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## **The formation of preference in risky choice**

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## The formation of preference in risky choice

27A key question in decision-making is how people integrate amounts and  
28probabilities to form preferences between risky alternatives. Here we rely on the  
29general principle of integration-to-boundary to develop several biologically  
30plausible process models of risky-choice, which account for *both* choices and  
31response-times. These models allowed us to contrast two influential competing  
32theories: i) within-alternative evaluations, based on multiplicative interaction  
33between amounts and probabilities, ii) within-attribute comparisons across  
34alternatives. To constrain the preference formation process, we monitored eye-  
35fixations during decisions between pairs of simple lotteries, designed to  
36systematically span the decision-space. The behavioral results indicate that the  
37participants' eye-scanning patterns were associated with risk-preferences and  
38expected-value maximization. Crucially, model comparisons showed that within-  
39alternative process models decisively outperformed within-attribute ones, in  
40accounting for choices and response-times. These findings elucidate the  
41psychological processes underlying preference formation when making risky-  
42choices, and suggest that compensatory, within-alternative integration is an  
43adaptive mechanism employed in human decision-making.

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### 53Author Summary

54Decision-making under risk requires a selection between alternatives, such as  
55lotteries, which offer a reward with a specified probability. Human decision between  
56such alternatives is at the center of the normative decision theory, which assumes that  
57decisions are rationally made by forming a value for each alternative and selecting the  
58alternative with the highest value. To this day, there is still a considerable debate on  
59how such values are computed. While the normative theory assumes that values of the  
60alternatives reflect the statistically expected reward, more recent theories have argued  
61that alternative-values are not computed and choices are only based on sequentially  
62comparing the alternatives on amounts or on probabilities. Here, we carried out an  
63experimental investigation of risky decision-making, in which participants chose  
64between pairs of simple lottery alternatives that systematically span a range of  
65probabilities and rewards, while we tracked their eye positions during their decision-  
66making process. We found that the participants are sensitive to the expected-utility of  
67the alternatives, as predicted by the normative decision theories, but they also exhibit  
68risk-biases that correlate with the eye-scanning patterns. We then carry out  
69computational modeling, comparing preference-formation models on their ability to  
70account for both choices and their reaction-time. The results provide strong support  
71for normative models which assume that the values of the alternative are computed  
72via a multiplicative function of the amounts and probabilities. These results suggest  
73that humans are closer to normative principles than previously assumed, and motivate  
74further investigation into the neural mechanism that mediates these multiplicative  
75computations.

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## 811. Introduction

82Decision-making under risk is ubiquitous in daily activities, such as deciding whether  
83to take an umbrella when the weather forecast predicts 50% chance for rain or  
84whether to purchase a lottery ticket with a winning probability of 1%. Such decisions  
85are difficult because the outcomes of the alternatives are only known with some  
86probability, and thus they are subject to risk tradeoffs. For example, when deciding  
87between a lottery that offers \$100 with a probability of 50% and an offer of \$40 with  
88certainty, one needs to balance between the appeal of the attractive amount (\$100) and  
89the risk of getting nothing (rather than gaining \$40 for certain). Choices between such  
90lotteries were the subject of intensive research in economics and experimental  
91psychology that investigated how humans make risky decisions, starting from the  
92normative Expected-Utility (*EU*; [1]), followed by random utility models [2] and  
93culminating with Cumulative Prospect Theory (*CPT*; [3–6], see also Transfer of  
94Attention eXchange [*TAX*], for a related type of model [7]). Yet despite the  
95impressive success of *CPT* in accounting for risky choice data (e.g., the dependence  
96of risk-aversion on the magnitude of the outcomes' probabilities [8]), the theory has  
97been criticized for making assumptions that are inconsistent with capacity limitations  
98of human online information processing, and for not explicating the process by which  
99the preferences are formed [9,10].

100Several process theories were developed to account for risky choice. First, heuristic  
101models, such as Priority Heuristic (*PH*), suggest that preferences are not formed via a  
102compensatory process of averaging over all outcomes (like in *EU* and *CPT*), but  
103rather via a sequential process of comparing the alternatives over one specific  
104attribute (probability or amount) at a time, in a specified order, and stopping at the  
105first instance in which a termination criterion is satisfied [9]. Second, a number of  
106models have relied on the sequential-sampling framework [11–14], which  
107successfully accounted for choices in perceptual tasks, in order to develop a process  
108model of risky choice. For example, in Decision Field Theory (*DFT*; [15]), as  
109attention fluctuates between the alternatives, the preference dynamically evolves by  
110integrating amounts, which are sampled with a frequency that is associated with their  
111(subjective) probabilities [16]. In the Decision by Sampling model (*DbS*; [17–19]),

112like in *PH*, the sampling involves comparisons between the values of the alternatives  
113on a specific attribute (i.e., amounts or probabilities, but not both). However, unlike  
114*PH*, *DbS* does not assume a fixed order of attribute sampling, nor that the decision is  
115settled at a single comparison, but rather a stochastic sampling, which continues until  
116the accumulated difference of favorable comparisons reaches a decision boundary.  
117Critically, as opposed to *EU* or *CPT*, in *DbS* the processing takes place within-  
118attributes (i.e., comparison between amounts or between probabilities). Finally, in the  
119Parallel Constraint Satisfaction model (*PCS*; [20]), a compensatory within-alternative  
120process similar to *EU* (i.e., multiplication of amounts and probabilities) is carried out  
121in a parallel and automatic manner; this process is mediated by a connectionist  
122network of bottom-up and top-down connections. Although several qualitative  
123predictions of the *PCS* model have been confirmed [20], this model has not been  
124tested quantitatively in risky choice.

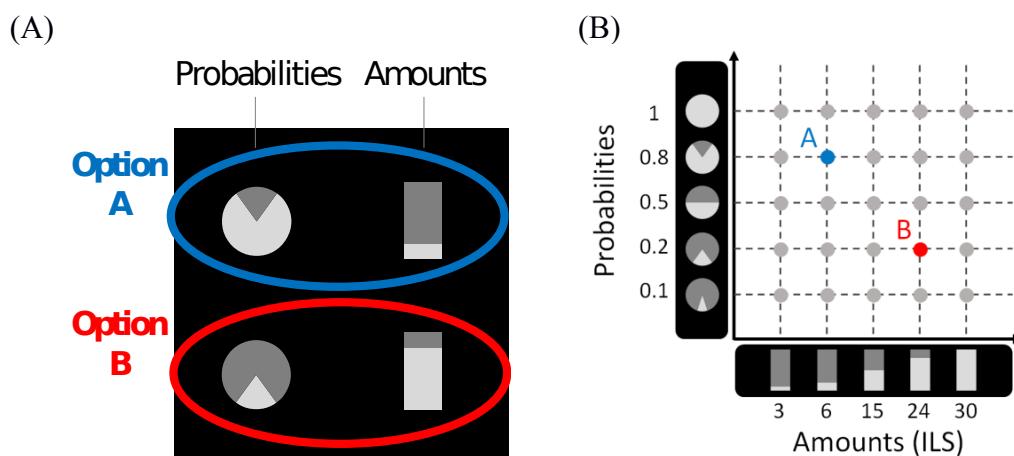
125More recently, a number of studies have relied on eye-fixations during choice  
126between alternatives, to gain insight into the preference formation process. For  
127example, Krajbich, Rangel and colleagues have shown that an extension of the Drift  
128Diffusion Model (*DDM*; [12,13]), the attentional *DDM* (*aDDM*), accounts well for  
129observed preferences between consumer products, food items and 50-50 monetary  
130gambles [21–24]. To do so, the *aDDM* assumes that the value of the sampled  
131alternative is modulated by eye-fixations, so that the values of the non-fixated  
132alternatives are attenuated compared with the fixated ones. In the domain of risky  
133choice, a number of studies have contrasted within-alternative and within-attribute  
134models, and reported partial support for both [20,24–28]. In particular, Glöckner and  
135Herbold [20] analyzed risky choice while monitoring eye-movements, and provided  
136evidence against the *PH* model and in favor of the *PCS* and *DFT* models (see also  
137[29] for similar results). Finally, in a recent investigation of eye-movements during  
138risky choice, Stewart, Hermens, & Matthews [30] concluded that, while eye-  
139movements contribute to choice preference, this contribution is mostly independent of  
140the values sampled. In other words, the more one looks at an alternative the more  
141likely s/he is to choose it, independently of the magnitude of amount or probability.

