

Mattias Desmet on Mass Formation Psychosis



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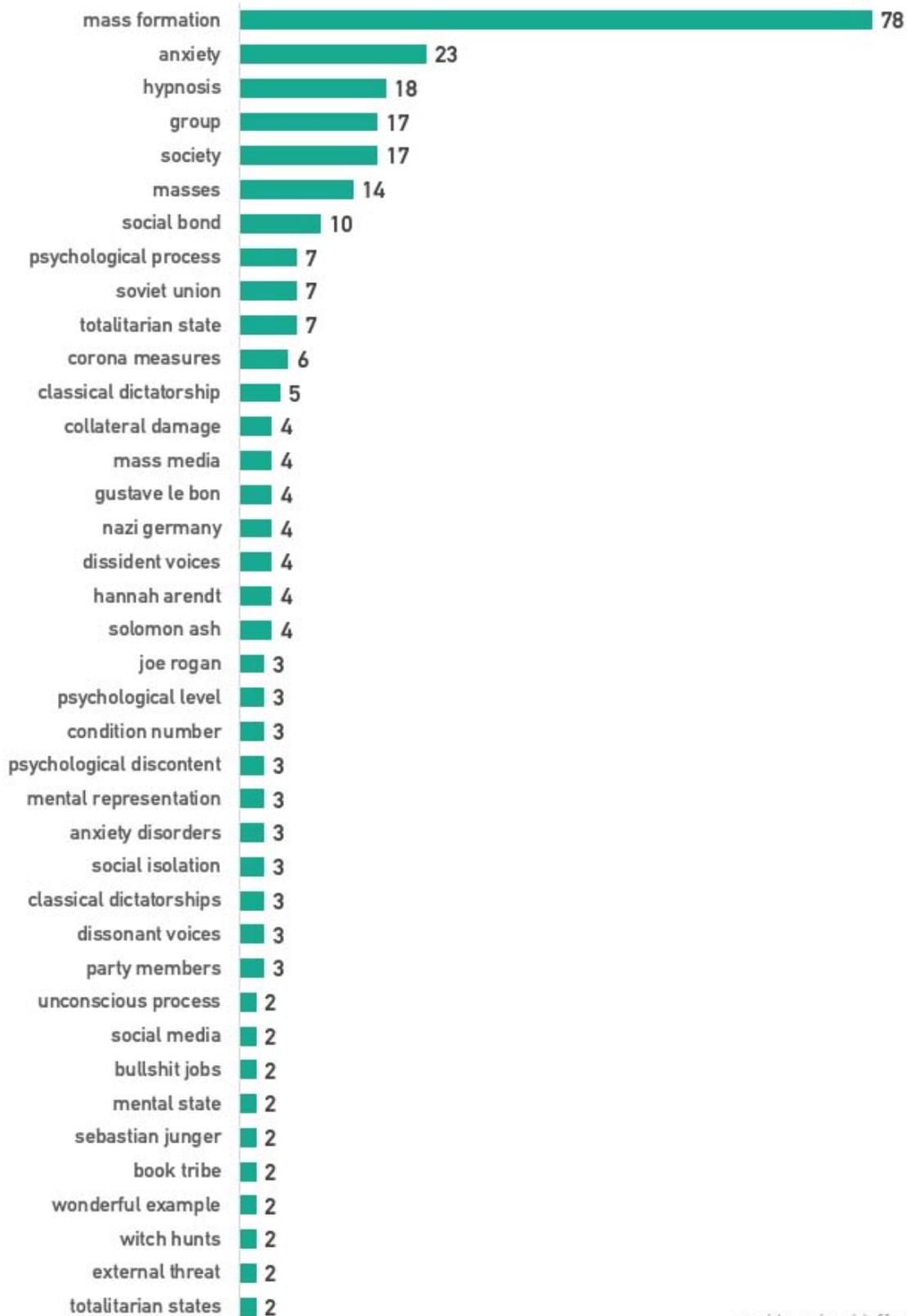
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Full transcript with timestamps provided below

Topic Discussion Keyword Counts

Mass Formation Interview with Mattias Desmet and Aubrey Marcus



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After the Joe Rogan / Robert Malone interview, many people are wondering what **Mass Formation Psychosis** is. This interview, titled “*Are we being hypnotized? The Phenomenon of Mass Formation*” with Aubrey Marcus and Professor Mattias Desmet is worth listening to no matter what side of the fence you are on when it comes to COVID-19, vaccines, etc. In it, Desmet explains that mass formation is essentially a group hypnosis (group think) that emerges in society when four conditions are met:

1. Lack of social bond [see 11:51 mark]
2. People experience life as meaningless or senseless [14:01]
3. Free floating anxiety and free floating psychological discontent [15:22]
4. Free floating frustration and aggression [17:17]

Desmet explains that all four of these conditions are currently being met, putting the majority of the population in a mental state that allows them to be essentially hypnotized.

“So all this free floating anxiety is attached to, connected to, the object of anxiety indicated in the narrative. And there is a huge willingness to participate in the strategy to deal with this object of anxiety because in this way, people feel that they can control their anxiety and their psychological discontent better. So all this anxiety connects to the subject of anxiety, and there is a huge willingness to participate in the strategy and that leads up to something very specific. People suddenly feel connected again in a heroic struggle with the object of anxiety. So a new kind of solidarity, a new kind of social bond and a new kind of meaning emerges in society. And that’s the reason why people follow the narrative, why people buy into the narrative and why they are willing to participate in this strategy.”

Professor Mattias Desmet

For those that prefer to read instead of watch, you can find the full transcript below. It include timestamps in case you want to jump to a specific part of the video embedded below. The interview is over 1 hour an 20 minutes long in total.

Analyzing the text of the transcript, here are the most common keywords/topics discussed:

Topic	Count
mass formation	78
anxiety	23
hypnosis	18
group	17
society	17
masses	14
social bond	10
psychological process	7
soviet union	7
totalitarian state	7
corona measures	6
classical dictatorship	5
collateral damage	4
mass media	4
gustave le bon	4
nazi germany	4
dissident voices	4
hannah arendt	4
solomon ash	4
joe rogan	3
psychological level	3
condition number	3

psychological discontent	3
mental representation	3
anxiety disorders	3
social isolation	3
classical dictatorships	3
dissonant voices	3
party members	3
unconscious process	2
social media	2
bullshit jobs	2
mental state	2
sebastian junger	2
book tribe	2
wonderful example	2
witch hunts	2
external threat	2
totalitarian states	2

Note: *If viewing this on a mobile device, it is best viewed horizontally (in landscape mode.)*

