

## Background

Different kinds of social norms thought to be learned from **distinct experiences**<sup>1,2</sup>:

- **Moral norms against physical harm** from observations of how actions affect other's welfare
- **Conventional norms** from authority commands or by observing social consensus

Children distinguish (familiar) moral and conventional transgressions: Evidence from **interview studies**<sup>3,4</sup> and studies using **spontaneous protest**<sup>5</sup>.

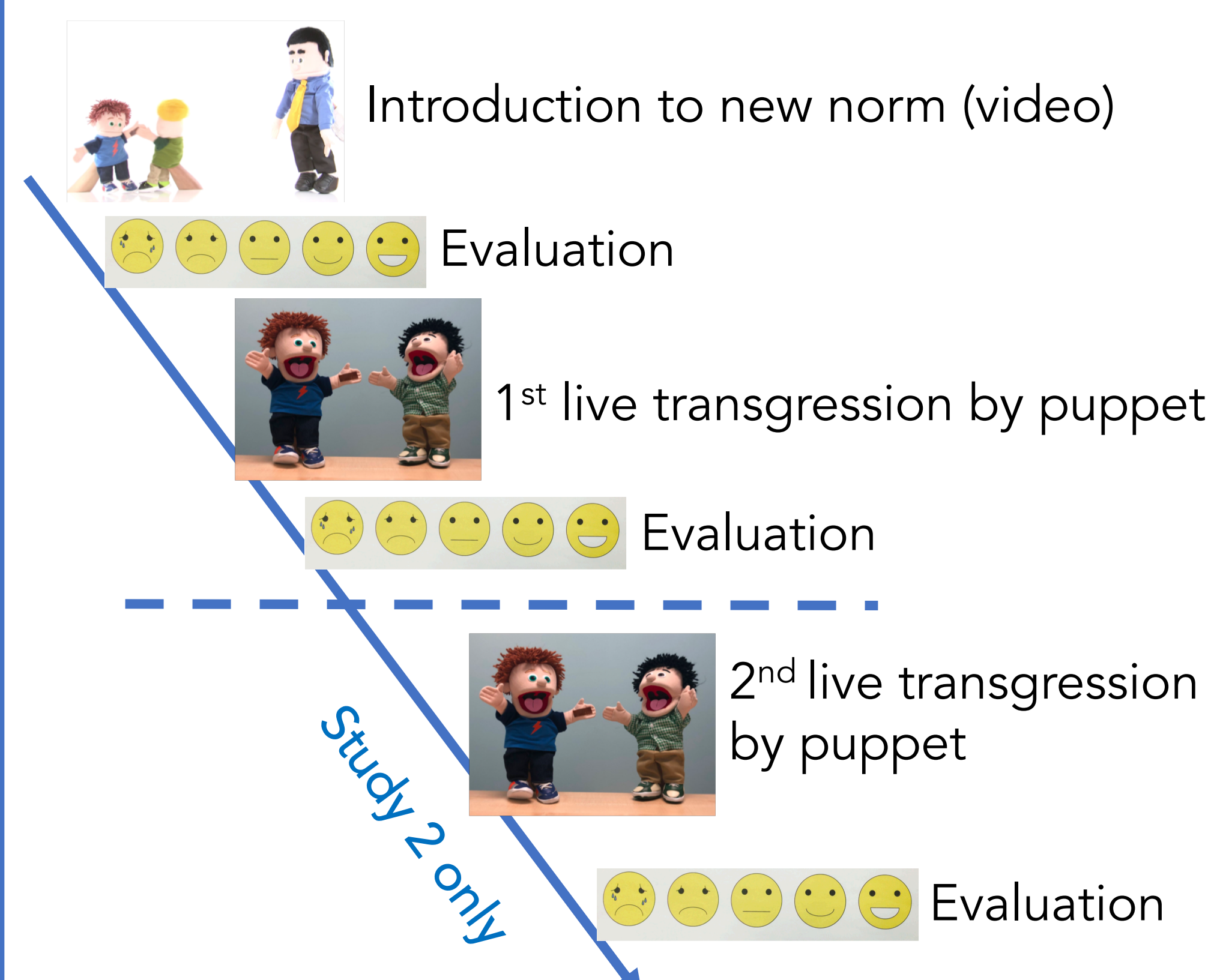
## Research questions

- Can preschoolers **rapidly** apply moral versus conventional concepts to **new** situations?
- Do the different measures form a **consistent picture**?
- What role does the transgressor's knowledge of the norm play for preschoolers' evaluations?

