

***Why Marriage? Why Not?
American's Support of and Opposition to Same-Sex Marriage***

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In June of 2006, President Bush advocated for a Constitutional amendment defining "marriage in the United States as the union of a man and woman." At the same time, other countries have started to recognize same-sex partnerships; marriage between two men or two women has become legal in countries such as Belgium, Canada, the Netherlands, and Spain. Americans are divided on the issue of same-sex marriage. Yet little research to date investigates how ordinary Americans justify their stance on same-sex marriage. This research project investigates these justifications through analysis of a sub-sample of 100 respondents from a nationally representative survey of over 700 American adults conducted in 2003 and 100 respondents from a follow-up survey of over 800 respondents conducted in 2006. The key questions explored are whether or not "gay and lesbian couples should be allowed to marry" and why Americans feel this way. In both the 2003 and 2006 date, slightly over half of the respondents analyzed opposed same-sex marriage and the other favored same-sex marriage. Individuals within the sample typically explain their views by invoking religion, equal rights, family and children, tradition, the purpose and definition of marriage, and the morality of same-sex marriage. Further, a goal of the paper is to determine whether or not individual opinions within the sample mirror public opinion of same-sex marriage.

***Ritual Rebellion:
Expressions of Agency and Solidarity in the University Student C-Store Run***

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At Indiana University, as at most universities across the United States, students living in college dormitories are required to purchase an annual meal plan for the on-campus cafeteria system. The price for these meal plans currently ranges from \$1000 to \$3328 at IU, representing a substantial annual investment for members of the student population. This project seeks to investigate student perceptions of the meal plan system and to identify the innovative consumption patterns employed by students for managing their university's alternative currency.

Interviews with representative Indiana University students reveal that many individuals view their meal plans as burdensome expenses imposed upon them by a distant and disinterested authority. Students' primary complaint is that meal plan options are in their opinion set according to an inflated scale that benefits no one but the university administration. Spending all of one's meal points by the end of each academic year is considered a near impossibility but also an unofficial obligation. Unused meal points, having been paid for in advance by the students, are seen as concessions to an exploitative system. Through their efforts to fully utilize their meal point allotments, students seek to assert themselves as empowered consumers who are aware of their options for action and wish to be recognized as individuals who refuse to be taken advantage of anymore than they already have.

This presentation will focus on a particular strategy of meal point usage known as the c-store run. The term describes a ritual form of buying frenzy undertaken by university students towards the end of each academic year. Although the most commonly asserted function of these events is to "burn" remaining meal points, c-store runs serve a larger purpose for the student community by providing a safe venue for protest and a source of memories that serve to bond the participants of a run long after the actual buying expedition has concluded. C-store runs also operate as important mechanisms for reaffirming student solidarity by operating as mediated performance spaces in which the gifting of large quantities of convenience store merchandise becomes socially acceptable. Differentials in wealth are dissolved as part of a communal effort to avoid exploitation from an externally imposed system.

The Role of Object Familiarity and Active Exploration in the Development of Preferred Views

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We are not passive perceivers, looking out into the world from a camera lens. We create our own opportunities for learning. Previous research has shown that adults show a specific pattern in terms of the object views they prefer to look at. Most of the time is spent exploring around planar views, such as the sides or the front of the object. Furthermore, actively viewing objects results in faster object recognition than just passively studying them (James et al 2001). A posterior study in our lab regarding preferences in children ages 18 to 24 months found that when exploring known objects, 18 to 24 month olds preferred planar views of objects (Pereira et al., 2006) but not for novel objects.

In a longitudinal study, we have decided to explore preferred views for objects which will originally be presented as novel to the child of 15 to 18 months, but over the course of four weeks will develop into known objects. The subject was distracted while the headband camera was mounted on the child's head. After the camera was secured, the child was presented with eight novel objects; four were shown passively and four were shown actively, and they were presented in a random order. Our hypothesis for the present experiment is that training on object familiarity could change the youngest children in this age period to exhibit a preference similar to older children. A camera worn on the forehead was used to record the child's perspective.

Following the experiment, a program was used to code the data from the headband camera. The sessions show that, the majority of the time, the kids are not exploring the objects at all. Our results suggest that children who are engaging in active and passive play prefer non-planar views. Furthermore, our results show that the current age group has no preference towards planar views suggesting a fast developmental shift in the period 18 to 24 months. If this experiment was run with a slightly older age group, the older children should not show this pattern.