

Carlos Malo de Molina

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FREEDOM

CARLOS MALO DE MOLINA

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CHAPTER 1

FREEDOM

One year after writing “The Market of Ideas” I find myself with renewed strenght and ideas to continue deepening and extending the concepts there started. In that work, I summarized almost every philosophical-political concept I have thought and analyzed for more than forty years. Starting from the idea of the existence of the invisible hand of sociopolitics, which is nothing else than the interaction of the 7.7 billion of people existing in the world, alongside all types of political, economic and social structures that pressure, execute and demand certain approaches and agreements, then transformed into moral and collective ethics, norms and laws.

This social and political concreation is product of what we may define as the market of ideas, image and likeness of what Adam Smith developed in his work “The Wealth of Nations,” published in 1776, almost 250 years ago, which gave rise to the economic market. In the current world —in which several politicians, and government and State leaders continuously lie, forcing us to live in a false parallel reality— there are many struggles to tell and defend the truth. Whatever say the many compulisve liars, in great manner controlling the world, the media and social network in the current times, there is only one economic

functioning system, both in the internationally and within each one of the countries: it is the economy of market, because other previous systems and competitors were radically surpassed. It has been, precisely, the superiority of market, in efficiency, equity and progress, what has made other models useless. Even so, the world has taken more than 200 years to globally accept the manifest and evident theories of Adam Smith.

Many still deny it, though they practice it on daily basis —being this part of their lies. It is possible, with time, for there to exist an alternative. It's not easy, but one should always have an open mind to economic innovations, moreover, in a time when countless powerful changes of all kinds are on the horizon. It is evident that within market economy there are many shades and forms of applications; from the market inadequately called ultra-liberal, where no control exists, with hardly any State and to a certain extent socially insensitive to the model of the welfare State.

I am in favor of the Welfare State, without the abuses of States and managing governments, because such abuse of power by governments and States is absolutely contrary to democratic and economic freedom, an intrinsic part of politics. There can be partial economic freedom without political freedom, but there can never be political freedom without economic freedom, among other things, because economic freedom is recognized by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as one of its essential rights.

As I stated in my previous essay, the invisible hand of Adam Smith is nothing more than a part of the invisible hand of sociopolitics and, in consequence, the economic market is an essential part of the market of ideas. The very same efficiency, transparency and equity the invisible hand gives to the economy is given also to the market of ideas, to freedom and democracy; there only is really one global invisible hand that permanently acts everywhere, at all times and in all types of political, economic and social —or any other type of— activities. With this, I don't mean to fall into simplifying things or give the impression that everything is easy, quick, and automatic. We said earlier that it took 200 years for the necessity and effectiveness of the market economy to be recognized. We have had the concept of democracy for more than 2,000 years, and yet there are still many who do not want to accept or recognize it, or who seek to adulterate and pervert its contents for personal partisan interests, which are generally spurious and false.

In market economy, a distinction can also be made between classical and Keynesian models or their derivatives. The former ones trace the origins of classical economics to Adam Smith, Jean Baptiste Say, David Ricardo, Thomas Malthus, John Stuart Mill, among others. Their postulates are based on the free market without outside intervention, not even from governments. They are opposed to the use of monetary and fiscal policy, and consider that the value of any good should be the product of the labor used to produce it.

Classical economics is over 200 years old and evolved into neoclassical economics, which is based on the essence of the market, i.e. supply and demand, price discovery, the value of money, and the pursuit of competition and its efficiency. Its main proponents were Alfred Marshall with his theory of partial equilibrium, Léon Walras with his theory of general equilibrium, the monetarists Knut Wicksell and Irving Fisher, and the so-called welfare economists Arthur Pigou and Wilfredo Pareto. It finally evolved into the Chicago school, a staunch defender of the free market, complemented by strict monetary control and, therefore, inflation and interest rates, led by Milton Friedman and George Stigler.

Competing with these theories, John Maynard Keynes, in his 1936 work "The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money," explains that public spending generates a multiplier effect on the economy, which leads to increased demand and, therefore, economic stimulation, which can be useful in times of recession and economic crisis. In short, in both theories, always within the market economy, some advocate less State intervention, and others more; but the truth is that both economic models intervene in practice to a greater or lesser extent depending on the situation.

Although the Chicago school is currently more influential than the Keynesian school, both are being applied especially in difficult times, such as the 2008 subprime mortgage crisis and, currently, with the pandemic; the United States, the European Union, and much of the

world have implemented economic practices that can be considered neo-Keynesian. Some people want to see the classical economists as more right-wing and the Keynesians as more left-wing. It is true that those who consider themselves right-wing tend to favor neoclassical policies and the containment of public spending, while those on the left tend to favor the expansion of public spending, although in the end either side ends up combining both policies, balancing austerity with an increase in public debt. Within the prevailing market economy system, which has proven to be the most effective, there is sufficient scope for debate, disagreement, and the search for different courses of action, with new ones emerging over time.

In the Digital Age, new ideas, technologies, and alternatives for greater and better development in the world will continue to emerge, including information, data collection, and transparency about how everything works, as well as what the decline in the physical presence of coins and the emergence of cryptocurrencies means.

The Market of Ideas, which I wrote at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, from January to May 2020, was an essay written in chapters, structuredly and interrelatedly, to be published week by week, not as chapters of an essay but as opinion articles, with the problem of length—as they were considerably longer than a newspaper article. So, I published them in real time: what I wrote in a week was published in the Venezuelan newspaper *El Nacional* on the following Tuesday. This form of publication became a notarized certificate of the moment

of its literary execution. Between essays, I wrote a novel of which I am particularly proud. I finished writing it in January 2021 and hope to publish it in the first half of 2022. I continue to build on the theses of *The Market of Ideas*, developing and deepening new concepts such as political centrality, the urgent need to maintain and develop freedom and democracy, the lack of international democracy, the horror of populism and divisiveness, political cynicism, and the absurd support of political leaders in democratic countries towards leaders of dictatorial countries, in many cases responsables of crimes against humanity. I maintain my thesis based on the continuous positive evolution of the world, but perhaps at a slower pace and with some failures in the short and medium term.

Who would have thought that former Spanish Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero's 39th visit to Nicolás Maduro in Caracas in February 2020—coinciding with Guaidó's successful visit to Europe, the United States, and Canada, where he met with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, French President Emmanuel Macron, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, and US President Donald Trump, among others—would be a complete success in defending the Chavista regime and boycotting any evolution of Venezuela towards democracy.

At that meeting, Zapatero threatened Maduro's wife, telling her that if Maduro left the presidency, regardless of

what the Americans said, she would inevitably go to prison. He therefore asked Maduro not to resign from the presidency, but to hold out for a while because things could change for the better. Zapatero offered Maduro's party, the PSV, membership in the Socialist International, a meeting with Josep Borrell, and assured him that the European Union would lift sanctions. Zapatero advised for a new National Electoral Commission to be appointed, for which he proposed some names, which meant support for new elections that could be recognized internationally. I reported on this meeting in an article I published in February 2020 in Infobae. It was never denied by anyone, and today almost everything has been fulfilled or is being fulfilled. According to an article published by the Spanish newspaper *El País* on June 25, 2021, *Brussels and Washington open the door to lifting sanctions on Venezuela*, "Borrell and Blinken issue a joint statement in which they close ranks in favor of a peaceful solution and offer concessions if Nicolás Maduro moves forward with a negotiated solution to the crisis." My current sadness and disappointment is not only due to the rise of radical politicians in pursuit of false divisionism, but also to the collaboration of this harmful dynamic of leaders and political forces that in recent decades were in what we can now define as centrality.

It is true that the world is suffering from the COVID-19 pandemic, and all crises generate sadness, discouragement, and economic problems that, to a certain extent, open Pandora's box and destabilize countries and

the world in general socially, politically, and economically, returning to systems and situations of the past that have been overcome and proven to be wrong.

I can understand that, as a distraction, people seek passion and confrontation between sports fans, as it happens between different soccer fans; although I do not share this approach to sports competition when that rivalry turns into fanaticism, contempt, animosity, and even hatred and violence. I am convinced that this type of attitude is encouraged by the leaders of soccer clubs, some more than others, in order to gain more fans, unconditional support, and more revenue. It is like literary novels, movies, or television series: if there is no tension, confrontation, violence, and death, they are less appealing. Division and confrontation are the product of marketing. The problem is that the passion and violence of a novel or film remain on the screen or in the book and do not generate anything beyond entertainment, violence, and damage outside of it. Today, in the absence of ideological differences, there is marketing, promises repeatedly broken and changed, and constant lies.

