Biases in ARG-based inference of historical population size in populations experiencing selection

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Abstract

Inferring the demographic history of populations provides fundamental insights into species dynamics and is essential for developing a null model to accurately study selective processes. However, background selection and selective sweeps can produce genomic signatures at linked sites that mimic or mask signals associated with historical population size change. While the theoretical biases introduced by the linked effects of selection have been well established, it is unclear whether ARG-based approaches to demographic inference in typical empirical analyses are susceptible to mis-inference due to these effects. To address this, we developed highly realistic forward simulations of human and *Drosophila melanogaster* populations, including empirically estimated variability of gene density, mutation rates, recombination rates, purifying and positive selection, across different historical demographic scenarios, to broadly assess the impact of selection on demographic inference using a genealogy-based approach. Our results indicate that the linked effects of selection minimally impact demographic inference for human populations, though it could cause mis-inference in populations with similar genome architecture and population parameters experiencing more frequent recurrent sweeps. We found that accurate demographic inference of *D. melanogaster* populations by ARG-based methods is compromised by the presence of pervasive background selection alone, leading to spurious inferences of recent population expansion which may be further worsened by recurrent sweeps, depending on the proportion and strength of beneficial mutations. Caution and additional testing with species-specific simulations are needed when inferring population

33　history with non-human populations using ARG-based approaches to avoid mis-inference due
34　to the linked effects of selection.

Keywords
36　Demographic inference, ancestral recombination graph, background selection, selective
37　sweeps, human population genomics, *Drosophila melanogaster*

Running title
39　Biases in ARG-based demographic inference due to selection

Introduction
41

Inferring the demographic histories of natural populations using population-genetic
approaches provides fundamental insights into both evolutionary and ecological species
dynamics. Demographic inference methods predict the effective size of ancestral populations
at different time points (epochs) in the past which best explains observed levels and patterns
of neutral diversity among sequenced individuals (reviewed in Beichman et al. 2018; Marchi
et al. 2021). Inferred population history can be correlated with archaeological and
anthropological findings to, for example, uncover the date and scale of population bottlenecks
and migration events (Mellars 2006; Jouganous et al. 2017; Bergström et al. 2020; Hu et al.
2023). Additionally, demographic history is needed to establish a null model for the inference
of selection across the genome (Teshima et al. 2006; Caicedo et al. 2007; Nielsen et al. 2007;
Thornton and Jensen 2007; Jensen et al. 2019). As we accumulate increasingly rich genomic
resources and apply advanced methods for inferring evolutionary parameters of populations,
it is essential that we understand the interactive effects between selection and historic
demography on contemporary variation, including the ways in which selection can impact
empirical inference of demography using modern methods.
57

Demographic history has traditionally been inferred using statistical summaries of
genomic variation such as the site frequency spectrum (SFS; Gutenkunst et al. 2009; Kamm
et al. 2020; Excoffier et al. 2021), linkage disequilibrium (LD; Hayes et al. 2003; Harris and
Nielsen 2013; Ragsdale and Gutenkunst 2017), by approximate Bayesian computation
approaches that use multiple summary statistics to perform inference (Beaumont et al. 2002;
Duchen et al. 2013; Kapopoulou et al. 2018; Johri et al. 2020), or by modelling local

genealogies (Li and Durbin 2011; Schiffels and Durbin 2014; Terhorst et al. 2017; Schiffels and Wang 2020). SFS-based approaches such as $\partial a \partial i$ (Gutenkunst et al. 2009) and *fastsimcoal2* (Excoffier et al. 2021) fit the observed SFS at putatively neutral sites to the expected SFS under a range of pre-determined demographic scenarios using diffusion theory and coalescent simulations respectively. However, SFS-based methods assume independence between segregating sites, which is violated when using dense variant data due to linkage disequilibrium between proximal loci. In contrast, sequentially Markovian coalescent (SMC) methods typically employ Hidden Markov Models (HMM) to generate local genealogies between historical recombination breakpoints across the genome, allowing for the estimation of genome-wide coalescence rates correlating to a specific branch-length across the genealogies (Li and Durbin 2011; Schiffels and Durbin 2014; Schiffels and Wang 2020). The coalescence rate across the genome is inversely proportional to the number of recombining individuals at a given time point in a panmictic population, thus the inverse instantaneous coalescent rate (IICR) can be used as a scaling factor to estimate relative effective population size even if it is also influenced by population structure and migration rate and should thus be interpreted with care (Mazet et al. 2016; Chikhi et al. 2018). SMC-based methods are limited to very few individuals (2-16 haplotypes) which limits analysis of recent demography. *SMC++* (Terhorst et al. 2017) was subsequently developed to address this limitation, accommodating the analysis of hundreds of samples to improve inference of recent demography. Furthermore, emerging methods for capturing detailed genealogies across larger populations present additional promising opportunities to improve demographic inference by harnessing richer sources of genetic information (Kelleher et al. 2019; Speidel et al. 2019; Zhang et al. 2023).

Ancestral recombination graphs (ARGs) capture detailed genealogical relationships between individuals by recording all ancestral recombination/coalescence events throughout the genome (Hudson 1991; Griffiths and Marjoram 1997), typically employing HMM algorithms similarly to SMC-based methods (Li and Stephens 2003). Among recently developed scalable ARG approximation tools, *Relate* has emerged as the most accessible and widely used for demographic inference as of yet (*e.g.* Speidel et al. 2019; Almarri et al. 2021; Minadakis et al. 2023; Moorjani and Hellenthal 2023; Teterina et al. 2023; Ishigohoka and Liedvogel 2024). To approximate an ARG, *Relate* estimates topological features of local genealogies (trees) based on position-specific distance matrices calculated between

haplotypes. Following the estimation of local tree topology, *Relate* then estimates branch

lengths using a Markov Chain Monte Carlo (MCMC) algorithm, initially assuming constant

effective population size. Estimated branch lengths are then used to re-estimate historical

population sizes from the inverse of the averaged coalescence rate at different epochs,

allowing in turn for branch lengths to be re-estimated under the inferred demography. This

process is iteratively repeated to co-estimate branch lengths and historical population size.

The authors presented simulations of human data suggesting that *Relate* provides improved

inference when compared to traditional local genealogy methods *MSMC* and *SMC++*,

particularly for estimates of population size in the recent past (Speidel et al. 2019).

Although most demographic inference approaches perform accurately when tested

with simulations assuming strict neutrality, indirect evolutionary forces, notably background

selection (BGS) due to purifying selection (Charlesworth et al. 1993) and selective sweeps

caused by positive selection (Maynard Smith and Haigh 1974), can produce genomic

signatures that mimic or mask signals associated with historical population size change

(Nicolaisen and Desai 2013), confounding inference of demography (Messer and Petrov

2013; Ewing and Jensen 2016; Schrider et al. 2016; Johri et al. 2021; Boitard et al. 2022;

Smith and Hahn 2023). For example, a population bottleneck caused by non-selective factors

(*e.g.*, founder effects following migration) will result in a population having fewer immediate

ancestors in subsequent generations; a hard selective sweep for a specific allele similarly

leads to fewer immediate ancestors in subsequent generations due to increased fitness for a

small proportion of the population (Teshima et al. 2006). Accurate inference of historical

population sizes therefore becomes a pre-requisite for, and pre-requires, accurate inference of

selection - presenting a circular dilemma (Johri, Aquadro, et al. 2022).

While a few recent simulation-based approaches have developed methods to jointly

infer selection and demography while accounting for the linked effects of selection (Sheehan

and Song 2016; Johri et al. 2020; Johri et al. 2023), the majority of widely-used demographic

inference approaches assume strict neutrality, *i.e.*, ignore the effects of direct and indirect

selection, which is typically attempted by masking functional regions (*e.g.*, conserved

elements, protein-coding exons) from the analysis. However, LD with selected loci often

extends beyond functional regions, violating assumptions of neutrality by impacting genetic

diversity at putatively neutral sites. Findings by Pouyet *et al.* (2018) suggest that the majority

of the human genome is influenced by BGS and biased gene conversion which in turn biases

the SFS and demographic inference. Furthermore, Johri *et al.* (2021) demonstrated that BGS

biases demographic inference when purifying selection is sufficiently pervasive, and spurious

inference of recent population expansion is observed under population decline and

equilibrium scenarios when using *fastsimcoal2* (Excoffier et al. 2021) and *MSMC* (Schiffels

and Wang 2020). In contrast, Boitard *et al.* (2022), who explored the relative decrease in

effective population size due to BGS and selective sweeps, suggest that the heterogeneity in

the rate of coalescence across the genome, as generated by the linked effects of selection, can

instead lead to spurious apparent decreases in effective population size. While previous

studies clearly outline the theoretical biases introduced by BGS and selective sweeps to

demographic inference, further analysis is needed to determine the extent to which the linked

effects of selection impact empirical population genomic inference using ARG-based

approaches where complex genome architecture and realistic effects of selection are present.

Moreover, because we do not have precise estimates of the fraction and strength of new

beneficial mutations in natural populations, it has been unclear if a reasonable extent of

recurrent positive selection will significantly impact linked neutral variation in human and *D.*

melanogaster-like populations.

