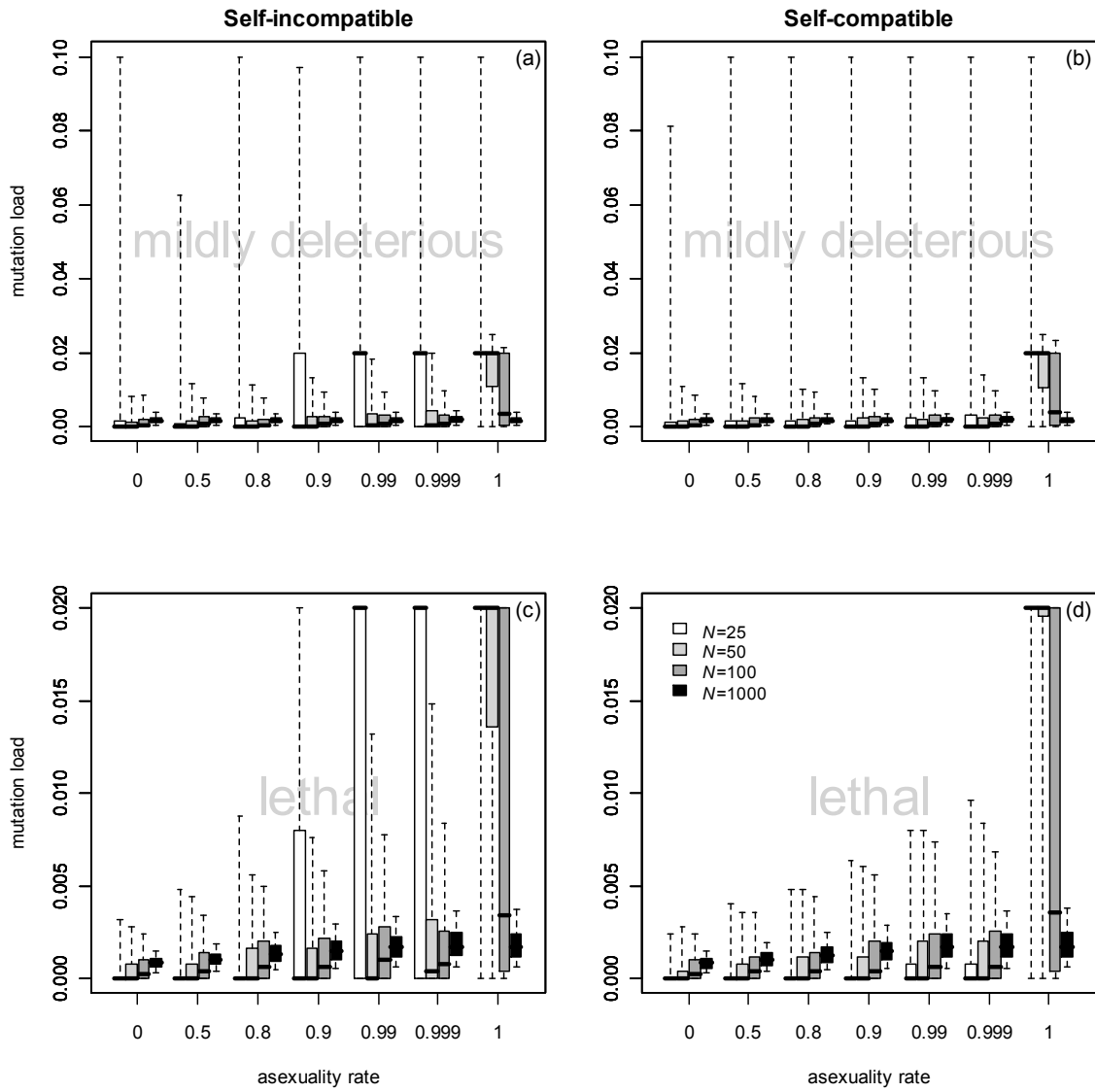
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662 **Figure 4**



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