

# „The Preventive Effect of Ignorance“ on the Compliance with Social Norms. An Experimental Test

(„Die Präventivwirkung des Nichtwissens“ im Experiment)

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## Heinrich Popitz, 1968. „Über die Präventivwirkung des Nichtwissens“

- ▶ The crime preventing effect of the ‚veil of ignorance‘
- ▶ Key Hypothesis: (1) People underestimate the amount of norm violations and (2) the ignorance concerning the true number stabilizes the system of social norms.
- ▶ If all norm violating activities (tax evasion, fare dodging, bribery, moonlighting, adultery etc.) were unveiled social norms might erode, suffer a loss of legitimization and eventually the system of norms might collapse.

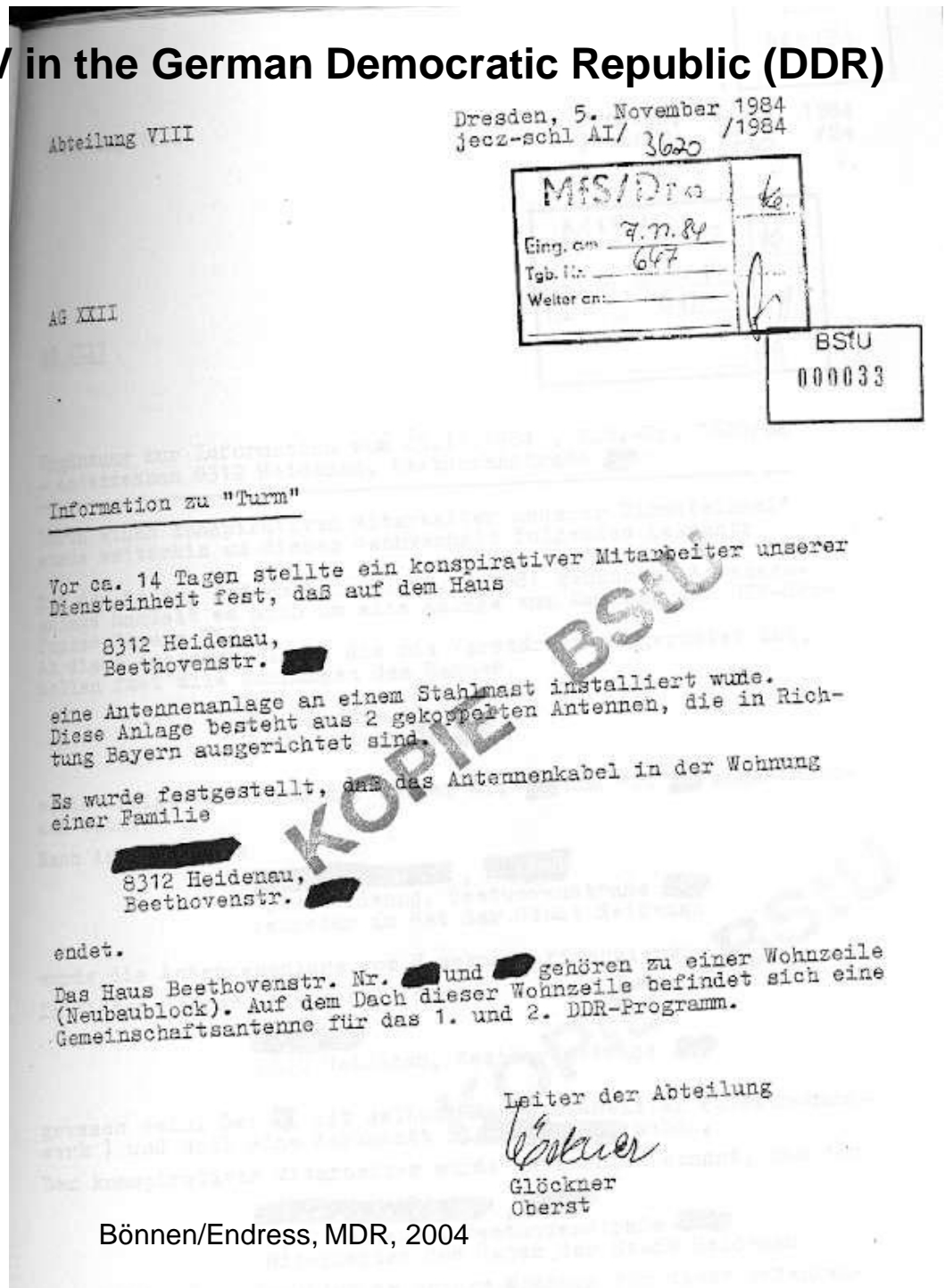
# Western TV in the German Democratic Republic (DDR)