142The aim of the current study is to develop and contrast process models of risky  
143choice, which are constrained by the eye movements of participants making decisions.  
144In particular, we adopt an integration-to-boundary framework, which allows to predict  
145both choices and their decision-time, and we extend the *aDDM* [21,22,31] approach to  
146the domain of risky choice (see also [24] for a recent extension to 50-50 monetary  
147gambles). In this regard, a central question is whether the preferences are formed by  
148integrating global alternative-values, based on multiplicative interactions between  
149amounts and probabilities (*within-alternative* processing), or by sampling and  
150integrating attribute-comparisons (*within-attribute* processing). Furthermore, using  
151process models that include attentional modulation of fixated information, we wish to  
152account for individual differences in risk preference. While previous work has  
153highlighted the impact of task-complexity (e.g., number of alternatives and attributes)  
154in determining the decision strategy that the participants adopt (e.g., [32]), here we  
155focus on the simplest type of risky choice (between pairs of alternatives, each  
156consisting of a probability  $p$  to win amount  $x$ , see Fig. 1A). Thus, our aim here is not  
157to determine which of these two types of processes prevail in any choice scenario (we  
158think that they both can take place, subject to task-conditions and individual  
159differences). Rather, we wish to test if, at least for this simple case, the more  
160“economically-normative” (within-alternative and multiplicative) strategies are within  
161the capacity of participants resources. Towards this end, we carry out a systematic  
162investigation of risky choice with simple two-outcome lotteries, while eye-fixations  
163are monitored. To anticipate our results, we provide a clear demonstration that within-  
164alternative and multiplicative evaluations are being used, subject to individual  
165differences that correlate with choice normativity.

## 1662. Results

167The participants were tested on choices between simple lotteries of the type ( $x_1$  with  
168 $p_1$  and otherwise 0, vs.  $x_2$ , with  $p_2$  and otherwise 0; where  $x_{1,2}$  are monetary amounts  
169and  $p_{1,2}$  are the corresponding probabilities of winning). The choice problems (94  
170trials) were selected by systematically sampling a two-dimensional grid of  
171probabilities and amounts (Fig. 1B). Dominated choice problems (in which both the  
172amount and probability of one option were higher than in the other option) were

173 excluded except for 10 catch-trials, which were used to assess task engagement. To  
 174 discourage numerical calculations, the choice alternatives were presented in graphical  
 175 format (Fig. 1A). The experiment was incentive compatible: it was explained to the  
 176 participants that one of their choices will be randomly chosen and played out for real  
 177 money at the end of the experiment (see *Methods and Suppl. Experimental*  
 178 *instructions* for details on the stimuli and task instructions).



**Figure 1.** Stimuli and study design. (A) Example of the stimuli used in the experiment. Amounts were represented by the lower (brighter) parts of divided bar graphs, and probabilities by the lower (brighter) sectors of pie charts. Note that the figure is not to scale, and the colored ellipses and labels are shown for illustration purposes only (they were not used in the actual experiment). (B) Choices were drawn from a 5x5 two-dimensional grid with amounts along one dimension, and probabilities along the other. The two stimuli from panel A are shown in this grid. Choice stimuli were presented without deadline until response.

### 1792.1 Choice behavior

180 We began by examining the basic psychometric properties of our choice-data.  
 181 Analysis of the "catch-trials" showed that the participants chose the better option  
 182 (higher in both amount and probability) in 97% of these trials ( $SD = 6\%$ ). Next, we  
 183 conducted a mixed-effect logistic regression on the choice data, with the Expected-  
 184 Value ( $EV$ ) differences ( $x_1 \cdot p_1 - x_2 \cdot p_2$ ) as a predictor, and with random intercepts and  
 185 slopes at the participant level. The results indicated that, consistent with an  
 186 "economically-normative" theory, the participants were sensitive to  $EV$  differences,  
 187 and preferred lotteries with higher  $EVs$  over lotteries with lower ones ( $\beta = 0.40$ ,  $p$   
 188  $< .001$ ; Fig. 2A). Additionally, using a Pearson correlation analysis, we showed that

189the reaction time (RT) of a decision decreased as the absolute *EV* difference between  
190the lotteries increased ( $r = -0.8$ ,  $p < .001$ ; Fig. 2B). This finding is consistent with  
191previous process models such as the *PCS* [20], the *aDDM* [21], and the *DFT* [16],  
192indicating that the participants take longer to decide when the evidence (as measured  
193by the *EV*-difference) is smaller.

194Finally, we evaluated the risk-preferences of the participants. To this end, we focused  
195on choice problems with similar *EVs* ( $|\Delta EV| \leq 1$ ,  $N_{choice\ problems} = 26$ ), and examined the  
196proportion of trials in which high-payoff/low-probability lotteries (riskier options)  
197were preferred over low-payoff/high-probability lotteries (safer options). Following  
198the *CPT* regularity of differential risk-attitudes for low vs. medium/high probabilities  
199(see *Suppl. Cumulative Prospect Theory (CPT) risk attitudes predictions*), we  
200examined the risk-preferences separately for these two probability domains: i) low-  
201probability cases, in which one of the lotteries has  $p < .25$  (e.g., \$24 with  $p = .1$  vs. \$6  
202with  $p = .5$ ), and ii) high-probability cases, in which both lotteries have  $p \geq .25$  (e.g.,  
203\$30 with  $p = .5$  vs. \$15 with  $p = 1$ ); the .25 cutoff was selected to match *CPT* (see Fig.  
204S1). A paired samples *t*-test indicated that, consistent with *CPT*, the participants  
205showed higher levels of risk-aversion for medium/high probabilities as compared to  
206low ones ( $t(30) = 3.84$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Follow-up one-sample *t*-tests (against .5) indicated  
207that the participants showed risk-aversion for medium/high probabilities ( $t(30) = 4.49$ ,  
208 $p < .001$ ); no risk-aversion, however, was obtained for low probabilities ( $t(30) = -$   
2090.11,  $p = .9$ ).

## 2102.2 *Eye-fixations and individual differences*

211On average, the participants made 9.05 fixations ( $SD = 0.64$ ) per trial, with a mean  
212duration of 407ms ( $SD = 244$  ms) per fixation. Also, on average across participants,  
213there was no significant difference between the proportion of fixations towards  
214amounts and probabilities ( $t(30) = 0.78$ ,  $p = .44$ ). There was, however, a remarkable  
215difference between participants in this proportion, which was correlated with  
216participants' risk preferences: the more a participant fixated on amounts, the more  
217likely he or she was to choose the riskier alternatives ( $r = .48$ ,  $p = .006$ ; Fig. S2A). To  
218understand this relationship we examined individual differences in fixating the higher  
219of two amounts/probabilities, as this can explain risk-biases (looking more at higher

220amounts or at lower probabilities leads to risk-seeking according to the *aDDM*  
221[21,22,24]). Importantly, we find that the more a participant tends to fixate on  
222amounts the more s/he fixates on the larger of them ( $r = .47$ ;  $p = .007$ ; Fig. S2B), and  
223similarly for probabilities ( $r = .46$ ;  $p = .007$ ; Fig. S2C). Finally, the frequency of  
224fixations on the higher of the two amounts was positively correlated with risk-seeking  
225( $r = .58$ ;  $p < .001$ ; Fig. 2E), and the frequency of fixations on the higher of the two  
226probabilities was negatively correlated with risk-seeking ( $r = .45$ ;  $p = .01$ ; Fig. S2D)  
227see also [24,33].

228We also examined the eye-trajectories in relation to their transitions between the four  
229attributes ( $x_1$ ,  $p_1$ ,  $x_2$ ,  $p_2$ ). The transitions between decision attributes (amounts and  
230probabilities) were classified into three categories [20,25,30]: i) Within-alternative  
231transitions – transitions between attributes that belong to the same alternative. ii)  
232Within-attribute transitions – transitions between different alternatives, within the  
233same attribute. iii) “Diagonal” transitions – transitions between the amount of  
234alternative A and the probability of alternative B and *vice versa*. Figures 2C-D show  
235one example each for within-alternative and within-attribute trials, respectively. An  
236Analysis of Variances (ANOVA) revealed significant differences of the transition  
237probabilities between the three transitions types ( $F(2,60) = 431.1$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Post-hoc  
238comparisons showed that the participants made more within-alternative than within-  
239attribute transitions ( $p < .001$ ), as well as more within-attribute than diagonal ones ( $p$   
240 $< .001$ ). The proportion of within-alternative transitions (out of all transitions) was  
241subject to individual differences and was correlated with the economically-normative  
242choice performance ( $\Delta EV$ ), such that the higher the fraction of within-alternative  
243transitions the higher was the proportion of the alternative with the higher  $EV$  to be  
244chosen ( $r = .57$ ,  $p < .001$ ; Fig. 2F).

