

person to order beer in the group that made its decisions out loud was de facto in the same condition as the people who expressed their opinion privately, since he or she was unencumbered, in choosing, by other people's choices. Accordingly, we found that the first person to order beer in the sequential group was the happiest of his or her group and just as happy as those who chose their beers in private.

BY THE WAY, a funny thing happened when we ran the experiment in the Carolina Brewery: Dressed in my waiter's outfit, I approached one of the tables and began to read the menu to the couple there. Suddenly, I realized that the man was Rich, a graduate student in computer science, someone with whom I had worked on a project related to computational vision three or four years earlier. Because the experiment had to be conducted in the same way each time, this was not a good time for me to chat with him, so I put on a poker face and launched into a matter-of-fact description of the beers. After I finished, I nodded to Rich and asked, "What can I get you?" Instead of giving me his order, he asked how I was doing.

"Very well, thank you," I said. "Which of the beers can I get you?"

He and his companion both selected beers, and then Rich took another stab at conversation: "Dan, did you ever finish your PhD?"

"Yes," I said, "I finished about a year ago. Excuse me; I will be right back with your beers." As I walked to the bar to fill their order, I realized that Rich must have thought that this was my profession and that a degree in social science would only get someone a job as a beer server. When I got back to the table with the samples, Rich and his companion—