Oben Wikipedia, unten und rechts MDR



Im „Tal der Ahnungslosen“



Alfred C. Kinsey, Waldell B. Pomeroy, Clyde E. Martin, 1958. *Sexual Behavior In the Human Male*

**„In sum, Kinsey was the major factor in changing attitudes about sex in the twentieth century. (...) He changed the nature of sexual studies, forced a reexamination of public attitudes toward sex, challenged the medical and psychiatric establishment to reassess its own views, influenced both the feminist movement and the gay and lesbian movement, and built a library and an institution devoted to sex research. His reputation continues to grow, and he has become one of the legends of the twentieth century.“**



[instructors.cwrl.utexas.edu/mcginnis/node/32](http://instructors.cwrl.utexas.edu/mcginnis/node/32)

V. L. Bullough, 1998, Alfred Kinsey and the Kinsey Report. Historical Overview and Lasting Contributions. *Journal of Sex Research* 35: 127-131.



**Kinsey's interview  
method: Direct,  
firm and tough!**

Bill Dellenback, Kinsey Institute, Wikipedia

- How to test the theory? How to test it by a controlled experiment?
- We were looking for a situation of possible norm violation in a lab.
- Fischbacher and Heusi, 2008. „Lies in Disguise. An Experimental Study of Cheating“
- Social norm: „Do not tell a lie!“

# Dice Experiment



Foto Wikipedia

Spots	1	2	3	4	5	6
CHF	1	2	3	4	5	0

Subjects roll a die in private and report the result to the experimenter.

# Screenshot „Dice experiment“

**Bitte würfeln Sie jetzt!**

Um zu überprüfen, ob der Würfel richtig funktioniert, können Sie auch mehrmals würfeln.  
Aber **nur der 1. Wurf zählt**.

Tragen Sie dann sowohl die Augenzahl, die Sie beim 1. Wurf gewürfelt haben, als auch Ihre Auszahlung gemäss der untenstehenden Tabelle in die beiden Felder ein.

Gewürfelte Augenzahl:

Auszahlung in CHF:

Gewürfelte Augenzahl:	1	2	3	4	5	6
Auszahlung in CHF:	1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	0.00

OK



# Experimental Design

Control (info0)	O		O
Experim. condit. 1 (info1)	O	$X_1$	O
Experim. condit. 2 (info2)	O	$X_2$	O

