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A Socio-Evolutionary Approach to Explaining Mob Behaviour: Symptomatic of Modernity or an Evolutionary Reiiic?

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ABSTRACT A potential explanation for historically and cross-culturally observed 'mob' behavior is presented. Collaborative data from the diverse disciplines of sociology, social anthropology and developmental psychology are united in the hope of increasing understanding of a human behavior frequently viewed as antisocial and detrimental to contemporary social functioning. It is contended that the social and psychological lives of the urban young may merely be following through an ethological heritage, a persistence of primordial patterns and innovative reactions to a way of life which in quasi-genetic terms is evolutionary, but in terms of contemporary social requirements is both abnormal and deviant. It is within these terms that a range of domains of mob culture within in urban and industrial social environments are examined, specifically competition, solidarity, protection, language and location.