## Design

	OBSERVATION	
	moral, observation	moral, no observation
	conventional, observation	conventional, no observation

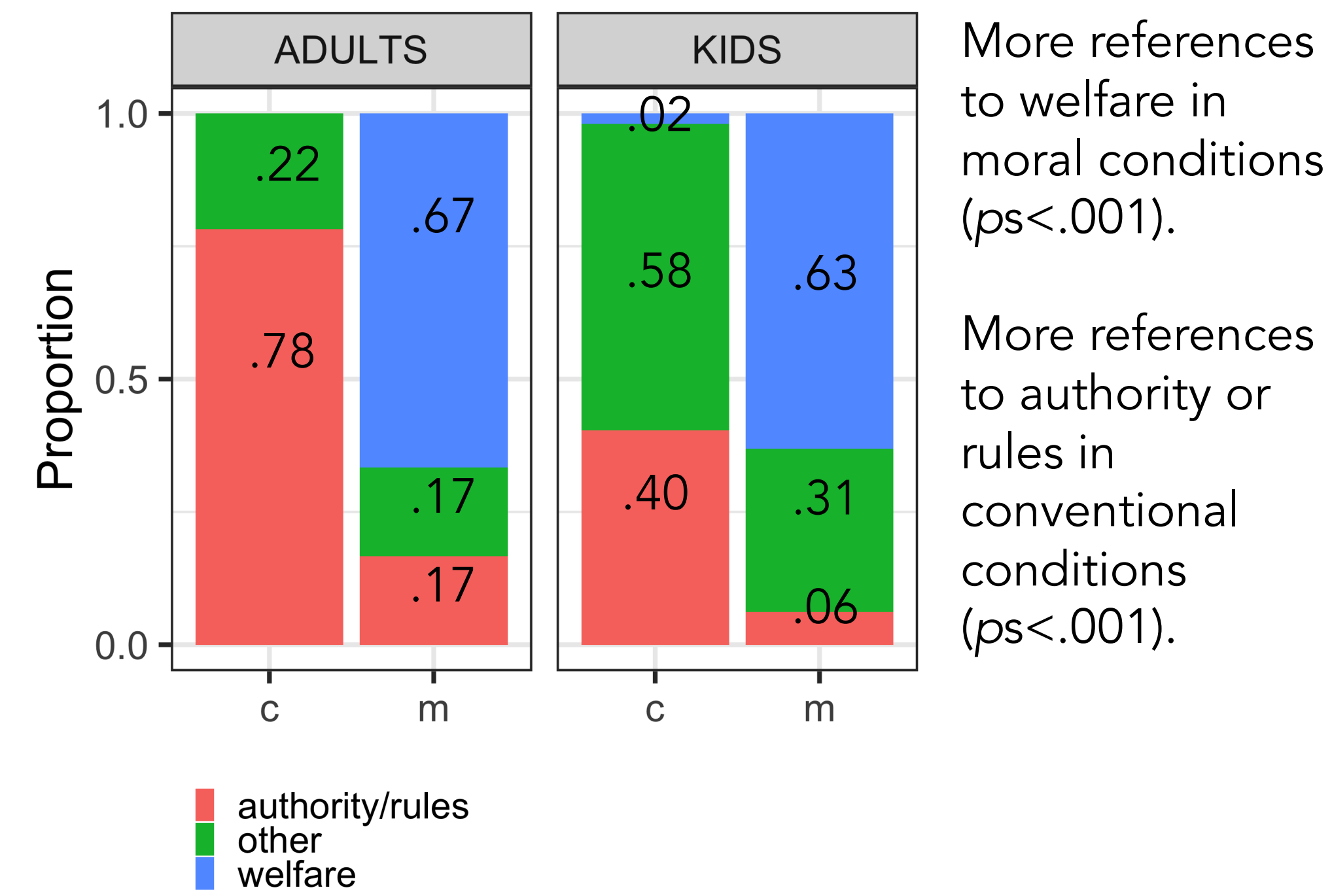
## Procedure



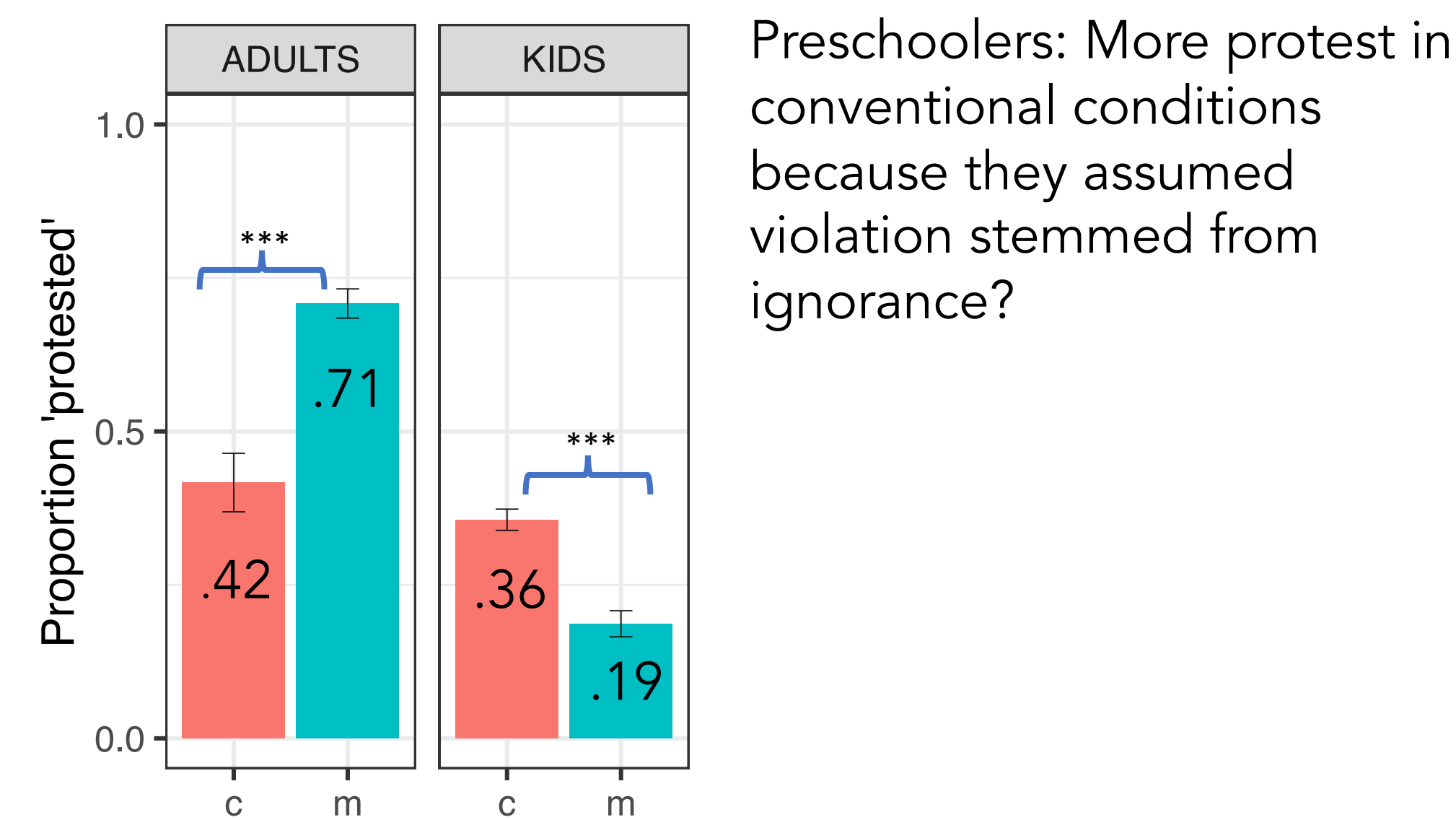