I understand that we are not perfect and that we all tell an occasional lie at some point, even if it is a so-called white lie or one that helps us get out of an embarrassing situation, but to do so constantly, outright lying in the face of evidence —and doing so without the slightest shame— is cruel, harmful, and dishonest. Lying is corruption, and is not at all democratic. Playing divisive games by generating and exacerbating falsehoods and lies is equally

undemocratic and deceitful. It was Juan Luis Cebrián, ideologue and strongman of the newspaper *El País*, a journalist close to the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE), who said in an interview with the newspaper *El Español* that "Pedro Sánchez is the president who has divided the most." He also accused him of being divisive and extended that characteristic to the previous Spanish socialist president, Rodríguez Zapatero. To make matters worse, Sánchez practices the politics of Nero, who, after the burning of Rome, blamed the Christians in order to promote and justify their persecution. According to Tacitus, "Nero quickly sought a culprit and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a group hated for their abominations, whom the populace calls Christians."

Pedro Sánchez, one of the world's greatest divisive figures, does not hesitate to accuse his political opponents of being divisive. It is unclear whether the fire in Rome in July 64 was arson and, if so, who was responsible. The same has happened with the pandemic. Far from reaching a consensus with the opposition and with the autonomous regions governed by opposition political forces, he has taken advantage of COVID-19 to impose his criteria without any kind of consensus, using restrictive and exceptional measures that curtail freedom. Despite a certain willingness to accept this on the part of his opponents, he has not stopped taking advantage of the situation to brutally attack his political rivals, to the extent of attempting to remove the Popular Party from power through motions of censure in important communities,

such as Murcia, Madrid, and Castilla León. But he reaped what he sowed, as this had a lethal effect on the PSOE, which lost the motions of censure in a humiliating manner and, with the early elections in the Community of Madrid, lost its social leadership to the Popular Party and jeopardized most of the regional elections to be held within the next two years and the next general elections.

My experience as a political advisor tells me that these mistakes during strategic moments come at a high price. I remember that around 1994 or 1995, my friend Miquel Iceta, currently Minister of Territorial Policy and Public Function in Spain, when he was working as Head of Analysis at La Moncloa, indirectly serving former President Felipe González, asked me, "How is it that before, we did whatever we did, and dare I say that we did something wrong, everyone applauded us, and now, whatever we do, everyone boos and criticizes us?" I replied that it was the current *tide*: when in your favor, all is congratulations; when it changes, criticism. The situation currently facing the PSOE and, above all, Sánchez is due to the mistakes made in his brutal confrontation with the president of the PP in the Community of Madrid, Isabel Díaz Ayuso, and his motions of censure, the result of which is that the tide has turned against him. The problem with the tide is that it takes a long time to change, but when it does, it is almost impossible for it to change again in the short term. There are people who do not see when things went wrong. In this case, Sánchez must know that he himself gave the final push from Moncloa, activating the motions of censure against the

PP and, above all, against Díaz Ayuso in Madrid. He lost the battles and possibly the war.

I have decided, both in my novels and essays, to contextualize my stories and political analyses, which means placing my writings in a specific context, limiting myself to the moment in which I write the narrative or socio-political analysis. In fact, I was already doing this in my previous publications. It is very easy to describe things with hindsight; but anticipating events, making predictions and forecasts is another matter. If you do so and the events confirm your predictions, this is in itself an important endorsement for the future. Concretely, looking at what I wrote in *The Market of Ideas* and comparing it with what has happened in just over a year is an important endorsement for what I am writing now. Pay particular attention to the three chapters focused on the pandemic, which also permeate the entire book to a certain extent due to the practice of contextualization in real time while writing. Although the essence of the book is a demonstration of the existence of the invisible hand of sociopolitics with its managerial manifestation in the market of ideas, the communication revolution generated by real-time zero, or rather zero time, the definitions of ideological supremacism, global *dictsoftorship* or whatever the lack of democracy in international structures means, and the need to reclaim freedom as the necessary zero point and epicenter of all democratic, fair, and social values of any political approach.

Without freedom there is no democracy; rather, there is oppression, dictatorship, persecution, and criminality against the people. Without freedom, markets do not exist as such; they are inefficient, unfair, disorderly, and antisocial. Without freedom there is no justice; everything works to serve and benefit dictators and tyrants. Without freedom there is no happiness either. Oppression and lack of freedom kill everything good that a people and individuals can have. The only freedom possible is that which guarantees the individual freedoms of all citizens; any collective freedom can only stem from individual freedoms.

Most authoritarians, populists, and dictators appeal to collective freedom to replace individual freedom with their authority and impose their will from a position of power, under the guise of collective freedom. On many occasions, there are groups that try to manipulate words to distort reality. Why talk about collective freedom when freedom is essentially individual? Why talk about social distancing during the pandemic when it should only be physical? Or why talk about a new normal when what we all want and need is to regain our usual normality, the one we have built over thousands of years? The fact is that there are groups that seek to use the crisis for ideological and even personal gain.

The management of the pandemic with exceptional emergency measures, exceptions, alerts, lockdowns, and curfews has been a regrettable example of authoritarianism, undemocratic and quite inefficient. Only the rapid creation,

production, and distribution of vaccines has helped us emerge from the pandemic crisis, which has had a high social and economic cost that we will undoubtedly suffer for years to come.

The marketing that has invaded the market for many decades has moved into politics and everything related to society, elections, political discourse, public communication, government management, and any political structure. So far, there is no problem, as it is just another tool that social, economic, and political dynamics have developed to ensure the fluidity of messages and that it works in all fields. The conflict arises when communication becomes propaganda and half-truths, serious lies, manipulation of important words, propaganda apparatus, manipulation of statistics, significant amounts of money invested in media advertising, the use of the state structure, public bodies, public media, and influence and pressure from public authorities on private media are used. In authoritarian regimes and dictatorships, this turns into the takeover of all or almost all media outlets and the persecution, coercion, repression, imprisonment, and murder of any dissenting voice.

The last straw is when those in power create a ministry of truth, which is what they call the Permanent Commission against Disinformation in Spain, with the power to control alleged fake news and disinformation campaigns, when that power is a machine for lying and spreading misinformation. This is a hoax by a government that has used the exceptional measures to restrict freedom

during the pandemic to deceive, lie, and govern by decree, in a manner that is neither transparent nor sectarian. Unfortunately, this has happened in many countries, undermining the democratic quality of the world due to the pandemic. I am sure that in the medium to long term we will recover what has been lost, but authoritarianism, populism, and dictatorships have gained ground over democracies. After the crisis and its suffering come the social and economic consequences.

China is to blame for the pandemic, guilty of its unsanitary practices, its lack of food safety controls, and an official dictatorship where no choice is allowed and all political freedoms are prohibited. The People's Republic of China, which practices savage capitalism without union rights and with fierce oppression of workers, is benefiting greatly from a pandemic that it itself has created. No one outside China knows how and why the pandemic occurred, or even its origin. Within its borders, everything is a mystery. The Chinese government hides and lies, and with each passing day there are more doubts about what happened there to understand the birth and spread of COVID-19. There is not the slightest transparency.

At the end of June 2021, almost two years after what is believed to be the date of the origin of the pandemic, everything remains a mystery. In chapter 4, entitled Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, of my previous essay, I wrote, "One of the fundamental principles of humanity is that we are free, which gives us the ability to think and act according to our decisions; free will is precisely the ability to decide. We

can now say that the idea of freedom was agreed upon by society and that the invisible hand of sociopolitics has recognized it as the mainstay and cornerstone of the basic principles of what we define as a scale of values."

The first key value of society is freedom, recognizing that without it, democracy, economic and management efficiency, justice, good social relations, equality, and fraternity are not possible. Once this evidence has been agreed upon, this concept must be applied to all areas, including compliance with everything contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the right to freedom, social and political rights, that is, the strictly democratic functioning of expression and communication, intellectual freedom, which is the personal ability to have and express any thought, ideology, or belief, sexual freedom, in short, any imaginable freedom, provided that it does not exceed or limit the freedom of others.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in Paris on December 10, 1948, by the United Nations Assembly, includes a first article stating that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and, being endowed with reason and conscience, should behave fraternally towards one another." The second article states that "everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, social, or economic origin, birth, or other status." The remaining 30 articles set out the rights relating to freedom of thought, religion, and

political, economic, social, and cultural freedoms, as well as the conditions and limits on the exercise of these rights in relation to the inalienable rights of man. This is the product of the organic feeling of human beings and, therefore, a direct consequence of the invisible hand of sociopolitics and the synthesis of the market of ideas.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, despite being 73 years old, remains fully relevant and valid today, which does not mean that its principles are being upheld or even accepted. There is a democracy index produced by The Economist Intelligence Unit, which determines the level of democracy in 167 countries. In the 2018 study, it found that only 20 countries are considered full democracies, accounting for 12% of countries and 4.5% of the population, while 55 countries, representing 12% and 43.2% of the population, are flawed democracies, and 39 countries are considered hybrid regimes, representing 23.4% of countries and 16.7% of the population, and finally, 53 countries, representing 31.7% of the total number of countries and 35% of the population, are classified as authoritarian regimes. The percentages are calculated based on the total number of countries in the sample of 167 states out of a total of 193 that are members of the United Nations. This evaluation system, which I consider extremely benevolent and therefore unrealistic, only accepts just under half of the population as full or imperfect democracies.

