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Directions: Read the following articles and answer the questions.

**“Understanding The Human Herd Mentality”**

by Vito Rispo

Researchers at Leeds University, led by Prof Jens Krause, performed a series of experiments where volunteers were told to randomly walk around a large hall

without talking to each other. A select few were then given more detailed

instructions on where to walk. The scientists discovered that people end up blindly

following one or two people who appear to know where they’re going.

The published results showed that it only takes 5% of what the scientists called “informed individuals” to influence the direction of a crowd of around 200 people. The remaining 95% follow without even realizing it.

“There are strong parallels with animal grouping behavior,” says Prof Krause, who reported his study with John Dyer in the Animal Behavior Journal. “We’ve all been in situations where we get swept along by the crowd but what’s interesting about this research is that our participants ended up making a consensus decision despite the fact that they weren’t allowed to talk or gesture to one another… In most cases the participants didn’t realize they were being led by others.”

This is excellent example of how the human brain is setup for social life. Even

without a top-down organizer or any obvious rules, society just falls into place.

Unfortunately, that “follow the herd” mentality isn’t always beneficial. If we’re not

fully versed on a subject, we tend to follow the guy who appears to know more than

we do. That sort of behavior applies to more than just random walking, we do it in

everyday life from picking political candidates to deciding what type of car to buy.

1. What did people in the experiment do when walking around the large hall? Why did “95% follow without even realizing it”?

2. How does “mob” or “herd” mentality affect us in our daily lives according to

the article?

**South Source: What is the psychology behind mob mentality?**

**By Megan Donley**

Social psychology does offer relevant explanations for group or mob mentality and violence. When people are part of a group, they often experience deindividuation, or a loss of self-awareness. When people deindividuate, they are less likely to follow normal restraints and inhibitions and more likely to lose their sense of individual identity. Groups can generate a sense of emotional excitement, which can lead to the provocation of behaviors that a person would not typically engage in if alone. Think about the last sporting event or concert you attended. It’s unlikely that you would have been yelling or singing the way you were if you were the only person doing it! The group seems to make some behaviors acceptable that would not be acceptable otherwise.

Deindividuation obviously does not occur every time people get together in a group, and there are some group characteristics that increase the likelihood of violence, such as group size and physical anonymity. First, many people believe they cannot be held responsible for violent behavior when part of a mob because they perceive the violent action as the group’s (e.g., “everyone was doing it”) rather than their own behavior. When in a large group, people tend to experience a diffusion of responsibility. Typically, the bigger a mob, the more its members lose self-awareness and become willing to engage in dangerous behavior.  Second, physical anonymity also leads to a person experiencing fewer social inhibitions.  When people feel that their behavior cannot be traced back to them, they are more likely to break social norms and engage in violence.

In general, we are all susceptible to participating in some group behavior, but researchers have found that certain situations and personality characteristics play a role. For example, people are more likely to engage in looting in dire situations, such as when resources were scarce after Hurricane Katrina. Adolescents who share antisocial tendencies and lack close family bonds are more likely to search for social identity in [gangs](http://source.southuniversity.edu/combating-gang-violence-requires-extensive-approach-29022.aspx?source=SOSRC" \t "_blank). The greater individuals feel like they identify with a group, the greater the pressures for them to conform and deindividuate become.

Group violence is most likely to occur when the group is large, people are able to remain anonymous, and people experience a diffusion of responsibility. Certain situations also play a role, such as when resources are scarce, we are surrounded by like-minded people, and/or when emotions are aroused.

1. define deindividuate(tion):
2. What is one trait common to the sense of deindividuation?

3. When is violence most likely to occur in a mob?