## Results Study 1

144 preschoolers (3, 4, 5 years); 48 adults

### Why did you think it was not okay to press?



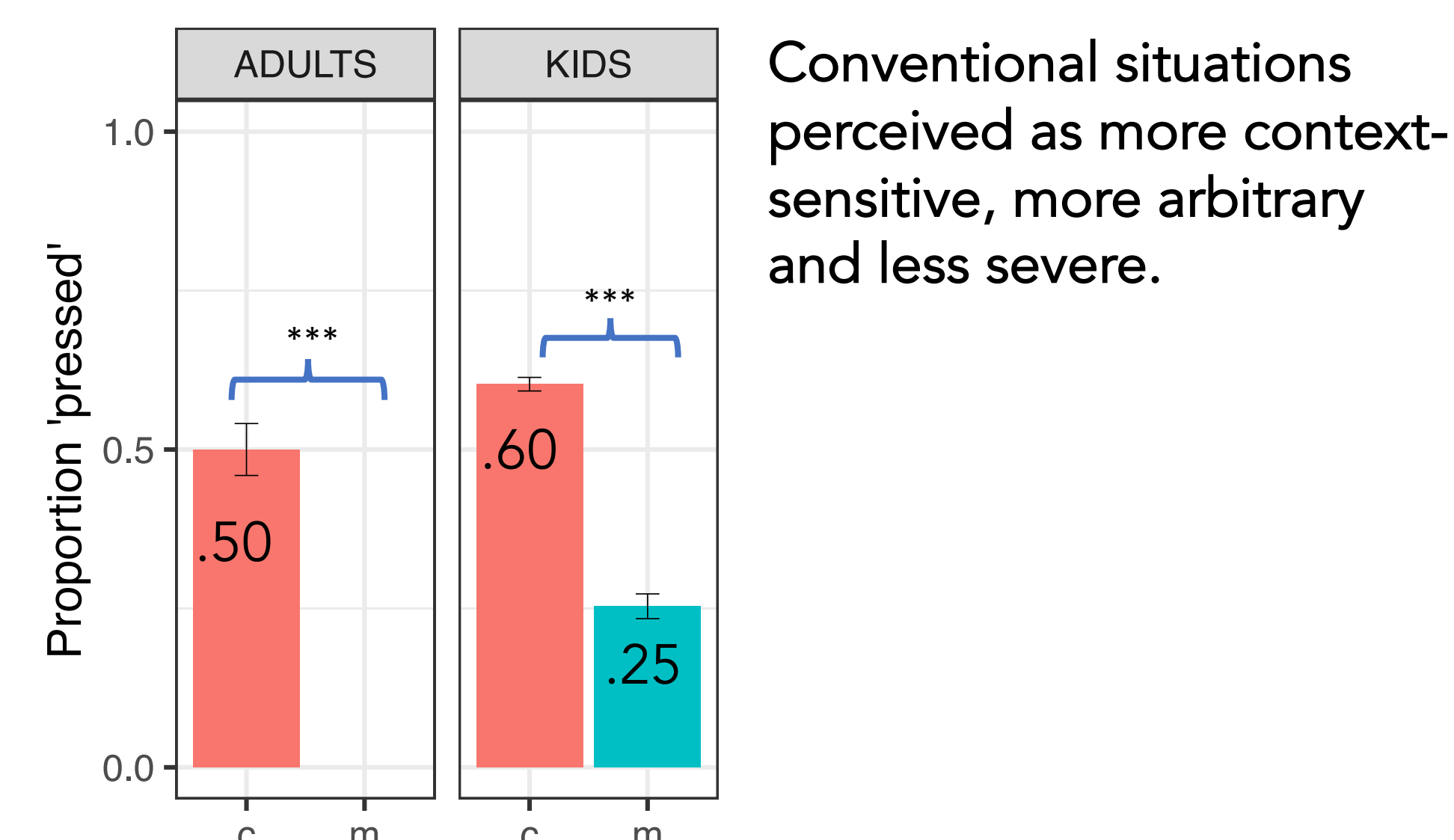
### Spontaneous protest during live transgression



**Authority contingency:** Adults and preschoolers more likely to say that conventional action would be okay if teacher permitted it ( $p < .001$ ).