Here, we test how demographic inference using an ARG-based approach is affected by

selection in complex genomes using highly realistic simulations relevant to human and

Drosophila melanogaster-like populations. To do so, we developed forward simulations

incorporating variable gene density, recombination rates, and mutation rates, using realistic

parameters for human and *D. melanogaster*-like chromosomes. We assess the effects on

inference of different simulated demographic histories, with the effects of background

selection and recurrent sweeps, parameterized by previously published estimates. Our

findings provide insights into pitfalls that arise when ARG-based demographic inference

approaches are applied to human populations and other species. Moreover, we collate

previous estimates of positive selection parameters inferred from human and *D.*

melanogaster-like populations, providing a potentially useful resource to other researchers

(Table 1).

Results

Neutrality with variable recombination/mutation rates in human-like populations

To assess the performance of *Relate* with realistic human data we performed detailed forward simulations of a whole chromosome, informed by empirical estimates, under five demographic histories: constant population size, recent expansion, recent contraction, bottleneck/recovery, and repeated bottleneck/recovery (Figure 1). Mutation and recombination rate heterogeneity was modelled across the chromosome according to published maps (The International HapMap Consortium 2005; Francioli et al. 2015) for all simulations (except where stated), rather than simulating a constant rate. Under equilibrium, (*i.e.*, constant population size N), *Relate* inferred the correct demographic history and only slightly underestimated the population size up to $4N$ generations prior to sampling (Figure 1A). *Relate* effectively identified the presence of historical population expansion and bottleneck/recovery, however the precise timing and speed of the bottleneck and initial population growth/recovery was less accurate (Figure 1B, 1D). The presence, timing, and scale of population contraction was correctly identified under neutrality (Figure 1C), though a very recent brief increase in population size approximately 1000 generations from present was spuriously inferred prior to a sharp decrease toward the present (Figure S1); *i.e.*, *Relate* correctly estimates the direction of population size change and the approximate scale of the overall decline in population size over N_{anc} (the ancestral population size) generations, though overestimates the rapidity of the decline in very recent generations for human-like populations. For the repeated bottleneck/recovery scenario *Relate* identified the presence of the most recent bottleneck/recovery, although the distant bottleneck/recovery was not inferred and elevated variation between replicates was seen along with mis-inference prior to the most recent bottleneck/recovery (Figure 1E). Our results suggest that mutation and recombination rate heterogeneity across the chromosome by itself had a negligible effect on simulated diversity and subsequent demographic inference for human simulations (Figure 1).

Background selection with variable recombination/mutation rates in human-like populations

BGS effects were modelled along with variable recombination and mutation rates.

The simulated 138.6 Mb genome consisted of an exon-intron-intergenic structure, with the

first and last exons of all genes flanked by UTR regions; realistic gene density heterogeneity

was modelled by varying the distance between adjacent genes (see Methods). All coding and

UTR regions experienced selection, while 4.4% and 3.6% of all new mutations in introns and

intergenic regions respectively experienced selection, matching empirical estimates (Siepel et

al. 2005; Dukler et al. 2022). This resulted in 3.15% of genome-wide sites experiencing

selection in simulations of human-like populations, consistent with recent estimates of 3.2%

of the human genome experiencing selection (Dukler et al. 2022). Purifying selection was

modelled by simulating the distribution of fitness effects (DFE) estimated by Huber *et al.*

(2017) and Johri *et al.* (2023), as discrete uniform distributions describing proportions of new

mutations drawn from four classes of selective effects. While both estimates predict similar

proportions of effectively neutral mutations ($0 \leq 2N_{anc}s_d < 1$), the DFE estimated by Johri *et*

al. (2023) comprises more mild ($1 \leq 2N_{anc}s_d \leq 10$) and moderately ($10 \leq 2N_{anc}s_d < 100$)

deleterious mutations, and no strongly deleterious new mutations ($2N_{anc}s_d \geq 100$), compared

to the Huber *et al.* (2017) DFE which predicts 22% of new mutations at conserved sites have

strongly deleterious effects (see Methods).

The addition of purifying selection using the Huber *et al.* (2017) DFE reduced genetic

diversity in neutral regions by 25-38% (Figure 1; Table S1, S2), with greater reductions for

the population contraction scenario (38%) and lesser reductions for population expansion

(25%). In comparison, we found the reduction of diversity under the Huber *et al.* (2017) DFE

was greater than the 10-16% reduction under the DFE estimated by Johri *et al.* (2023; Figure

1; Table S1, S2). While the introduction of BGS led to an overall reduction in estimates of

historical *N* inferred by *Relate* across all scenarios, as expected, the effect was relatively

minor for human-like genomes and population parameters (Figure 1). While the true

demographic history was largely recovered accurately in the presence of BGS in human-like

populations, under the repeated bottleneck/recovery scenario there was considerable

stochasticity between replicates in the more distant past as generations from present

approached $4N_{anc}$ (Figure 1E).

Effects of recurrent selective sweeps on demographic inference in human-like populations

Selective sweeps were modelled in addition to variable recombination and mutation rates and BGS effects by introducing beneficial mutations as an additional class in the DFE describing the 3.15% of chromosome-wide sites experiencing selection. To model the DFE of new beneficial mutations, we first performed a literature survey and collated previous estimates of relevant parameters from human populations (Table 1). While several studies have estimated the fraction of beneficial substitutions (α) in human populations, there are only two recent studies that have obtained estimates of the proportion of new mutations that are beneficial (f_{pos}) and the distribution of selection coefficients of beneficial mutations (s_a). However, these estimates vary widely because the two studies use very different data. Moreover, Zhen *et al.* (2020) demonstrated that a wide range of f_{pos} (proportion of new beneficial mutations at selected sites) and $2N_{anc}\bar{s}_a$ (mean population scaled selection coefficient of beneficial mutations) combinations could explain the observed substitution rates at nonsynonymous sites in humans across a likelihood surface. Thus, to explore a wide parameter space that could be relevant for human and great ape populations (see Table 1), we tested a range of f_{pos} and $2N_{anc}\bar{s}_a$ combinations in a grid-like fashion (Table 2). Beneficial mutations were introduced in simulations with one of two different proportions of new mutations ($f_{pos}= 0.01$, $f_{pos}= 0.001$); with each proportion, we tested population-scaled selection coefficients ($2N_{anc}s_a$) drawn from an exponential distribution with mean values of 10, 100, and 500. Note that our parameter combination $f_{pos} = 0.01$ and $2N_{anc}\bar{s}_a = 10$ closely matches the empirical estimate provided by Zhen *et al*. (2020; Table 1).

The introduction of selective sweeps due to relatively rare beneficial mutations ($f_{pos}= 0.001$), alongside BGS and variable recombination/mutation rates, resulted in effects on genetic diversity and demographic inference ranging from negligible to severe, depending on both the selection parameters and simulated demographic scenario (Figure 2; Table S1, S2). When the strength of positive selection was mild ($2N_{anc}\bar{s}_a = 10$, $f_{pos}= 0.001$), negligible changes in nucleotide diversity and demographic inference were observed (Figure 2; Table S1, S2). Moderate, rare positive selection ($2N_{anc}\bar{s}_a = 100$, $f_{pos}= 0.001$), resulted in moderate

reductions in nucleotide diversity relative to strict neutrality ($\frac{\pi_{neu}}{\pi_0}$ = 0.53-0.71; Figure 2;

Table S1, S2), though demographic inference appeared largely unaffected.

Strong, rare positive selection ($2N_{anc}\bar{s}_a$ = 500, f_{pos}= 0.001) resulted in large

reductions in nucleotide diversity ($\frac{\pi_{neu}}{\pi_0}$ = 0.17-0.49; Figure 2; Table S1, S2) and led to

demographic mis-inferences using *Relate*. For all demographic scenarios, strong, rare

positive selection ($2N_{anc}\bar{s}_a$ = 500; f_{pos}= 0.001) resulted in gradual population expansion

(approximately five-fold) from $4N_{anc}$ to around $1.5N_{anc}$ generations in the past, with

increased stochasticity between replicates (Figure 2). In addition, it caused recent population

expansion to be spuriously inferred under constant population size (Figure 2A), and constant

population size to be incorrectly inferred under population contraction (Figure 2C). The

presence of a recent population expansion was recovered under strong, rare positive selection

($2N_{anc}\bar{s}_a$ = 500, f_{pos}= 0.001) as was a recent bottleneck, though large reductions in diversity

and estimates of N were apparent, especially as generations from present approached $4N_{anc}$

(Figure 2; Table S1, S2).

The introduction of selective sweeps due to relatively common beneficial mutations

(f_{pos}= 0.01), resulted in greater effects on genetic diversity and demographic inference than

those produced under rarer occurrences of new beneficial mutations (f_{pos}= 0.001). Mild,

common positive selection ($2N_{anc}\bar{s}_a$ = 10, f_{pos}= 0.01) led to only slight reductions in neutral

diversity (π_{neu}) and did not impact demographic inference (Figure 3; Table S1, S2).

Moderate strength, common positive selection ($2N_{anc}\bar{s}_a$ = 100, f_{pos}= 0.01) led to large

reductions in π_{neu} and led to poorly inferred demographic histories, including high

stochasticity as generations from present approach $4N_{anc}$ and failure to recover a recent

population contraction (Figure 3C), similar to effects seen for populations experiencing

strong, rare positive selection ($2N_{anc}\bar{s}_a$ = 500, f_{pos}= 0.001) parameter combination (Figure

2C). Strong, common positive selection ($2N_{anc}\bar{s}_a$ = 500, f_{pos}= 0.01) resulted in extreme

reductions of π_{neu} and failure to recover demographic histories, with severely underestimated

N and spuriously inferred growth regardless of the simulated scenario (Figure 3). In

summary, population history is mis-inferred by *Relate* when using neutral sites from human-

like genomes if the combination of frequency (f_{pos}) and strength of beneficial mutations

($2N_{anc}\bar{s}_a$) is sufficiently high ($2N_{anc}\bar{s}_a f_{pos} \geq 1$).