Speaker	Time	Dialogue
Aubrey Marcus	1:02	Mattias, thanks for coming on the show.
Mattias Desmet	1:05	Welcome.
Aubrey Marcus	1:07	So I'd love to start with a little explanation of your background and where you're coming from and where you've gotten your education and some of your credentials to talk about what we're about to talk about.
Mattias Desmet	1:22	That's great. Yes. So actually I am a professor in clinical psychology, and I lecture at Ghent University in Belgium. And also I have a double degree. Actually, I have a degree in psychology, but also I also got a master in statistics, meaning that I could take two different angles or two perspectives on this crisis, actually.
Aubrey Marcus	1:49	Yeah. And that's kind of where things started for you, because with your background and statistics, you started noticing that there was models that were being projected out into the world and then the models were not making sense pretty quickly. So tell us how that got into your mind as far as taking a look at things and thinking something's not quite right here.
Mattias Desmet	2:14	Yes. So indeed, in the beginning of the crisis. So, around the end of February 2021, I took the perspective of a statistician. Indeed, I started to study some numbers and some figures and some mortality rates, the infection fatality rate, the case fatality rate, stuff like that. And I immediately got the impression that most statistical models overestimated the dangerousness of the virus. And by the end of 2020, in my opinion, by the end of May 2020, this was proven beyond doubt, I think, because the models that were used around which the Corona measures were based

worldwide predicted, so those were the models of Imperial College in London, these models predicted that in a country such as Sweden, about 80,000 people would die by the end of May 2020 if the country did not go into lockdown. And the country did not go into lockdown and only 6,000 people died, which means about 13 times less than was predicted. So the predictions of Imperial College were completely off, actually. And the strangest thing was for me that at that moment, the Corona measures, the people in charge, always claimed that they relied on mathematical modeling and science, actually. But when it was proven beyond doubt that the initial models were completely wrong, the measures continued. The Corona measures continued as if nothing was wrong, as if the models were right. So for me, it was a strong sign that there were things going on at a psychological level that were really powerful. Besides other things. Of course, something that also struck me at the beginning of the crisis was that political leaders never seem to have taken into account the collateral damage caused by the measures. In my opinion, if you take measures against the virus, the first thing that you would consider is whether the measures you take, for instance, the lockdowns, will not claim more victims than the virus could claim. That was exactly, so like in the beginning of the crisis, Institutions such as the United Nations warned us immediately that there could be more people dying from hunger, from starvation in developing countries, then there could possibly die from the virus if no measures were taken at all. So it shows immediately that actually the remedy could be far worse than the disease in this case and also that in one way or another, nobody seemed really able to take into account both the victims that could be claimed by the virus on the one hand, and the collateral damage caused by the Corona measures. Never during this crisis...we saw one mathematical model that calculated both the number of victims that could die from the

		virus and the collateral damage of the measures never happened.
Aubrey Marcus	6:14	And it's such a basic thing that you would do if you're acting in good faith and you want to do the best thing for the world, the best thing for the country. You look at all different options and you assess risk and reward for all different options and you make a logical decision. It's just the most obvious thing to do. This is not like, wow, what an amazing idea. How did you come up with that? That's incredible.
Mattias Desmet	6:40	It's obvious that you basic consideration someone can do in this situation, yes? And it never happened. So in one way or another, it showed how that the attention of the entire world was so narrow that it was focused so much on one risk or one danger, the coronavirus itself. That to me, it seemed as if from then on, from the end of May 2020, I really switched perspectives. I really had a feeling that I should try to understand what was happening at the psychological level. What made that the attention of people was so narrowly focused on the coronavirus.
Aubrey Marcus	7:34	This was something that was very difficult for me, and this is a very complex situation, and it's hard to know what exactly the right thing to do is, but the fact that people weren't considering all of these other tangential and secondary effects of all of the measures being taken, and not only that, but the opportunity cost of the money that was being spent to support the lockdowns and the closing of businesses. I mean, the US alone has produced trillions of dollars of excess capital. And if you look at statistics of estimates from different worldwide organizations, okay. What would it cost to create sustainable food supplies for the entire world and world hunger? It's like 300 billion somewhere around there. What would it cost to get clean sanitary water for everybody who's dying of parasites with a bloated belly? Okay, that's maybe 150,000,000,000. Maybe it's double. That doesn't matter. It's less than

		one stimulus check. And all of a sudden, we ended world hunger. We provided clean water for the world, and then we can start looking at other things.
Aubrey Marcus	8:34	Okay.
Aubrey Marcus	8:35	Let's improve education. Let's improve all of these other qualities that ultimately downstream lead to the degradation of society, poor education, poor support, poor nutrition, lack of support for families and domestic abuse. And all of these centers. There's so much that could have been done with the money. So there's not only the direct cost, which is the suicidality that goes from lack of meaning and lack of purpose and people taking their jobs and the increase in alcohol sales, which are through the roof and increase in domestic violence and all of these other different things and the people who are being starved. But then there's opportunity cost. And that wasn't in a model either. So no one was deciding like, okay, maybe this is the right thing, and I'm still open to that. I'm still open to that. But you have to show me that this is the right thing compared to all of the other things that we could do. I mean, I was the CEO of a big company. It's basic. We got this opportunity. It's going to cost this, this is where it's going to go. You just figure it all out. Of course, you make the best choice. And maybe you're wrong. But at least you've considered it.
Mattias Desmet	9:43	Of course yes. And that was what didn't happen. And what was really striking. I started to really think about what psychological dynamic or processes could be responsible for this lack of openness of mind in a situation. And it took me several months. Actually, it took me until August 2020 to really, in my opinion, hit the nail and to suddenly see that what we were dealing with was a large scale phenomenon of mass formation, of what is called mass formation, and looking backward it seems really surprising to me that it took me so long because I had been lecturing for three or four years

		<p>about the psychological process, which showed actually that also, I, as a psychologist, was very much under the spell of this process. Or at least that also for me, it was really difficult to see what was going on. And I believe that's the same for my colleagues in psychology. Most of them are really not aware of what is going on at this moment. I mean, 99%.</p>
Aubrey Marcus	11:01	<p>Yeah. So, I want to really get into this into mass formation and understand it. Is it possible that just like you, first of all, I want to make it so that it doesn't seem like we're saying this is some conspiracy and it has to be that. It seems like it's possible that even the politicians themselves, even the policymakers themselves, everybody, was falling victim to this kind of mass psychosis that was happening in mass formation. This was just a psychological process that was universal that doesn't necessitate some evil intent or some powerful cabal that's trying to do something to harm people. It's just a psychological process that's difficult to resist unless you become aware of it.</p>
Mattias Desmet	11:51	<p>Yes, it's psychological process that is, for 95%, an unconscious process, both at the level of the masses and at the level of the leaders of the masses. So that's one very important thing that the leaders of the masses usually are also grasped in the process of mass formation. But maybe we should go into detail a little bit and tell how it emerges in a society. The process absolutely. Is that okay. So mass formation is a specific kind of group formation, and it emerges in a society when very specific conditions are met. And the most central of these conditions, the most important of these conditions, is that there should be a lot of people who experience a lack of social bond. A lot of people who feel socially isolated, and then the second condition immediately.</p>
Aubrey Marcus	12:44	<p>Well, let me stop you there because I have some statistics. So lack of social bond. We're talking about ripe conditions for this psychological phenomenon</p>

		<p>called mass formation, which is a kind of group hypnosis. Number one, lack of social bond. This is a condition that's important. Here are some statistics. According to the National Survey from published in the American Sociological Review, 25% of people reported that they didn't have a single close friend, not one, right? That's a crazy thing. One out of four people didn't have a single close friend. And then the 75 million adults aged 18 to 27, comprising the millennials and generation Z, were lonelier than any other US demographic. Which is wild to think. We think of like older generations being lonely, but it's actually the younger generations reporting even more loneliness. Some psychologists say it's a social media paradox. People are interacting online with their avatars, which isn't their true self, so they're not creating the intimacy of vulnerability that comes from shared experience. So as far as condition number one for mass formation, it's inarguable that we are suffering a crisis of lack of community and lack of peace.</p>
Mattias Desmet	14:01	<p>From this first condition follows the second one, which means that a lot of people experience life as meaningless or senseless. And, for instance, think about the phenomenon of the bullshit jobs. I don't know if you're familiar with this phenomenon. Professor Graeber in Great Britain wrote a book about it, which was titled Bullshit Jobs < https://amzn.to/3qqHtQL >, and he describes how research shows that when you ask people whether they think their job is meaningful, 50% of the people answered "not at all". 50% feels that their job is not meaningful at all. That doesn't mean anything to anyone. So a very nice example, I think strong condition.</p>
Aubrey Marcus	14:49	<p>I also have another study that I was able to find it's. A Gallup poll from 2012 polled people in 142 countries. 63% of respondents admitted to being so disengaged at work that they were sleepwalking through their work day, putting time but not passion into their work. 63%</p>