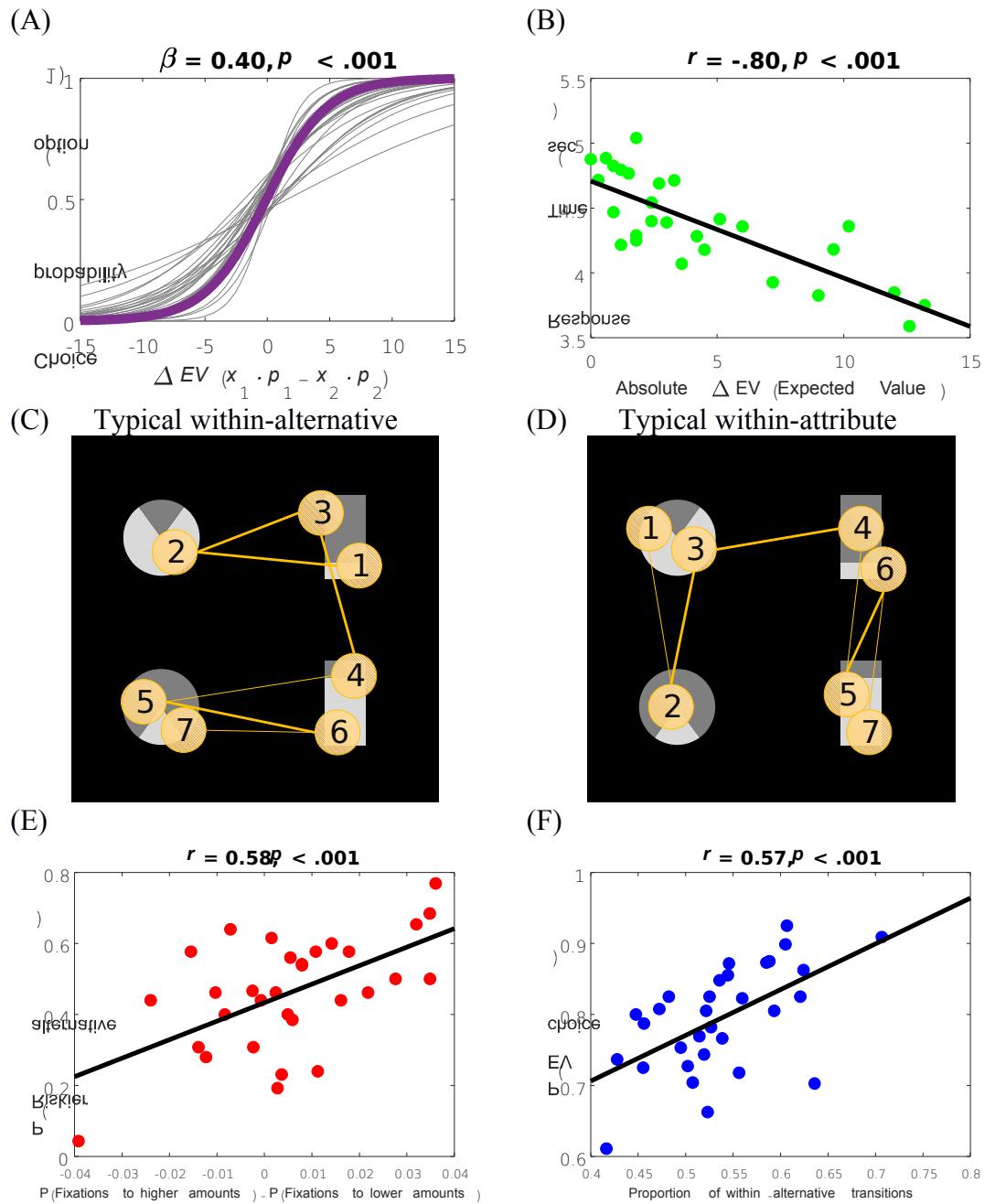
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**Figure 2. Choice and eye-movements analysis.** (A) The participants were sensitive to EV differences between the options. Solid purple line corresponds to the group fit; grey lines correspond to the fit of individual participants. (B) Response times were negatively correlated with the alternatives' EV differences. (C-D) Example eye-trajectory characterized by within-alternative transitions (in C) and by within-attribute transitions (in D). The numbers indicate the order of fixations. (E) The proportion of fixations to the higher amount correlated with risk-seeking preference. (F) The proportion of within-alternative transitions correlated with the proportion of higher EV choices.

### 2502.3 Predicting choices using eye-fixations

251Recent research has demonstrated that attentional mechanisms play a key role in the  
 252development of preferences [24,34–38]. In particular, it was shown that the more an  
 253alternative is fixated, the more likely it is to be chosen [21,30,39].. We have  
 254confirmed this regularity in our data by carrying out a number of logistic regression  
 255models that predict choices based on the *EU* or *CPT* utility functions, and the relative  
 256number of fixations (or dwell-times) on each alternative (see *Suppl. Predicting*  
 257*choices using eye-fixations* for details).

(A)

**Dwell Time Regression**

$$P(A, B) = \frac{1}{1 + e^{-\beta(x_1^g \cdot p_1 \cdot t_1 - x_2^g \cdot p_2 \cdot t_2)}}$$

$t_1$  - Total looking time on option A

$t_2$  - Total looking time on option B

(B)

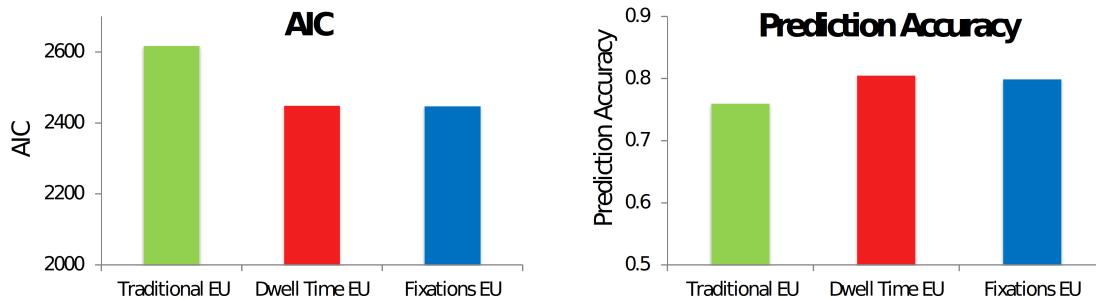
**Number of Fixations Regression**

$$P(A, B) = \frac{1}{1 + e^{-\beta(x_1^g \cdot p_1 \cdot f_1 - x_2^g \cdot p_2 \cdot f_2)}}$$

$f_1$  - Number of fixations to option A

$f_2$  - Number of fixations to option B

(C)



**Figure 3.** Expected Utility based regression models. (A)  $EU_{Dwell\text{-}time}$ : the  $EU$  value of each of the alternatives is modulated by the total looking time on each alternative. (B)  $EU_{Fixations}$ : the  $EU$  value of each of the alternatives is modulated by the relative number of fixations toward it. (C) Prediction accuracy and  $AIC$  for the traditional, dwell time and number of fixations  $EU$ .

258As illustrated in Fig. 3A, we examined an  $EU \times time$  model<sup>1</sup>, in which the  $EU$  value  
 259of each alternative increases with its dwell time on the two alternatives ( $\alpha$  is the risk-  
 260parameter of  $EU$ ,  $\tau$  is a saturation parameter, and  $\beta$  is a slope parameter). Additionally,  
 261we examined a similar regression model, in which dwell-times were replaced with the  
 262number of fixations each alternative is sampled (Fig 3B). Comparison of these models  
 263with the traditional  $EU$  (which does not take eye-movements into account) showed  
 264that using eye-movements significantly improved prediction accuracy and  $AIC$   
 265compared with the traditional  $EU$  (Fig. 3C). Note also, that the prediction accuracy

<sup>21</sup> We focus here on  $EU$  based models, however similar conclusions were obtained for *CPT* based  
 22models, see *Suppl. Predicting choices using eye-fixations*.

266and *AIC* which were obtained using the number of fixations, equal (for *EU*) or  
267surpasses (for *CPT*), the prediction accuracy and *AIC* obtained using the more  
268traditional measure of dwell-time. In addition, the fitted values of saturation-  
269parameter  $\tau$ , were lower than 1, in both time based regressions (number of fixations  
270and dwell time), indicating that, for example, looking twice as long at an alternative  
271increases its value by a factor of less than 2. One way to understand this non-linear  
272saturation is in relation to a leak of the accumulated values ([14,40,41]). In such leaky  
273integration models, the accumulated evidence saturates at an asymptotic value, and  
274remains constant even if more integration time is allowed. Accordingly, at each  
275fixation one samples and accumulates a value, however, as the trial proceeds, the  
276accumulated value leaks, resulting in a type of recency. Indeed, when we compute the  
277percentage of match between the fixated alternative and the final choice as a function  
278of fixation number (backwards from the end) we obtain a clear recency pattern (see  
279Fig. S5 in *Suppl. Last fixations and choice*).