Relevance to human populations

While we have demonstrated that there exist parameter combinations where
demographic inference will be biased in human populations in the presence of recurrent
sweeps, it's important to evaluate whether they are relevant to human populations. To assess
the tenability of positive selection parameters for human simulations, we used the ratio of
divergence at coding and neutral sites ($\frac{div_{coding}}{div_{neu}}$), as used by (Soni et al. 2023), and the
fraction of beneficial substitutions at coding sites, corrected to reflect values at
nonsynonymous sites (α; Table 2; Table S3-S6), to compare our simulations with empirical
findings (Table 1). In particular, our simulations indicated three combinations of parameters
($2N_{anc}\bar{s_a} = 10$, $f_{pos} = 0.001$; $2N_{anc}\bar{s_a} = 100$, $f_{pos} = 0.001$; $2N_{anc}\bar{s_a} = 10$, $f_{pos} = 0.01$) that
result in α values within the published range for humans (0-0.25; Table 2) as well as plausible
ratios of divergence between coding and neutral sites (Table 2). Thus, positive selection
causing classic hard sweeps in humans is likely to be relatively rare and not strong, consistent
with previous literature. Importantly, simulations with the parameter combinations that
exhibited plausible summary statistics for human populations (Table 2) did not impact
demographic inference with *Relate* (Figure 2, 3).

In contrast, when common positive selection was moderate or strong ($2N_{anc}\bar{s_a} = 100$,
$f_{pos} = 0.01$; $2N_{anc}\bar{s_a} = 500$, $f_{pos} = 0.01$), parameter combinations that caused mis-inference
with *Relate* (Figure 3), resulted in higher divergence in coding regions experiencing selection
compared to neutral intergenic regions ($\frac{div_{coding}}{div_{neu}} > 1$; Table 2), indicating that it is unlikely
that these parameter combinations are relevant to human populations. Simulations with
strong, rare positive selection ($2N_{anc}\bar{s_a} = 500$, $f_{pos} = 0.001$), which also caused mis-inference
with *Relate* (Figure 2), exhibited plausible $\frac{div_{coding}}{div_{neu}}$ values (Table 2), with α values (0.40-
0.47) exceeding published findings for humans and great apes, however this parameter
combination may be relevant to rapidly evolving distant mammalian species with higher
reported α values, such as mouse (Table 1).

Effects of selection on demographic inference in *Drosophila melanogaster*-like genomes

To gauge the effects of BGS and selective sweeps on demographic inference with more compact genomes, we used similar approaches as described above for humans, with variable recombination/mutation rates, though simulated for *D. melanogaster*-like parameters (Table S7). The *D. melanogaster* genome architecture was simulated with 48.7% of genome-wide sites under selection, again distributed in exons, UTRs, introns (43% sites under selection), and intergenic (35% sites under selection) regions, consistent with estimates by Siepel *et al.* (2005). We found that providing an accurate mask input to *Relate* for recalculation of genetic distance was essential for accurate demographic inference for compact genomes where variants at a substantial proportion of total sites are removed from the analysis (48.7%; see Supplementary Note S1; Figure S2).

Introducing recombination rate and mutation rate heterogeneity led to a moderate improvement in demographic inference performance with *Relate* for *D. melanogaster* genomes across all demographic scenarios; N was relatively under-estimated by 2-fold to 10-fold in the distant past as generations from present approached $4N_{anc}$ for simulated populations with constant recombination and mutation rate when compared to simulated populations with realistic heterogeneous rates (Figure S3). For neutral simulations with realistic heterogeneity in mutation and recombination rates, *Relate* recovered the correct demographic histories under equilibrium (constant population size), population expansion, contraction, and the most recent bottleneck/recovery (Figure 4). However, approximately 2-fold variation in population size was inferred across the $4N$ period under equilibrium, as well as spurious inference of population expansion from ~2500 generations ago until present with high stochasticity between replicates (Figure S4). In addition, an additional bottleneck further in the past was not recovered (Figure 4).

Introducing BGS effects, modelled by applying the DFE estimated for deleterious mutations by Johri *et al.* (2020) to conserved sites (48.7% region-wide), reduced nucleotide diversity in neutral regions by 46-70% (Figure 4; Table S8, S9) consistent with theoretically predicted values by Charlesworth (2013). As expected, BGS led to substantially under-estimated N and increased stochasticity across replicates in all scenarios as generations from

present approached $4N_{anc}$, with additional spurious variation in historical population size

identified, even under equilibrium (Figure 4A). *Relate* recovered the recent population

expansion and recent contraction, albeit with high stochasticity between replicates and

underestimation of N beyond $1.5N$ generations ago for the population contraction scenario

(Figure 4B, 4C). BGS caused recent bottlenecks to be entirely mis-inferred as recent

expansions with population sizes under-estimated by up to two orders of magnitude prior to

the bottleneck (Figure 4D, 4E).

Selective sweeps were modelled by introducing beneficial mutations at conserved

sites with varying frequency (f_{pos}) and mean positive selection coefficient ($2N_{anc}\overline{s_a}$),

informed by widely varying empirically estimated values (Table 1), with BGS present. In

contrast to human populations, several previous studies have estimated the relevant

parameters in *D. melanogaster* populations (Table 1) though estimates vary widely, possibly

due to methodological differences. We therefore simulated all estimated parameter

combinations. The parameter combination (f_{pos}= 0.005, $2N_{anc}\overline{s_a} = 20$) simulating common,

weakly beneficial mutations reported by Keightley *et al.* (2016) had minimal additional

effects on reducing diversity and impacting demographic inference, when compared to

simulations with BGS only (Figure 4). The Campos *et al.* (2017) parameter combination

(f_{pos}= 0.0002, $2N_{anc}\overline{s_a} = 250$) simulating infrequent, moderately beneficial mutations had a

larger effect on reducing diversity, particularly in the population expansion scenario (Figure

4B), though demographic inference was only minorly impacted by the addition of sweeps.

The Jensen *et al.* (2008) parameters (f_{pos}= 1×10^{-6}, $2N_{anc}\overline{s_a} = 10000$) simulating very rare,

very strongly beneficial mutations had only moderate effects on reducing diversity and

impacting demographic inference, though stochasticity between replicates was considerably

higher in all scenarios, particularly when a recent population bottleneck occurred $1N$

generations ago (Figure 1D, 1E). However, simulated data from all three empirically

estimated combinations of positive selection parameters produced summary statistics that did

not match well with empirical findings: simulated $\frac{\pi_{neu}}{\pi_0}$ ranges from 0.54-0.27 (Figure 4,

Table S8, S9), while Elyashiv et al. (2016) estimated $\frac{\pi_{neu}}{\pi_0} = 0.11$-0.23; simulated $\alpha \leq 0.19$

(Table 2; Table S10) while published estimates report $\alpha = 0.40$-0.71 (Table 1); and finally,

while the simulated $\frac{div_{coding}}{div_{neu}} \leq 0.52$ (Table 2, S11-13), which is plausible in real populations

experiencing selection, Johri *et al.* (2020) empirically estimated a higher ratio for *D.*

melanogaster ($\frac{div_{coding}}{div_{neu}} = 0.87$).

The parameter combination of $f_{pos} = 0.005$ (Keightley et al. 2016) and $2N_{anc}\overline{s_a} = 250$

(Campos et al. 2017) simulating common, moderately beneficial mutations, which was never

inferred by any one previous study, produced summary statistics (α, $\frac{div_{coding}}{div_{neu}}$, $\frac{\pi_{neu}}{\pi_0}$; Table S8-

S13) that best matched empirical estimates, which could potentially suggest that it most

accurately models the effects of selection in real *D. melanogaster* populations. This

parameter combination resulted in total reduction of neutral diversity ($\frac{\pi_{neu}}{\pi_0} = 0.09$-$0.28$;

Figure 4, Table S8, S9) consistent with findings by Elyashiv *et al.* (2016), as well as α (0.40-

0.47; Table 2, S10) and $\frac{div_{coding}}{div_{neu}}$ (0.91-0.98; Table 1, S11-S13) best matching empirical

estimates (Keightley et al. 2016; Campos et al. 2017; Lange and Pool 2018; Johri et al. 2020;

Zhen et al. 2021) of all simulated *D. melanogaster* parameter combinations. Selective sweeps

introduced by this parameter combination ($f_{pos}= 0.005$, $2N_{anc}\overline{s_a} = 250$), with BGS present,

led to failure by *Relate* to effectively infer demographic histories, with recent population

expansion spuriously inferred in all simulated scenarios, severe underestimates of *N*, and

extremely high stochasticity between replicates, even under equilibrium (Figure 4).