From my point of view, the methodology used is not appropriate, as it is based on opinion polls when democracy

is measurable through facts and objective measurements. What democracy can there be in a country where there are no free elections? None, so the rating should be zero. Similarly, when elections are a fraudulent and totally manipulated farce, I do not believe that any country can score higher than 8 out of 10. Unfortunately, as the saying goes, *“made the law, made the loophole.”* There is not a single country in the world that fully and comprehensively complies with the UDHR. The United Nations itself is the first to violate all of its articles, in addition to a large number of its member countries, which do so in a serious and gross manner. It is clear that in the areas of freedoms, democracy, and values, the world is prospering in the medium and long term, always in a positive way, and at an accelerated pace in the last 100 years. It is to be hoped that this positive evolution will accelerate even further in the coming years. The cry for freedom and democracy has been heard for more than 2,000 years, although so far we have only managed to implement it incompletely in part of the world, almost half, according to a study by The Economist.

Characteristic of a good intellectual and scientist is to doubt, but so is the strict use of the scientific method of analysis. Once a reality has been established, it should not be manipulated, distorted, or denied. It may be that a scientific analysis can be nuanced, supplemented, or even partially refuted over time, but if it was done rigorously at the time, based on the well-analyzed reality of that moment, it must be respected. The supposed intellectual or scientist who knowingly manipulates or falsifies syllogisms is a false

intellectual, a cheat, and a scientific criminal, that is, someone who violates scientific norms with the spurious intention of defrauding society with false and rigged conclusions. This is what Karl Marx and other 19th-century philosophers attempted when they explained collective freedom by absolutely denying individual freedom. The concept of collective freedom can only be accepted if it emanates from the sum of individual freedoms, freedom that is strictly individual. In fact, collective freedom is used by people such as Hegel, Marx, or more recently Bertrán de Jouvenel as political freedom and, ultimately, is nothing more than a synonym for democracy, although those who invented this absurd pairing did not accept democracy and did accept the dictatorship they called the dictatorship of the proletariat.

This is how they understood it philosophically, and this is how they practiced it in all the countries they ruled, always through violent, imposing, and repressive means of coming to power, which they called revolution. Even some countries, such as China, have just abandoned the economic systems of communism or socialism and embraced capitalism in one of its most unjust and aggressive forms, but they continue to call themselves communists and maintain oppression, repression, and dictatorship. These days, Xi Jinping, president of the People's Republic of China, in addition to saying that the country must continue on its path as a great socialist country in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party, said, "The Chinese people will never allow foreign

forces to abuse us. Anyone who harbors such illusions will be crushed and spill their blood against the great steel wall formed by 1.4 billion Chinese people.” He also said, “Resolving the Taiwan issue and completing the reunification of the motherland is an unavoidable task for the Communist Party of China and the common aspiration of the entire Chinese people.” If we try to be minimally rigorous and serious in our philosophical and political approaches, and we aspire to a certain intellectuality and use of the scientific method, we must not lie, misrepresent words, or string words together to change their meaning. Anyone who seeks to develop a concept that gives it a new name, and who wants to combine two existing words, should not do so in order to pervert or even destroy a particular word.

The concept of collective freedom was created to destroy the highest value of political and social philosophy, just as in many cases the concept of popular democracy is used to destroy that of democracy, transforming it into a synonym for dictatorship, as was done by the former socialist regimes of Eastern Europe, with their communist ideology and self-proclaimed dictatorships. Some word games or combinations may be correct, but they can and should be done with respect for the meaning of the main word in the combination, which is the case with the word freedom, which is an abstract noun because it relates to ideas and desires such as love or justice. When a combination of words can alter or transform one of them, or even the main one, it should not be done under any

circumstances. It is clear that the combination “collective freedom” is intended to attack, nullify, or dilute the true meaning of freedom, reaching the absurdity of vindicating something as diametrically opposed as dictatorship.

Something similar has happened with the pandemic: two false concepts have been developed, namely *social distancing* and a *return to the new normal*, launched by powerful international structures and universally accepted. This essay, to be published in book form, is the fourth I have written during the pandemic. From the very first, and in various newspaper articles, I have immediately denounced the incorrectness and possibly malicious intent of both concepts. It is clear that the first case refers to physical distancing, never social distancing, be it that the latter can and should be practiced to a greater extent during the pandemic, but in a way other than physical contact. Is it possible to have social contact without physical contact? Of course it is. The second concept is more aberrant, since by saying “return to the new normal,” the intention is to replace the previous normality with a new one, the result of the pandemic, a normality that we had built up over thousands of years of history, the product of the evolution of freedoms and democracy and caused, in my opinion, by the invisible hand of sociopolitics and the market of ideas. The concept of the new normal is suspiciously convergent and similar to those who have sought to use the pandemic to change the world political order and have stated this openly.

According to the RAE (Spanish Royal Academy), a syllogism is “an argument consisting of three propositions, the last of which necessarily follows from the other two.” It is a form of deductive reasoning created by Aristotle, and has been the central axis of Aristotelian thought for 2,400 years. The syllogism is considered a fundamental pillar of scientific and philosophical thought. In a well-structured syllogism, if the two premises are true and are well concluded and structured, the conclusion is equally true. It is possible to construct a manipulated and deceitful syllogism, as in the case of sophisms, which, as the Royal Academy aptly defines, are “false reasons or arguments with the appearance of truth.”

We are currently surrounded and immersed in a world full of lies, deception, manipulation, and sophistry. We must try to eradicate these distortions of reasoning from social and political life in any system of analysis and argumentation, not through repression and deception, but through dialectics, consensus, and scientific analysis. In the end, the marketing use of social distancing and the new normal have been eliminated, withdrawn by their creators by the force of the invisible hand and renamed as they should have been from the beginning: physical distancing and return to normalcy. There are still some stragglers who continue to use the failed and perhaps intentional old slogans. Unfortunately, there are currently many manipulative and false slogans that continue to be used in line with the construction of political correctness, which is one of the impositions of the criteria of a minority.

The RAE defines supremacism as a “supreme degree in any line,” therefore, those who advocate ideological superiority are supremacists. Using sound syllogism, if those who advocate their superiority in any line are supremacists, and certain groups advocated their ideological superiority, calling it the moral superiority of the left, we can conclude that those who claim moral superiority because they are left-wing are ideological supremacists. Clearly, anyone who is of another ideology, right-wing, for example, advocates their moral superiority, would also be an ideological supremacist.

In *The Market of Ideas*, I devoted Chapter 9 to discussing ideological supremacism. Since then, I have heard much less talk about the moral superiority of the left. It is even possible that they have realized their tremendous mistake; rectifying it is wise. Ideological supremacism is as serious and perverse as supremacism based on race, gender, sexuality, social class, or any other factor. I am particularly pleased with the spectacular progress being made in relation to gender equality and respect for different sexual orientations, but not so much with the political exploitation of these issues by certain social groups and political parties. I agree with fashion designer Lorenzo Caprile, who said on LGBTBI Pride Day that it has become highly politicized: “I find it sad that certain parties have taken a back seat and others have almost exclusively appropriated this discourse,” and “I believe that all this goes beyond ideologies.” I think this is a balanced and fair analysis of reality, with some being clumsy and others opportunistic. I say this so that

both sides can rectify their positions, because the important thing is to keep moving forward. There is still much to be done in terms of gender equality and the recognition and respect of different ways of understanding and practicing sexuality. The last straw was when Carmen Calvo, vice president of Pedro Sánchez's government, said that feminism does not belong to all women, stating, "No dear no, we have worked hard on the ideology of socialist thought." Calvo has inflicted serious damage on the feminist movement and on women by appropriating a right that belongs to all women for the benefit of justice, equality, and humanity. We could say that it is part of humanity's heritage.

There are too many idea thieves who do so for their own benefit or that of certain groups, but it is one thing to steal ideas and quite another, and more serious, to steal the concept of social behavior and conduct. We must all believe that women and men are equal, with the same rights and obligations. It is one thing to consider their individual and collective behavior, and quite another to proclaim *ad hominem* that gender equality belongs to them or to their particular group. I hope that one day Carmen Calvo will reconsider, apologize, and retract her words.

Values such as freedom, democracy, respect for human rights, gender equality, respect for sexual freedom, and many others, must not only be proclaimed and defended, but also upheld personally and collectively, and we must demand the same from those around us. Those who seek their friends and political partners among those who are liberticidal, authoritarian, and dictatorial are not

consistent. How is it possible that the Spanish government seeks political friends among leaders who seek to violate a large part of human rights or who show excessive understanding toward true tyrants who are criminals against humanity? I am referring to the understanding and, in some cases, even the implicit support of former President Zapatero and part of Pedro Sánchez's government for Maduro and the criminal government of Venezuela.