#### 2802.4 Towards a process model of risky choice based on eye-movements

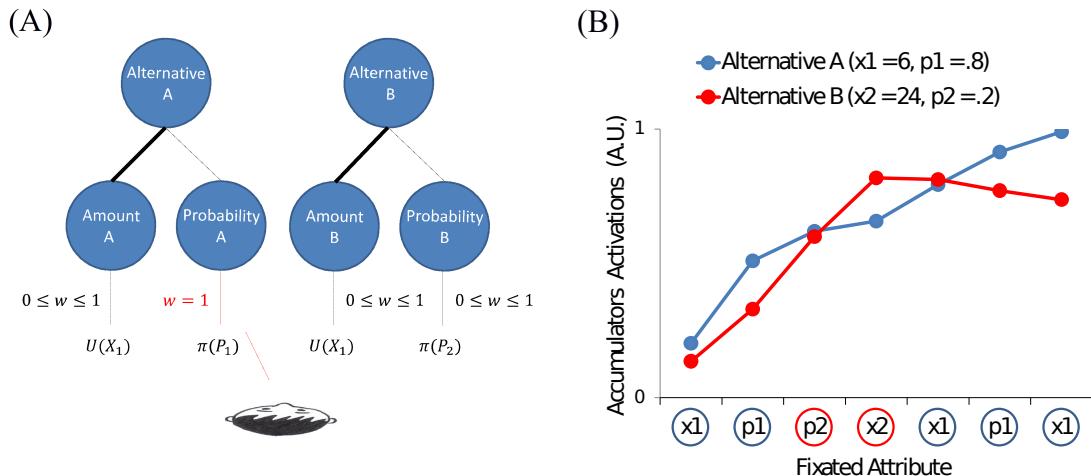
281The central aim of this study is to develop and contrast two classes of process models  
282that differ in the way attentional (or eye) transitions affect the integration of amounts  
283and probabilities. Both types of models assume that: a) fixated objects receive  
284enhanced attention, b) attention modulates the weight of value integration [21], and c)  
285recently sampled values are weighted more than earlier ones [14,40,41]. The models  
286differ, however, on how the values are integrated into preferences. Note that we do  
287not aim to test specific models but rather distinguish between broad classes of models  
288based on certain principles, in particular, between *within-attribute* vs. *within-*  
289*alternative* models [20,25,32,42]. While the former is used in models such as *PH* and  
290*DBS*, the latter is used in models such as *EU*, *CPT* and *PCS*. We also examined a  
291more hybrid model, which still relies on multiplicative within-alternative  
292computations, but also allows some extent of competition between the attributes.

293*Within-attribute integration models.* Models from this class assume that when  
294decision-makers attend to one attribute (e.g., amount or probability), they accumulate  
295the value-difference (or categorical difference) of the two alternatives on that  
296attribute, according to:

297 
$$Y_A(t+1) = (1 - \lambda) \cdot Y_A(t) + D_A(t)$$

298 
$$Y_B(t+1) = (1 - \lambda) \cdot Y_B(t) + D_B(t)$$

299 where  $Y_i$ ,  $i \in \{A, B\}$  is the accumulated preference for alternative  $i$ ,  $\lambda$  is an integration-  
300 leak factor that emphasizes recent values, and  $D_i$  is the value (or categorical)  
301 difference between the attributes, which depends on eye-fixation and model variant  
302 (see *Suppl. Within-attribute integration models* for a detailed description of the  
303 models). This mechanism was implemented in two model variants. In the first one,  
304 preferences were generated by accumulating the normalized differences (min-max  
305 normalization, over the whole set of decision problems) of the attended attribute  
306 values. For example, if the participant had to choose between A:(\$20, 0.2) and B:  
307 (\$10, 0.5), then the difference between the normalized amount values (of \$20 and \$10,  
308 respectively), is accumulated whenever the representations of amounts are fixated.  
309 Likewise, the difference between the normalized probability values (of 0.2 and 0.5,  
310 respectively) is accumulated whenever the representations of probabilities are fixated.  
311 The second model assumes integration of categorical differences; this follows the  
312 DBS assumption that people have access to ordinal comparisons rather than values  
313 [18]. Therefore, in the above example, the accumulator associated with alternative A  
314 increases by one unit at each fixation of an amount (since \$20 is more than \$10), and  
315 the accumulator of alternative B increases by one unit at each fixation of a probability  
316 (since 0.5 is larger than 0.2). This means that the mechanism accumulates binary  
317 counts of comparison between the same attribute in different alternatives [17,19]. To  
318 enhance these models' performance we allowed an additional parameter: attentional  
319 modulation, which enhances the weight of sampled attributes ([21,22]; see *Suppl.*  
320 *within-attribute integration models*). Note that since the values of both attributes are  
321 used in the comparison, these models assume either the existence of some degree of  
322 peripheral vision, or reliance on memory. Since memory cannot play a role during the  
323 first fixation of an attribute (and since peripheral vision is less sensitive to the low  
324 contrast of our stimuli in any fixation, including the first), we assumed that default  
325 values (mid-range of the amounts and probabilities values used in the experiment) are  
326 used for the yet un-scanned attributes. The default values were replaced with the  
327 actual attributes' values at the first fixation to each attribute. This treatment was  
328 implemented in all versions the process models.



**Figure 4.** Illustration of the two-layer leaky accumulator model and its dynamics. (A) The first layer consists of four leaky-accumulators associated with the different attributes, and the second consists of two leaky accumulators associated with the alternatives' values. The units in the first layer are updated with the attentionally modulated subjective values of each attribute (the red arrow indicates the input from the attended attribute, whereas the black arrows indicate the attenuated inputs from the unattended attributes). The units in the second layer are fed with the first layer units' activations, and accumulate their product. (B) Simulated run of the two-layer leaky accumulators model using the average best fitted parameters (see Table S2), in a choice between: A(\$6, .8) and B(\$24, .2); A-wins. Blue circles (x-axis) correspond to fixation toward A, and red circles correspond to fixation toward B. Values on the y-axis correspond to the activations of the second-layer accumulators.

329 *Within-alternative integration models.* The second class of models assumes that the  
 330 values that are integrated are associated with the alternatives and are multiplicatively  
 331 formed from the attributes (as in expected utility). This mechanism was also  
 332 implemented in two models. The first model has single-layer architecture and  
 333 involves two accumulator units, one for each alternative (A or B). On each fixation,  
 334 the accumulators are updated with the integrated subjective utilities of the fixed alternative  
 335 (which is based on multiplication of the subjective-amounts and  
 336 subjective-probabilities; see *Suppl. Within-alternative selection/One-layer leaky*  
 337 *accumulators*), according to:

$$338 \quad Y_A(t+1) = (1 - \lambda) \cdot Y_A(t) + SU_A(t)$$

$$339 \quad Y_B(t+1) = (1 - \lambda) \cdot Y_B(t) + SU_B(t)$$

340where  $Y_i$ ,  $i \in \{A, B\}$  is the accumulated preference of alternative- $i$ ,  $\lambda$  is an integration-  
341leak, and  $SU_i$  is the subjective expected utility of alternative- $i$  (similar to *CPT*),  
342subject to attentional modulation that depends on eye-fixation. As in the *aDMM*  
343model [21], this model assumes that the inputs are modulated by gaze direction, i.e.,  
344higher weight is assigned to the fixated alternative than to the non-fixated one. Note  
345that in this model the update does not depend on whether the current fixation is on  
346amount or probability, but only which alternative is fixated, with the non-fixated  
347alternative being attenuated. For example, when one looks at either the amount or the  
348probability of alternative A, the corresponding accumulator is updated with the  
349integrated subjective utility of that alternative, while the other accumulator is updated  
350with an attenuated value of the subjective utility of alternative B.