Discussion

Implications for human-like populations

Our analysis of realistic simulated populations (not accounting for structure) indicated

that signatures of the linked effects of selection have the potential to cause mis-inference of

historical population size using *Relate* when purifying and/or positive selection are

sufficiently strong and pervasive. However, demographic inference with empirically

supported parameters for human populations was shown to not be strongly impacted by

selection under most tested demographic models. While BGS introduced by the DFEs

estimated by Huber et al. (2017) and Johri et al. (2023) had moderate effects reducing

genomic variation for simulated human populations ($B \approx 0.7$-0.9; Table S1, S2), consistent

with previous estimates ($B = 0.83$; Murphy et al. 2023), our findings suggest the effect of

BGS on demographic inference for humans is minimal, inducing only slight under-estimation

of historical population size without causing spurious inferences. Selective sweeps from

recurrent positive selection similarly had little effect on demographic inference with *Relate*

when restricted to empirically supported parameters for human populations (Eyre-Walker and

Keightley 2009; Galtier 2016; Uricchio et al. 2019; Zhen et al. 2021), only potentially

impacting the inferred history for populations that experienced repeated bottlenecks.

For simulated populations experiencing recurrent selective sweeps with parameters

($2N_{anc}\bar{s}_a$, f_{pos}, α) consistent with findings for human and other great apes with similar

selection (McManus et al. 2015; Cagan et al. 2016; Castellano et al. 2019) and population-

genetic dynamics (Besenbacher et al. 2019; Schmidt et al. 2019), we found the greatest driver

of population history mis-inference using *Relate* was not selection but rather repeated

fluctuations in historical population size. We found that when a simulated population

experienced repeated bottlenecks *Relate* was only able to detect the most recent bottleneck,

and exhibited poor inference further in the past, raising concerns of its accuracy when applied

to many real populations. Great ape taxa including orangutans, gorillas, chimpanzees, and

bonobos have been reported by some to experience a recent bottleneck (McManus et al.

2015) and repeated population bottlenecks (Prado-Martinez et al. 2013), suggesting that

perhaps other demographic inference methods may be better suited at recovering repeated

bottlenecks. Previous archaeological evidence suggests that we expect natural human

populations underwent multiple bottlenecks (reviewed in Hawks et al. 2000; Nielsen et al.

2017). Our results suggest that while recent bottlenecks humans experienced may be

observable (*e.g.,* Gravel et al. 2011; Liu and Fu 2015; Terhorst et al. 2017; Almarri et al.

2021; Ragsdale et al. 2023), *Relate* and similar methods may not effectively identify

additional distant bottlenecks that may have taken place (Hawks et al. 2000).

While recurrent selective sweeps using parameters supported by findings for humans

($2N_{anc}\bar{s}_a = 10$, $f_{pos} = 0.001$; $2N_{anc}\bar{s}_a = 100$, $f_{pos} = 0.001$; $2N_{anc}\bar{s}_a = 10$, $f_{pos} = 0.01$) are not

strong and pervasive enough to meaningfully impact demographic inference with *Relate*, we

found that stronger positive selection ($2N_{anc}\bar{s}_a = 500$, $f_{pos} = 0.001$) could lead to mis-

inference, which may be relevant to other mammalian species. Lemur (*Propithecus*

coquereli; $\alpha = 0.75$; Galtier 2016), mouse (*Mus musculus;* $\alpha = 0.41, 0.51$; Halligan et al.

2013; Zhen et al. 2021), and rabbit populations (*Lepus granatensis, Oryctolagus cuniculus;*

Carneiro et al. 2012; Galtier 2016) have been estimated to have a high fraction of beneficial

relative to neutral substitutions at or above levels which caused *Relate* to produce spurious

population expansions with substantial underestimations of historical population size ($\alpha =$

0.40-0.47; Figure 4, Table S13). Mice and rabbits have higher gene densities than humans

(Carneiro et al. 2014; Frankish et al. 2019) and larger effective population sizes (Carneiro et

al. 2011; Phifer-Rixey et al. 2012), which would exacerbate the impact of both BGS and

sweeps on demographic inference, though they also exhibit higher rates of recombination

relative to mutation rates (Jensen-Seaman et al. 2004; Booker et al. 2017; Lindsay et al.

2019). Overall, our results indicate that selection has the potential to cause mis-inference of

population history with *Relate* in some mammalian populations, though additional

simulations modelling alternative genomes/populations are needed to identify the precise

effects for non-human species. In cases where ARG-based inference using all

intergenic/intronic sites are expected to be impacted due to the linked effects of selection,

masking only selected regions may be insufficient and instead it may also be necessary to

mask adjacent regions most affected by BGS and selective sweeps.

Implications for *Drosophila*-like species with compact genomes

Our results suggest that demographic inference with *Relate* is susceptible to mis-

inference for species with compact genomes and pervasive selection, as modelled by our *D.*

melanogaster simulations. BGS due to purifying selection introduced according to the DFE

estimated by Johri et al. (2020) substantially impacted demographic inference and decreased

historical population size estimates by approximately ten-fold $1N_{anc}$ generations ago.

Interestingly, the recent approximately two-fold expansion in the most recent $1N_{anc}$

generations inferred by *Relate* for a population of constant size experiencing BGS (Figure

4A) matches well empirical estimates of two- to four-fold growth in the Zambian population

of *D. melanogaster* (Ragsdale and Gutenkunst 2017; Kapopoulou et al. 2018), raising

questions of whether these findings of population growth may be equally explained by a

population of constant size experiencing the linked effects of selection. In addition, the

effects of BGS in *D. melanogaster* resulted in the failure of *Relate* to recover some

demographic shifts including population bottlenecks. Various non-Zambian *D. melanogaster*

populations experienced severe bottlenecks, such as during transcontinental colonization

events (Thornton and Andolfatto 2006; Laurent et al. 2011; Duchen et al. 2013; Kapopoulou

et al. 2018; Arguello et al. 2019). Our results indicate that BGS alone is sufficient to entirely

obscure the presence of population bottleneck when inferred by *Relate,* instead spuriously

inferring a recent population expansion.

Selective sweeps will likely also exacerbate mis-inference in *D. melanogaster*,

however, the extent to which this occurs may be unclear, as our simulated parameters

matching empirical estimates varied widely in their frequency/intensity of selection and their

effect on demographic inference. The mismatch we found between summary statistics (α,

$\frac{div_{coding}}{div_{neu}}$, $\frac{\pi_{neu}}{\pi_0}$; Table S8-S13) from our simulations using widely varying published f_{pos} and

$2N_{anc}s_a$ combinations (Jensen et al. 2008; Keightley et al. 2016; Campos et al. 2017; Zhen et

al. 2021) compared to the same summary statistics reported in the literature (Elyashiv et al.

2016; Keightley et al. 2016; Campos et al. 2017; Johri et al. 2020; Zhen et al. 2021) raises

concerns of consensus regarding which parameters best describe real populations. This is

likely in part due to the likelihood surface as presented in Zhen *et al.* (2021), which

highlighted the difficulty in accurately inferring the fraction of new beneficial mutations and

their strength jointly. Another possibility is that the beneficial DFE in real *Drosophila*

populations may deviate from the expected exponential distribution (Fisher 1930; Gillespie

1984; Orr 2003) modelled in our simulations and inferred by previous studies, and may

instead be better fit by alternative distribution domains (Joyce et al. 2008; Seetharaman and

Jain 2014). Similarly, while we assumed that all new mutations are semidominant, increased

recessivity or dominance of selected mutations could result in different effects on genomic

variation (Teshima and Przeworski 2006). Thirdly, it is possible that the large rescaling of *D.*

melanogaster-like simulated populations that was necessary for computational tractability

(see Methods; Table S14) inadvertently changed some dynamics of recombination by under-

modelling crossover interference which increases the probability of introducing more than

one crossover events in a single progeny; in such a case, increased linkage effects between

distal sites may occur which could in turn influence selection dynamics. Generally, increased

linkage and a higher mutation rate per diploid genome is likely to cause interference between

selected alleles, leading to a possible decrease in the efficacy of positive selection.

Alternatively, it is possible that diminished effects of recombination could lead to increased

effects of background selection, resulting in a lower effective population size, and therefore

reduced efficacy of positive selection (*i.e.*, lower values of $N_e s_a$). While we optimized our

simulations based on the best fit to empirical findings within the realms of tractability, the

precise impacts of rescaling are not fully known and further research is needed to clarify its

effects and how best to preserve expected population genetics dynamics. Finally, positive

selection in *D. melanogaster* and other populations may be primarily due to polygenic

selection or selection on standing variation, in which case our assumed model of recurrent

classic sweeps might not be sufficient to fit the empirical observations. Because positive

selection on new mutations causes the strongest hitchhiking effect, it is unlikely that other

models of positive selection will result in more severe mis-inference than that simulated in

our study.

ARG-based demographic inference methods including *Relate* were initially developed

to investigate human ancestry, however, these approaches have recently been applied to other

organisms including insects, nematodes, and plants. Pope *et al.* (2023) reported population

histories using ARG information approximated by *Relate*, inferring recent expansions in

squash bee (*Eucera pruinosa*) populations following population splits coinciding with

historical events. Our *D. melanogaster* results under the population bottleneck scenario

(Figure 4D) suggest mis-inference due to BGS effects could partially explain some of their

findings, if their methods for masking sites putatively linked to selected loci were too

permissive (Pope et al. 2023; see Supplementary Note S2 for details). Beyond insects, *Relate*

has recently been used to infer the demographic histories of self-fertilizing (selfing) and

outcrossing *Caenorhabditis* nematodes (Teterina et al. 2023), and a grass species

(*Brachypodium distachyon*) with high rates of selfing (Minadakis et al. 2023). Selfing

increases the effects of background selection (Charlesworth et al. 1993; Charlesworth 2003)

and selective sweeps (Hedrick 1980; Hartfield and Bataillon 2020), dramatically affects

heterozygosity (Charlesworth and Charlesworth 1987) and linkage (Wright et al. 2013; Noble

et al. 2021), and ultimately, changes the genealogical patterns from which *Relate* derives its

demographic estimates (Nordborg and Donnelly 1997; Nordborg 2000; Strütt et al. 2023).