Corrupt, freedom-destroying, repressive, dictatorial, and criminal governments cannot and should not be whitewashed. Can any of these Spanish politicians and their counterparts in other democratic countries who fraternize with them deny that they are corrupt, freedom-destroying, repressive, dictatorial, and criminal? This is not to mention the almost total destruction of the economy and all kinds of social services in one of the countries that was among the richest in the world at the beginning of the 20th century. Nor is it to mention the more than 4 million citizens forced to emigrate all over the world in order to send a few dollars to their families so that they can barely survive.

I have written extensively about Venezuela, describing in detail its dire, sad, and criminal situation with facts and figures. I do not understand the denialism of many leaders of democratic countries. The reality is clear and obvious. I must repeat the words of former Spanish President Felipe González when he said about Venezuela, "There have been more deaths in Caracas than in Damascus, Syria, in recent years. Venezuela is a true tyranny, a narco-tyranny." On another occasion, in May 2019, he said, "When

Maduro falls and the horror of Chavismo is revealed, I will accept no excuse.”

Why does this absurd denial of the evidence occur? Is it due to ignorance, political fanaticism that prevents people from discerning reality, or political accommodation in defense of a particular ideology, based on perverse interests, for their own benefit or that of the group they represent? I think, especially coming from political leaders who are presumed to have a certain intellectual capacity, and even more so if they represent a large group, that it is the third option: pure intellectual corruption, economic interests, and the deliberate defense of political structures that crave more power and even material goods for themselves, structures that in one way or another facilitate their access to or maintenance of political power.

These are generally left-wing dictatorships, as right-wing ones have been disappearing, many transforming into democracies. there are still Arab dictatorships that are right-wing and, curiously, directly or indirectly support left-wing autocracies. We could say that a large part of these Arab dictatorships are linked to the cheating and thuggish countries in line with the supposed left, which are only communist and radical left-wing in name, because the reality is that they are dictatorships that practice savage capitalism.

The wealth and million-dollar accounts of most of the world's leading leftist leaders are well known. Examples include Hugo Chávez, his family and friends, Nicolás

Maduro, Diosdado Cabello, and countless other Chavista leaders in Venezuela; Daniel Ortega, his family, and senior officials in Nicaragua; the opulence of Kim Jong-un, president of North Korea; the Castro family in Cuba; Cristina Kirchner, her family, and associates in Argentina; Putin, although not a communist, but rather far-right, is connected to and supports the supposed global left.

Who supports Venezuela's nonsense? Cuba, Russia, Iran, North Korea, Nicaragua, and José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, dragging along to some extent part of the Spanish government, everyone in Podemos, and a few other socialist leaders, with the presumed permission of President Pedro Sánchez.

There is an article published on July 7, 2021, in the Spanish newspaper *ABC*, *Borrell's concessions to Venezuela alarm the US*, which states that “the Americans were willing to review the sanctions policy on the basis of significant progress in comprehensive negotiations” but that the US Secretary of State refuses to sign any agreement to support elections in Venezuela that do not meet international standards for democracy, starting with the local and regional elections scheduled for November 2021. As I have highlighted and described in previous articles and essays, “the supposed democratic elections of Chavismo were yet another lie of the regime.” They stole the presidential elections from Capriles twice, Chávez in 2012 and Maduro in 2013. The opposition's victory in the 2015 National Assembly elections would have been even more overwhelming without Chavismo's cheating. After all, it was

all a gross and widespread falsehood. I don't want to bore readers by repeating things I already wrote in my previous essay.

I have studied Venezuela, its political, social, and economic situation, and the perversion of its system in all its aspects. As a result of conversations with different social and political forces of the opposition and even of Chavismo, I drew up a set of documents at the end of 2018 that were structured in 25 points focused on defining the process of democratic transition with the departure of Chavismo from power, for the formation of a transitional government and general, democratic, free, and fair elections.

These proposals were almost mimically taken up by the opposition and its acting president Juan Guaidó in January 2019. Among my contacts, I must highlight the following individuals: Bishop Ovidio Pérez Morales, William Dávila, Henry Alviarez, Corina Machado, Lewis Pérez, Antonio Ledezma, Cecilia Sosa, Haroldo Romero, Walter Aranguren, Miguel Henrique Otero, Humberto Calderón Berti, and Roberto Henríquez. I also spoke with Chavista representatives, the most significant of whom was José Vicente Rangel. There were other people from social movements, the opposition, and Chavismo who asked to remain anonymous. The latter group includes important politicians, military personnel, lawyers, and businesspeople, some of whom I did not even know by name. I remember more than one conversation with a group of high-ranking military officers conducted via

encrypted telephone or with secure communications. I recount this part about Venezuela with great sadness.

For now, the democratic transition has eluded us all, and those who, for one reason or another, had an interest in perpetuating Maduro's regime of perversion, theft, and crimes against humanity have won. I remember what Cilia Flores, Nicolás Maduro's wife, told me through a member of the Chávez family when, at the end of 2019, she was pushing for and supporting the agreement. According to her, they were against the long-awaited transition, as everyone knew Cuba, Russia, China, and Iran were, but to my disbelief, she mentioned a part of the US Democratic Party, the Socialist International, and Zapatero. According to her, that part of the US Democratic Party sent them the following message: "Do not abandon the Venezuelan presidency because the US government will not fulfill its commitments and you will end up in jail. Wait until 2021 when we will be in government and we will achieve a better solution." This message was very similar to the one sent by part of the Socialist International and, even more forcefully, by José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero. The key issue at present is that the situation in Venezuela is untenable and if there were democratic, free, and transparent elections, the opposition would win by an overwhelming 85% to 15% for the Chavistas.

As a result, given the obvious reality of countless crimes of all kinds, it would be logical for the current Chavista leaders to be arrested, tried, and convicted for the immense number and variety of crimes they have

committed, some of which are crimes against humanity. For this reason, the political framework I developed was based on the democratic transition that has facilitated the transition from dictatorship to democracy in countless countries since this formula was applied in Spain in 1976 and 1977, where, thanks to the excellent participation of the last president of the dictatorship and then the first of democracy, Adolfo Suárez, King Juan Carlos, and the leaders of the entire democratic spectrum, from Francoists, conservatives, centrists, liberals, Christian Democrats, nationalists, socialists, and communists, an effective and, in my opinion, absolutely necessary work of art was carried out, with the collaboration of the overwhelming majority of the Spanish people.

The transition to democracy was actually invented in Spain, and as they say, it came into the world to stay, since that is how it was carried out and is being carried out in practically all democratic transition processes around the world, as was the case in Spain, Russia, many communist countries in Eastern Europe, Chile, and others. Other countries only took steps in the economic field, as in the case of China, which continues to be a harsh and unjust social and political dictatorship.

I made a very brief summary of the 25 points I drew up in 2018 to define Venezuela's transition to democracy: "removal of Chavismo from power in the Republic, closure of the Constituent National Assembly and restoration of the powers of the National Assembly, formation of a mixed transitional government with an opposition majority and

collegial functioning, express constitutional reform to include a two-round presidential election and eliminate reelection, calling elections in 9 to 12 months, conditional general political amnesty and exile of the 40 main Chavista leaders under international control, placing the army at the service of democracy, freedoms, and the Constitution."

The more I read and relive the documentation on my website, the more I like it and the more it saddens me that an operation we were on the verge of achieving fell through. Perhaps I am naive, but I have always believed that people are mostly motivated by ideals and generous feelings aimed at solving problems and benefiting society or the people of a particular country. I thought that whether it was one ideology or another, one economic, social, or other theory, it didn't really matter, since there aren't too many ideological differences and at least they had good intentions.

Now, unfortunately, I believe that they excessively prioritize their personal interests, whatever they may be. Putin, Sánchez, Trump, Maduro, Kirchner, Ortega, and many more of these leaders, I am almost certain that they are only interested in themselves, they don't care about the rest, the others make an equation or an algorithm, which is more fashionable, between all kinds of interests, where ideological and social issues may have some weight, but so do personal, partisan, and economic interests.

In Venezuela, I felt completely abandoned by Spain, which offered no support whatsoever, however small. The

United States was too chaotic, with the people surrounding the government having multiple personal interests. Guaidó's entourage had little ability to unite the opposition and was also involved in personal interests, some corruption, and even friendly fire.

As time passes, I will speak more clearly about these issues, except for these comments to all the people I mentioned earlier, with whom I met, and others I did not mention, but especially to Monsignor Ovidio Pérez Morales, who, with dedication, hard work, and profound analysis — in my opinion always accurate—, has been at the center of the struggle for democratic transition and the solution for Venezuela's progress. In the current situation in Venezuela, Monsignor Ovidio proposes to continue with the idea of democratic transition, beginning with the election of a National Constituent Assembly. How is it possible that there are international sectors advocating elections under the total control of Chavismo? If the Chavistas accept elections, it is because they intend to transform their real meager minority into an electoral majority with tricks, lies, and cheating.