**Severity:** Adults and 5-year-olds liked moral transgressions less ( $p < .001$ ;  $p < .05$ ).

### Own transgression: Do you want to press?

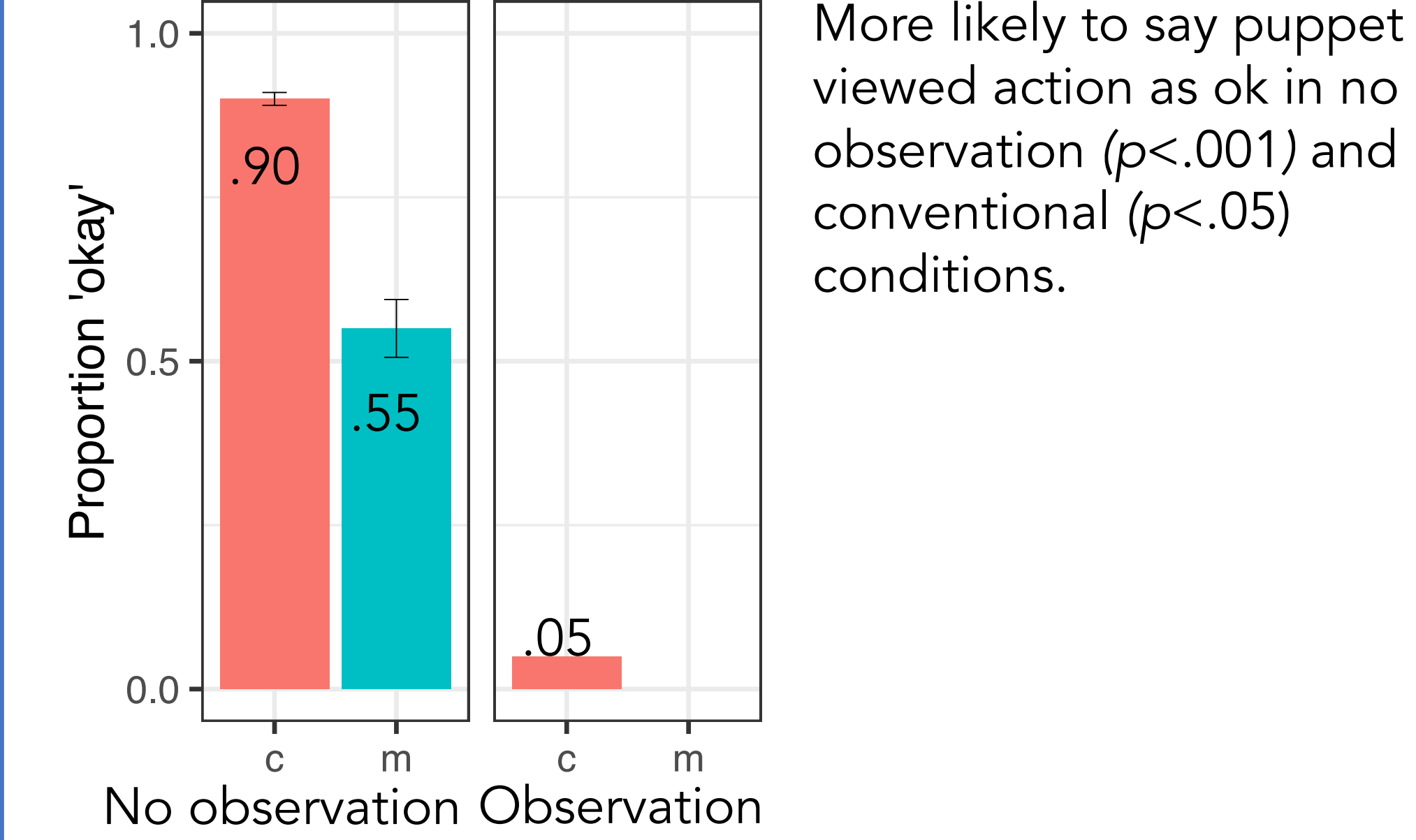


## Results Study 2

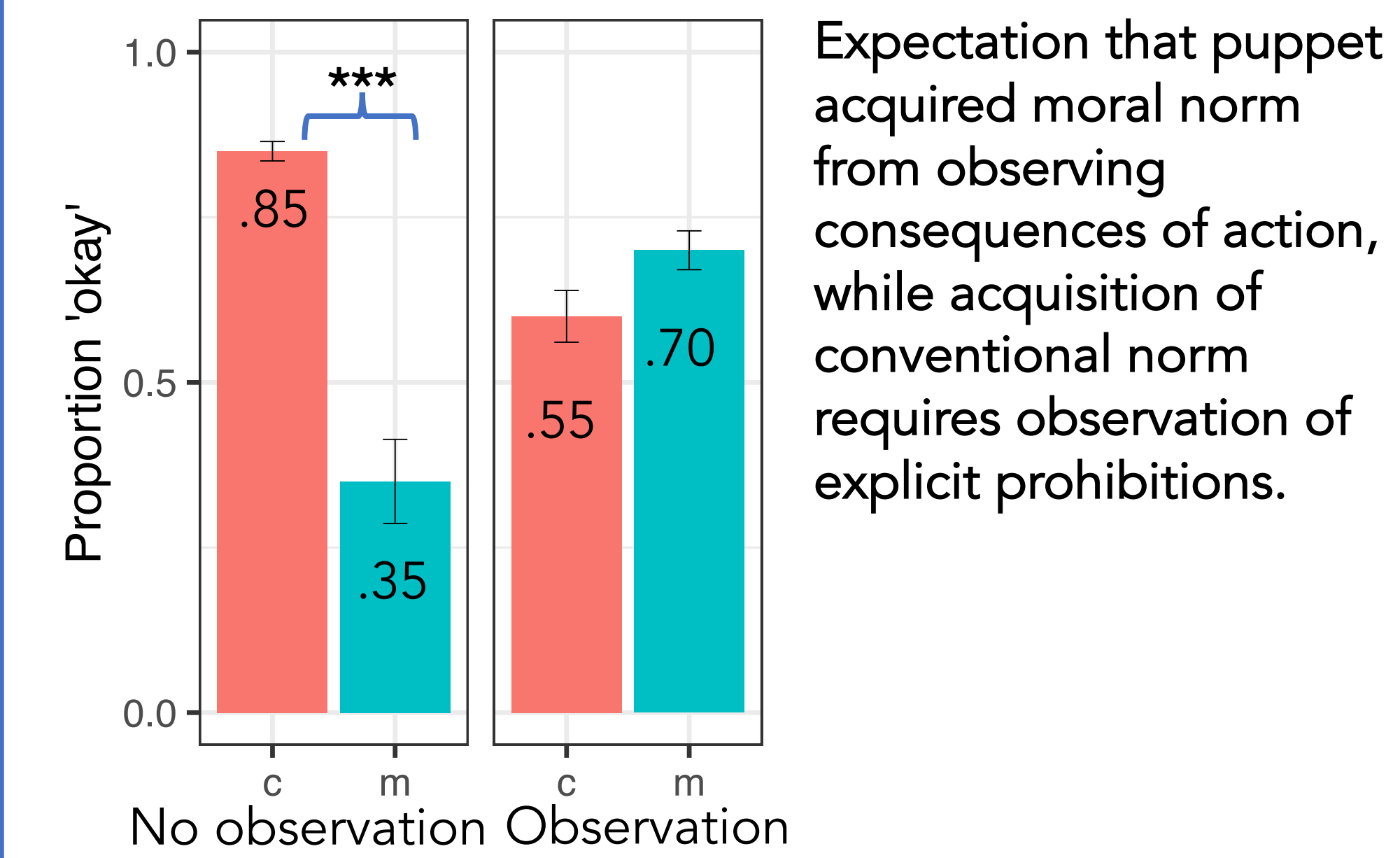
80 adults