N = 466 subjects

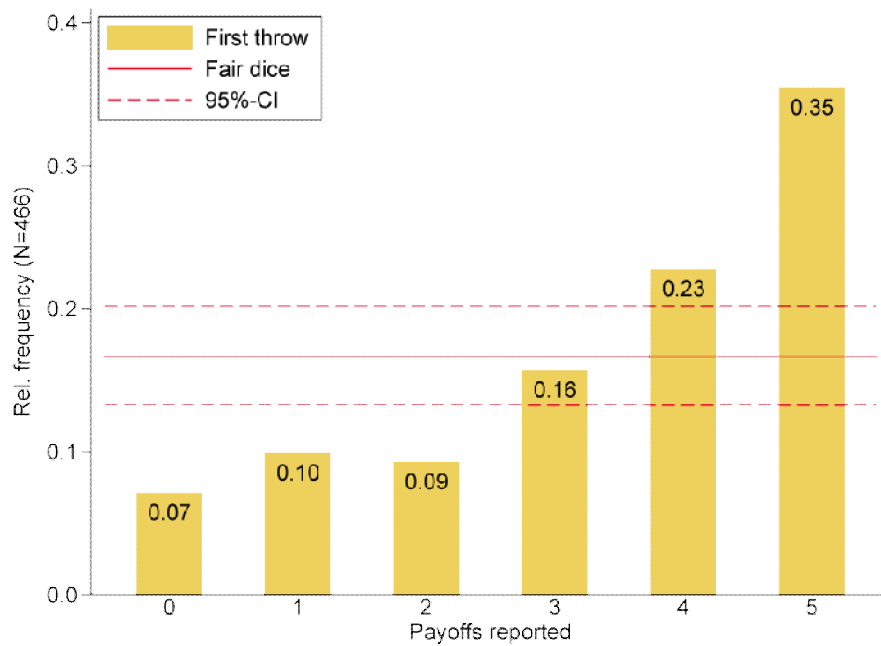
30 groups of  
14 to 16 subjects

O = Observation, X = Information feed back

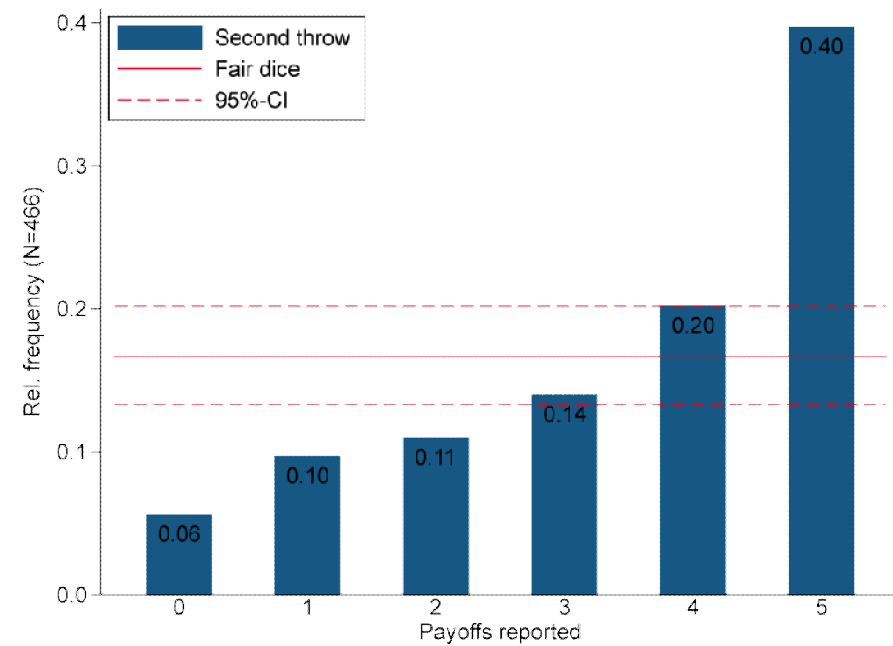
Info1: Distribution of reported spots from Fischbacher and Heusi (2008)

Info2: Feedback of group-specific distribution

# Reported result of dice throws



Before giving information feedback  
in info1 and info2

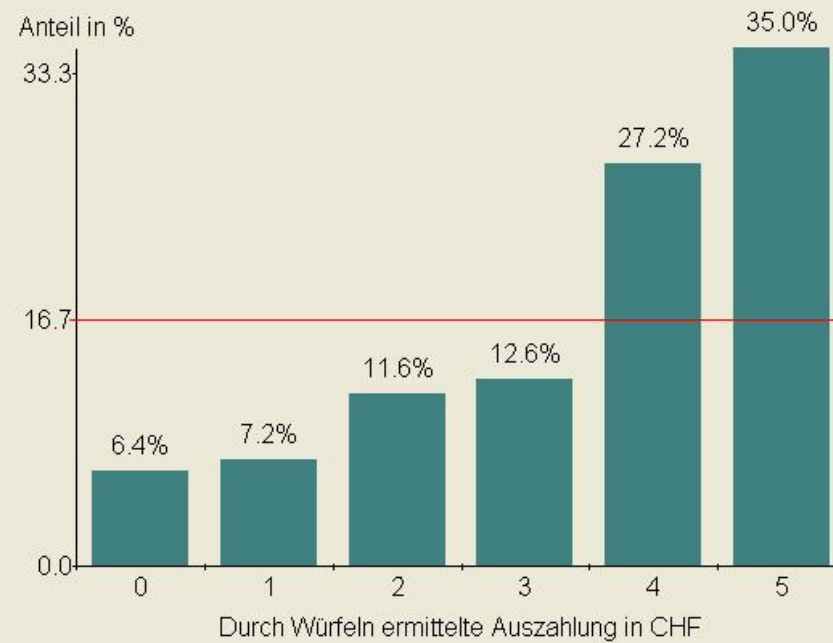


After giving information feedback  
in info1 and info2

Diese Grafik zeigt die Verteilung der Auszahlungen, die **von 389 Studierenden** der ETH und der Universität Zürich in demselben Experiment durch Würfeln ermittelt wurden.