Our results underline the need for caution when applying methods, such as *Relate*, that were

designed for and tested with human parameters, to species with differing genome architecture

experiencing disparate population dynamics.

Demographic inference with complex genomic architecture

While a moderate improvement in inference was seen by effectively modelling

recombination and mutation rate variability across *D. melanogaster* genomes (Figure S3),

simulating recombination and mutation rate heterogeneity did not have a large impact on demographic inference with *Relate* across human genomes, unlike observations in some previous studies (Sellinger et al. 2021; Boitard et al. 2022). Sellinger *et al.* (2021) found that local variation in mutation rate could lead to demographic mis-inference and spurious apparent population decline using SMC methods. Realistic variation in local mutation and recombination rates has been shown to impact demographic inference when using SFS-based methods (Soni et al. 2024). In addition, extreme rates of recombination (cM/Mb ≤ 0.01, cM/Mb ≥ 5) have been shown to result in mis-inference of historical population size as calculated from nucleotide diversity using *Relate* (Novo et al. 2022). However, Upadhya and Steinrücken (2022) suggested that demographic inference performance with *Relate* improves when recombination rates are variable due to the presence of low recombination rate regions from which exact local genealogies can be estimated, which could in part explain the moderate improvement provided by modelling mutation and recombination rate heterogeneity in *D. melanogaster* simulated populations (Figure S3). It is unclear whether recombination and mutation rate heterogeneity may have more substantial effects in different species, as recent reports suggest masking low-recombination regions in songbird species may improve demographic inference with *Relate* (Ishigohoka and Liedvogel 2024).

The feasibility of finding neutral sites for demographic inference, which have not been substantially affected by nearby linked sites under selection, is essential for accurate genetic inference. Messer and Petrov (2013) found a 5-fold recent expansion could be mis-inferred by DFE-α using synonymous sites under equilibrium due to BGS alone, with more severe mis-inference (8.8-fold expansion) when selective sweeps were also modelled, with parameters ($2N_{anc}\bar{s_a} = 20$, $\alpha = 0.18$) similar to our empirically supported human parameters that did not lead to demographic mis-inference with *Relate* (Table 2; Figure 3A). Similarly, Schrider *et al.* (2016) revealed that when substantial fractions of neutral sites used for demographic inference are affected by proximal strong selective sweeps, population history can be severely impaired, concluding that it is essential to identify neutral sites sufficiently unlinked from recent selective sweeps to use for demographic inference. We found that neutral sites in intronic and intergenic regions are indeed sufficiently unlinked from recent selective sweeps to not affect inference in humans when simulating empirically supported positive selection parameters (Table 2; Figure 2, 3). However, our results suggest that the linked effects of selection (notably BGS) in compact genomes such as *D. melanogaster* impact demographic inference when using sites in neutral regions (Figure 4). Thus, for

populations with compact genomes experiencing selection such as *D. melanogaster*, or in

more extreme cases such as viruses where neutral sites unlinked to selected loci do not exist

(Howell et al. 2023; Terbot et al. 2023), population history may be best inferred using joint

inference approaches (*e.g.* Johri et al. 2020) that account for the linked effects of selection

and demography simultaneously.

The effect of selection on gene genealogies

Our results did not reveal that the effects of selection at linked sites lead to spurious

inference of recent population decline, as reported by Boitard *et al.* (2022), when tested in

realistic populations. The authors suggested the conflict between their findings (Boitard et al.

2022) and findings by Johri *et al.* (2021) was due to modelling of genomic regions without

variable gene density or recombination and mutation rate variability; however, the simulated

populations in our current analysis addresses these concerns and we largely corroborate

findings by Johri *et al.* (2021). This is because Boitard *et al.* (2022) modelled the

heterogeneity in effective population size across the genome while accounting for only the

rescaling effects of N_e due to background selection and sweeps. However, both processes

lead to not only a decrease in N_e, but also affect the underlying gene genealogy, which

mimics the genealogy of an expanding population and skews the SFS (Kim 2006; Nicolaisen

and Desai 2013), and this is not accounted for by Boitard *et al.* (2022). Similarly, while

Cousins *et al.* (2024) have recently implemented a *PSMC* method that accounts for the

relative decrease in N_e across the genome caused by the linked effects of selection, such a

method is unlikely to account for impacts of selection on local genealogies and thus may be

ineffective when selection is pervasive, especially in species with compact genomes or those

with little/no recombination. A final caveat of our analysis is the assumption of panmixia that

may not reflect the reliability of ARG-based inference in the presence of population structure,

which Boitard *et al.* (2020) showed could overshadow the impact of linked effects of

selection on the IICR. Given reports that humans, for example, have experienced

considerable population structure throughout their demographic history (Schiffels and Durbin

2014; Schlebusch et al. 2017; Ragsdale and Gravel 2019; Ragsdale et al. 2023), the effect of

selection on inference in structured populations may be a promising avenue for additional

research.

Following our analysis, the question arises: how generalizable are our findings using

Relate to analysis with alternative ARG-based demographic inference approaches?

Systematic ARG estimation using exhaustive likelihood approaches is computationally

impractical (McVean and Cardin 2005), and as a result, *Relate* and similar methods use

heuristics and HMMs to minimise redundant calculations (Li and Stephens 2003), greatly

improving scalability with large sample sizes at the cost of precision. *Relate* (Speidel et al.

2019) and *tsinfer/tsdate* (Kelleher et al. 2019; Wohns et al. 2022) share biases when

estimating recent and ancient coalescence times (Brandt et al. 2022; Upadhya and

Steinrücken 2022), where accuracy drops when compared to *e.g.* the less scalable, more

precise *ARGweaver* (Rasmussen et al. 2014), likely due to factors such as under-sampling of

marginal trees (Deng et al. 2021). *Relate* has been shown in other studies to produce spurious

inferences in very recent generation times, suggested to be due to a lack of sufficient

mutations accumulating in short time intervals, as is needed for accurate inference using

coalescent approaches, which alternate methods may improve upon (Santiago et al. 2020).

Among the scalable approaches, *Relate* is relatively more affected by under-sampling of

marginal trees (Deng et al. 2021), and preliminary reports indicated that demographic

inference with *Relate* is less accurate than *tsinfer/tsdate* for the most recent ~1000

generations, though *Relate* outperforms *tsinfer/tsdate* further in the past (Fan et al. 2023)

while having improved coalescence time estimation than the recently developed *ARGneedle*

(Ignatieva et al. 2023; Zhang et al. 2023). Thus, while minor differences in mis-inference due

to effects of selection may occur across ARG-based methods, as the genealogy at linked

neutral sites itself is altered by selection (Zeng and Charlesworth 2011; Nicolaisen and Desai

2013) we expect similar biases when performing demographic inference using branch lengths

from alternative ARG approximations.

Conclusions

ARG-based inference of population history remains a promising avenue for

developing new methods (Brandt et al. 2024; Lewanski et al. 2024), however, *Relate* appears

to be similarly impacted by the linked effects of selection as traditional SMC and SFS-based

approaches (Johri et al. 2021). As a result, sufficiently pervasive positive and purifying

selection leads to mis-inference of historical population size, most notably when moderately

severe bottlenecks have taken place. While the effects of selection on demographic inference

of human populations appears minimal, caution and additional testing with specific

simulations are needed when analysing compact genomes with pervasive background

selection and/or sufficiently high rates of positive selection, such as *D. melanogaster*, and

populations with complex demographic histories.

Quantifying expected interactive effects between demography and selection on

population variation remains necessary through the development of theoretical advances

(Friedlander and Steinrücken 2022) and joint-inference approaches that account for the

effects of selection at linked sites (Sheehan and Song 2016; Johri et al. 2020; Johri, Eyre-

Walker, et al. 2022;). In addition, novel scalable ARG approximation with uncertainty

estimates for coalescence times has recently been theorized (Wong et al. 2023), which would

enable the development of improved methods that can account for temporal uncertainty

(Brandt et al. 2024). While ARG-based demographic inference methods rapidly advance in

terms of scalability and sophistication, it is essential we develop in tandem an understanding

of their limits when applied to complex and varied empirical populations.

Methods

Simulation of chromosome structure

Simulations were performed using *SLiM* 4.0.1 (Haller and Messer 2023) with ten

replicates for each evolutionary scenario. Simulations of human-like populations were

performed assuming an ancestral population size (N_{anc}) of 20,000 diploid individuals (Sherry

et al. 1997; Huff et al. 2010), a mean mutation rate of 1.25×10^{-8} (Kong et al. 2012), and a

mean recombination rate of 1×10^{-8} per site/generation (Dumont and Payseur 2008; Kong

et al. 2010). All *SLiM* simulations were scaled appropriately (population sizes and the

number of generations were reduced, by a factor of 10 for human, while mutation and

recombination rates were multiplied by the same factor) resulting in a scaled N_{anc} equal to

2000 (Comeron and Kreitman 2002; Hoggart et al. 2007; Kim and Wiehe 2008; Uricchio and

Hernandez 2014). All simulations, human and *Drosophila*, included a burn-in period of

$14N_{anc}$ generations, with an output of 50 diploid individuals (unless specified) in the VCF

format. The number of output diploid individuals (50) used for demographic inference with

Relate was chosen following testing with neutral simulations with human-like parameters

which indicated that using 10 or fewer samples led to minor mis-inference in recent

generations, while increasing the number of individuals beyond 50 up to 250 did not lead to

substantial improvements in inference (Figure S5, S6). Note, we attempted to run *Relate* with

1000 samples, though results are not shown as demographic inference did not finish within

86 hours.