### Does the puppet think it's okay to press?

#### After watching video

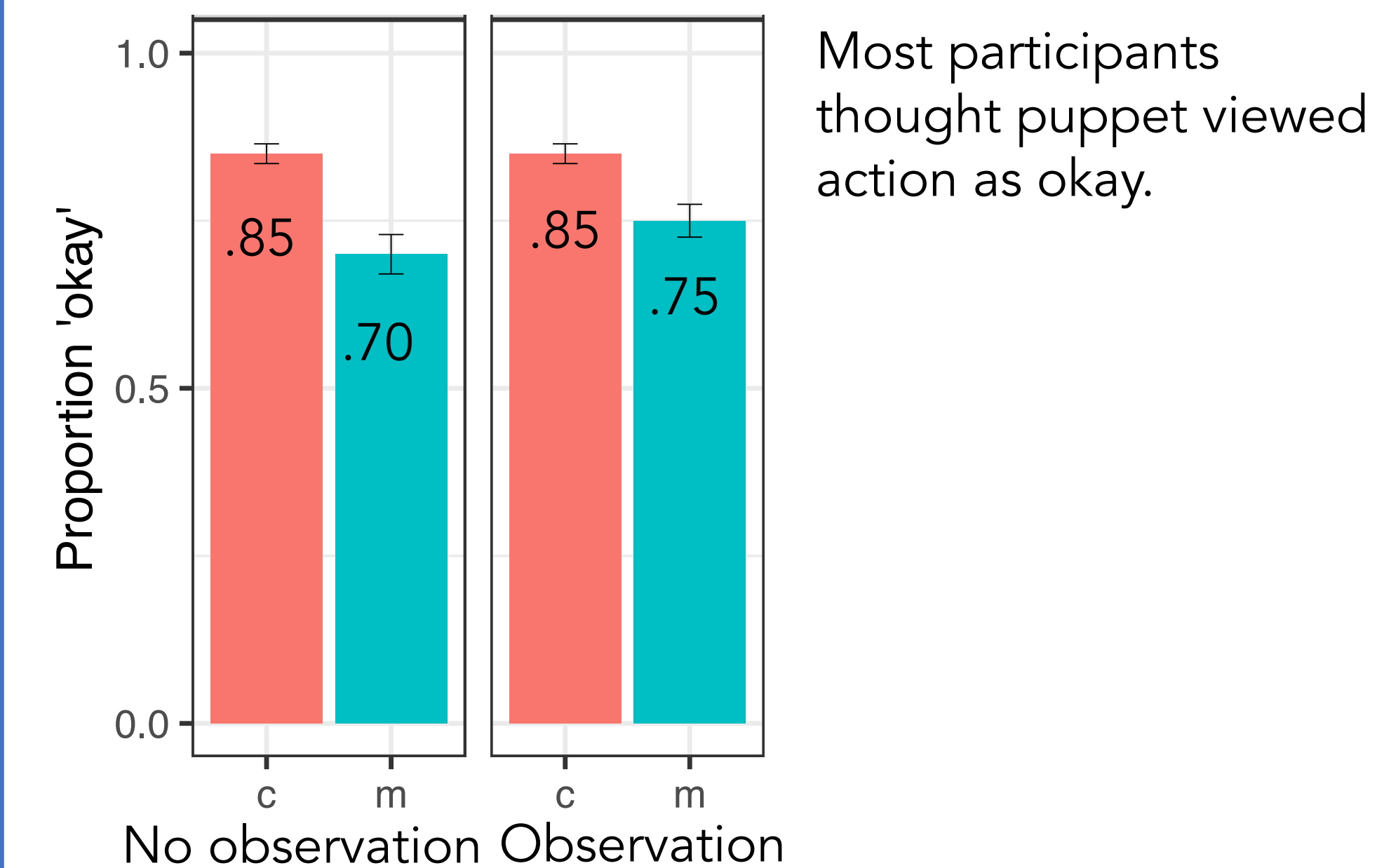


#### After 1st transgression



**1st versus 2nd evaluation:** Proportion of participants who say 'ok' after watching video different from proportion of participants who says 'ok' after 1st transgression ( $p < .001$ ).