		of people right. Okay. Condition number two, condition number two, we've established that there's a lack of social bond. There's a lack of meaning and purpose in what people are doing.
Mattias Desmet	15:22	And the third condition follows actually from the first two conditions. The third condition is that in order for mass formation to emerge, there should be a lot of what psychologists call free floating anxiety and free floating psychological discontent. Meaning that if you're anxious of a lion, you know what you're anxious for. So the anxiety is connected to the mental representation or the mental image of a lion. But if people feel socially isolated and if they feel that their life has no meaning, then they are confronted with a kind of anxiety that is free floating. That means that it is not connected to a mental representation and with a lot of psychological discontent that is not connected with a mental representation. And also that at that level, we see very striking things, namely, that, for instance, in a country such as Belgium, each year, 300 million doses of antidepressants are used in a population of about 11 million. And then we are talking only about antidepressants. There are also antipsychotics and sleeping pills
Aubrey Marcus	16:39	And anxiety medications. Yep.
Mattias Desmet	16:41	Yea. The fourth condition is that they should...
Aubrey Marcus	16:45	Let me just give one more study. So the World Health Organization says that one in five people actually have anxiety disorders. So they actually not only have anxiety, but they qualify as having anxiety disorders, which is over 300 million people. And that's something that's in the manual, like an anxiety, in the manual. It's not just like a little bit of anxiety, which a lot of us have, like, one in five people have anxiety disorders. So this free floating anxiety is also incredibly pervasive.

Mattias Desmet	17:17	<p>Yes, of course it is. Yes. And then the fourth condition is that there should be a lot of free floating frustration and aggression meaning people should feel. And that actually follows from the other conditions as well. So people should feel frustrated and feeling aggressive without also really knowing what the cause of the frustration and aggression is. And if these four conditions are fulfilled in society, then the population is in a mental state in which something very specific can happen. Meaning that, if under these conditions a narrative, a story is distributed through the mass media, indicating an object of anxiety, and at the same time providing a strategy to deal with this object of anxiety, then the following happens or might happen. All the free floating anxiety, free floating anxiety, which is extremely painful because it always threatens to turn into panic. So all this free floating anxiety is attached to, connected to, the object of anxiety indicated in the narrative. And there is a huge willingness to participate in the strategy to deal with this object of anxiety because in this way, people feel that they can control their anxiety and their psychological discontent better. So all this anxiety connects to the subject of anxiety, and there is a huge willingness to participate in the strategy and that leads up to something very specific. People suddenly feel connected again in a heroic struggle with the object of anxiety. So a new kind of solidarity, a new kind of social bond and a new kind of meaning making sense, making emerges in society. And that's the reason why people follow the narrative, why people buy into the narrative and why they are willing to participate in this strategy, even if it is utterly absurd. Because the reason why they follow it has nothing to do with the fact that it is correct or accurate or scientific. Not at all. The reason why they buy into the narrative is because it leads to this new social bond. This new solidarity. People are social beings and being socially isolated is really painful. And through the process of mass formation they switch from the very</p>
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		<p>negative state of social isolation to the opposite state of maximal connectedness, of the maximum connectedness, that exists in a crowd in a mass. And that in itself leads up to a kind of mental intoxication which is the real reason why people stick to the narrative, why people are willing to go along with the narrative, even as we said, if it is utterly wrong and even more important, even if they lose everything that is important to them personally. Because mass formation is a kind of hypnosis. And just like in hypnosis, the attention is focused on this very small part of reality that is indicated by the story. And just like in hypnosis, people are not aware of everything that happens mentally outside of this small focus of attention. That's something very striking, like in hypnosis. What you see is that a simple hypnotic procedure is sufficient to focus the attention of someone so much on one aspect of reality that a person will never feel that someone cuts into his flesh. It's a procedure that is used in some hospitals when someone is allergic to a chemical anesthesia. Sometimes a simple hypnotic procedure is used which focuses the attention on a positive thing, and then the surgeon can cut straight through the breast bone. The patient will not feel it. So that's exactly what happens in mass formation. The attention is focused on the virus, for instance, in this case, and then people are not aware that they lose their psychological health or their physical health. Or they lose their wealth, their material well being, and so on. That's one of the most problematic aspects of the phenomenon of mass formation.</p>
Aubrey Marcus	22:09	<p>And it can be productive, right? The human beings don't develop things that are entirely unproductive. Those things typically get weeded out. So you take a look at, like Sebastian Junger's work in his book Tribe < https://amzn.to/33CnSUL >, and he talks about how in interviewing and surveying the people who survived the blitzkrieg in London, where bombs were falling</p>

		<p>from, Nazi bombs were falling and the air raid sirens were going off. They report that that was the happiest time of their life. They were happiest when the bombs were falling. Can you imagine the atrocity of bombs falling, people dying, exploding things happening. But they felt such a deep social bond. And all of their focus of attention was on the Nazis, on the bombs that brought everybody together. No one was lonely, actually, the mental hospitals, they all emptied out to a certain degree. Everybody was like, oh, we have a deep meaning. We have a clear purpose. We're all in this together, and they felt better than they ever have. And it allowed them to make it through a very challenging situation. So in a situation like that, it's a very healthy process that can happen.</p>
Mattias Desmet	23:14	<p>Yes. For the same reason, people do not commit suicide under very severe conditions. For instance, in the concentration camps and the Gulag people did not commit suicide. And it was because there was a clear external danger they were focused on and which made their psychological system very coherent, very coherently focused on one point. Usually, people commit suicide because they feel internally divided, because they feel that they lack unity, they lack coherence. And when there is a strong external danger, people usually will feel very coherent and they will, for instance, and not commit suicide. That's something very striking. And the example you give is actually a wonderful example indeed, of people who are under attack and who feel that they experience the happiest times of their lives. I've never heard that example. But it's a wonderful example.</p>
Aubrey Marcus	24:11	<p>Yeah. Sebastian Junger's book Tribe is phenomenal. I recommend it. There's very toxic examples of that as well. So you take a look at the witch hunts, for example, that happened throughout Europe and in America. And there's a quote from Francis Hill, and he was saying during the witch hunts in some Swiss villages, there</p>

		<p>were hardly any women left alive once the fever burned out. And it got to such a fever. So basically, everybody had this free floating anxiety, a lack of social bond, lack of purpose, all of the conditions presuming led up to this. And then all of a sudden, someone came with a narrative that, oh, you know what the problem is? It's the witches.</p>
<p>Aubrey Marcus</p>	<p>24:51</p>	<p>It's the witches. It's the women who are the witches. And that's the problem. So they became the scapegoat. They became the reason everybody became myopically focused, narrowed their field of attention on that external threat. And in that fever, they just burned women alive until in some places, there were no women left.</p>
<p>Mattias Desmet</p>	<p>25:11</p>	<p>Yes. So something very important, I think, is that for one reason or another, which can be explained. I'm writing a book in which I go into detail about this. But I don't think we can do it now because it would lead us too far. But for one reason or another, the process of mass formation become stronger throughout the 19th century. And, for instance, Gustave Le Bon, who is one of the major scholars on the phenomenon of mass formation, warned us that in 1895 already that if the process would continue to become stronger, the process of mass formation, we would soon end up in a state in which the masters of the crowd would take over control in society. And that we would, according to Gustave Le Bon, experience the emergence of a new kind of state, a new kind of political apparatus. And that was exactly what happened in the beginning of the 20th century in the Soviet Union and the Nazi Germany. We saw this immense, this last large scale process of mass formation there. And then the objects of anxiety were the aristocracy in the Soviet Union and the Jews in Nazi Germany. And we saw that we saw how the masses emerged and how the masses were grasped in this specific narrative. And then how suddenly a totalitarian regime took advantage of this</p>