José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero asked the international community to accept the completely fraudulent results of the latest elections to the Venezuelan National Assembly. As incredible as it is true. Unjustifiable and deeply undemocratic. The previous National Assembly was and remains the only one with democratic credibility, even though it was elected under the electoral and political control of the Chavista regime, which was unable to

overturn the opposition's resounding victory in time, despite having manipulated the election in its favor.

The current dictatorial leaders of the world are under pressure, as in the case of Venezuela, to behave in a minimally democratic manner. Since they do not want to, because they are not, and would lose the elections drastically, they have learned to grossly manipulate the electoral processes with various tricks. It would be fair for Venezuela's National Electoral Commission to be minimally democratic, for which it should have been elected by the previous National Assembly that appointed Juan Guaidó as interim president, but which was ignored, disregarded, and discredited by the Chavista government and the entire state structure. Now, the impostor Chavista National Assembly, as reported by the newspaper *El Nacional* on July 6, 2021, "NA of 2020 annuls the legislative agreements of the opposition-majority Parliament."

For any election in Venezuela to be considered free, transparent, and democratic, and therefore declared valid, the following minimum conditions must be met:

1. No candidacy or person who wishes to be a candidate may be declared invalid or prohibited.
2. Voters may only vote at their designated polling station.
3. Ghost and itinerant polling stations must be prohibited.
4. Polling stations must be set up for Venezuelans abroad.

5. All public media must be under the control of a neutral body, where news, political, and opinion space must be distributed equally and fairly among all electoral contenders.
6. Elections must be counted manually, with polling stations formed by lottery among the population and with representatives from all parties. In my opinion, especially in authoritarian and dictatorial countries, those in power have much more control over automatic counting than manual counting.
7. The counting of ballots must be public and transparent at all levels, including at the polling stations as an essential basis, with copies of the results provided to all members, including party representatives, and must be publicly displayed at the polling station so that they can be photographed by any citizen.
8. There must be strong international oversight to verify compliance with agreed-upon standards and the fairness of the elections. The presence of the Organization of American States (OAS) is particularly and inexcusably necessary.
9. All political prisoners must be released.
10. Political parties usurped and hijacked by the Chavista regime must be freed and returned to their true structures and owners.
11. The financial expenses of election campaigns must be controlled.
12. The elections to the National Constituent Assembly, which should also provisionally fulfill and have the

powers and attributions of the National Assembly, therefore, the current and false National Assembly must be closed, including the conditions mentioned above in the points and conditions of the transition process, the most important of which are the removal of Chavismo from power and the formation of a transitional government.

The only solution for Venezuela is a democratic transition process, which cannot be achieved under a Chavista government or with the presence of a false National Assembly. It is clear that the only way to address the situation is by creating a new National Constituent Assembly, which will also exercise the functions of the National Assembly. Within a period of 9 to 12 months, all elections must be held, including presidential, local, and gubernatorial elections. Once the new democratic leaders have been elected, new elections to the National Assembly must be called, in light of the new Constitution, which should have been ratified in a referendum at the same time as the presidential elections.

Any agreement other than a democratic transition is doomed to failure, either because it would perpetuate Chavista tyranny with all its evils, or because the transition that was not properly carried out would have to be attempted again. At this moment, with the transition of Venezuela and its people to democracy, they are gaining the beginning of the solution to their countless problems, including freedom, democracy, human rights, and the beginning of economic recovery.

Venezuela has been and will once again be a great country with the effort of all, the support of its citizens, and the international community. In the medium and long term, it will recover everything that belongs to it and that should never have been usurped. What is the price to be paid, even if they do not deserve it, by criminals against humanity? Conditional amnesty with the exile of those most responsible.

The ideal scenario would be the holding of free and democratic elections, which are practically impossible without the removal of Chavismo from power and with the victory of democracy, the prosecution and conviction of all crimes committed by Chavismo. Maduro maintains support in certain countries such as Cuba, China, Iran, Russia, and North Korea, as well as support from countries with a voice and veto power in the United Nations, which continues to be reiterated and insisted upon by a certain part of the supposedly democratic left, whose most emblematic representative is Rodríguez Zapatero.

The option we currently have is to keep the dictator Maduro in power or to offer him a golden handshake to leave power and the country. Maduro and his followers have hijacked the country, and as in any hijacking, there is no choice but to act by force or negotiate with the hijackers for their departure to free the hostages, in this case, the entire country and its citizens.

Two years ago, I came up with the idea that Maduro and the Chavistas would leave either willingly or unwillingly.

Willingly —through pressure and negotiation—, has been very difficult, and unwillingly has not been possible so far. For the latter option, it would be good and almost essential to have the support of the army. We have come close to both possibilities, almost to the point of achieving them, but they slipped through our fingers, among other things because of the many mistakes made on our part, especially by those with the most power and responsibility.

In view of the possible new negotiations between the opposition and Chavismo, one way or another, more pressure should be exerted in all areas and in the streets to rebalance the forces somewhat.

In the words of the newspaper *El País* on July 12, 2021, “Cuba is experiencing the largest protests against the government since the 1990s.” Most of the media and Amnesty International denounce the heavy police repression, which has resulted in injuries, threats, and arbitrary arrests. Cuban President Miguel Díaz Canel said on national television, “The order to fight has been given, revolutionaries take to the streets.” Inviting violence and confrontation between civilians and demonstrators with the support of the public forces of order, he declared his willingness to defend the revolution “at whatever cost.” It would be good if the political leaders who shelter and protect dictators from democratic countries would defend and protect their people from beatings and arbitrary arrests, even if only for peacefully demonstrating. Also of concern is the support for protesters from other countries that are not so peaceful and have democratic governments,

which are certainly not perfect and have many things to fix, but with free and democratic elections, as has happened in Chile, Ecuador, and, recently, Colombia.

It is a common pattern among authoritarian dictators to threaten and repress citizens at all times and in all circumstances, using any excuse or simply for exercising their democratic rights, in this case the right to express themselves and demonstrate. Maduro uses prisoners and criminals against the civilian population. Díaz Canel calls on citizens to act violently against demonstrators protected by the police. Putin arrests and imprisons the supporters of a political leader who attempted to assassinate him and is now in prison. Ortega has arrested almost all the political leaders of the Nicaraguan opposition and even dissidents from his own party. China is an official dictatorship and systematically represses its people, as does North Korea. They support each other, dramatic is that they have the support of leaders of democratic countries.

In countries that enjoy freedom and democracy, even those that The Economist classifies as full democracies, where only 4.5% of the world's population lives, are by no means perfect and have much room for improvement. Where there is no freedom and democracy, the political system and society must be changed and improved. I will never tire of repeating that freedom is an indispensable and essential value throughout the world. In many democratic countries, there is too much corruption, especially in Latin America and Africa, but in populist and dictatorial regimes,

corruption is total and pervasive in power and society; they are completely corrupt.

I would define freedom as the innate power and right of women and men to choose and act in different ways or not to act, which makes them authors and responsible for their actions. The RAE defines it as “the natural ability of humans to act in one way or another, for which they are responsible for their actions.” Please excuse me for constantly referring to the RAE, but I do so because of its undeniable quality, precision, and because it is the official dictionary and almost the only one for my native language, Spanish.

Freedom is not only an inalienable individual right, meaning that it cannot be transferred, but we must also accept the freedom of others on an equal basis, which means that we must organize, coordinate, arrange, and find ways to reconcile our right to freedom with the rights of others. That is why rules and laws are necessary, so that everyone equally respects the freedom of all. This can be achieved politically and socially through democracy, its structures, and laws. The RAE defines democracy as “the political system in which sovereignty resides in the people, who exercise it directly or through representatives.” As I have already said, without freedom there can be no democracy because without freedom sovereignty cannot reside in the people, who cannot elect their representatives. It would violate the entire text of the definition. I am completely obsessed with precision in language, which is the key to our perception, intelligence, and ability to communicate. Precision is the best and most effective

weapon for navigating the stormy world of lies, traps, tricks, misrepresentations, manipulations, propaganda, corrupt media or media with biased political, economic, and personal interests, fake news, false digital identities, and computer bots. The key to freedom is not only to agree with this universal right but also to exercise it while respecting the freedom of others and complying with the rules and laws established by democratic powers and structures.