351The second within-alternative model contains two-layers of leaky-accumulators in  
352cascade (Fig 4A); as we will show, this model allows to apply attentional modulations  
353to specific attributes and not only to the whole alternative. The first layer of the model  
354consists of four leaky-accumulators associated with the four different attributes ( $x_1$ ,  
355 $p_1$ ;  $x_2, p_2$ ). Unlike in the previous (single layer) version, these units are updated with  
356the attentionally modulated subjective values of each *attribute*. For example, when a  
357participant looks at the amount of alternative A ( $x_1$ ), the accumulator of that attribute  
358is updated with the subjective value associated with it (i.e.,  $x_1^\alpha$ , where  $\alpha$  is a free  
359parameter), while the other accumulators (of  $p_1, x_2$  and  $p_2$ ) are updated with attenuated  
360subjective values of these attributes. The second layer of the model consists of two  
361leaky-accumulators corresponding to the integrated preference of the two alternatives.  
362At each fixation, each second layer (alternative) accumulator is fed with the  
363activations of the first layer units associated with it, by accumulating the product of  
364their values (see Fig 4B for illustration of the model dynamics and *Suppl. Within-*  
365*alternative selection/Two-layer leaky accumulators* for details). In one version of the  
366two-layer model, we also introduced mutual inhibition between the amount units (i.e.,  
367competition between  $x_1$  and  $x_2$ ) and the probability units (i.e., competition between  $p_1$   
368and  $p_2$ ). One can think of such a model as implementing a hybrid between within-  
369attribute and within-alternative processes: while the alternatives units still receive  
370multiplicative input from both their attributes units, the mutual inhibition (depending  
371on its strength) can polarize the difference in activation, subject to attentional

372modulation based on the current fixation. We note that the level of activation-leakage  
373(in both types of models) is a free-parameter, so that the case in which  $\lambda=0$ ,  
374corresponds to the more standard Drift-Diffusion models, and is thus explicitly tested  
375as part of our model fit procedures.

376The models were fitted to the data in two steps. In the first, we fitted the models to  
377choice data, based on the values of the alternatives and the eye-fixations made for that  
378decision, using maximum likelihood estimations to obtain the best model parameters  
379(see *Suppl. Model Fitting*). In the second step, we used the models with their fitted  
380parameters from step 1, to make predictions for decision-time, under an integration-  
381to-boundary framework (in which we included a new set of parameters that  
382correspond to the response boundary). At this stage we also compared the models on  
383their ability to predict *both* choices and decision-times.

384In addition to the process models, we also fitted a number of *benchmark* non-  
385integration to boundary models. Specifically we examined traditional compensatory  
386models, such as *EV*, *EU* and *CPT*, as well as non-compensatory heuristic models such  
387as *Maximax* [43], *Least-Likely* [44] and *PH* ([9]; see *Suppl. Heuristics* for detailed  
388description of these models).

389To evaluate the models' capabilities to fit the data, we used several selection criteria:  
390prediction-accuracy, *AIC* and cross-validation measures (see *Suppl. Model Selection*).  
391For the heuristic models, whose choices are deterministic, we only examined their  
392accuracy measures [8]. Because it can be argued that the prediction-accuracy of  
393models with fixed (or no) parameter values (such as the heuristic models) cannot be  
394compared to the prediction-accuracy of models with fitted parameter values [45], we  
395compare them using the Cross-Validation/Accuracy measure.

#### 3962.4.1 Step-1: choice data

397The most complex of the models (in terms of number of parameters) is the within-  
398alternative process model, which has four free parameters. The first two,  $\alpha$  and  $\gamma$   
399correspond to the *CPT* parameters [3] for risk aversion and probability weighting,  
400respectively,  $\theta$  corresponds to the *aDDM* attentional modulation parameter, and  $\lambda$  is

401the activation-leak. As we show in *Suppl. Parameters Recovery*, we carried out a  
 402recovery exercise, showing that our fitting procedure is able to provide a good  
 403recovery for all those parameters over a wide range of values that correspond to those  
 404found in the actual data. This non-trivial result is helped by the fact that our 94 choice  
 405problems systematically span the choice space. As shown in Table-2, the *within-*  
 406*alternative* process models with attention modulation and leak gave the best fit and  
 407showed the highest cross-validation prediction accuracy. They outperformed both the  
 408within-attribute process models, as well as the traditional, non-integration to boundary  
 409models (compensatory and non-compensatory heuristics). These results speak against  
 410the hypothesis that the participants accumulate only the differences of the attended  
 411attributes. We also found that the within-attribute models with perfect (rather than  
 412leaky) integration (Normalized and Binary differences), resulted in much worse *AIC*,  
 413prediction accuracy, and cross-validation (therefore in Table-2 we report only the  
 414within-attribute models which include leak as a free parameter). We also note that the  
 415within-alternative choice models required a significant degree of information leak ( $\lambda$   
 416<sub>group</sub> = 0.58). As we show in the *Suppl. Additional model variations*, we explicitly  
 417tested four versions of within-alternative models that included an attentional  
 418modulation but no activation-leak, all of which resulted in much poorer prediction-  
 419accuracy and *AIC* fit values (these models reached a prediction accuracy that while  
 420exceeding that of the simple *EU*, did not exceed that of the *CPT* without eye-fixations;  
 421see *Suppl. Additional model variations*)<sup>2</sup>. By contrast, the within-alternative process  
 422models (with leak) outperformed (on prediction accuracy, *AIC* and cross-validation)  
 423the regression models that include either *EU* or *CPT* together with the number of  
 424fixations (see *Suppl. Predicting choices using eye-fixations*). This suggests that  
 425considering dynamic processes, such as attentional shifts and leak of activation  
 426improves prediction accuracy and fit measures beyond what is achievable by using

---

35<sup>2</sup> The hybrid model resulted in fits that did not exceed (*AIC* and prediction accuracy) those of the  
 36within-alternative model (see *Suppl. Additional model variations*) and with a moderate mutual  
 37inhibition value (.13), which does not trigger a full all-or-none dynamics. As this model has two extra  
 38parameters (the mutual inhibition values between the *x* and the *p* units), we kept two of the other  
 39parameters (leak and attentional modulation) to the optimal values of the model without mutual  
 40inhibition. Due to its complexity, we leave a full investigation of this model to future research. We  
 41wish to point out, however, that inhibition at the level of attributes is not motivated by Connectionist  
 42principles ([72]), which suggested mutual inhibition between units that correspond to different  
 43alternatives (for example, this could apply to inhibition between alternative A and B at the 2<sup>nd</sup>  
 44alternative layer, see Fig. 4A).

427only the number of fixations. Note that the within-alternative two-layer leaky  
 428accumulators model outperforms the single layer accumulator model. This result  
 429suggests that the perception of the attributes is dynamic and is subject to modulation  
 430by attentional processes.

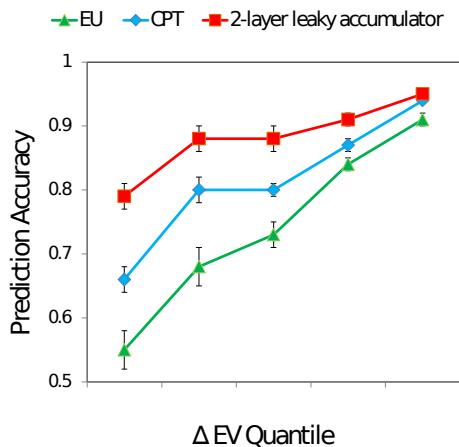
431 **Table-2: Model comparison**

Model	AIC	Prediction	Cross-Validation	
			n	(- Accuracy 2•LogLikelihood)
<b>Traditional Models</b>				
EV	2789	75.1%	567	75.1%
EU	2617	76.5%	527	76.0%
CPT	2364	81.2%	484	79.6%
<b>Heuristics</b>				
MaxiMax	-	44.8%	-	44.8%
Least-Likely	-	55.2%	-	55.2%
Priority Heuristic	-	58.3%	-	58.3%
<b>Fixation based regression models</b>				
EU <sub>Fixations</sub>	2447	79.9%	506	78.7%
CPT <sub>Fixations</sub>	2173	83.9%	453	81.7%
<b>Within-attribute Integration</b>				
Normalized differences	2716	76.8%	551	75.4%
Categorical differences	2724	76.4%	576	74.4%
<b>Within-alternative Integration</b>				
one-layer leaky accumulators	1980	86.1%	445	83.8%
two-layer leaky accumulators	<b>1877</b>	<b>87.2%</b>	<b>436</b>	<b>84.1%</b>

AIC values are rounded to the nearest integers. Bold entry indicates the best fitting models. Note that AIC differences exceeding 10 are considered very strong evidence in favor of the model with the lower numerical values.

432Finally, we carried out a comparison of the predictive accuracy of our best  
 433performance model – the two-layer leaky accumulators - with that of the traditional  
 434EU and CPT models across all decisions as a function of EV-differences. The  
 435comparison demonstrates that the difference in prediction accuracy is especially large

436for difficult choices (low *EV*-differences, 1-3 Quantiles; Fig. 5), suggesting that  
 437attentional modulations are particularly significant in difficult decisions [46].



**Figure 5.** Predictive accuracy of the EU, CPT and the two-layer within-alternative integration models as a function of  $\Delta EV$  quantile. The two-layer model outperformed all other models especially in difficult decisions (low *EV*-differences). Bars denote S.E., clustered by subjects.