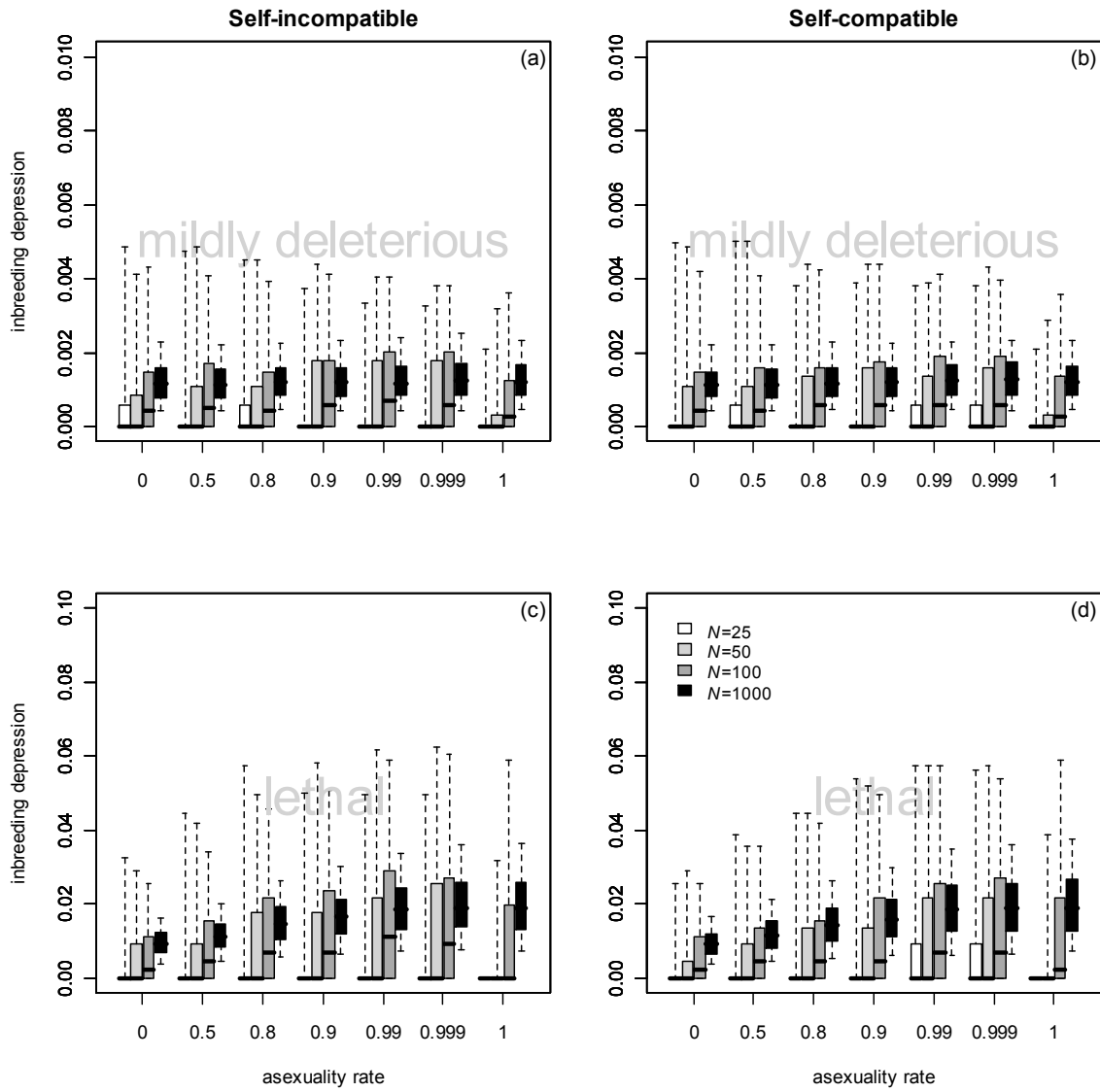
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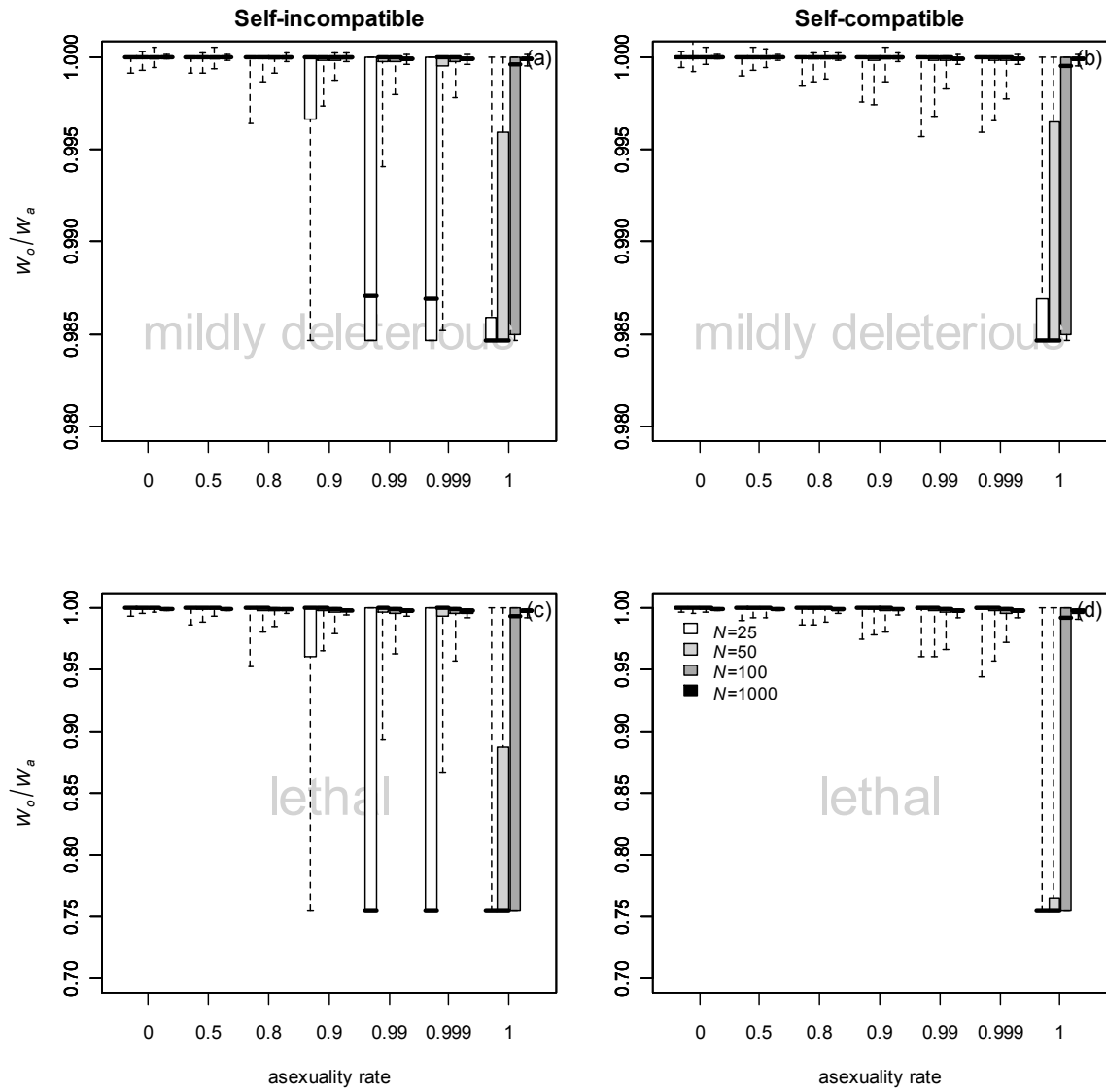
668 **Figure 6**



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671 **Figure 7**



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