How can we define someone who fully supports, defends, and applies the concept of freedom, and their followers? The problem is that the possible words have been misused, manipulated, and distorted. The most common is liberal, and even the RAE is extremely confusing and vague in its definition. Of the eight definitions, which are less consistent with the essential meaning of freedom, the second and third definitions provide the closest alternative to the ideology and definition of political parties or ideological currents referred to as liberal. It is correct to say that liberal ideology and liberal parties have monopolized the use of this term, distorting its meaning. This does not mean that these groups are not defenders of freedom and its political and social application, but rather that they apply it in their own way and, above all, they are not the only ones, they are a minority, not even the owners and definers of its extensive and complete meaning. As in everything, within liberal parties there are some that are more consistent and others that are much less so or even transgressors of freedom in certain areas; some are only liberal in economic terms and have little social sensitivity.

In short, we cannot use the word liberal. Nor can we use liberalism. The RAE starts off well on this occasion, defining it as “an attitude that advocates freedom and tolerance in the life of a society.” The second definition begins by saying political doctrine, and the third defines doctrinal liberalism. Therefore, we cannot use it either. There is also the word libertarian, which the RAE directly attributes to anarchist ideology and libertarian communism, which is again impossible.

The word liberal can be used as in “he is a liberal-minded person,” which in my opinion is a perfect application. There is a third possibility, which is *libérrimo*. According to the RAE, “it is an absolute superlative adjective because it expresses the maximum degree of freedom in absolute terms.” “The most free.” This works for us, and we also start from the premise that freedom is the highest value and a conditioning and essential element for democracy, justice, equality, order, the market economy, efficient management, and even happiness. It is not wrong to use it in the superlative degree.

We accept the definition of freedom and define politically free as “a person who believes in the innate ability and right of every human being to choose and act in different ways or not to act, and who does so as the author and responsible party for their actions. A free person defends, supports, and applies freedom in all areas of their life. They respect and defend the freedom of others and compliance with the rules and laws that come from democratic powers and structures. We could also use “pro-

freedom” as a synonym for “libérrimo,” always understanding it as thought, action, and respect and acceptance of the freedom of others. It has been easier for me to find the antonym of “libérrimo,” which is “liberticida” (freedom-killer,) “one who kills or destroys freedom.” I would add “annuls, restricts, repeals, removes, denies, or represses.” I believe that these definitions cover the two fields of the use and practice of freedom. Each person must decide which structure of thought and action they align themselves with and act upon sociopolitically. No one is perfect enough to be totally and exemplarily free, just as I do not believe that anyone, or almost anyone, is a liberticidal monster. It is clear that the path of man must be that of freedom, and its destruction is that of the perverse. The field of democracy as a concept, practice, and form of public and collective political and social action is intrinsically linked to freedom. We can define the democratic sphere as the space that brings together those who are completely free in their thoughts and actions and the structures that are generated under the criterion of freedom in its highest expressions.

CHAPTER 2

DEMOCRATIC RANGE

IN statistics, range is the amplitude or spread of a variable, which means the distance between a set of data points. We start from the premise that one can only be a democrat if one is completely free, understanding that, in turn, acceptance of the sovereignty of the people is a sine qua non condition for being completely free, which is an obvious condition for exercising freedom. We have previously defined freedom clearly and extensively from a personal and socio-political point of view. As we are imperfect and must avoid maximalism, ideological supremacists, and supporters of political correctness, we will accept as free anyone who thinks and acts in line with the above definition.

It is logical to deduce that anyone who rejects democracy politically or acts against democratic systems in any place or in any way is not truly free. Anyone who does not believe in equal rights for all people, total equality between women and men, the right to sexual freedom, and who harms or abuses other people personally or collectively through economic or political power is not truly free. Terrorists are not free, nor are murderers, rapists, corrupt individuals, thieves, and all those who repeatedly break the laws created by democratic political structures. The conviction of being completely free is the most

important thing, but we must also act accordingly. Lying, cheating, and manipulating are forms of corruption. The list of examples is extensive, but that does not mean that by making a mistake one day we become liberticides. However, if we repeatedly and consistently make one or more mistakes, we are, to a greater or lesser extent, liberticides. When a person commits a crime and has had the help or support of another, that other person becomes an accomplice and therefore a criminal. Both criminals are liberticides; obviously, anyone who is not completely free is a liberticide, at least in part. This is not a matter of handing out cards; each person must analyze themselves, but it is good that in the field of discussion in the global parliament of ideas, we are clear about who is or acts as a libertarian or a liberticide. By definition, authoritarians, dictators, and tyrants are radically liberticides. All supremacists, whatever their type, are liberticides, as are all those who help or support authoritarians, dictators, and tyrants or their power structures or actions. All those who, from their supposedly democratic countries, support or collaborate with dictatorial systems become liberticides. Although we all make mistakes, one mistake does not make you a liberticide, but continuity and repetition over time do. It is not the same to lie or deceive another person as it is to do so to a group or an entire country, or to do so from a position of power, or to do so once or constantly. Those who constantly lie and cheat from a position of power are, at least partially, liberticides. Democracies that are not entirely perfect, but in which there is freedom of expression and demonstration, as well as the ability to operate through

any type of association, organization, and political party, in addition to any collective action, cannot justify any type of violent act, no matter how justified it may seem. Any act of violence against people and property is an attack on democracy and freedom. Any person or group that exercises, supports, or justifies acts of violence is a destroyer of freedom. Today's countries have armies, police, and other state security forces. However, no matter how optimistic we may be, we have not yet reached a level of social and humanistic development where the use of such military and police forces is unnecessary. I find it difficult to imagine achieving this in a quantifiable time frame. If possible, the use of law enforcement should improve significantly, with increasingly less aggressive, controlled, and fair means.

Any use of violence is very difficult to control completely and act correctly, even so, state apparatus must try their utmost. It is good for countries and their inhabitants that society controls, monitors, and criticizes the slightest error made by police structures and, where appropriate, holds the government, police forces, and police officers who have in one way or another exceeded their authority accountable. We must never forget that, in a democracy where individual and collective protest methods exist, these are the first and true means of controlling violence. It must be understood that the monopoly on the use of violence must be held by the state, and is held by the state, provided that it is minimally democratic. If it is not, it cannot exercise that power, or any

other power of the state and the various organs of power and management, for the simple reason that the people have not granted it to them. In authoritarian countries, dictatorships, and tyrannies that have usurped power from the people, the struggle against dictatorial power is entirely acceptable, even if it involves the use of violence. It is always better if there is some possibility of exerting pressure, seeking agreements, and initiating transition processes in general. Transition processes are very difficult and impossible if there is no strong pressure inside and outside the country and dictatorships entrench themselves in power. Every transition must be based on the removal of usurpers from power. It is curious to see how there are individuals, social groups, politicians, and even leaders of countries who criticize police actions in democratic countries but never criticize the violent movements that drive them, nor do they criticize the continuous and brutal repression of dictatorial countries.

These days, as I mentioned earlier, there have been significant demonstrations in Cuba. Despite the risk of repression, some political groups say that Cuba is not a dictatorship. Those who say this, in addition to being freedom killers, are compulsive liars, because it is clear that there are no free and democratic elections, all parties are banned, there are no political or any other freedoms, and human rights are not respected. This is what Podemos in Spain, partners of the Spanish government, with five ministers from Pedro Sánchez and the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE for the initials in Spanish), have just

said. Even the Spanish president has found it difficult to say that Cuba is a dictatorship.

The democratic spectrum includes all those who, in one way or another, albeit with some imperfections, are free thinkers and act accordingly, because those who are not free thinkers are partially or totally liberticidal. I have called it the democratic spectrum to describe, from the first mention, a place where all those who, in one way or another, accept, support, and practice freedom can fit, including all forms of thinking that are, of course, democratic. To understand this, during the Spanish democratic transition, all politicians with parliamentary representation were included, from the conservative Alianza Popular to the Communist Party and the nationalists, with the exception of the far right, Fuerza Nueva (New Force), and the pro-ETA Herri Batasuna (HB). At that time, the Communist Party of Spain, led by Santiago Carrillo, defended, respected, and acted democratically, while also criticizing countries such as Russia and its allies for their lack of freedom and democracy. Now, we cannot say the same about its current heirs, Podemos, who support dictatorial countries and even sometimes act violently within Spanish territory. Some Spanish nationalists today engage in freedom-destroying practices, discriminating against and attacking non-nationalists, marginalizing and persecuting the use of the Spanish language, and forcing and punishing children in schools for using Spanish. I have been able to demonstrate that the power and essence of democracy, freedom, is fundamental for each and every person. If we do not have

freedom, we are slaves to the system and to the public authorities. It is no good failing to comply with the most important value of freedom and demanding to be critical in other less important democratic fields, turning them into the essential axis of one's political thought and action. We all have the right to criticize, even if we are partially or totally liberticidal, but not to deceive in the debate of ideas by ignoring priorities and combating certain concepts because, as I have repeated, if there is no freedom and democracy, there will be no other political, social, and economic values either.