438

#### 439 2.4.2 Step-2: Accounting for both choice and decision-time.

440We contrasted the *within-alternative* and the *within-attribute* models, in accounting  
 441simultaneously for choices and decision-times. To this end, we adopt an integration-  
 442to-boundary framework, which assumes that preferences are accumulated until they  
 443cross a decision criterion [47,48]; this introduced a few more parameters (for the  
 444boundary) into the model (see *Suppl. Model Fitting*). The models are now set to  
 445estimate the probability of a subject's choice conditioned on its decision time and  
 446fixations. This probability is accumulated for all choice trials of the participant to a  
 447total likelihood, which is used to optimize the boundary parameters. Two families of  
 448decision boundaries were tested, for each of the models: i) the standard fixed (time-  
 449invariant) boundary, which introduces a single new boundary parameter, and ii) a  
 450collapsing (time-variant) boundary model, which introduces three new parameters  
 451(see *Suppl. Optimization procedure: choices and decision-times*, for further details  
 452regarding the implementations of these two types of models). The collapsing  
 453boundary model has been the focus of recent investigations in decision neuroscience  
 454[41, 42], and appears to be favored in experimental tasks that span over longer time  
 455intervals (more than 2-3 sec [49,50]).

(A)

(B)

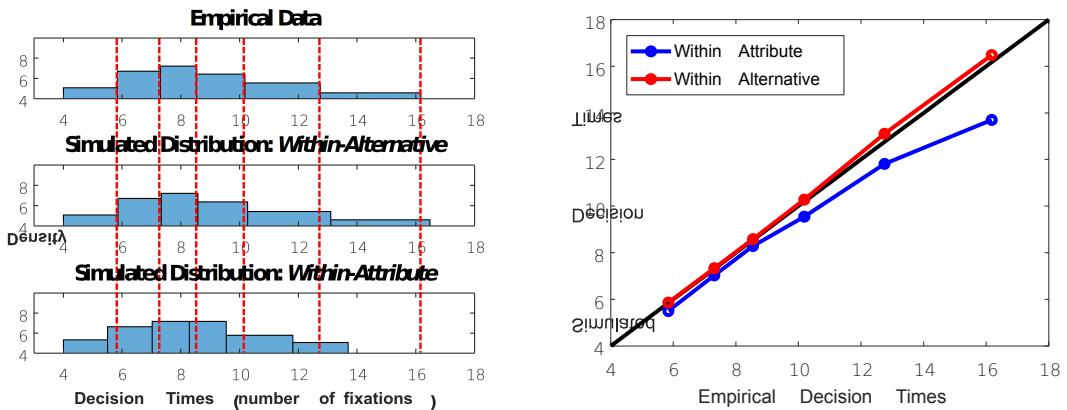
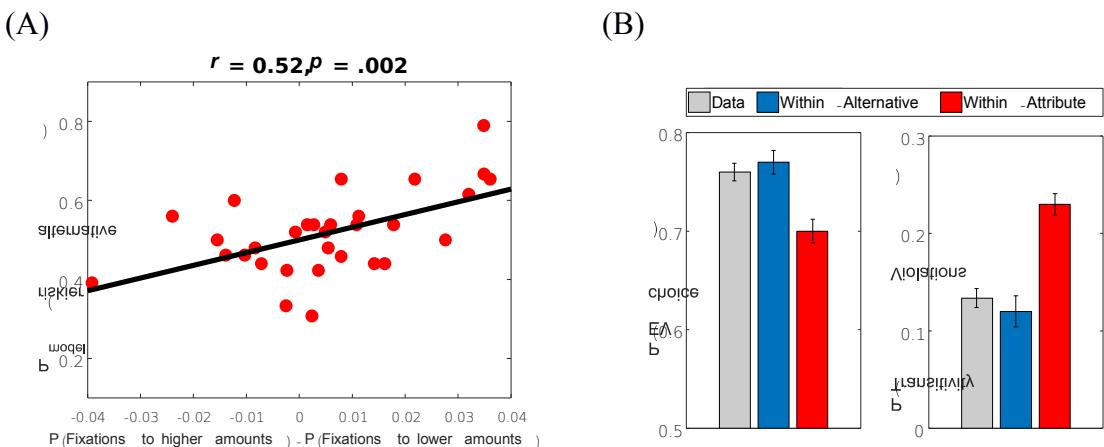


Figure 6. Accounting for choices and decision times. (A) Group quantile (Vincentizing; [12]) decision-time density distribution (in number of fixations to decision). Dashed red lines indicate the quantiles of the actual data distribution ([.1, .3, .5, .7, .9, .99]). (B) Group Quantile-Quantile plot comparing the actual decision time and the simulated decision time of the within-alternative (red) and within-attribute models (blue). Note that the within-alternative model captures better the tail of the distribution.

456 The results show that, with both decision boundary families, the *two-layer leaky*  
 457 *accumulator* model outperformed all the other models. Among the two types of  
 458 boundary families, the best fits by far were obtained under the collapsing boundary  
 459 model (*AIC* and cross-validation), despite the cost of the two extra parameters (see  
 460 *Suppl. Process model comparison* for all models). For this reason, we only report  
 461 below the results for this type of boundary. We find that the *within-alternative/two-*  
 462 *layer leaky accumulator* model (*AIC* = 14,492) decisively outperformed the *within-*  
 463 *attribute/normalized differences* model (*AIC* = 15,815;  $\Delta AIC$  = 823), in accounting for  
 464 decision-times (conditioned on the actual fixation patterns). Finally, we used these  
 465 models to predict the distribution of decision times (measured in number of fixations),  
 466 for novel but statistically matched patterns of fixations. To this end, for each trial we  
 467 simulated a fixation sequence that is based on a statistical model of the participant's  
 468 fixations towards the four attributes as a function of their values [21,30]. The results  
 469 indicate that for the two-layer leaky accumulator model, the predicted and actual  
 470 decision-time distributions show a good match, however for the normalized  
 471 differences model, the tail of the predicted decision-time distribution deviates from  
 472 that of the actual decision-time distribution (Fig. 6 A-B).

4732.5 *Accounting for individual differences in risk-bias and in economically  
474normative choice*

475Our best within-alternative integration model accounts also for the empirical  
476correlation we reported between the proportion of fixations a participant makes to the  
477higher of the two amounts and his or her risk-preference bias (Fig. 2E; see also [24]).  
478To show this, we simulated choices for each participant, based on his or her fitted  
479model-parameters and the participant's actual fixation sequence. The correlation  
480between the model's risk-preference prediction and the proportion of fixations to the  
481higher amount ( $r = .58, p < .001$ ), was exactly equal to the empirical correlation  
482obtained in the data (Fig. 2E). Next, we sought to demonstrate that this relation is  
483associated with the fixation pattern and not merely with differences in model  
484parameters. To this end, we simulated choices for each participant, by using his or her  
485actual fixation sequences, however, this time we used model parameters that  
486correspond to the group mean (rather than the individually fitted parameters). This  
487resulted in a significant correlation ( $r = .52, p = .002$ ; Fig. 7A) between the risk-  
488preference and the proportion of fixating on the higher amount. This correlation  
489between risk-biases and fixation-pattern relies upon the model's attentional  
490component, which gives higher weights to the attributes on which the participant  
491fixates. For example, assume that a participant is asked to choose between A:(\$20,  
4920.5) and B:(\$10, 1). If s/he fixates more the amount of alternative A than the amount  
493of alternative B, higher weights would be given to the former, and thus the riskier  
494alternative (A) would be preferred by the model over the safer one (B).



**Figure 7.** Model predictions and individual differences. (A) The proportion of fixations

*toward the higher amount was correlated with the risk-seeking preference predicted by the two-layer within-alternative integration model with parameters fixed at the group-mean, but with actual fixations. (B) The within-alternative model is closer to the data and predicts a higher fraction of economical-normative EV-choices (left panel) and a lower fraction of (irrational) transitivity violations (right panel), compared with the within-attribute model. Error bars represent the standard error of the mean.*

495Finally, we address an important question: which preference-formation mechanism  
496(*within-alternative* or *within-attribute*) results in better normative performance, and  
497thus can be regarded as more adaptive? To answer this, we simulated the two types of  
498models based on the participants' best fitted parameters and actual fixation sequences,  
499and we examined two measures of normative choice predicted by each model: i) the  
500fraction of *EV*-choices (for simplification we discuss normativity in terms of *EV*, but  
501the same would hold in terms of *EU*), and ii) the fraction of transitivity violations – a  
502direct measure of choice irrationality ([51,52]; see *Suppl. Transitivity Violations*). As  
503seen in Fig. 7B, the normative performance is higher for the within-alternative model  
504than for the within-attribute model, for both measures: *EV*-choices:  $t(30) = 6.27$ ,  $p < .001$  and  
505transitivity violations:  $t(30) = 5.15$ ,  $p < .001$ . This is expected because our  
506within-alternative model, like *CPT*, assumes a multiplication between subjectively  
507transformed amounts and probabilities, which also maintains choice-consistency.  
508Although the economically-normative model requires a multiplication of objective  
509values whereas our model requires a multiplication of subjective values, this  
510discrepancy is relatively minor compared with non-multiplicative strategies (i.e.,  
511within-attribute integration or heuristics). Moreover, we have found that the more  
512within-alternative transitions a person makes, the higher is his or her fraction of  
513economically-normative *EV* choices (Fig. 2F; see also [28]). This correlation can be  
514naturally understood, since the participants rely on a within-alternative multiplicative  
515mechanism, and this operation is likely to be more precise following an actual  
516transition between amounts and probabilities (i.e., a fixation on one attribute of an  
517alternative followed immediately by a fixation to the other attribute of the same  
518alternative), than following a non-direct transition (where one of the to-be-multiplied  
519attributes is based on memory or defaults). Consistent with this, we found a  
520correlation across participants between the prediction accuracy of the *within-*

521 *alternative model* and the proportion of within-alternative transitions ( $r = 0.39$ ,  $p$   
522 = .03).

