

THE NEW AND VERY INTERESTING BOOK BY MOISÉS NAÍM: "THE REVENGE OF POWER"



The Venezuelan intellectual Moisés Naím recently published a new book, titled *"The Revenge of Power: How Autocrats are Reinventing Politics for the 21st Century"*. I confess that I was absorbed by its ideas, since it is an extremely interesting analysis of what is happening in the world and essential to better understand our present. And for that reason, I would like to do a little review of the book, as well as share some of my thoughts about it.

In recent weeks I had the opportunity to virtually attend a talk with Moisés and, due to his very interesting exposition, I decided to buy and read his latest book. **As you know, Moisés is an extremely knowledgeable person with extensive public experience.** He got his master's and PhD degrees from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), has been a university professor, has numerous publications and was the first foreigner to assume the direction of the prestigious magazine Foreign Policy. Furthermore, he has national and international political experience, since he was Minister of Development and director of the Central Bank of Venezuela, as well as executive director of the World Bank.

I have known Moisés since 2002 when I began to belong to the Group of 50, an organization of Latin American businesspersons that Moisés founded. In his new work he begins by making a recapitulation of his last book, titled *"The End of Power"*, commenting that while on that one he focused on studying the centrifugal forces of power, **in his new book he tackles the centripetal forces power.** That is to say, his analysis goes from the dispersion to the concentration of power. Given this, a question arose me: Isn't the latter what we are experiencing in Mexico and in many countries throughout the world? With the introduction alone, the book caught my attention.

The author talks **about the three “p” of autocrats:** populism, polarization and post-truth.

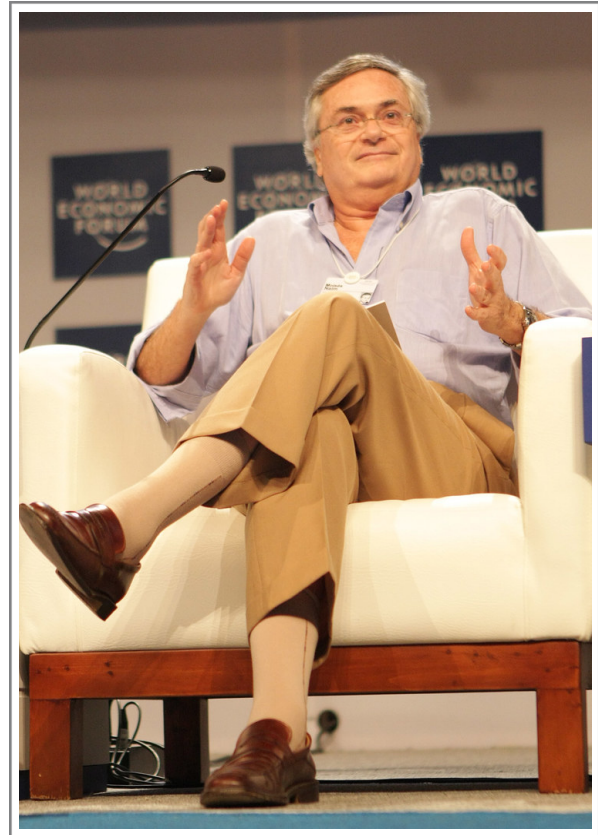
- **Populism:** It is not an ideology, but a series of practices that are used in the service of those that want to retain power. It's as old as politics itself. It is based on the maximum “divide and conquer”.

- **Polarization:** In democracy differences are organized through elections. In a polarized society disputes are so extreme that it is impossible to govern. Polarization amplifies social divisions and even provokes new divisions.

- **Post-truth:** There is a permanent campaign to influence citizens. It attacks the basic elements of reality, causing paralysis in a society.

Here the obvious question arises: **How to prevent autocrats from concentrating power?** Moisés speaks of the five battles that all citizens must fight and win to avoid autocratic regimes: against lies, criminalized governments, foreign subversions, political cartels and the illiberal narrative. About each of them there is much to say, one more reason why I recommend to buy and read the book.

Plato said that “the price of disregarding politics is being governed by the worst men.” I totally agree. The message that I take from the book is that, as citizens, we are all responsible for what happens in our community. No one lives in isolation, and our environment affects us all. And for this reason, it is our duty to participate in public affairs to the extent of our possibilities.



Moisés Naím