		<p>mass formation and started one of the most cruel episodes in modern history. With something with certain characteristics, like a totalitarian state is radically different from a classical dictatorship. And that's very important. And the difference is this psychological process. Classical dictatorship is not based on mass formation, not at all. Classical dictatorship is based on a very primitive process of fear that a human being has for someone who is stronger, who is in power.</p>
<p>Aubrey Marcus</p>	<p>27:20</p>	<p>Like any warlord, like a warlord in a tribal situation, I have the most guns. I have the people on my side. And if you don't comply, I'll shoot you. And that's what we see in a lot of movies, actually, like a lot of the villains in the fantasy novels or whatever. They're just they have the biggest army. And that's how they keep everybody in control. But we don't see the process. And I think a lot of times we project that on someone like Stalin, like, oh, yeah, he just did this. It was all him. But no, he just took advantage of a deep psychological process that was supported. People were cheering him on all the way up to the point where he killed millions and millions of people. And then they were like, oh, shit. What did we do? But that was like, a little bit late.</p>
<p>Mattias Desmet</p>	<p>28:02</p>	<p>Of course, that's the difference between classical dictatorship and a totalitarian state. And it shows that it makes that actually the structure and the process totalitarian states go through is really different from the process of classical dictatorships. For instance, if in a classical dictatorship, the opposition stops to speak out. Like if the opposition, the dissonant voices, the dissident voices are silenced, then usually the dictator will become milder. He will become less aggressive because he realizes that he has to try to make the population sympathetic against him to make them feel that he will be a good leader and stuff. So it's important for him that at that moment he becomes milder and less aggressive because he is in power. He doesn't</p>

		<p>need to be aggressive anymore. But in totalitarianism, a totalitarian state, exactly the opposite happens. When the opposition is silent, when the opposition stops to speak out. At that moment, exactly, the totalitarian state commits its most cruel atrocities, starts to commit its most cruel atrocities. And that was what happened in 1930 in the Soviet Union, when Stalin started has a “large scale purification”, which led to about 80 million people dying in less than ten years, according to Selsinchin. And then in Nazi Germany, the same happened around 1935. The opposition was silenced. And then the real problem started in the totalitarian state. So totalitarianism is something really different from classical dictatorships. And it’s the process of mass formation that is important. There the process of mass formation, which became increasingly strong throughout the 19th century and throughout the 20th century, like the witch funds you refer to, are very important. These witch funds, indeed, were perfect examples of mass formation, but they didn’t last too long.</p>
Aubrey Marcus	30:24	That’s because people out of women.
Mattias Desmet	30:26	<p>Yes. But that’s something that often happens, like the larger the population, the worse the processes of mass formation are. And for the reason you mentioned, because mass formation needs always new victims. Mass formation arises around an object of anxiety, and that object always has to be destroyed. And so if the population is too small, the mass formation will take less long than in a large population. And that was exactly the reason, according to Hannah Arendt Jewish < https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hannah_Arendt> German philosopher, why totalitarianism was only successful or emerged only in countries with a very large population, such as the Soviet Union.</p>
Aubrey	31:22	Let me get this. I don’t understand Soviet history that

Marcus		<p>well, but I think initially the scapegoat was the wealthy, right? It was like the wealthy bourgeoisie, and they were the ones that were destroying the country. But ultimately, somehow Stalin then switched because you ran out of those there's not that many wealthy people right ran out of killing them and using them as a scapegoat. And then he switched it. He switched it to something else that gave him the reasoning to kill all of the 80 million people that he killed.</p>
Mattias Desmet	31:55	<p>He switched it to the Kulaks, the farmers, actually. And then to the goldsmiths, then to the Jews, the one group after the other. Until finally, he also killed 50% of his Communist Party members, who usually didn't do anything wrong, who were not disloyal to him, not at all. But he killed them. And the strangest thing about this was that these party members actually in a very strange way, which was also very nicely described by George Orwell in Animal Farm < https://www.britannica.com/biography/George-Orwell/Animal-Farm-and-Nineteen-Eighty-four>, for instance, but also by Sulcinich and the Willock Archipelago and Hannah Arendt also describes it. These party members who were killed, who were condemned, all admitted that they had been disloyal, that they had been traitors and so on, which was very strange. Like people, observers from abroad, international observers were baffled. And they said, what is happening here? We can't believe our eyes. These people didn't do anything wrong. They did not go against the rules of Stalin. And then now they admit that they have done things wrong and that they deserve to die, which was extremely strange. And that's exactly what happens in a process of mass formation. Someone is graphed so much in a narrative that he accepts the most absurd consequences of the narrative, even if it costs him or her their own life. So that's one of the most strangest things I've heard.</p>
Aubrey	33:33	<p>I've heard the word mentacide. Would you call that,</p>

Marcus		<p>what happens, the mentacide is the killing of the mind. At a certain point, the totalitarian process, it kills the mind. It degrades logical thinking. It degrades all of the faculties of sense making and meaning making to the point where the mind is dead. And at that point, you're so gullible to suggestion. And it's something that you can see in a small scale where if you have a really belligerent interrogator and someone with a weaker mind, after enough time, they'll admit to a crime that they didn't do. And there's many examples of this in the justice system of a very aggressive and psychologically keen interrogator that's convinced somebody that they actually committed a murder that they didn't do. And then they'll find with DNA results, they didn't do it. And they were like, Why did you admit to it? And they're like, I don't know.</p>
Mattias Desmet	34:26	<p>Indeed, that's exactly what happens in a process of mass formation. The individual disappears and the collective becomes absolutely predominant and erases all individual characteristics. It doesn't make a difference whether the people involved, the individual involved are very intelligent or not intelligent. It doesn't make any difference. Always the same happens. Everybody becomes equally "stupid" in a mass, and it doesn't matter how smart or how intelligent they were before they lose all capacity for critical thinking. They lose all individual characteristics because they are really absorbed in this process of mass formation.</p>
Aubrey Marcus	35:15	<p>I've heard you talk about there is a spectrum of people who go along with the narrative and are very susceptible to this mass formation phenomenon. There's people in the middle that are kind of like, I'm not really sure. And then there's the people who are in opposition of this. And that's the initial condition for mass formation. Then it seems like, once we get to totalitarianism, the degradation of people's mind starts to actually make those numbers even increase. But let's talk about the first part, which is how this spectrum</p>

		<p>kind of plays out. And whether you think that what's happening now is kind of what you're seeing in the spectrum. And of course, we have to establish that what we're seeing now has some of the characteristics of mass formation. But let's talk about the spectrum first. And then let's talk about our current situation.</p>
Mattias Desmet	36:05	<p>Yes, indeed. Usually when a process of mass formation emerges in a society and a population only 30% of the people is really hypnotized. So that's something very important, because it seems there are much more. But it's not the case. There is only 30% of the people who are really hypnotized. And then there is an additional 40% of the people who goes along with this first group because they never go against the current, and they feel that they don't want to go against the current, that is too difficult and too dangerous to go against the crowd. So and then there is an additional 20% or 30% or something who is not hypnotized and who wants to speak out, who wants to do something. But it can be surprising, like even in totalitarian States such as Germany or the Soviet Union. Usually not more than about 30% of the people is really totalitarian. And that's something that is observed time and time again. I don't know if you're familiar with experiments of Solomon Ash. Solomon Ash was a psychologist who did some experiments shortly after the second World War, in which he showed two small groups of about eight people on one line who was about 30 CM long, and then three other lines. The first of these three lines was about 10 CM long. The second was 120 CM long, and then the third one was about 60 CM long. So it was clear in one glance of an eye it was clear that the third line was the line that was equally that had the same length as the first one. And that was what Solomon Ash asked to these small groups of participants, eight participants, he asked, what do you think which lines have the same length? And the first seven of the participants actually were collaborators of Solomon Ash. And they were all instructed to give the wrong</p>

