

## **How Millennial's And Frat Boys Are Killing Others In The Pandemic - The Stupidity Of Sheep Culture**

- Millennial youth and Frat culture people are among those shown to have lower intelligence and less concern for reality

In human societies, herding often involves people using the actions of others as a guide to sensible behavior, instead of independently seeking out high-quality information about the likely outcomes of these actions. Herding can be particularly destructive in market contexts, because blind faith in market trends by a swarm of individuals can lead to huge bubbles and devastating crashes. But if herding can lead to outcomes that are so damaging and maladaptive at the level of the society, then why did it evolve in the first place? Because herding evolved to benefit individuals, not groups or societies.

We're used to thinking of social groups as fundamentally cooperative entities, but with some kinds of groups, nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, the best-known biological theory of herding, William Hamilton's "selfish herd" idea [1], proposes that herds are the result of individuals trying to ensure that other members of their species, rather than themselves, will get eaten by predators. According to this theory, in many social aggregations, the risk of predation is higher at the periphery than at the center. A herd's form and movement can be the result of individuals competing to stay close to this center, so that other individuals end up between themselves and the predators. Selfish herds have been proposed to occur in many different species, from wasps to guppies to sheep [2-4].

Another likely reason why evolution has favored herding is related to information access. By aggregating in groups, individuals can more easily benefit from knowledge that other group members have gained about, for example, the location of key resources. Herding can thus improve individual foraging success, and this appears to be a primary reason why fish such as (once again) guppies form shoals [5]. From this perspective, as with that of selfish herd theory, herding is the by-product of individuals pursuing their own self-interest.

What do these evolutionary explanations have to do with human herding in market contexts? With regard to the second explanation—improved foraging success—the answer seems pretty straightforward. Speculators often have severely limited information about how markets are likely to move, and they think that others have better information than they do, so they base their decisions on the actions of others. This strategy can work pretty well for humans, just as it can for guppies. However humans are a lot more sophisticated than guppies in matters of market exchange, and so unlike guppies, they often base their valuations of resources chiefly on how much they think others will value those resources in the future. Which is fine, as long as these expectations don't get so exuberantly [optimistic](#) as to create a giant bubble.

What about the first explanation for herding noted above, the selfish herd anti-predator theory? It may not seem to apply so well to market speculation, because speculation doesn't normally seem motivated by [fear](#) of things like sharks and tigers. However, it's not much of a stretch to note that just as guppy schools can result from individuals striving to minimize their exposure to predators, marketplace herds can result from

individuals striving to shield themselves from accusations of professional stupidity. If you lose a bet that no one else made, because they all thought it was a hopeless long shot, you'll look less competent than everyone else. But if you lose a bet that everyone else made too, because they all thought it was a sure thing, you won't seem any less competent than them.

It is likely, then, that herding in humans, as in other species, is an effort by individuals to obtain resources and minimize risks. Herding therefore often seems prudent as an individual strategy. However, it can become dangerous at a systemic level, because when combined with too much market optimism and uninformed imitation of others—plus, quite often, a significant degree of [deception](#) by sellers about how much their wares are truly worth—herding can lead to spectacular crashes. Ironically, in other words, the bubbles which are so risky for market systems are probably caused in large part not by reckless individual [risk-taking](#), but by individuals choosing what feels to them like the least risky strategy of all: following the herd.

Range cattle live in groups of cows and calves; males are often separated until breeding season. Dominance in cattle is based on age, sex, weight, presence of horns, and territoriality. Breed also seems to play a role—heavier dairy cattle are dominant to lighter breeds, while lighter beef cattle are dominant to heavier breeds. When a heavier and older cow is introduced into a group, it is usually subordinate to existing members of the group. In large herds, triangular relationships between cows exist. In dairy cattle, hierarchies change constantly as cows are added or removed from the herd. Once a hierarchy is established, overt aggression is reduced.

Very little is known about vocal communication of cattle; most commonly noted are the moo, call, hoot, and roar. A distressed cow or calf will call or hoot, an aggressive bull may roar, and a hungry calf will give a high-intensity “menh.”

Under natural conditions, cows cycle throughout the year, with peak activity between May and July and low activity between December and February (northern hemisphere). The heat cycle is usually 18–24 hr and generally begins in the evening. Common estrous behaviors include reduced food intake, increased movement, flehmen, standing behind another cow and resting the chin on its back, and increased licking and sniffing. Aggression and mounting also increase during the cycle. Heat detection is an important practice, especially in dairy cattle, in which artificial insemination is common. There are many methods to augment the detection of heat, including placement of dyes on cows’ backs that will stain the estrous cow’s ventral torso and pedometers that record increased movement. On some farms, a teaser bull is still in use. Bulls on pasture will graze alongside proestrous cows; the bull will stand head to head with the cow or may rest his head on her back. As estrus progresses he will try to mount, licking her vulva and showing flehmen.

Parturition normally occurs at night on pasture, and the calf normally starts suckling in <3 hr. The newborn calf spends most of its time near the dam until it is ~4–6 mo old, when it forms unstable groups with other calves. Cows maintain bonds with their calves even when the next calf is born. On pasture, heifers are weaned when ~8 mo old and bull calves when ~11 mo old. Social status increases with age, and social relationships are not stable until at least 1 yr of age.

**Herd behavior** is the [behavior](#) of individuals in a group acting collectively without centralized direction. Herd behavior occurs in animals in [herds](#), [packs](#), [bird flocks](#), [fish schools](#) and so on, as well as in humans. Demonstrations, [riots](#), [general strikes](#),<sup>[1]</sup> sporting events, religious gatherings, everyday decision-making, judgement and opinion-forming, are all forms of human based herd behaviour.

Raafat, Chater and Frith proposed an integrated approach to herding, describing two key issues, the mechanisms of transmission of thoughts or behavior between individuals and the patterns of connections between them.<sup>[2]</sup> They suggested that bringing together diverse theoretical approaches of herding behavior illuminates the applicability of the concept to many domains, ranging from cognitive neuroscience to economics.<sup>[3]</sup>

(A version of this article will appear as the author's "Natural Law" column in the banking magazine *Global Custodian*).

## References

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