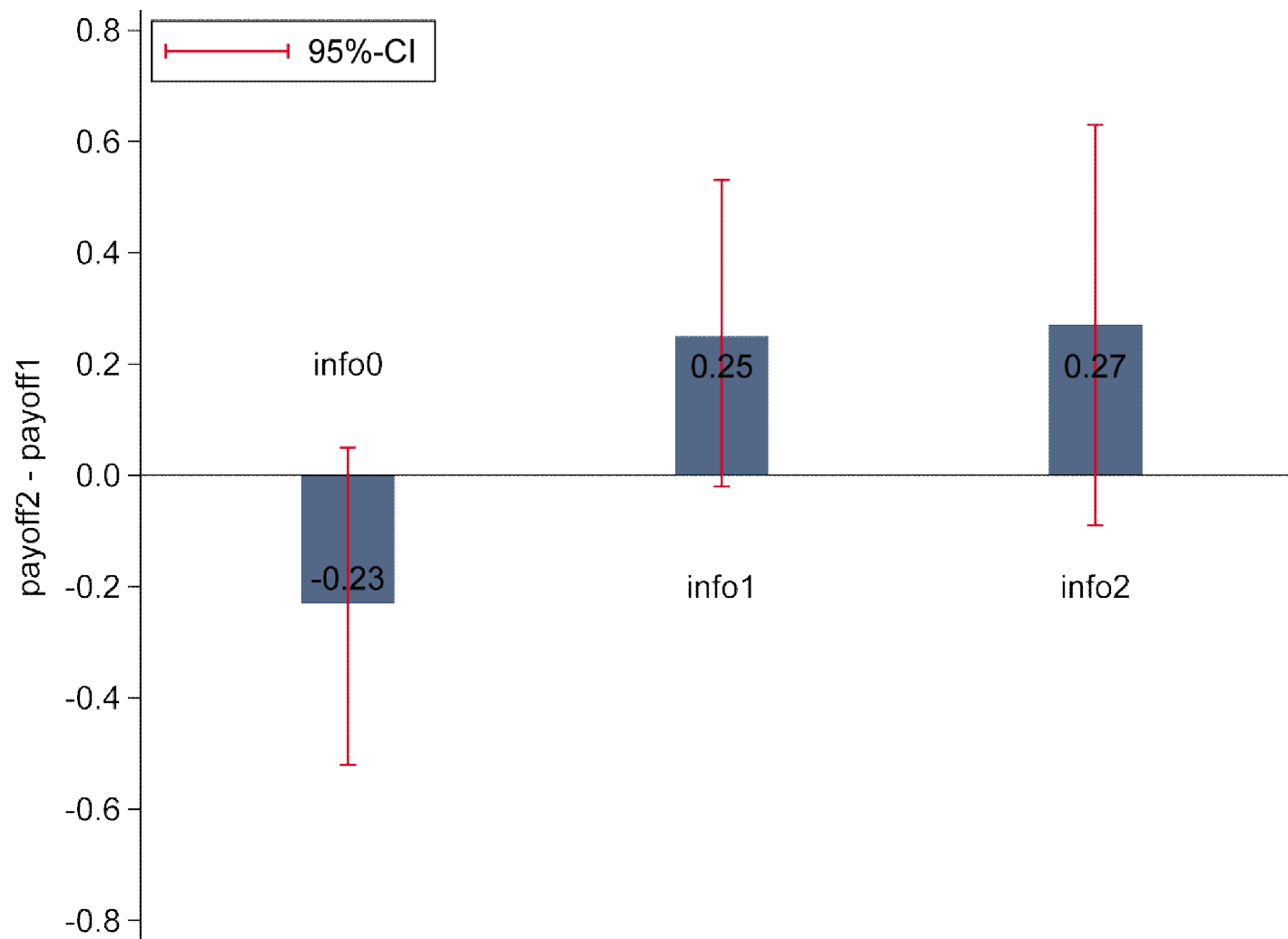
Die **rote Linie** markiert den durchschnittlichen Anteil der Auszahlungen, der sich bei einer **grossen Zahl von zufälligen Würfelwürfen** ergeben würde.