		<p>answer. They were all instructed to say that line one and the two lines were equally wrong, who were absolutely not equally equally long. And upon hearing that upon hearing that the first seven participants all gave the wrong answer, of which a blind man could see that this was wrong, the 8th participants in 75% of the cases gave the same wrong answer. So it was really amazing to see.</p>
Aubrey Marcus	38:58	<p>When I studied that, and it's a really powerful video as well. And maybe we'll be able to edit that into this just so people can see it. The psychologist and Solomon gave two hypotheses. One was that in some cases, people actually convinced themselves that they were wrong, that their eyes were deceiving them, and they were just wrong. And so they actually believed that they believed what everybody else was saying was true. And then another group was just so shy about saying something different from everybody else because they were so worried that the other people would make them an outcast. So they were just going along with it, even though they knew they were wrong, they were giving the wrong answer. So there was two reasons why the participants were giving the wrong answer.</p>
Mattias Desmet	39:41	<p>Yes, indeed. And there were these three groups as well. The three groups, the first group who really believed or who are really hypnotized by the group and who are really convinced that the wrong answer was the right answer. And then the second group who knew that it was the wrong answer, but who didn't dare to speak out. And then the third group who saw that, who gave her the right answer, who dared to speak out. You see these three groups time and time again and you see them in each process of mass formation, a group that is really hypnotized and then a totalitarian state who becomes really totalitarian, then a second group who just only goes along with the first group. And then a third group who does not want to buy into the story</p>

		<p>and who wants to speak out. So meaning that in this situation, if the people who want to speak out dissident voices, if in one way or another, they could unify and form one group, then it's very probable the second group of about 40% of the people might switch direction and join them. And that would mean that the mass formation is over so that's one of the solutions to the problem. But if all the people who want to speak out and who want to go again, who are not hypnotized and who want to do something against the crowd or against the mainstream narrative, if they would unify and become one group, they would be powerful enough to change the direction of the middle group, which would mean that the majority of the people would go in a different direction than the people who are really hypnotized.</p>
<p>Aubrey Marcus</p>	<p>41:34</p>	<p>One of the challenges, now let's bring this to the modern context, and we've explained the theory and the philosophy behind mass formation, what do you see in the current system that we're seeing, who is becoming the scapegoats? Where is this pointed to? What do you feel like is dangerous about the current situation that we're in, and as it pertains to the pandemic?</p>
<p>Mattias Desmet</p>	<p>42:06</p>	<p>Well, the risk, of course, is that the people who don't want to buy into the narrative that they become a scapegoat, indeed, the anti vaccines, for instance, people who don't want to take the vaccine might become public enemy number one, and they might become the object of this fourth condition that we mentioned at the beginning of all this free floating frustration and aggression. Because that's also something typical for mass formation. All the free floating frustration and aggression that existed before the mass formation is projected and channeled onto the people who are not into the process of mass formation. So that's one major risk. And then also, of course, if the massed would succeed in silencing these</p>

		<p>people, then the masses will start to commit atrocities, also towards the members of the masses themselves. So that's strange. Hannah Arndt says the monsters or totalitarianism and mass formation always is a monster that divorce its own children. There's something very strange. In the end, it starts to kill among its own members. So the most important thing, actually, the most important thing we can do in this situation is to continue to speak out. I repeat this time and time again, mass formation is one kind of hypnosis. It's an example of hypnosis, and hypnosis works through the voice in one way or another. People are grasped in the resonance of a voice. That's what totalitarian leaders know. They start each day with 30 minutes of propaganda, for instance, just to keep people into the narrative and to make sure that they continue to resonate with the voice of the leader, with the narrative that led up to the mass formation. And the opposite is also true. Like, if there are dissident voices, if there are dissonant voices that continue to speak out, then the hypnosis will become less deep. Gustave Le Bon in the 19th century said, usually dissonant voices will not have the power to wake up the masses, but they will make the hypnosis less deep, and they will prevent that the masses start to commit atrocities. So that's what we all have to realize. We all have to realize, in my opinion, that it is not an option to stop speaking. We should continue to speak out. That's the most important thing we can do.</p>
Aubrey Marcus	44:47	<p>So we see some conditions when you talk about atrocities, people might think, all right, this will never happen. This will never exist. But all of this begins with some form of dehumanization and some form of really making some other the enemy.</p>
Mattias Desmet	45:02	<p>Right.</p>
Aubrey Marcus	45:03	<p>And we've already heard in the mainstream narrative, people who don't want to take the vaccine, it's become</p>

		<p>the pandemic of the vaccine. And then they're killers. They're domestic terrorists. That's actually a word that mainstream media has been using. And it seems like the advantage of the state in this case is that they control the mainstream narrative. <u>There's a clip that I saw recently of dozens and dozens of newscasters from different all Fox News and ABC and CBS and CNN. They were all reading the exact same script. < https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_fHfgU8oMSo></u> There's a centralization of the narrative.</p>
Mattias Desmet	45:42	Production of the narrative is centralized.
Aubrey Marcus	45:45	<p>Yeah. And then with that, then there's also the silencing of the contrary narrative, which is coming through social media. And people say, well, Instagram can censor whoever they want. It's a private company. But nonetheless, the pressure that's being applied seems to be, or they are just in the mass formation themselves, and they're just deciding to do it. Who knows? I'm not trying to propose a conspiracy. I don't know what's happening. I think it's very likely that people are just caught in their own mass formation. But what we're seeing is we're seeing censorship of dissident voices, and we're seeing the collaboration on the single narrative that's being pushed out to the mainstream. And that's the challenge that I think in all of these cases, in all of these societies you face is that the more centralized communication is and the more they're able to silence dissident narratives, burn books. It used to be. But now it's now censoring and deplatforming and banning different... it starts to allow them to be able to be in easier control of the masses. And I think that's what we have to look at is when doctors are being censored from giving their opinion. Why? When in history has that ever happened? That's not science. It's not the scientific method. You come up with a theory and you have a bunch of people challenge it. You're an academic, you propose a theory,</p>

		<p>you expect all of your colleagues to be like, Matthias, I don't agree with you. This is why. And you say, thank you. I appreciate your critique. Now let me explain why I'm right. But it's not really what we're seeing right now. So this is also leading to an opinion that, all right, this is dangerous. These conditions are appearing like they're following a pattern, and it's a pattern that we've seen. And it's a pattern that leads to a disastrous dystopian, catastrophic result in many other cases. I'm not saying that's where we're going necessarily. But there's indications that cause worry.</p>
<p>Mattias Desmet</p>	<p>47:45</p>	<p>The large scale mass formations that we have seen, and from the 20th century on, it can never exist without mass media. So that's clear, you need mass media who distribute the same narrative time and time again to make this large scale and long term mass formation happen. And usually I think it's a mixture. And it's for 90% of unconscious process. But there is also for 10% about maybe I say 10% now could be more could be less but intentional manipulation of the masses that also happens. And usually the people who do it are convinced that they will bring paradise to society. Like Stalin was. He was convinced that his historical materialistic ideal society would be realized and that in order to do that, it was justified to manipulate the population to move them in the direction he wanted. And exactly the same was the case for Hitler, who felt that his race theory would turn society into a kind of a paradise. And that exactly for that reason, it was justified to provoke some collateral damage. And I think it's the same now of course, there are some powerful institutions who have this ideal image of society and who want to use the crisis to move the society in the direction they think is optimal, and they use all their power that is at their means. I think to make people go in the direction they want. That's true. But I think for 95%, what is happening is not the process of large scale manipulation, but for 95%, we are in a process of large scale unconscious mass</p>