### 523 3. Discussion

524 The main aim of our study was to elucidate mechanisms by which different attributes  
525 (amounts and probabilities) are integrated to generate an overall subjective value of  
526 choice alternative. To this end, we focused on choices between simple lotteries and  
527 developed process models of risky choice, which are constrained by eye-fixations and  
528 we assumed a fixation-based attentional modulation. In addition, we introduced  
529 activation-leak and examined two types of decision-boundaries, in order to account  
530 for decision times. Within these models we specifically contrasted *within-alternative*  
531 multiplicative models and *within-attribute* type models, and carried out a systematic  
532 parametric investigation of choices between simple lotteries ( $x_1$  with  $p_1$  vs.  $x_2$  with  $p_2$ ),  
533 while tracking participants' eye-fixations.

534 First, we replicated previous findings indicating that participants show preference for  
535 lotteries that reflect the economic-normative theory: choice probability of the  
536 alternative with the higher *EV* increases (and choice-RT decreases) with *EV*-  
537 difference between the lotteries. Nevertheless, participants also exhibited risk biases  
538 that are probability-dependent, being risk-averse at high/medium probabilities, but not  
539 at low probabilities. Second, we found that, on average, the eye-scan patterns were  
540 dominated by within-alternative as compared to within-attribute or diagonal  
541 transitions (Fig. 2C-D, respectively), and that individual differences on this eye-scan  
542 pattern correlate with *EV*-choice (see also [28], for a similar result). Third, we used  
543 eye-fixations to constrain a number of process models that accumulate preference  
544 across fixations, using an *aDDM* approach with two attributes [21,53]. Here we  
545 contrasted two types of integration-to-boundary process models: i) within-attribute  
546 models, and ii) within-alternative models. As shown in Table-2, the latter resulted in  
547 the best predictive accuracy and measures of fit. Importantly, the two-layer model  
548 also accounted well for decision times (see Fig. 6) and for individual differences in  
549 risk biases. Finally, the worst performance in our task was obtained for the non-  
550 compensatory heuristic models. For example, the best of the heuristics (the *PH*)

551 resulted in a worse fit than even the simple *EV* model (see cross-validation measure in  
552 Table-2).

553 The conclusions favoring the within-alternative multiplicative models may need to be  
554 the task conditions we used here. First, we used simple lotteries with single non-zero  
555 outcomes ( $x$  with  $p$ , 0 with  $1-p$ ). It is possible that the amount of non-compensatory,  
556 within-attribute processing would increase when more complex choices are used  
557 ([25,32]). While we cannot rule out this possibility, recent research in the domain of  
558 probabilistic inferences ([54–56]), and risky choice ([20,57]), indicate that when  
559 decision processes are monitored via eye-tracking (which does not slow down the  
560 decision process) rather than via mouse pressing techniques (e.g., [10]), participants  
561 are able to use compensatory strategies for relatively high complexity levels (see also  
562 [58] for a multi-attribute choice task). With regards to our study, we need to also  
563 qualify the results to our use of analog (graphic rather than symbolic) presentation of  
564 the data<sup>3</sup>, and the fact that our alternatives were presented top/bottom (and thus the  
565 amounts and probabilities left/right, Fig. 1A)<sup>4</sup>. Here we wish to support the following  
566 conclusion: humans possess the ability to deploy an ‘economic’ (multiplicative  
567 across-dimension) type computation, supporting the idea that humans are closer to  
568 normative principles than previously thought (see also [56,59]). Future research will  
569 be needed to further quantify to what extent the use of this mechanism (or strategy)  
570 depends on the task complexity and type of stimuli.

571 There are several important properties of our winning process model that we want to  
572 highlight. First, it assumes two layers of leaky accumulators, one for the estimation of  
573 subjective amounts and of subjective probabilities, and the one for the evaluation of  
574 the integrated subjective values (the combination of subjective amounts and  
575 probabilities). Second, it assumes that the units in the second layer are updated via a

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59<sup>3</sup> We used here analog representations because we wanted to prevent our participants (who are students  
60 that may be familiar with *EV*-principles), and are required to do 94 choice problems, from adopting an  
61 explicit *EV* calculation strategy. We believe that such a strategy is less likely with analog information  
62 and thus our results favoring an implicit multiplicative mechanism are even more remarkable.

63<sup>4</sup> It is possible to argue that our experimental layout (horizontal) favors within attribute processing (left  
64 to right, or right to left for our Hebrew speaking participants). Note, however, that the alternative layout  
65 (setting amounts bars horizontally), would trigger a strong bias favoring within-attribute processing (in  
66 particular, comparing the aligned bars). Nevertheless, we report in the *Suppl. Pilot study* data from a  
67 pilot Experiment ( $N=13$ ) using this layout (i.e., vertical), which shows that even under such within-  
68 attribute favorable conditions, we still find dominance for within alternative transitions.

576multiplication of the activation of the corresponding, first layer units (Fig. 4A). This is  
577similar to how the *CPT* model generates subjective utilities. In fact, we find a high  
578correlation between the utility function's curvature parameter ( $\alpha$ ) of the classical *CPT*  
579and the corresponding parameter of our process model ( $r = .91, p < .001$ ), with higher  
580 $\alpha$  -values for the classical *CPT* (see *Suppl. Relationship between the models' utility*  
581*parameters*). This suggests that the classical *CPT*-parameters reflect a combination of  
582several processes, such as attention allocation and subjective-value transformation  
583[60]. Note also, that the model assumes an activation-leak, a feature that allows it to  
584account for recency effects in the data (see *Suppl. Last fixations and choice*), and  
585prevents a double-integration that would occur in the two-layer model in its absence.  
586Third, in addition to predicting choices, the model also predicts decision times,  
587describing the preference formation dynamics under the integration to boundary  
588framework with inputs that correspond to a multiplicative transformation of subjective  
589amounts and probabilities. In particular, we found support for a collapsing boundary,  
590consistent with choice studies that span longer intervals [49,50]).

591Other process models of risky choice, such as *DFT* [15,16] also assume an implicit  
592multiplicative interaction between amounts and probabilities. In *DFT*, however, this is  
593not due to the multiplication of amounts and probabilities but rather to the sampling  
594frequency of the amounts, which changes with the corresponding probabilities. This  
595implies that observers look (or attend) more to a given amount if the corresponding  
596probability is higher. In our data, while we find that the relative number of fixations to  
597an amount increases with its probability, this increase was quite minor (about 1%),  
598and therefore cannot explain the multiplicative interaction [20]. However, it is  
599possible that eye-fixations under-estimate the differential of covert attention  
600modulation.

601Future research is also needed to better understand the neural mechanisms underlying  
602these computations [61–63]. While the computation of subjective amounts and  
603probabilities can be understood to involve simple psychophysical transformations  
604over amounts (unbounded scale; [64]) and probabilities (bounded scales; [65]), the  
605nature of the multiplicative interaction between neural activations requires future  
606investigations. Note that a multiplicative interaction is also assumed in the *PCS* risk

607model [20]. To do so, *PCS* had to assume different neural substrates for amounts  
608(neural activations) and for probabilities (synaptic weights). The latter assumption,  
609however, may be difficult to justify for one-shot decisions, which allow little  
610opportunity for learning synaptic weights. We thus suggest that the multiplicative  
611interactions involve neural activations. While less standard than linear interactions  
612[66], a number of neural mechanisms have been proposed to mediate multiplication of  
613neural activity in neural systems [67,68]. Future research is also needed to extend the  
614scope of this investigation from simple lotteries to more complex ones (with multiple  
615outcomes) and from binary to multiple choices.