Drosophila: Simulations of *Drosophila melanogaster*-like populations were

performed similarly, assuming $N_{anc} = 1 \times 10^6$ (Keightley et al. 2014), a mean mutation rate

of 3×10^{-9} (Keightley et al. 2014), a mean recombination rate of 1×10^{-8} (Comeron et al.

2012). Given computational feasibility constraints of modelling *D. melanogaster* populations

using forward-simulations with selection, we tested of a range of scaling factor and genome-

size combinations (Table S14); as a result, we scaled simulations by a factor of 300 for a 5

Mb euchromatic region, which maximised the length of the region and resulted in empirically

supported background selection effects (modelled as described below) in neutral regions:

$B = 0.4$ simulated under constant population size ($B = 0.45$; estimated by Charlesworth

2013).

Simulating the genome architecture

To approximate the genome architecture of the average human chromosome, we

interspersed 797 genes with size and features approximately matching the mean values

obtained across human protein-coding genes (Mignone et al. 2002; Mayr 2016; Piovesan et

al. 2019). In simulated human genomes, all genes had 11 exons of 311 bp, 10 introns of 6938

bp, a 200 bp 5′ UTR, and an 800 bp 3′ UTR, with a mean intergenic length across the

chromosome of 100 Kb. The 5′ UTR was placed immediately before the first exon in each

gene; the 3′ UTR was placed immediately after the final exon in each gene; all genes had

forward orientation.

To capture realistic variability of gene density, human gene features for chromosome

7 were downloaded from NCBI (https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov; Sayers et al. 2023) using the

following command: "*7[Chr] AND "Homo sapiens"[Organism] AND ("has*

ccds"[Properties] AND alive[prop])". The chromosome was divided into 1 Mb bins within

which the number of genes were counted. The mean (5.47) and standard deviation (6.07) for

the gene count across the 1 Mb bins were used to produce a normal distribution (limited to

avoid negative gene counts and counts resulting in total genic lengths exceeding 1 Mb). We

developed a script that recursively sampled 138 integers from this normal distribution

(setSeed = 1), corresponding to the number of genes per 1 Mb bin, until the first occurrence

of a cumulative sum (total gene count) of exactly 797 was output and saved to generate gene

densities in simulations (see

https://github.com/JohriLab/ARG_BGS_Demography/blob/main/scripts/gene_density_gener

ation.slim). Within *SLiM*, the saved 138 integers were used to generate corresponding counts

of gene structures in 1 Mb bins, by varying the intergenic lengths within each bin (Figure S7),

with 300 Kb intergenic regions added to each end of the chromosome (*n.b.* the intergenic

lengths are the only genomic elements that vary in length across the chromosome, and the

chromosome structure was identical across all replicates and conditions). This produced a

chromosome with a size of 138.6 Mb and genic regions (introns and exons) spanning 58 Mb

(41.9%), which is consistent with the 1.27 Gb estimate of total protein coding gene length

including introns (Piovesan et al. 2019), which spans 40.9% of a 3.12 Gb human genome

(Nurk et al. 2022; Rhie et al. 2023).

Drosophila: The genome architecture of *Drosophila melanogaster* was simulated

similarly, however, due to computational feasibility constraints, a 5 Mb euchromatic region

was modelled based on features from chromosome arm 2R rather than a full chromosome.

All 565 genes had 5 exons of 314 bp each, 4 introns of 999 bp each, a 266 bp 5′ UTR and a

382 bp 3′ UTR, with a mean intergenic length across the region of 2654 bp (Long and

Deutsch 1999; Dos Santos et al. 2015; Table S7). The mean (14.69) and standard deviation

(7.54) for gene count across 100 Kb bins was used to generate a normal distribution of gene

counts in 50 variably dense 100 Kb bins totalling 565 genes over 5 Mb (see above and

https://github.com/JohriLab/ARG_BGS_Demography/blob/main/scripts/gene_density_gener

ation.slim), with 20 kb intergenic regions added to the ends of the region. This produced a

5.04 Mb region comprised of 17.70% coding sites, matching the chromosome 2R annotation

for the BDGP6 assembly (17.68%; Dos Santos et al. 2015).

Modelling heterogeneity in recombination and mutation rates

The sex-averaged mutation rate map for human chromosome 7 generated by Francioli

et al. (2015) was used as input for the mutation rates, scaled so that the average mutation rate

(μ) across the chromosome was 1.25×10^{-8} per site/generation (1.25×10^{-7} after scaling;

see Figure S8 for distribution of mutation rates). As Francioli *et al*. (2015) provided the rates

for each base pair transition (*i.e*., A to T, T to G, etc), the nucleotide composition for each

corresponding 1 Mb interval was calculated from the GRCh37 reference (BioProject

PRJNA31257) and multiplied by the sum of the rates for each given nucleotide. Finally, the

rates for each nucleotide were combined to produce μ (see

https://github.com/JohriLab/ARG_BGS_Demography/blob/main/scripts/mut_map.sh). The

population-specific recombination rate map for chromosome 7 generated for the YRI

population in the HapMap project (The International HapMap Consortium 2005) was used as

input for the recombination rates. The shared length (146.04 Mb) reported in both the

chromosome 7 recombination rate map and mutation rate map (7.01 Mb to 153.05 Mb) was

extracted, and all interval lengths were reduced by approximately 5.1% to have a cumulative

total length of 138.6 Mb rather than 146.04 Mb, so that the maximal region for which

recombination rates and mutation rates are reported for chromosome 7 could be modelled in

our simulations.

Drosophila: The mean mutation rate simulated was 3×10^{-9} per site/generation

(Keightley et al. 2014) prior to scaling and was varied across the region in 50 kb bins. The

mutation rates in each 50 kb bin were drawn from a normal distribution with a coefficient of

variation of 0.479, corresponding to the coefficient of variation for divergence at 4-fold

degenerate sites (d_S) between *D. simulans* and *D. melanogaster* in the middle section of the

2R chromosome arm (Mackay et al. 2012). The mean sex-averaged recombination rate

simulated (crossover probability per bp = 1×10^{-8}) was modelled on a genome-wide

estimate (Comeron et al. 2012), though rates were varied in 50 kb bins. The recombination

rates in each 50 kb bin were taken from the rates in 100 Kb bins from 10 Mb to 20 Mb

reported by Comeron *et al*. (2012) on the *Drosophila melanogaster* recombination rate

calculator v2.30 (Fiston-Lavier et al. 2010).

Simulating mutational fitness effects

Functional regions, coding sequences and UTRs, experienced purifying selection

modelled by a distribution of fitness effects (DFE) comprised of four non-overlapping

uniform distributions representing the effectively neutral ($0 \leq 2N_{anc}s_d < 1$), weakly

deleterious ($1 \leq 2N_{anc}s_d < 10$), moderately deleterious ($10 \leq 2N_{anc}s_d < 100$), and

strongly deleterious ($100 \leq 2N_{anc}s_d < 2N_{anc}$) class of mutations, such that f_0, f_1, f_2, and f_3

proportion of all new mutations belonged to each class respectively. Here, s_d represents the

selective disadvantage of mutant homozygotes relative to the wildtype, and all mutations

were assumed to be semidominant. When simulating recurrent sweeps, an f_{pos} proportion of

all new mutations in functional elements was assumed to be beneficial, while $1 - f_{pos}$

proportion was effectively neutral and deleterious. Beneficial mutations were assumed to be

semidominant and to follow an exponential DFE with the mean selective advantage of mutant

homozygotes relative to wildtypes denoted by $\overline{s_a}$. Semidominance of all mutations was

assumed because previous estimates used to parameterize selection in our simulations were

inferred under the same assumption.

The deleterious DFE estimated by Huber *et al.* (2017) for the Yoruba population was

used to inform the proportions of each mutation class in human simulations where BGS was

present: $f_0 = 0.51$; $f_1 = 0.14$; $f_2 = 0.14$; $f_3 = 0.21$; the alternative Johri *et al.* (2023) DFE

tested (Figure 1) was: $f_0 = 0.50$; $f_1 = 0.20$; $f_2 = 0.30$; $f_3 = 0$. Simulations that modelled

recurrent selective sweeps included beneficial mutations with varying values of f_{pos}, and the

population-scaled selection coefficients of advantageous mutations ($2N_{anc}\overline{s_a}$), as provided in

Table 2.