		<p>formation in which almost everybody has grasped. We shouldn't be naive. There has always been intentional manipulations. There are always institutions who want to benefit from all kinds of circumstances. All institutions have their own idea about how the future society should look like, and they always will use their power to move in that direction. So that's definitely happening. But that doesn't take away. I think that for 95%, it's a phenomenon of mass formation that happens.</p>
Aubrey Marcus	50:15	<p>For certain people, their fatal flaw is not that they hate the world or hate society. It's not the Batman villain Bane that just wants to watch the world burn. They actually are more like the bond villains that are like, oh, well, or Thanos, for example, yes. Except for an ordered universe, we need to kill half. We need to blink half of the people out of existence, and then the universe will be fine, and then I'll retire. The motivation was pure in a way, it's just a delusion. The delusion in the hubris to say, I can be God, and I accept the knowledge and I can decide. So it's very interesting because the actions themselves are evil, but the intentions are often not evil. So when we project these, like demonic reptilian things upon them, it's not that, they're just overconfident and they just think they're doing something good, but they're actually not.</p>
Mattias Desmet	51:09	<p>Yes, we are dealing with megalomaniac plans here. That's the right word. I think not so much with psychopaths. That's not true. People often say that we are dealing with psychopaths. I think we are dealing with megalomaniac plans, people who believe that they will solve all the problems in the world by imposing a new social system, which is, I think, the basic ideology of the system is transhumanist in nature. People who believe that problems can only be solved through technological control. I truly believe that this is what drives these people. This is their view on man and the world. And this is their idea on how the problems of</p>

		<p>humanity can be solved, which is delusional thinking, that's not true at all. Exactly. This mechanistic ideal. This mechanistic thinking. This transhumanist thinking is the cause of the problems, because if we wonder why we ended up, before the Corona crisis, in this terrible mental state in which people felt socially disconnected, in which they experienced this lack of meaning making in which there was all this free floating attention, all this frustration, then we can clearly see that all this free floating anxiety and this frustration that it started to increase once the world became industrialized and mechanized. So this is very typical. While the mechanistic view on men in the world started to become predominant at the same pace, the free floating anxiety and also the social disconnectedness started to increase. And that's why Hannah Arendt says that's why the phenomenon of mass formation became increasingly strong throughout the last century because more and more people ended up in an isolated state. More and more people dealt with this free floating anxiety. So, I believe that the people who the large institutions who are in charge now and who actually tried to shape the future according to their own ideal image, well, I think that these people propose a solution exactly. This kind of discourse. This kind of things that caused the problem. Einstein said something very nice about that. You can never solve a problem by the same kind of thinking that caused it. That's exactly what people try to do now, I think.</p>
Aubrey Marcus	53:28	<p>Yeah. In The Myth of Control, Charles Eisenstein talks about this in The Myth of Control, it's always an increasing amount of control that's the solution, and it never ends. If the control didn't work, more control will work. Oh, technology didn't work? More technology will work! It's just this endless process. They don't want to reevaluate their thinking, probably because their identity is attached to this solution that they believe is going to work. And by whatever mechanism.</p>

		<p>I want to switch gears to real quick and talk about. One of the things that I see happening is this is not just a singular narrative that's creating mass formation, because there are small pockets of mass formation that are existing as well, because on the other side, in opposition to the mainstream pandemic narrative, there's a counter mass formation of people who are in this deep conspiracy thinking that all liberals are evil. And so they're scapegoating liberals or they're scapegoating certain politicians or Bill Gates or whoever becomes the object of the external threat that their free floating anxiety, their anxiety, is then attached to. So it's a very interesting time where all right, we have one side where it's the dominant narrative that's causing a mass formation. And then on the other side, we have a counter mass formation, which is much smaller. That's also not the right way, right? It's also a scary thing as well, because if that side wins, it's just going to be the same problem with a different scapegoat and a different victim of the atrocity. So that doesn't work. So what needs to emerge is a third way of just loving, compassionate, rational thinking. And that's really what I've been trying to dedicate my efforts towards. It's not about picking sides here. It's about sense making in general and universal compassion.</p>
Mattias Desmet	55:21	<p>I agree. On the other side, there is a very similar process in which people are confronted with a lot of anxiety because they feel threatened by the process of the mass formation. They also deal with a lot of free floating anxiety, and they connected to a different object, to the elite, to the Illuminati or a small elite that would threaten them. They dehumanize this small group of people, so they have a different enemy. While the masses have as an enemy, the people who refuse to conform with the masses, the other side also creates an enemy, an object of anxiety. And in a similar way, they want to destroy this enemy. They believe that if</p>

		we destroy the elite, the problem will be solved, which, of course, is not true.
Aubrey Marcus	56:09	<p>Humanization on both sides. On one side, there's domestic terrorists. On the other side, there's reptilian elite and sheep. Talk about dehumanization. They're literally making them non human. And so we're dealing with this on both sides. Fundamentally, neither way is going to work. And it's a very interesting predicament because I was looking out at the world. I was like, well, I can't join that team because that team is following the same principles. They're on the same mechanism as the other team, and I certainly can't join that team. So what's the third team and I came up with this sentiment. I call it united polarity, which is like taking both sides with absolute reverence and reminding people that underneath all of the opinions and ideologies, there's a human, and it's a human that's scared. It's a human. It's lonely. It's a human that wants the best for themselves and other people at the fundamental level. Let's remind ourselves of that. Let's actually, instead of dehumanizing, let's super-humanize them. Let's see ourselves in them. Let's see ourselves in every single other person and unite the polarities, not by trying to change them, but saying, like, look, what is the common ground by which we all stand. And that's really through this whole process, that's the only thing that's really made sense to me. And when I speak about it, it seems like people, maybe it's that group that 40% in the middle. But that group in the middle is like, I like that, I can stand behind that. And so I'm hoping that in some small way, in whatever way I'm able to contribute, that can help become part of this force that mitigates some of the damage of the mass formation leading to totalitarianism.</p>
Mattias Desmet	58:02	Yes, I hope I am part of the same force.
Aubrey Marcus	58:06	I believe you are.

Mattias Desmet	58:08	<p>Yes. Because I agree there is a strong tendency to dehumanize on both sides, and that's exactly what we should avoid. We should try to identify with being someone who tries to speak as sincere as possible and who gives everybody the right to speak out his own opinion. That's being human. What makes us human is that we have the right to speak in our own way and the way we prefer. If people could unify, if people could form a group because they all identify with this position, that would be the solution to the problem we are facing.</p>
Aubrey Marcus	58:50:00	<p>One of the other things that is concerning. So when you look at some of the mechanism of totalitarianism, there's some thinkers who talk about and have analyzed that there's waves of terror. And this is how it kind of works and the waves of terror. So something becomes really scary. There's a retraction where it's not so scary. And then something else really scary happens. And it's just kind of like battering down, like you imagine a big log trying to batter down a door. And so this is something that I think we should be mindful of that if this process is happening, we should be aware that if there's a second wave, this is part of the playbook for actually weakening people's defenses and having them desire to reach for some powerful, despotic, tyrannical, totalitarian leader who can save the day because they just get more and more scared.</p>
Mattias Desmet	59:54:00	<p>Yes, it's something quite strange. I think that the masses always long for a severe and cruel leader, Gustave Le Bon said, which is something very strange, something in the process of mass formation that kept you. Look, we come from a very individualistic age in which people try to find meaning in their own lives in their own way, but actually in a strange way. Now we see how the opposite emerges. It is as if people want to lose themselves in the masses, in the crowd and as if they are looking for a leader who tells them what to do. And that's one of the most specific aspects of mass</p>