#### After 2nd transgression



## Legend

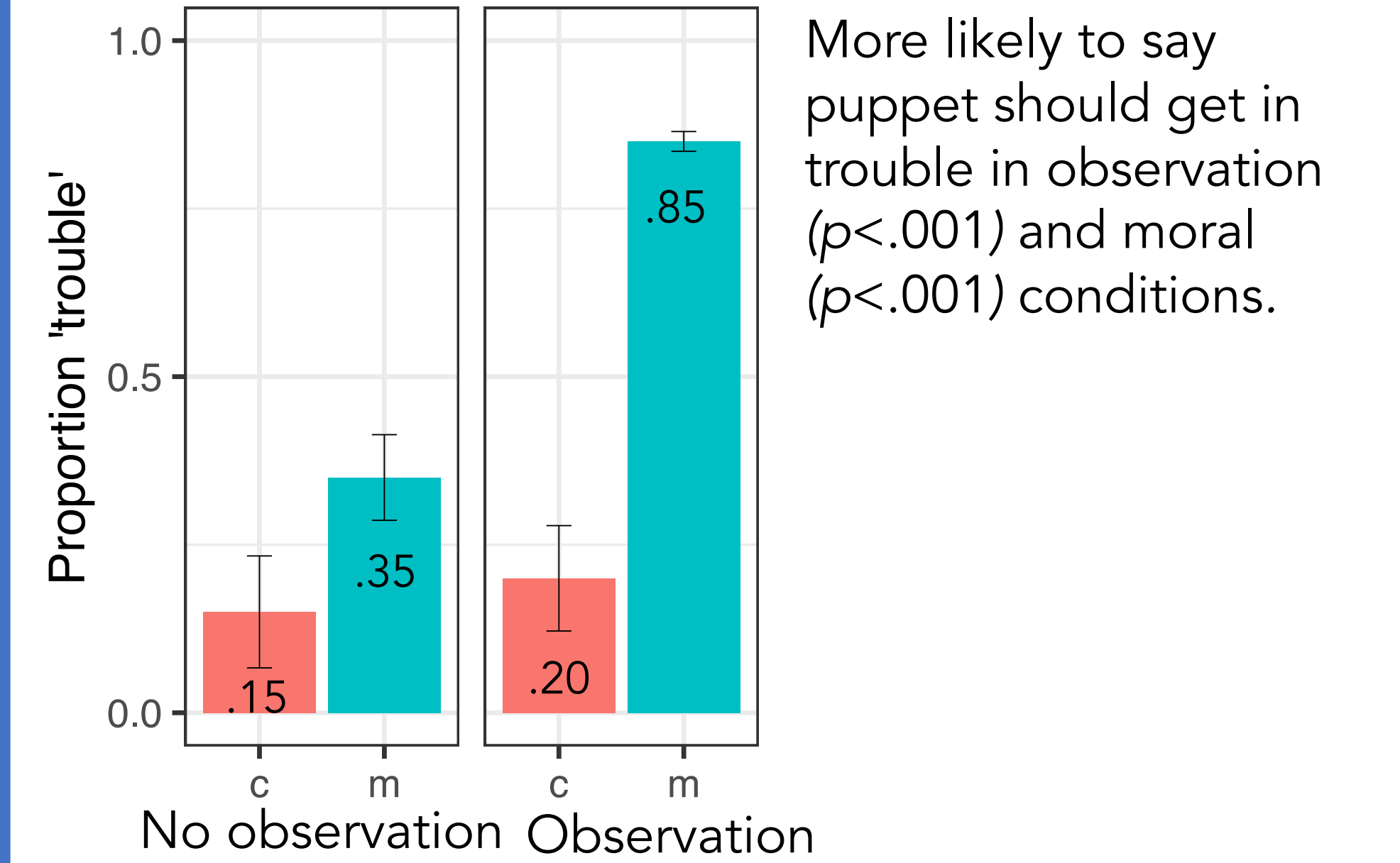
c = conventional scenario  
m = moral scenario  
Error bars indicate  $\pm 1$  SE