#### 6164. Methods

##### 6174.1 Experiment

618*Participants.* 35 Tel-Aviv University undergraduate students (24 females; ages range  
619from 19 to 26, Median<sub>age</sub> = 23) were recruited to the experiment. All of them reported  
620having normal or corrected-to-normal vision. Four of the participants were not able to  
621carry out the eye tracker calibration task, and thus did not take part in the main  
622experiment, leaving 31 participants. The participants received course credit in  
623exchange for participating, as well as a bonus fee ranging from 0 to 30 Israeli Shekels  
624(ILS), which was contingent upon their choices. The experiment was approved by the  
625ethics committee at Tel-Aviv University.

626*Apparatus.* Eye-movements were recorded using a Tobii TX300 desk-mounted eye-  
627tracker (23" monitor with 1920 x 1080 pixels resolution, sampling rate: 300Hz, spatial  
628accuracy: 0.5°), attached to an Intel i7 personal computer. Displays were presented  
629using Psychtoolbox for MATLAB [69]. Viewing distance was approximately 60 cm.  
630Responses were collected via the computer keyboard. A chin rest was not used.

631*Stimuli.* Each choice consisted of two simple lotteries in the form of  $p_1$  chance to get  
632 $x_1$  ILS (otherwise nothing) vs.  $p_2$  chance to get  $x_2$  ILS (otherwise nothing). An  
633example of the display is presented in Fig. 1A. Amounts were represented by the  
634lower parts of divided bar graphs, and probabilities were represented by the lower  
635sectors of pie charts. These attributes appeared at the vertices of an imaginary square  
636subtending 14.5° (15.25 cm), and located in the center of a black screen. The height of

637each bar graph subtended 2.07° (2.17 cm) and its width subtended 0.67° (0.69 cm);  
638the radius of each pie chart subtended 0.67° (0.69 cm). Thus, the bar graphs and pie  
639charts had exactly the same surface. The amounts and probabilities of each alternative  
640were displayed horizontally (one lottery was placed over the other); but see footnote 4  
641and the results of a pilot study reported in *Suppl. Pilot study*.

642*Choices*. Choice problems were constructed in the following way: we generated a 2-  
643dimensional grid with amounts (3, 6, 15, 24 and 30 ILS) along one dimension, and  
644probabilities (0.1, 0.2, 0.5, 0.8 and 1) along the other dimension. The resulting grid  
645contained 25 lotteries (Fig. 1B), each of which was paired with all other possible  
646lotteries. Stochastically dominated choices (in which both the amount and probability  
647of one alternative were higher than those of the other) were excluded, except for 10  
648choice problems which served as "catch-trials". Overall, the experiment consisted of  
649104 separate choices: 94 non-dominated trials and 10 "catch-trials" (all the choice  
650problems are given in *Table S1*).

651*Procedure*. The participants signed an informed consent form prior to the experiment.  
652Then, a calibration of the eye-tracker took place. In case the calibration was  
653successful, the experiment started, otherwise recalibration was performed. At the  
654beginning of the experiment, instructions were given to the participants (see *Suppl.*  
655*Experimental instructions*). The experimenter emphasized that choices should be  
656made in accordance with subjective preferences and that there is no "correct" choice.  
657The experiment consisted of two blocks of 52 choice trials each. A short break was  
658allowed between blocks, and a recalibration procedure was performed before the  
659second block. Each trial began with a fixation display which consisted of a red 0.2° ×  
6600.2° fixation cross (+) that remained on screen until a continuous fixation of 500 ms  
661duration was made. Then, the two lotteries were presented until response. Choice was  
662made using the up and down arrow keys. Participants were told that after completing  
663the experiment, one of the choices will be randomly chosen and payed out. The whole  
664experiment took approximately 30 min per participant. Choice order as well as the  
665horizontal position (left/right) of the amounts and probabilities were randomized for  
666each participant; the vertical position of each lottery (up/down) was randomized  
667between subjects.

668 *Eye-movements*. Fixations were classified as being directed to a certain attribute, if  
 669 they were within 100 pixels of the center of that attribute and lasted at least 50 ms.  
 670 Two consecutive fixations to the same attribute were joined and considered as one  
 671 fixation. Trials longer than 10 sec or shorter than 500 ms (4% of all trials), as well as  
 672 trials in which the participants did not look at all of the attributes (4% of all trials),  
 673 were excluded from further analysis.

#### 674.2 Models of Risky-choice

675 Here we briefly describe the key features of the models applied (for a full description  
 676 see *Suppl. Models of risky choice*). In all of the models (except for the Heuristics  
 677 models), the probability of choosing each alternative is calculated using an  
 678 exponential version of Luce's choice rule [70,71]:

$$679 P(x_1, p_1; x_2, p_2) = \frac{1}{1 + e^{-\beta(U_1 - U_2)}}$$

680 where  $U_1$  and  $U_2$  are the utilities of the alternatives, and  $\beta$  is a free parameter  
 681 indicating the sensitivity of the model to their difference.

---

#### **Traditional Models**

##### *Expected Value (EV)*

- Participants choose the alternative with the higher Expected-Value:

$$EV = x \cdot p.$$


---

##### *Expected Utility (EU)*

- Participants choose the alternative with the higher Expected-Utility:

$$EU = u(x) \cdot p ; u(x) = x^\alpha.$$


---

##### *Cumulative Prospect Theory (CPT)*

- Participants choose the alternative with the higher Subjective-Utility:

$$SU = u(x) \cdot \pi(p) ; \pi(p) = \frac{p^\gamma}{(p^\gamma + (1-p)^\gamma)^\frac{1}{\gamma}}.$$


---

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#### **Fixation based regression models**

##### *EU<sub>Fixations</sub>*

- $U_{alternative} = u(x) \cdot p \cdot n^\tau$ , where  $n$  is the number of fixations to the alternative,  
 and  $\tau$  is a saturation parameter.

---

##### *CPT<sub>Fixations</sub>*

- Defined analogously to *Multiplicative EU<sub>Fixations</sub>*, but with  $p$  replaced with  
 $\pi(p)$  according to *CPT*.

## Heuristics

### MaxiMax

- Choose the alternative with the highest maximum amount.

### Least-Likely

- Choose the alternative with the lowest probability of its worst outcome.

### Priority Heuristic

- Compare sequentially the following attributes: minimum amounts, probability of minimum amounts, maximum amount.
- Stop when difference between the attributes reaches a termination criterion.

### Within-attribute Integration

#### Normalized differences

- Normalize the amounts and probabilities using min-max normalization:

$$y' = \frac{y - \min(y)}{\max(y) - \min(y)}$$

- On each fixation, the normalized differences of the attended attribute are accumulated. Unattended attribute are underweighted.
- Example: if one fixates on  $x_1$ , accumulator A increases by:  $x_1' - \theta \cdot x_2'$ , and accumulator B by:  $\theta \cdot x_2' - x_1'$ .  $\theta \in [0,1]$  represents attentional modulation.

#### Categorical differences

- This model was implemented as the *normalized differences* model, except that instead of accumulating normalized differences, the model accumulates counts based on categorical comparisons.
- Example: if one fixate on  $x_1$  and  $x_1 > \theta \cdot x_2$ , accumulator A increases by one unit, and B remains the same.  $\theta \in [0,1]$  represents attentional modulation.

### Within-alternative

#### Integration

##### One-layer leaky accumulators

- On each fixation, this model accumulates the *SU* of the two alternatives, defined as in *CPT*.
- At fixation toward alternative A, the input of alternative B is attenuated (and vice versa).
- Example: if one fixate on  $x_1$ , accumulator A increases by:  $SU_A$ , whereas the accumulator B increases by:  $\theta \cdot SU_B$ .
- The activations of the alternatives' accumulators are subject to leak.

---

### Two-layer leaky accumulators

- Two layers of leaky accumulators, the first estimates subjective amounts and probabilities (defined as in *CPT*), and the second estimates integrated *SU*.
- On each fixation, the first-layer units are updated with the subjective amounts and probabilities, with the inputs of the unattended attributes attenuated.
- Example, if one fixates on  $x_1$  the inputs of  $p_1$ ,  $x_2$  and  $p_2$  are  $\theta \cdot \pi(p_1)$ ,  $\theta \cdot u(x_2)$  and  $\theta \cdot \pi(p_2)$ , respectively. The second-layer units are fed with the activations of the first layer units, and accumulate the product of their values.
- The units of both layers (first and second) are subject to leak.

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### 686 Authors' contributions:

687 D.L., E.N., M.G., M.U. and V.T. developed the study concept. M.G., M.U. and O.S.  
688 designed the experiment. M.G. and O.S. performed research and analyzed the data.  
689 M.G. and M.U. developed the models. M.G. fitted the models. M.G. and M.U. wrote  
690 the paper. All authors provided critical feedback and final approval for publication.

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