		<p>formation that it makes people long for a harsh leader. Gustave Le Bons crisis already. And if the readers of the masses understand this, they understand that they can be as absurd as they want, that they can be as harsh as they want, that they can impose the most absurd limitations to individuals lives. It will only make mass formation stronger, and it will only make the regions more popular.</p>
Aubrey Marcus	1:01:05	<p>It's imposing sacrifice, which is a deep part of ritual. And I've heard you say ritual. How like the sacrifice itself, any initiation process, it's difficult. It's hard. We've had to do this together. We gave up Thanksgiving and we gave up Christmas, and we gave up. We never left our house and we put masks on our three year old children, and we sacrificed. And that ritual then actually increases the sense of social bond.</p>
Mattias Desmet	1:01:32	<p>Of course. Exactly.</p>
Mattias Desmet	1:01:33	<p>You nail it down. Now I think that's exactly what happens. Like the Corona measures, the lockdowns, the social distancing, the mask wearing, and so on actually have the function unconsciously of a ritual, a ritual meaning a kind of behavior that, as the only function has to create a social bond. And the less practically meaningful such a behavior is, the better it serves its function as a ritual. The more absurd it is, the better it serves a function as a ritual. And the more sacrifices it demands, the better it functions as a ritual, because in this way, the individual that sacrifices something shows that the collective, that the group, the cohesion among the group members, is more important than what is important to the individual. So that's exactly how rituals functions. Rituals have to be pragmatically meaningless, useless. And they have to demand sacrifices of the individual. And that's exactly what the Corona measures do. They are absurd without practical relevance, most of them. And also they imply huge losses for the individuals, which makes</p>

		<p>them very useful, very suitable as rituals for the new cohesion, the new collective, the new solidarity.</p>
Aubrey Marcus	1:03:02	<p>And people who hear that will vehemently deny that the rituals are meaningless. And of course, I have enough epistemic humility to say, like, all right, maybe that maybe there is some purpose to these rituals, but you also have to acknowledge the nature, the psychological nature. Like you have to look at both, even if there is meaning to these rituals of mask wearing, and even if there is meaning to the social isolation, you have to look at what it actually is happening psychologically as well. Just like we were mentioning before, you have to look at the damage of the virus and you have to look at the social damage. You have to look at, all right, what is the actual possibility of prevention based on all of these different procedures? And what is the psychological cost? And there should be just a whole group of top psychologists and sociologists who are saying, all right, this is the damage that's being done to children having to wear masks when they're in school, and this is the risk of children actually contracting COVID. Right? Let's take a look at this from a really holistic perspective, of course, but that's certainly not happening. So whether you think these rituals are meaningless or whether you think these rituals are essential, that's fine. But also, please look at the total picture, regardless of what's happening on a psychological level. And I hope no matter what everybody thinks as they're listening to this podcast, to become aware of the psychological processes to make the unconscious conscious is extremely important.</p>
Mattias Desmet	1:04:37	<p>Indeed. Indeed. Yes and maybe some of the measures have a certain practical effect. That's possible. But in the psychological function, what I tell only shows I think that we should not expect that because the measures are absurd. In certain respect, people will stop to follow them. Not at all. The more absurd they are, the more</p>

		the 30% of people who are under hypnosis will be willing to cling to them and to follow them.
Aubrey Marcus	1:05:06	That just deepens their vigor for these. So when we're talking about, all right, the ways to stand in resistance, I think, identifying, as I said, the united polarity movement that I've really started to put out there into the world, the idea of recognizing the shared humanity amongst all people and drawing people together for that cause. I think that's something that I of course want to mention. But there's Vaclav Havel, who was the President of Czechoslovakia, went through periods of Russian communism. He talks about the importance of parallel structures, and these are like enclaves havens of where different ideologies and philosophies operate and how important they are even in totalitarian, even if it goes all the way to totalitarian, what Charles Eisenstein would call islands of sanity. These parallel structures, these places where people can recognize each other's sovereignty and humanity. And this is really important, and it's important for people to understand that even if you're not out publicly speaking, which, as you said, it's important, a lot of the hypnosis comes verbally, so definitely speak. But another big part of the resistance is just become part of the parallel structure, become part of something that is a living, breathing example of something different.
Mattias Desmet	1:06:29	Yes, I entirely agree. Yes, those parallel structures are extremely important, and it doesn't matter so much where you speak out. I think if it is in a small group, if it is in front of a camera, on television or in a podcast, or if it is around the kitchen table or in a small shop or on the streets, I think that if you look at, I think that something like this, this process of mass formation can really be compared to a complex dynamical system. And in complex and dynamical systems, even the smallest action and the smallest spot of the system can make the system change. That's something very specific characteristic of complex dynamical systems.

		<p>So it doesn't matter where you are. It doesn't matter how large your audience is, but continue to speak out, continue to speak out.</p>
Aubrey Marcus	1:07:24	<p>In this specific case, there's two factors that I think are interesting that are perhaps different than other periods of mass formation. One is that social isolation has been part of the policy, which is removing people from other people. The other one is if you're around people, you're wearing a mask, which is limiting the amount of nonverbal communication that you can have and the actual connection you have with people. This is either a happy accident in an actual way to stop the spread of disease, which certainly being around people less, I think COVID is a real virus, and not being around someone who has a virus is certainly helpful. The mask debate certainly has evidence on both sides, but in either case, these two conditions seem like they're actually exacerbating and actually creating more conditions where this mass formation is possible because people are isolated and because if they are around each other, they're literally masked. Do you see that as like something that's actually accelerating the process of mass formation? These two different things.</p>
Mattias Desmet	1:08:36	<p>You can consider mass formation as a kind of a psychological symptom...symptom of a society. And as all symptoms do, they always create more of the conditions that made them emerge. So that's always at the individual level, you see the same. Like if someone drinks too much alcohol, something in his system will change, which makes him long more after alcohol. And that's exactly same at all symptoms. Symptoms always recreate and reinforce the things they need to exist. And I think that mass formation is the same. Mass formation in one way or another will make that after a while, people feel even more socially isolated. That was exactly what happened in Nazi Germany and then the Soviet Union as well. After a while, people didn't dare to come together anymore with more than two or three</p>

		<p>people because they were always scared of being accused that they were conspiring against the state. So in that way, they become even more socially isolated than they were in the beginning, and that in itself made them more susceptible, more vulnerable to mass formation. So the phenomenon of mass formation, indeed, in one way or another makes that society ends up in a vicious spiral. It always goes down, and it always goes down faster, and in the end, it always leads up to its own destruction. That's something very important. Totalitarianism, classical dictatorships can exist for thousands of years, such as in Egypt with the Pharaohs, for instance. But totalitarian systems usually destroy themselves and quite quickly usually. And I think that this kind of totalitarianism we are in now, like Hannah Arendt warned already in 1953, she said, we've seen the decline and fall of Nazism, and we see the decline of the Soviet Union of Stalinism now. But she wonders that that does not mean that a trend towards authoritarianism will stop. Very soon, she said, a new totalitarian state will emerge and it will be a worldwide system, she said. And it will be a system that is no longer led by mob leaders such as Stalin and Hitler, but by dull technocrats and bureaucrats. And I think that's what we are about to see now and such as, just like the totalitarian systems of the first half of the 20th century, this system will destroy itself, and it probably will destroy itself much quicker than the systems than the systems of the 20th century. It will be more intrinsically self destructive because totalitarianism and mass formation are always self destructive. You can explain this very well from a psychological point of view, but it's quite complicated, but they are always self destructive. And once you realize that you know that the only thing you have to do is in one way or another, you have to try to survive outside of the system in a parallel structure and just wait until the system destroys itself.</p>
Aubrey	1:11:58	Well, that seems like a pretty clear prerogative and to