No one, nor any system, can completely suppress freedom. Even a slave or a prisoner, despite being in such a dramatic situation, has areas of freedom. Only when you are killed can freedom-destroying systems completely rob you of your freedom. Fortunately, dictators can only severely diminish part of your freedom because, to the extent that they do so, it conditions other values. Absolute, personal, and individual freedom does not exist. The 20th-century philosopher Karl Popper said, *"The unlimited freedom of each individual becomes problematic, because the unlimited freedom of each individual becomes impossible due to the coexistence of human beings."*

The limit of our freedom is the freedom and well-being of others, just as others have the limit of our freedom and well-being. Ultimately, it is a problem of coordination and equal rights. Rules and laws must be applied so that the enjoyment of freedom is strictly equal in terms of rights and duties, without individual or group exceptions, which could

not be applied to a particular person or group if the rule or law were broken. Rules and laws must be produced by democratic political structures; otherwise, they are neither democratic nor fair in origin, as they are not the product of the free action of the people through popular sovereignty based on one person, one vote, and the delegation and representation of the way citizens are and think.

For Aristotle, freedom is “the capacity that man possesses to act according to his own will.” Plato said that “freedom means being the master of our own lives” and spoke of “the notion of rational self-control,” that is, the coordination of freedom with the real world, our capacity for analysis and understanding with the rest of the world. Almost 2,500 years ago, freedom was defined in almost exactly the same way as it is today. More than 300 years ago, John Locke placed freedom above all else. If freedom is a superior value and all others depend on it, it must be the first and most important of political and social values when organizing a state, its political structure, and legislation. This is also recognized by the United Nations in its Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which prioritizes freedom above any other value, reiterates it appropriately in the first two articles, and is a structural part of its content. The problem is that these wonderful principles are aggressively violated by half of the countries, partially by all or almost all, or in other words, no country complies with them in their entirety. The UN itself is not a democratic structure, nor does it make sufficient effort to defend compliance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

at the international level in each country. It does do something, and its existence is undoubtedly better than its non-existence, but it must do much more. They say that, in a glass half full of water, some see the glass as half full and others as half empty. The serious problem is that I see it as being at most a quarter full, not in terms of what is desirable but in terms of what is possible. It is incredible that its representatives are not the product of free and democratic elections but of the whims of the governments of those countries, a significant number of which are undemocratic or poorly democratic, not to say falsely democratic. I want more from the United Nations, at least in terms of democratizing its structure, defending human rights, improving the quality of the organization, and exerting continuous pressure on the world and on all countries in favor of freedom, democracy, human rights, and the efficient management and organization of its structures on issues concerning international matters such as the environment, education, hunger, and pandemics. It is not possible that there are common parts of the world over which no one has jurisdiction and no one acts, such as the subsoil, the atmosphere and the stratosphere, the oceans and water in general, since it is the same all over the planet, moving from one place to another, from the North Pole to the South Pole. I am told that the UN should be like this, a meeting place for all countries regardless of their democratic quality, so that there can be dialogue between the most liberal and the most repressive. They are partly right, but that does not mean that its civil service structures should be or must be made up of conceited bureaucrats,

that its dependent structures should be highly inefficient, and that there should be no pressure, even minimal, for freedom and democracy.

The management of the coronavirus pandemic has been a resounding failure. It is clear that the World Health Organization has not been given sufficient resources, structures, or funding to carry out its fundamental mission of protecting global health. The WHO has proven to be a politicized, inefficient organization that is influenced by certain countries and interests.

The world has learned that prevention is essential for adequate global health and absolutely essential for pandemics. What prevention measures has the WHO taken with the COVID-19 pandemic? None, or almost none. The world's suffering from the pandemic has been, is, and will continue to be enormous. Millions of deaths, illnesses, physical and psychological damage, fear, the abusive curtailment and disruption of freedoms, and social, economic, and political damage that will endure over time. In economic terms alone, which in turn feeds back into all the other negative consequences, the cost is thousands of times higher than what adequate prevention would have cost. To this must be added the behavior of the two main culprits of the pandemic, which I mentioned in an article I published on April 2, 2020, in the Venezuelan newspaper *El Nacional*: "China and its political leaders, because that is where the coronavirus originated and spread. The world and its structure, because once again they are unprepared to fight the pandemic (...) in the last 2,500 years there have

been more than 20 major pandemics, such as the Black Death or the bubonic plague, which in the 14th and 15th centuries killed more than 200 million people, wiping out a quarter of the world's population."

The Chinese, or rather their political leaders, are at fault for the origin of the pandemic, an irresponsible dictatorship that constantly lies. China does not have rigorous health controls, maintains unsafe food practices, and has no occupational safety and hygiene measures or environmental measures. They did not report the origin of the pandemic in a timely manner, not even afterwards, and they continue to hide and lie about everything that happened and is happening, with zero transparency. The Ethiopian, now Eritrean, Tedros Adhanom is currently the Director-General of the WHO. This organization, vital for the world during the COVID-19 pandemic, showed the same obscurantism and lack of transparency as China, at least in the first months, which were the crucial time to act and take measures. He served as Minister of Health and Minister of Foreign Affairs in the governments of Meles Zenawi and Hailemariam de Salegne, both from the Tigray People's Liberation Front, of Marxist-Leninist ideology and with important ties in recent years to the People's Republic of China. What leads one to think that the WHO director chose to support the obscurantism and lack of transparency of the Chinese government is that it is not logical to think that the UN, which is the only existing global structure to defend the world and its countries, would entrust one of its main assets responsible for global health to a leader who could

be presumed to have a freedom-restricting ideological tendency, little transparency, and friendship with countries that are far from proper, far from transparent, and whose sanitary standards are more than questionable. Worse still, he has been kept in the position over time; he is currently still the Director-General of the WHO.

A professor at the Faculty of Law of the National Autonomous University of Mexico, Luis Raúl Gonzales Pérez, wrote a short essay on freedom in part of constitutional philosophical thought, after drawing on the ideas of a number of thinkers and philosophers throughout history such as Aristotle, Thomas More, John Locke, Immanuel Kant, Alexis de Tocqueville, Stuart Mill, Norberto Bobbio, Robert Dahl, John Rawls, and Luigi Ferrajoli, ultimately concluding that “intrinsic freedom corresponds to the very essence of the human being, provided it does not cause harm to others. The construction of ideas represents a fundamental part of freedom of expression. Rights stand above political power.” I could not agree more; I would only add that political power is what emanates from the sovereignty of the people and their ideas. A separate mention should be made of his sources, although they represent a good selection of thinkers who converge in the idea of freedom as the superior value among socio-political and personal values. The United Nations was created after the Second World War, as a consequence of it, based on the idea of having an international structure with the purpose of preventing any armed conflict and of serving as a forum for meeting and debate to solve problems and build bridges between

countries with differences in the quality of their democracies and in their minimum levels of freedom. We must consider and analyze whether the UN truly wants to lead and, furthermore, to fight for freedoms, democracy, and the fulfillment of human rights, specifically the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, approved in 1948 by the UN just three years after its founding. In reality, it was something like starting off at a gallop and stopping like a donkey. Has the UN advanced in this regard? I would say very little, if at all, in a world and a reality that have evolved at dizzying speed. It must be said that if they do not do this, we will have to think of another international organization that is democratic and that fights for democracy and human rights in the world, in each of the countries, and for the effective management of major global issues such as pandemics, the prevention and management of everything that is shared and has no borders—such as water, oceans, the poles, the Earth's interior, the atmosphere and the stratosphere, also the rest of the universe and, in a special way, everything related to the ecosystem, global networks of organized crime, piracy, and criminal activity in the virtual world.

We begin from the premise that respect for freedom and being entirely free are compatible with democracy, and even reinforced by it, as well as by the structures that emerge from democratic political power, so long as they maintain the representation of their citizens and the essence of democracy. We are seeing many democracies whose power structures are becoming corrupted with

tricks and manipulations that lead toward authoritarian, autocratic, and populist systems. What has happened in many countries during the pandemic has been a bad example and a precedent for what many populist leaders intend to do: excessive authoritarianism, prohibitions beyond what is necessary, limits on democratic oversight, lack of transparency, falsehoods and lies, corruption, and a lack of dialogue and consensus. Generating greater democratic development in the world cannot and should not move in that direction, but strictly in the opposite one.

My idea of transforming the United Nations would be to continue with all the responsibilities and actions it carries out, with more resources and even more power, but acting with democratic methods and oversight, demanding and requiring greater efficiency, and exercising it in the most just, equal, and democratic way possible. To expand and improve the pressure applied to maintain and preserve peace, extending it also to the fields of democracy, freedom, and the fulfillment of human rights. To work for social equality, gender freedom, and to fight effectively against all forms of supremacism based on race, gender, social class, or ideology; against hunger and the needs of the world; and in favor of education, the ecosystem, the care of children and older people, culture, and better global health.