\*\*\* =  $p < .001$   
\*\* =  $p < .01$   
\* =  $p < .05$

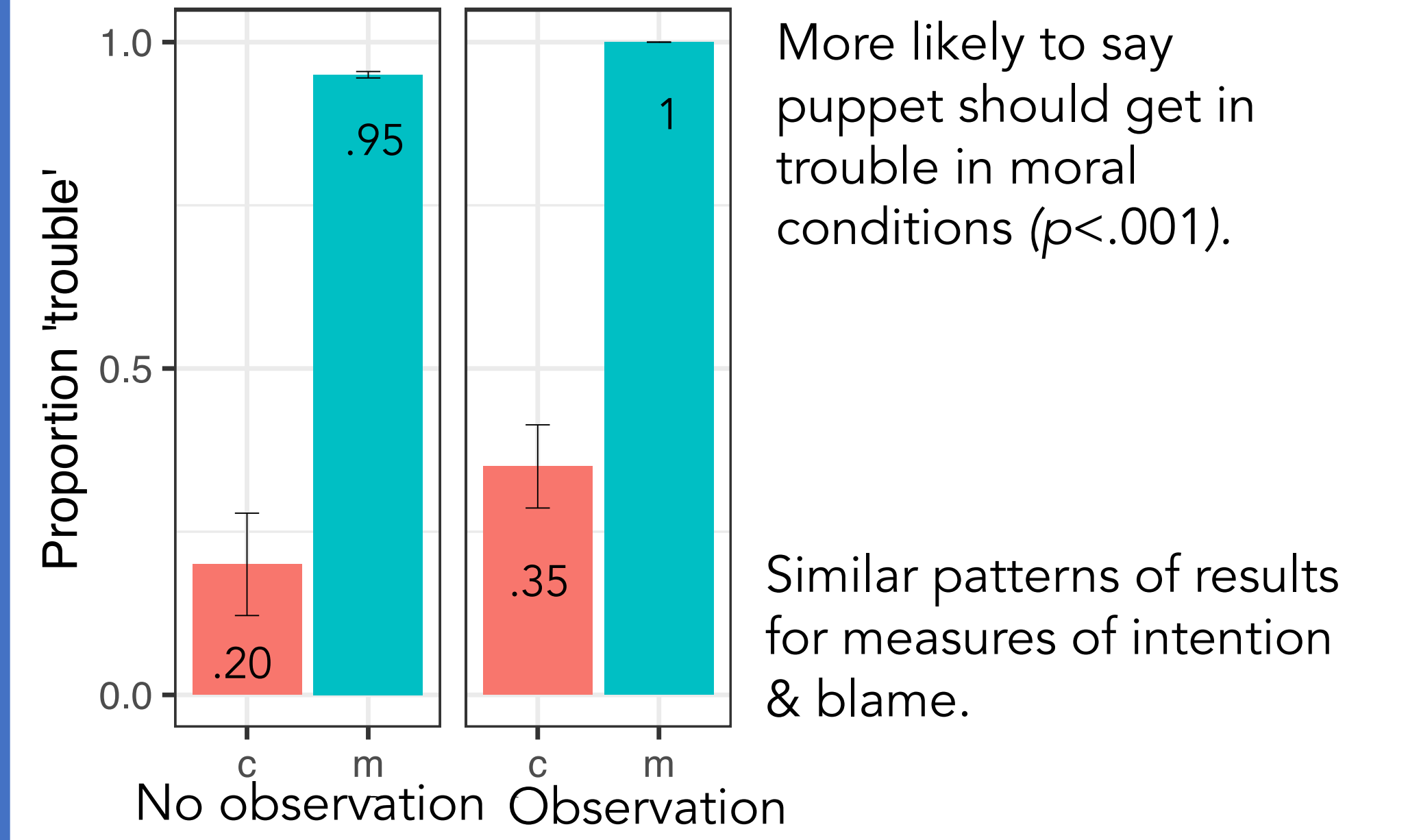
## Results Study 2 continued

### Do you think the puppet should get in trouble?

#### After 1st transgression



#### After 2nd transgression



**1st versus 2nd evaluation:** More likely to say puppet should get in trouble after 2nd transgression ( $p < .001$ ).

## Conclusion and further directions

- Adults and preschoolers **rapidly** construct distinct moral and conventional evaluations about novel actions **across judgments, reasoning, and actions**.
- Adults believe people don't have to be **taught** that it is wrong to cause pain to others but do have to be taught arbitrary conventions.
- Data collection with preschoolers for Study 2 is ongoing. Findings promise to provide insight into how preschoolers attribute **knowledge of new norms** to others.

## Selected references

1. Turiel (1983). *The development of social knowledge*. 2. Korsgaard (1996). *The sources of normativity*. 3. Killen (2014). Social and moral development in early childhood. 4. Turiel, E., 2006. *The development of morality*. 5. Schmidt, Rakoczy, & Tomasello (2012). Young children enforce social norms selectively.