Marcus

help mitigate so it seems like mitigate the amount of damage and hopefully prevent the level of atrocities where people are going around, because we saw that actually happened after 9-11, where people were attacking mosques, and we've seen this where we feel threatened and then people lash out. And there's this vigilante thing. So do our best to mitigate the level of atrocity. Of course, I don't think it will ever reach the level. It's a different type. It's more of a psychological totalitarianism, unlike the way that it was in Germany or Russia, but who knows? But it feels like it's going to be more of a psychological war that's being waged, but still, nonetheless, on the periphery, there can be atrocities that occur so mitigating those as much as possible by standing for, you know, standing for the recognition of humanity and then also accelerating the awakening of people to all of the deep, unconscious psychological processes that exist. The seduction of the solution of mass formation, how you can externalize the problem that's internal, how seductive that is, and then also the seduction of the ego to say, I'm helping the world more than you. So I'm better than you and how good that feels to be the one that really is sacrificing the most and helping people more because that makes you better than someone else. Hey, I'm a better person than Joe Rogan. And Joe Rogan is super powerful and super wealthy, but I'm better than him because I care more. And then how seductive that is psychologically. Just to be aware of all of these processes, it's okay. We're all fallible. We're all vulnerable. We're all subject to unconscious processes. Any of us could walk on stage with a top hypnotist, like a world class hypnotist. We could walk on stage, and in ten minutes we could be clucking like a chicken in front of an audience. It could happen to any of us. And then would our friends later, like, two years later be like, you fucking chicken. You're such a chicken like, no, you would have been a chicken, too. Our mind is vulnerable. And so to have that compassion for everybody, I think it's so important.

Mattias Desmet	1:14:14	<p>Yeah, but, you know, that usually people who are under hypnosis stick to the same ethical rules and ethical level as they do when they are not hypnotized. That's interesting. I think so. Being hypnotized is not an excuse to transgress ethical boundaries. That's something important. But it doesn't matter. I agree with you. Of course. I think that is maybe the deeper meaning of this crisis that it confronts us, or that it might lead to an analysis of who we are as a human being, for someone else, that it might confront us with who we are. And that can make us think about how we can, what the right thing to do is in this situation. I don't know. I feel that in one way or another, this crisis pushes me and brings me closer to myself. And then by continuing to speak out, I learned to control my own anger. For instance, if people react aggressively towards me and so on. I feel that in one way or another, this process leads to an intense questioning of who I am and makes that I go through an evolution as a human being. And I hope that the same is the case for many other people.</p>
Aubrey Marcus	1:15:40	<p>Yeah. No doubt that brought something up because I have seen that where the top hypnotist will put someone under a deep hypnosis, give them a knife and say, "Stab me" and they'll do anything else. They'll do anything else, humiliating, completely humiliating. They would take their pants off, or they would pretend to have sex or act like a chicken, whatever they'll do, all that stuff, but they won't hurt somebody else under hypnosis. So mass formation isn't exactly hypnosis. It's something a little bit different because it can lead to atrocities that are so it's almost like there's almost more Manchurian candidate, this kind of different psychological process that's similar to hypnosis, but also different because it seems like historically, at least it's led to people committing committing atrocities that they normally wouldn't commit under normal conditions unless there's just a percentage of people that are naturally homicidal. Anyways.</p>

Mattias Desmet	1:16:42	<p>Yes. I think there are, but I think that mass formation is a kind of hypnosis. But there are differences with classical hypnosis. For instance, in the process of mass formation, the hypnotist is hypnotized himself. That's the most important difference. Like in a classical hypnosis, the hypnotist is awake. His field of attention is not narrower than normal, but the person who is hypnotized suffers from a narrow field of attention. But the hypnotist doesn't. And in the process of mass formation, usually the opposite is true. The field of attention of the person who hypnotizes is usually even narrower than the masses themselves. So that's why the experts in this situation, they make mistakes that ordinary people wouldn't make, and that it was very clear to me from the beginning. If you look at the statistics and the numbers that are presented through the mass media, they often are so blatantly wrong that even a child can see it. And still it is as if many of the experts do not realize it. And that's because in one way or another, they very often are hypnotized, or their field of attention is even narrower. So we could talk for days about the leaders of the masses. It's very complicated because in one way or another, they are hypnotized. In another way, they often manipulate and cheat and lie to the people, and that's because they do really believe in their ideology and the ideals they are striving for. That's something they are usually hypnotized by. But usually they do not believe in the narrative that they are presenting to the people. They feel that it is justified to lie to the people and to manipulate them. So you have to make a distinction there. They are hypnotized in this sense that they really believe in a megalomaniac way, that their ideology will create a kind of a paradise for humanity. But that doesn't mean that they believe everything they are telling, because usually they know that they are manipulating the population. So it's double, I think.</p>
Aubrey Marcus	1:19:16	<p>Have you been threatened to lose your job as a professor for speaking out in this way? Has there been</p>

		any consequences for you professionally? Because we certainly hear that in different places.
Mattias Desmet	1:19:27	Not at this moment, not at this moment. So I've been under huge pressure. Some people at my university told me that I should watch out what I was saying, and I felt that they implied that, well, if I continued in the same way that I could get in trouble, but at the same time, well, I've never felt up until now, I've never felt really threatened. Because in Belgium, a professor is a very well protected profession. But I think in the nearby future it might become problematic actually. I think that things are getting worse. Of course, for instance, if you refuse the vaccine, I don't know if you will still be, if it will still be possible to teach to students, for instance.
Aubrey Marcus	1:20:19	Yeah, we're seeing that with a lot of our health care workers. It's very interesting times. Well, I want to end with something, a positive message that actually came from Carl Jung. And he says, and obviously it wasn't pertaining to this time, but it's almost very prescient for where we are now. He says, <i>"It is not for nothing that our age cries out for the redeemer personality, for the one who can emancipate himself from the grip of the collective psychosis, save at least his own soul, who lights a beacon of hope for others. Proclaiming that here as at least one man who has succeeded in extricating himself from the fatal identity within the group psyche."</i> It's just a beautiful message to say, look, even if you don't say anything, even if you don't go out there like emancipate yourself, this is crucial, like be the living example of someone who is free and someone who can generate their own thoughts and have agency and be aware of your own biases. Be aware of your own desire for confirmation. Be aware of your own desire to be better than others. It's all okay.
Aubrey Marcus	1:21:36	We're all human, but liberate yourself with that awareness. And that's a great way to stand in this world where people are really subject to phenomenon like mass formation.

Mattias Desmet	1:21:49	It's a very nice code. Yes, I agree.
Aubrey Marcus	1:21:53	Well, thank you so much for joining. If people are interested in learning more from you, and I know you got a book coming out if you want to talk about that.
Mattias Desmet	1:22:02	Yes. Well, first it will be published in Dutch first, but then it will be translated very quickly. The title is The Psychology of Totalitarianism. I really go into the phenomenon of totalitarianism and mass formation that's historical roots and trying to explain how it emerged in our society. And then also, I will also try to show what the real solutions to the problem are. Yes. I think it will be available in Dutch somewhere in February next year and then I hope a few months later, also in English and in America.
Aubrey Marcus	1:22:44	Well, if the world hasn't dramatically changed by then, then maybe we'll do another podcast after I can get my hands on.
Mattias Desmet	1:22:54	Absolutely.
Aubrey Marcus	1:22:55	Well, thank you so much. I appreciate you coming on. Yeah.
Mattias Desmet	1:22:58	Thank you for listening.

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