Nachfolgend erhalten Sie die Möglichkeit erneut zu würfeln. Die Auszahlung, die Sie beim nächsten Wurf ermitteln, wird Ihnen zu Ihrer bisherigen Auszahlung dazugezählt.



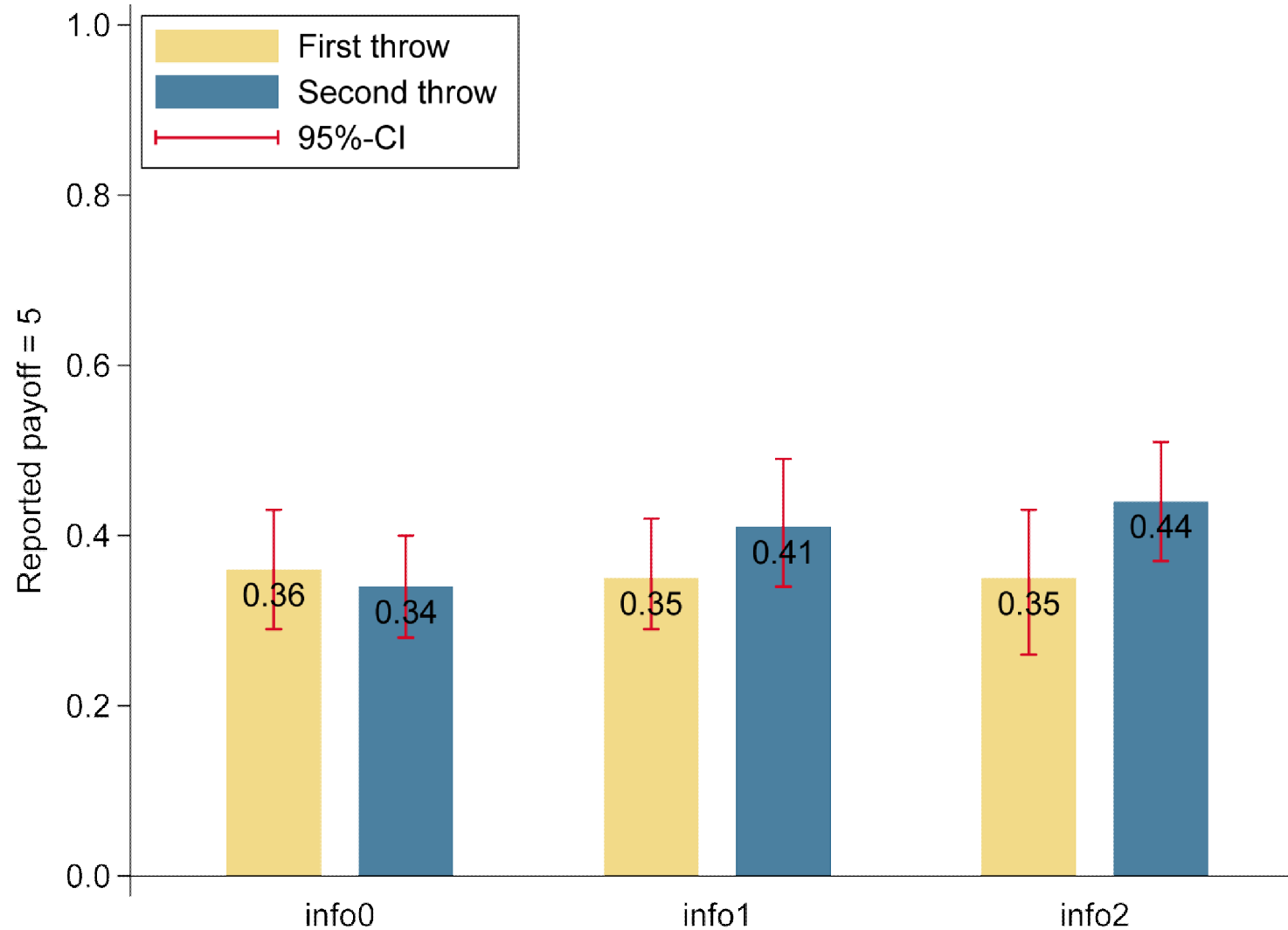
OK

# Payoff2 – Payoff1

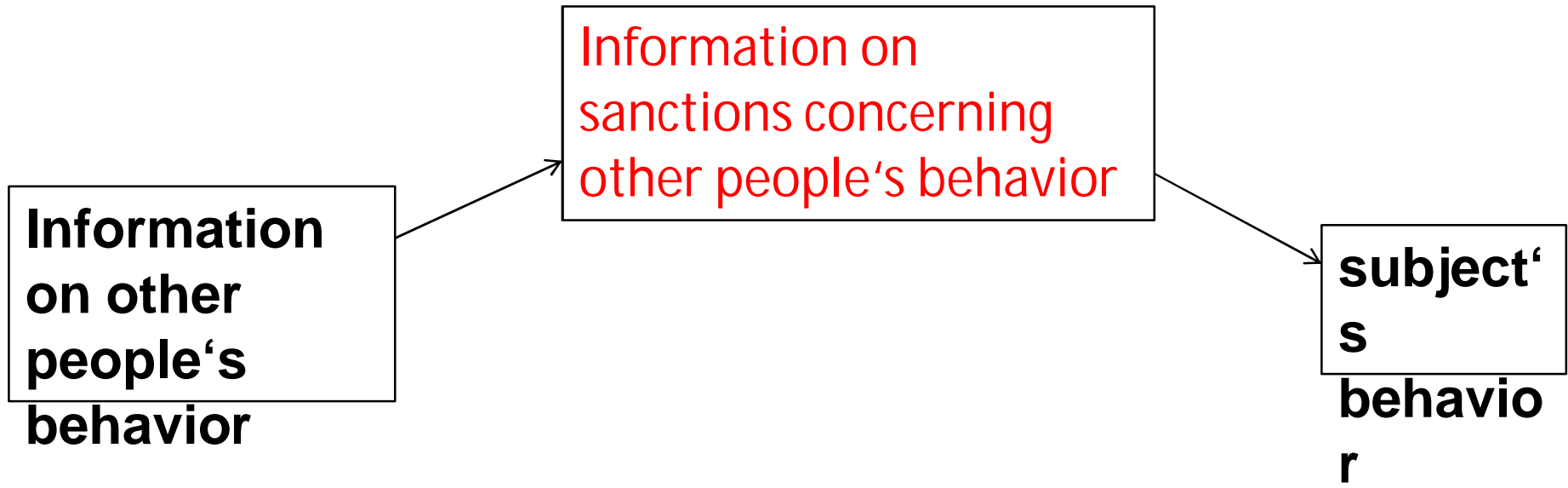


	<b>OLS 1</b>		<b>OLS 2</b>		<b>Logit</b>	
	(Payoff 2–Payoff1)		(Payoff 2–Payoff1)		(Report of 5)	
	Koef.	SF	Koef.	SF	Koef.	SF
First throw					(ref.)	
info0	(ref.)		-0.234	0.138	-0.054	0.167
info1 (FH 2008)	0.487*	0.195	0.253	0.135	0.243	0.206
info2 (group)	0.501*	0.189	0.267	0.177	0.360*	0.182
Intercept	-0.234	0.138			-0.601*	0.105
N <sub>1</sub>	466		466		932	
N <sub>2</sub>	30		30		30	
adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.01		0.01			
pseudo R <sup>2</sup>					0.004	
χ <sup>2</sup>					5.827	