To model functional elements like regulatory elements present in intergenic and

intronic regions, we assumed that conserved introns and intergenic regions experience

selection. Previous findings report the functional proportion of the human genome

experiencing purifying selection is approximately between 3.2%-8.2% (Siepel et al. 2005;

Rands et al. 2014; Dukler et al. 2022). Approximately 60% of mutations with a deleterious

fitness effect across the genome have been found to be located in intronic and intergenic

regions (Siepel et al. 2005; Dukler et al. 2022). According to Table 2 in Dukler *et al.* (2022),

3.6% of intergenic regions, and 4.4% of intronic regions are conserved (i.e., containing

elevated proportions of selected sites). Thus, instead of modelling the precise locations of

regulatory elements, we assumed that 4.4% and 3.6% of all new mutations in intronic and

intergenic regions were selected, following the same DFE as in coding and UTR regions,

while the remaining majority of intergenic (96.4%) and intronic (95.6%) mutations were kept

neutral (*n.b.* we did not explicitly model conserved non-coding element structures within

introns and intergenic regions). Combined with the exon and UTR regions (2.54% of the

genome) for which all new mutations possessed selection coefficients sampled from the DFE,

the mean total proportion of new mutations across the genome with selection coefficients

sampled from the DFE was 6.43%; given an effectively neutral (f_0) proportion of 0.51, the

conserved proportion of the genome ($p_{conserved}$) was 3.15%.

Drosophila: The structure of functional elements for *Drosophila* simulations was

modelled as above, with constrained proportions of intron (43%) and intergenic (35%) sites,

constrained proportion of all sites (48.7%) matching previous estimates (Andolfatto 2005;

Siepel et al. 2005; Table S7). The deleterious DFE estimated by Johri *et al.* (2020) for the

Zambian population was used for *Drosophila* simulations: $f_0 = 0.25$; $f_1 = 0.49$; $f_2 = 0.04$; f_3

$= 0.22$. In total, 64.9% of new mutations across the genome sampled fitness effects from the

DFE and $p_{conserved}$ was 48.7%, matching previous findings of 39%-53% (Siepel et al.

2005).

Simulation of population history

Four demographic models were tested to assess the robustness of demographic

inference results under a range of historical population scenarios following the burn-in period

of $14N_{anc}$, at which time $N = N_{anc} = 2000$ for human simulations (3333 for *Drosophila*) after

scaling. Recent expansion was modelled by exponential growth leading to a five-fold

increase in population size that started $1N_{anc}$ generations ago. Recent contraction was

modelled by exponential decline leading to a five-fold decrease in population size that started

$1N_{anc}$ generations ago. Bottleneck and recovery were modelled by an instantaneous ten-fold

decline in population size ($1N_{anc}$ generations ago), which remained constant for 10

generations, before exponentially increasing to recover to N_{anc}. Repeated bottlenecks were

simulated identically to the bottleneck-and-recovery scenario, however following recovery,

population size was kept constant for $1N_{anc}$ generations, before repeating the scenario.

Calculating summary statistics

Mean nucleotide diversity in neutral regions (π_{neu}) was calculated using the

calcHeterozygosity function within *SLiM*, applied to only neutral mutations in the intergenic

and intronic regions, multiplied by the total proportion of neutral sites in the genome. The

decrease in nucleotide diversity in neutral regions due to the shared effects of background

selection and selective sweeps under different selection parameters was estimated by $\frac{\pi_{neu}}{\pi_0}$,

where π_0 was obtained from otherwise identical simulations without selection.

Divergence at neutral sites in (div_{neu}) was calculated as the number of neutral

substitutions in intergenic and intronic regions that occurred after $10N_{anc}$ generations (*n.b.* all

population size change scenarios took place after $14N_{anc}$ burn-in) divided by the total number

of neutral sites in intergenic and intronic regions (*i.e.*, 95.65% of intronic and 96.40% of

intergenic sites for human). Divergence in coding regions (div_{coding}) was similarly

calculated by dividing all exonic substitutions, neutral and selected, by the cumulative length

of exon regions in the simulated chromosome.

The proportion of nonsynonymous substitutions in coding regions that were positively

selected (α) was determined assuming ~30% of mutations in coding regions are synonymous,

and all synonymous mutations are neutral. Given ~50% of new mutations in coding regions

are neutral according to the human DFE provided by Huber *et al.* (2017), this suggests that

the remaining ~40% of neutral mutations in coding regions (~20% of all exonic mutations)

refer to non-synonymous sites. Therefore, α for simulated populations of humans was

calculated by the number of substitutions observed in different classes of mutations (sub_{class})

that occurred after $10N_{anc}$ using the following equation:

860
$$\alpha_{human} = \frac{sub_{pos}}{0.4sub_{neutral} + sub_{del} + sub_{pos}} \qquad (1)$$

863   *Drosophila*: we assumed that all mutations in the effectively neutral class (comprising

864   25% of all mutations) following the Johri *et al.* (2020) DFE represent all synonymous

865   mutations, and no nonsynonymous mutations are strictly neutral. Therefore, α for *Drosophila*

866   was calculated as above, though without including any neutral substitutions:

868
$$\alpha_{drosophila} = \frac{sub_{pos}}{sub_{del} + sub_{pos}} \qquad (2)$$

Scripts used to generate summary statistics are available at:

https://github.com/JohriLab/ARG_BGS_Demography/blob/main/scripts/pi_div_alpha.sh.

Demographic inference with *Relate*

The VCF for each replicate was filtered to only contain neutral mutations in

intergenic and intronic regions, before being converted to the hap/sample format using the

RelateFileFormats script, with *–mode ConvertFromVcf*. During testing, we found that when

masking selected sites from the VCF used as input for *Relate*, *i.e.*, removing SNPs in selected

regions, demographic inference could be majorly impacted if a mask file was not provided to

Relate to enable recalculation of genetic distances between sites (see Supplementary Note S1

for details). As a result, we generated a genomic mask file for each individual replicate which

masks conserved regions (exons/UTRs) as well as conserved sites and a randomly chosen

proportion of invariant sites in introns/intergenic regions, to account for excluding/masking

functional elements for demographic inference (see

https://github.com/JohriLab/ARG_BGS_Demography/blob/main/scripts/new_build_mask.sh)

. The haps, sample, and mask files were then passed to *Relate* 1.1 (Speidel et al. 2019) to

perform genome-wide genealogy estimation with mutation rate (μ) = 1.25×10^{-8} for human

(3×10^{-9} for *Drosophila*). The estimated current haplotype population size ($2N_{cur}$)

parameter, '-*N*', required by *Relate*, was calculated as may be done in empirical analysis,

rather than using the true values from simulations, by the following:

893                      $$2N_{cur} = \frac{\pi_{neu}}{2\mu} \tag{3}$$

896   Where μ is the unscaled genome-wide mutation rate, and mean nucleotide diversity in neutral

897   regions (π_{neu}) is calculated as previously described. The genealogy results were passed

898   through *Relate*'s EstimatePopulationSize module, with '--years_per_generation 1'. Historical

899   effective population sizes for an epoch *i* generations ago (N_i) were estimated from the

900   coalescence rates output using the same method built into *Relate*:

$$N_i = \frac{0.5}{coal_i} \tag{4}$$

where *coal* is the mean genome-wide instantaneous coalescence rate *i* generations ago obtained from the *.coal* file output by *Relate*. The genetic maps were calculated from the recombination rate maps assuming linearity (see https://github.com/JohriLab/ARG_BGS_Demography/blob/main/scripts/rec_map2gen_map.sh); Haldane's correction (Haldane 1919) was deemed unnecessary as mean interval length between rate recalculation < 1.1Mb. *n.b.* despite the *SLiM* simulations being scaled down, the *Relate* parameters are unscaled, thus producing unscaled demographic inference results.

Figure generation was performed using *R* v4.1.0 and *Python* v3.11.3. ChatGPT 3.5, (https://chat.openai.com; accessed September 2023) was used to build two minor data processing scripts (print_nums.sh and exon_mutations.py at https://github.com/JohriLab/ARG_Selection_Demography/blob/main/scripts/), though was not used for any text generation for the manuscript.

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Data availability

All relevant code and scripts generated for this study are available at https://github.com/JohriLab/ARG_BGS_Demography. The mutation and recombination rate maps used for analysis are available at https://github.com/JohriLab/ARG_BGS_Demography/tree/main/misc.

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Figures and Tables

Figure 1. Historical population size inferred by *Relate* for human-like parameters under five

demographic scenarios under neutrality and in the presence of BGS. The black line represents

the true simulated population size (*N*) for each demographic scenario (A-E); coloured lines

represent simulations without selection with varying recombination/mutation rates (grey),

with constant recombination/mutation rates (gold), with BGS from the DFE reported by Johri

et al. (2023; light blue) and with BGS from the DFE reported by Huber *et al.* (2017; dark

blue). Thin coloured lines represent each of the 10 replicates per evolutionary scenario, thick

coloured lines represent the moving regression (LOESS) across all replicates for a given

condition. Nucleotide diversity at neutral intron/intergenic sites for simulations with selection

relative to identical simulations under neutrality is presented as $\frac{\pi_{neu}}{\pi_0}$ in the table. Note,

population size is presented on a $\log_{10}$ scale.

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Figure 2. Historical population size inferred by *Relate* for human-like parameters under five demographic scenarios experiencing selective sweeps from relatively low frequency positive selection (f_{pos} = 0.001) with variable recombination/mutation rates and BGS (DFE from Huber et al. 2017). The black line represents the true simulated population size (N) for each demographic scenario (A-E), coloured lines represent results for BGS only (blue), and different simulated mean positive selection coefficients ($2N_{anc}\bar{s_a}$). Thin coloured lines represent results for each of the 10 replicates per evolutionary scenario, thick coloured lines represent the moving regression (LOESS) across all replicates for a given condition. Nucleotide diversity at neutral intron/intergenic sites relative to identical simulations under neutrality is presented as $\frac{\pi_{neu}}{\pi_0}$ in the table. Note, population size is presented on a $\log_{10}$ scale.

