



3rd floor – TIME

Option track: Spoilt for choice

Push the ball up with the stick.

On the left you have many choices, on the right just one.

How long does it until you've made a choice and the ball lands back at the bottom?

"THE FEELING OF MISSING OUT ON SOMETHING INCREASES WITH GROWING FREEDOM OF CHOICE AND INCREASING OPTIONS."

"... IT IS NO LONGER TIME AND EXTERNAL PRESSURE, BUT OUR FREEDOM OF TIME DOMINATES US."

More and more options: How decision problems eat up our time

Modern societies are always trying to create more and new possibilities. Having more options, being able to decide things for ourselves, is what we experience as freedom. That's why it's considered progress when we don't just have three TV channels at our disposal, but 200. And when we can watch the programmes when we want. And when we have many more formats, channels and options on the internet. Or when we can choose between hundreds of telephone tariffs and types of insurance and electricity providers. 'Choose the one that suits you best' is what they'll say.

That's great - isn't it?

Too much choice – is there such a thing?

In fact, most people have problems finding what suits them individually: the choices then do not mean an increase in quality of life, but a source of stress. Having more options is only an improvement where it is about things that are important to us and where we can also decide which option is right for us. Surprisingly, however, we seem to be running out of good reasons for such decisions more and more quickly in many respects. This applies to small as well as big decisions. Whether you are asked to choose the right party in the voting booth, the right computer in the electrical shop, the right investment in the bank or the right course of study at university: the problem is always the same.

Wrong advisors?

The advisors advise unwaveringly: Firstly, inform yourself carefully about all the offers, get an overview. But you would need years to study all the courses of study, party programmes, financial investments and computer models, including their risks and side effects. If you really want to compare carefully, you will get old before you have decided - and most offers have long since changed in the meantime. Second advice: determine carefully what is important to you and what needs you have and want to have. But who knows? Not only the world, but also you and your life situation are changing more and more rapidly. You cannot know today what will be right for you tomorrow. Consequently, you have three bad options in the voting booth as well as in the bank, in the electrical shop and at the student advisory centre:

First, you inform yourself really carefully - then you waste an unreasonable amount of time on the decision and yet come to no resilient conclusion. Secondly, you simply decide on the basis of your gut (most people do this sooner or later) - then you may make a wrong choice, in any case not the

best one. Thirdly, out of fear of this, many people then don't decide at all: they don't vote, put the money under the pillow, stick with the old computer model and do an internship first. The 'blind' multiplication of options and possibilities, that much is certain, is a cause of time shortage, of bad consciences and of the nagging feeling of being insufficient. It puts us under constant pressure to optimise.

Choose the individual areas of life and decide what is important to you and what seems unimportant in your life. Try to bring the whole thing into balance.

We modern people have much more choice than in the past. There are many different options of everything. What should we do? Finding the best mobile phone model is impossible. Compare all the models? Already there are new ones. Some people despair of the big choice.