# Relative frequency of „5“ before and after information feedback

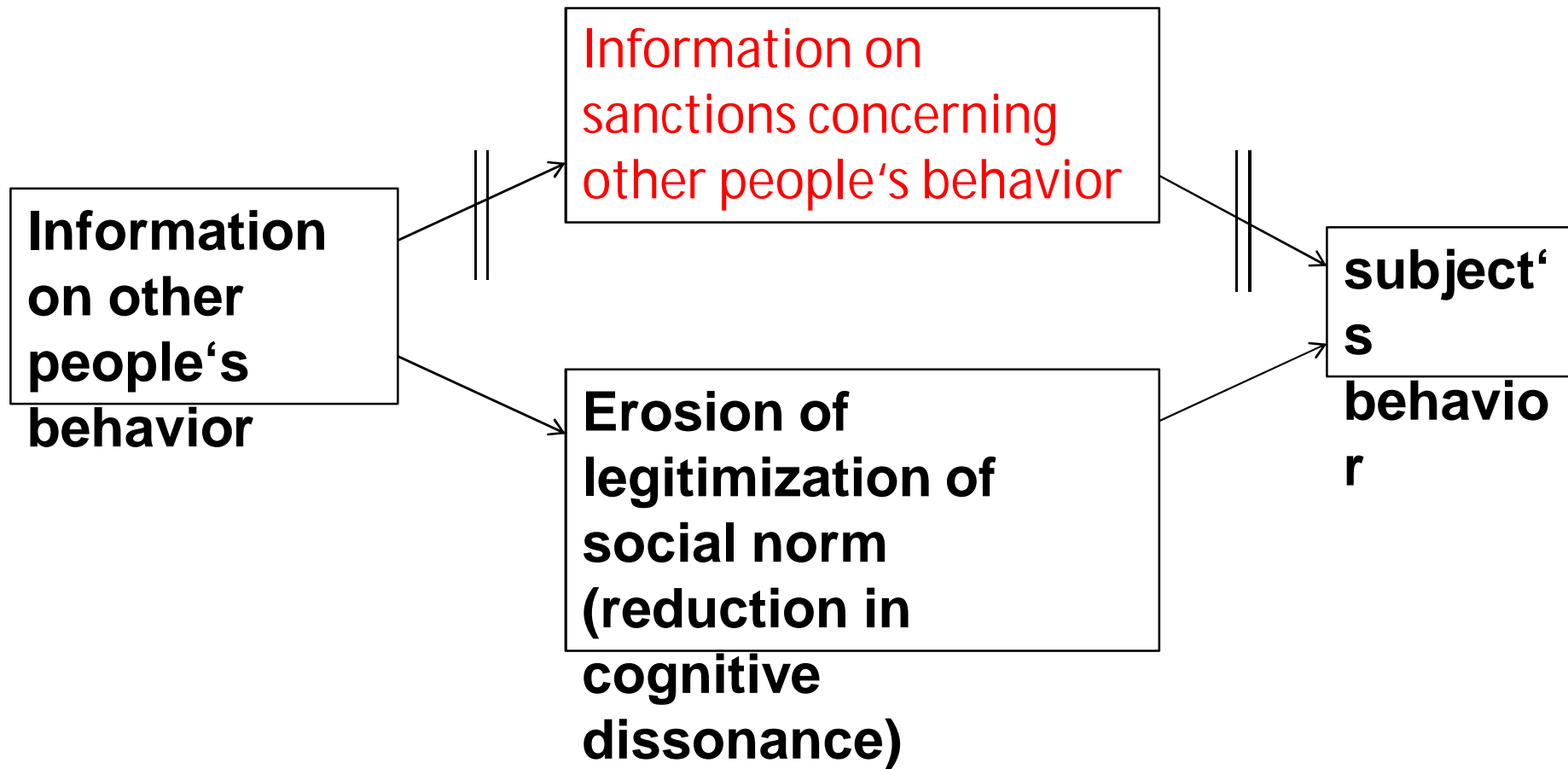


	<b><i>OLOGIT</i></b>	
	(Payoff first throw)	
	Coeff.	SE
<i>Religious denomination</i>		
No denomination	(ref.)	
Protestant	0.274	0.236
Catholic	0.027	0.314
other	0.975*	0.372
Degree of religiosity	-0.057	0.075
Sex (m=1)	0.148	0.176
Age (years)	0.053*	0.025
Budget (in 100 CHF)	-0.023*	0.011
Years of education (father)	0.015	0.044
Years of education (mother)	-0.053	0.037
Threshold 1	-2.099*	0.947
Threshold 2	-1.039	0.920
Threshold 3	-0.458	0.929
Threshold 4	0.257	0.924
Threshold 5	1.239	0.934
N <sub>1</sub>	431	
N <sub>2</sub>	30	
pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.01	
χ <sup>2</sup>	37.43	



Assumption: Underestimation of norm violations and overestimation of likelihood and severity of sanctions.





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