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Figure 3. Historical population size inferred by *Relate* for human-like parameters under five demographic scenarios experiencing selective sweeps from relatively high frequency positive selection (f_{pos}= 0.01) with variable recombination/mutation rates and BGS (DFE from Huber et al. 2017). The black line represents the true simulated population size (*N*) for each demographic scenario (A-E), coloured lines represent results for BGS only (blue), and different simulated mean positive selection coefficients ($2N_{anc}\overline{s_a}$). Thin coloured lines represent results for each of the 10 replicates per evolutionary scenario, thick coloured lines represent the moving regression (LOESS) across all replicates for a given condition. Nucleotide diversity at neutral intron/intergenic sites relative to identical simulations under neutrality is presented as $\frac{\pi_{neu}}{\pi_0}$ in the table. Note, population size is presented on a $\log_{10}$ scale.

D. melanogaster simulations	π_{neu}/π_0				
	Constant	Expand	Contract	Bottleneck	Repbneck
Neutral	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
BGS only	0.40	0.48	0.30	0.48	0.54
$2N_{anc}\bar{s}_a=20$ $f_{pos}=.005$	0.39	0.46	0.30	0.48	0.53
$2N_{anc}\bar{s}_a=250$ $f_{pos}=.0002$	0.35	0.37	0.27	0.46	0.51
$2N_{anc}\bar{s}_a=250$ $f_{pos}=.005$	0.12	0.09	0.12	0.25	0.28
$2N_{anc}\bar{s}_a=10^4$ $f_{pos}=10^{-6}$	0.34	0.33	0.27	0.45	0.50

1373

Figure 4. Historical population size inferred by *Relate* for *Drosophila melanogaster*-like

parameters under five demographic scenarios, with variable recombination/mutation rates.

The black line represents the true simulated population size (*N*) for each demographic

scenario (A-E); coloured lines represent simulations under strict neutrality (grey), with BGS

from the DFE reported by Johri *et al.* (2020; blue), and simulations experiencing BGS as well

as sweeps from positive selection introduced with different parameter combinations. Thin

coloured lines represent results for each of the 10 replicates per evolutionary scenario, thick

coloured lines represent the moving regression (LOESS) across all replicates for a given

condition. Nucleotide diversity at neutral intron/intergenic sites for simulations with selection

relative to identical simulations under neutrality is presented as $\frac{\pi_{neu}}{\pi_0}$ in the table. Note,

population size is presented on a $\log_{10}$ scale.

Table 1. Summary of empirically estimated positive selection parameters for different animal populations, including the selection inference

method used. Confidence interval values provided where available in parentheses. Annotation type of selected sites used for analysis is provided:

"CDS" is protein coding sites, "Nonsyn", nonsynymous, "0-fold", 0-fold degenerate coding sites.

Taxon	Population	f_{pos}	$2N_{anc}\bar{s}_a$	α	Reference	Selected sites	Selection inference method
Human	African			0.135	Uricchio et al. 2018	CDS	ABC-MK
	YRI	0.01	6.05	0.25 (0.24-0.252)	Zhen et al. 2021	Nonsyn	Composite likelihood approach
	YRI			0.24	Zhen et al. 2021	Nonsyn	DFE-alpha (Eyre-Walker and Keightley 2009)
	Mixed			0.24 (0.18-0.29)	Galtier 2016	Nonsyn	Grapes
	Mixed			0 (-0.30-0.24)	Eyre-Walker & Keightley 2009	0-fold	DFE-alpha
	Mixed	0.000023 (0.0000022-0.0076)	0.0064 (0.0007-0.1084)		Castellano et al. 2019	CDS	polyDFE v2.0 (Tataru and Bataillon 2019) using only the SFS
Chimpanzee	Western			-0.21 (-0.46-0)	Cagan et al. 2016	0-fold	MK test (McDonald and Kreitman 1991)
		0.000029 (0.0000032-0.01)	0.0081 (0.0007-0.0911)		Castellano et al. 2019	CDS	polyDFE v2.0
Bonobo	Congo			-0.04 (-0.37-0.15)	Cagan et al. 2016	0-fold	MK test
	Congo	0.017 (0.000073-0.12)	0.076 (0.0008, 27.8)		Castellano et al. 2019	CDS	polyDFE v2.0
Gorilla	Western lowland			0.03 (-0.16-0.21)	Cagan et al. 2016	0-fold	MK test
		0.0013 (0.0000071-0.03)	0.0091 (0.0008, 0.2291)		Castellano et al. 2019	CDS	polyDFE v2.0
				0.014 (-0.116-0.110)	McManus et al. 2015	Nonsyn	DFE-alpha
Lemur	Coquerel's sifaka			0.75 (0.7- 0.78)	Galtier 2016	Nonsyn	Grapes
Mouse	Castaneus (mixed)			0.32 (0.28-0.35)	Halligan et al. 2013	0-fold	DFE-alpha
		0.000179 (0.0000865-0.0002715)	170.6 (89.7-251.55)		Booker et al. 2021	CDS	Maximum likelihood
		0.003 (0.0019-0.0048)	14.54 (9.24-23.4)		Booker et al. 2018	0-fold	DFE-alpha

	Castaneus (NW India)			0.51	Zhen et al. 2021	Nonsyn	DFE-alpha
		0.04	3.76	0.41 (0.411-0.413)	Zhen et al. 2021	Nonsyn	Composite likelihood approach
Rabbit	*Lepus granatensis*			0.77 (0.68-0.86)	Galtier 2016	Nonsyn	Grapes
	Oryctolagus cuniculus			0.64 (0.53-0.71)	Carneiro et al 2012	Nonsyn	DFE-alpha
Drosophila melanogaster	Rwandan	0.0045 (0-0.0165)	23 (10-36)	0.57	Keightley et al. 2016	Nonsyn	DFE-alpha
	Yakuba	0.00022; 0.000841 (high gene conversion rates)	249; 508 (high gene conversion rates)		Campos et al. 2017	Nonsyn	DFE-alpha
	Zambian			0.71	Zhen et al. 2021	Nonsyn	DFE-alpha
		0.04	4.92	0.60 (0.601-0.604)	Zhen et al. 2021	Nonsyn	Composite likelihood approach
				0.59	Lange & Pool 2018	Nonsyn	asymptoticMK (Haller and Messer 2017)
	East African	0.00001	10000		Jensen et al. 2008	Nonsyn	ABC
	Raleigh, NC			0.40	Elyashiv et al. 2016	Nonsyn	Maximum composite likelihood

1388

Table 2. Proportion of positively selected "nonsynonymous" substitutions at coding sites,

corrected to reflect values at nonsynonymous sites (α) and the ratio of divergence in coding

and neutral regions $\frac{div_{coding}}{div_{neu}}$ for human and *D. melanogaster* simulations experiencing

different combinations of positive selection parameters: proportion of advantageous (f_{pos})

and mean population scaled selection coefficient of advantageous mutations ($2N_{anc}\overline{s_a}$)

following an exponential distribution. Minimum and maximum values are shown, displaying

the range across the five demographic scenarios tested for each parameter combination (Table

S3-S6). Cells shaded green indicate simulated parameter combinations exhibiting higher

divergence in neutral compared to coding regions, as expected in real populations, and α

consistent with empirical observations in human and *D. melanogaster* populations (Table 1).

1399

Human simulations		$2N_{anc}\overline{s_a}$		
		10	100	500
f_{pos}	0.001	$\frac{div_{coding}}{div_{neu}} = 0.54\text{-}0.55$	$\frac{div_{coding}}{div_{neu}} = 0.59\text{-}0.63$	$\frac{div_{coding}}{div_{neu}} = 0.80\text{-}0.89$
		$\alpha = 0.02\text{-}0.03$	$\alpha = 0.16\text{-}0.24$	$\alpha = 0.40\text{-}0.47$
	0.01	$\frac{div_{coding}}{div_{neu}} = 0.59\text{-}0.61$	$\frac{div_{coding}}{div_{neu}} = 0.99\text{-}1.13$	$\frac{div_{coding}}{div_{neu}} = 1.58\text{-}1.70$
		$\alpha = 0.16\text{-}0.23$	$\alpha = 0.58\text{-}0.65$	$\alpha = 0.71\text{-}0.74$

D. melanogaster simulations		$2N_{anc}\overline{s_a}$		
		20	250	10000
f_{pos}	0.005	$\frac{div_{coding}}{div_{neu}} = 0.48\text{-}0.52$	$\frac{div_{coding}}{div_{neu}} = 0.91\text{-}0.98$	
		$\alpha = 0.11\text{-}0.19$	$\alpha = 0.40\text{-}0.47$	
	0.0002	$\frac{div_{coding}}{div_{neu}} = 0.43\text{-}0.49$	$\frac{div_{coding}}{div_{neu}} = 0.48\text{-}0.52$	
		$\alpha = 0.01$	$\alpha = 0.06\text{-}0.11$	
	0.000001			$\frac{div_{coding}}{div_{neu}} = 0.46\text{-}0.51$
				$\alpha = 0.01$

1400