In *The Market of Ideas* I explain in detail the need to democratize the UN and how this could be done. In my opinion, a Congress and a Senate would need to be created and democratically elected at a global level. The world needs to organize itself this way at a global scale; the correct

and appropriate path is for it to be done through the UN, and if it does not do it or does not want to, then we would have to think of another alternative.

Freedom is universal, timeless, and intrinsic to the human being. What elevates freedom is using it fully, always and for everything. Taking away our freedom is stealing our soul, which, as defined by the RAE, is “the immaterial part of human beings.” Oxford Languages adds, “Together with the body or material part, it constitutes the human being. It is attributed the capacity to feel and think,” meaning it is essential to the human being.

This main explanation of the soul should not be confused with the meaning given to it by certain religions. We have said before that without freedom there can be no form or degree of democracy; without democracy, freedom is seriously hindered, limited, and conditioned. The weight, strength, and power of freedom are immense.

We can say that the greatest crime that can be committed against a human being, after murder, is the total deprivation of their freedom or its reduction to a lesser or greater extent. All autocratic, dictatorial, and tyrannical governments are, in a serious degree, destroyers of freedom. The RAE defines a crime against humanity as “a crime of special gravity, such as murder, extermination, slavery, deportation or forced transfer of a population, severe deprivation of freedom, or torture, committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack against a civilian population and with knowledge of said attack.” The

element that aggravates a crime and elevates it to the dimension of a crime against humanity is the part referring to the special gravity of a widespread or systematized attack against the civilian population.

Autocratic governors, dictators, and tyrants always act in a generalized way against the population, knowing what they do and how they do it, gravely depriving the people of their freedom. With this, we have the evidence that they are criminals against humanity. They also act continuously and systematically, killing and torturing, and therefore, besides being destroyers of freedom, they are criminals against humanity. The democratic spectrum is a broad and multi-ideological space where all democrats fit, with their imperfections, but democrats in principle, in thought, and in constant intention, defenders of freedoms, democracy, and human rights as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Those who destroy freedom, those who act in a way that destroys freedom, and those who justify, support, or help such people, who are, in the end, their accomplices, are not part of this space by their own choice. With the recent, unexpected, and successful demonstration in Cuba peacefully demanding freedom, democracy, and a free Cuba, many world political leaders have once again revealed their true colors. The Spanish newspaper *El Mundo* on July 12, 2021, speaking about Latin America, highlights that “the regional Latin American left maintains its unconditional support for the Cuban dictatorship.” It reports that they continued the systematic violation of human rights with

total impunity, with the approval of the international left, and it points out that “the Puebla Group expresses its support for the government of President Díaz-Canel.” They made statements in favor of Cuba or remained on the sidelines: Alberto Fernández, president of Argentina; Andrés López Obrador, president of Mexico; Pedro Castillo, president of Peru; Lula da Silva and Dilma Rousseff, former presidents of Brazil. Also belonging to the Puebla Group are Ernesto Samper, former president of Colombia; Zapatero, former president of Spain; Evo Morales, former president of Bolivia; Rafael Correa, former president of Ecuador; Leonel Fernández, former president of the Dominican Republic; and José Mujica, former president of Uruguay, among others. I understand that if someone belongs to a group that issues a declaration supporting Cuba’s dictatorial president, that person stands against the oppressed Cuban people. If any of them did not agree, they should withdraw from the group or at least publicly express their dissenting opinion.

A significant part of the Latin American left is in a position closer to those who destroy freedom than to those who defend it fully, possibly outside the acceptable democratic spectrum. We must be increasingly demanding in favor of freedoms, democracy, and human rights, so that more states, more governments, and more people remain within the democratic range, and so that we can avoid maximalism, the constant and self-interested trap of political correctness, and the aberrant ideological supremacism.

The world is showing fatigue from the coronavirus, the poor management of the pandemic and its health, social, and economic consequences, most of which are still to come, along with the added damage done to civil liberties through the abuse of states of emergency and curfews, revealing a certain authoritarianism in some governments. In London, despite the rise in COVID cases, though with 53% of people vaccinated, on the night of July 18 to 19 many citizens went out to celebrate Freedom Day. This suggests to me the idea that we should celebrate once a year, around the entire world, as with many other celebrations, a Freedom Day and a day for those who fully defend freedom, as a way to uphold freedoms, democracy, and human rights in the world and in each country.

The lack of freedoms takes us back to the past, when authoritarianism was the prevailing norm, although unfortunately the dictatorships of Cuba, Nicaragua, North Korea, Venezuela, China, Vietnam, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Somalia, Libya, Thailand, Egypt, South Sudan, Rwanda, Belarus, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Eritrea, Kazakhstan, Cambodia, Equatorial Guinea, Laos, Eswatini, the United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Syria, Burundi, Uzbekistan, Chad, Iran, and the Republic of the Congo still remain in place. According to the intergovernmental organization IDEA, these are the 32 dictatorships, with three different operating models: socialist republics based on a single-party system, absolutist monarchies, and failed, simulated, deceitful, and corrupted democracies. The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral

Assistance (International IDEA) is an intergovernmental organization that supports sustainable democracy around the world. Throughout the last century there have been brutal dictators, cruel and bloodthirsty, who have severely harmed and devastated the world.

Hitler governed Germany from July 1932 until his death on April 30, 1945. He entered power democratically, winning the elections, and once in government he suppressed the constitutional regime and established a single-party system. Hitler was an ideological supremacist responsible for the murder of approximately 11 million people, including Jews, Roma, and other ethnic groups, due to social, ideological, and religious differences. Hitler and the Nazis were also responsible for the deaths of more than 60 million people by provoking the Second World War, which brought destruction and suffering to a large part of the world, hundreds of millions of people affected, devastated cities, and destroyed economies. All thanks to the Führer, with the vital support of Heinrich Himmler and Hermann Göring.

Lenin, together with Trotsky and Stalin, under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party, beginning with the Russian Revolution of 1917 that resulted in the overthrow of the imperial tsarist regime, overthrew the Provisional Government and established a new regime based on the abolition of private property, the total elimination of freedoms and democracy, and the formation of a strict communist dictatorship that lasted until 1991, when the Soviet Union dissolved. He took advantage of the internal

divisions between Bolsheviks and anti-Bolsheviks, and of the support of the great powers for the latter; after the victory of the Bolsheviks, they created in 1922 the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, incorporating various countries and territories. In the First World War, with the defeat of Germany, they incorporated into the communist regime the Eastern European countries under their domination. The communist ideology and system spread throughout a large part of the world, subjugating more than one billion inhabitants of Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas. According to *The Black Book of Communism*, published by Harvard University in France, the deaths caused by communist ideology may have exceeded 120 million. Some say this number is exaggerated and may be half. In any case, the killing of any number of tens of millions of people unjustly is always a monstrosity and an aberration.

There were more freedom-destroying monsters who, leading dictatorships or tyrannies, gravely harmed citizens and countries, such as the case of Saddam Hussein, president of Iraq from 1979 to 2003, judged and sentenced to death and executed on December 30, 2006 for crimes against humanity; Idi Amin Dada, president of Uganda from 1971 to 1979; Muammar Gaddafi, president and founder of the Republic of Libya from 1969 to 2011; Benito Mussolini, founder of fascism and leader of the National Fascist Party, president of Italy from 1922 to 1943; Mao Zedong, also called Mao Tse-Tung, top leader of the Chinese Communist Party, founder of the People's Republic of China, Supreme Leader from 1949 to 1976. Thus, we can name more than

100 leaders who fall into this category of dictators or tyrants of exceptional aggressiveness, brutal murderers and torturers, criminals of crimes against humanity—some of whom still remain in power today, as we mentioned earlier.

The majority of concepts that define dictators are communism or leftism, absolutist monarchies, and radical ultranationalism, or sometimes, and especially lately, a mixture of several of these concepts. Radical nationalism has always been understood as far-right, but now we can see the good rapport between communists and socialists with nationalists, or the Chinese dictatorship, which has ceased to be communist in what is essential to communism—its economic functioning—in order to embrace capitalism in its most radical and aggressive form while simultaneously being hyper-nationalist.

For me, Franco's dictatorship had special relevance because I personally suffered it during my childhood and adolescence, although in its final years it was not as cruel and aggressive as in its origins. It lasted from 1936 to 1975, ending with the dictator's death; in 1977 the first democratic elections were held in post-Franco Spain. Particularly notable was the dictatorship of former Chilean president Pinochet; the Argentine dictatorships of Onganía, Reynaldo Bignone, Luciano Benjamín Menéndez, Roberto Viola, and Videla; the Korean leaders Kim Il-sung, Kim Jong-il, and Kim Jong-un, the current president, who—despite not being a monarchy—passed power from grandfather to father and then to son; the Brazilian military dictatorship

under Humberto de Alencar Castelo from 1964 to 1985; the Colombian dictator Gustavo Rojas Pinilla; the South African Pieter Willem Botha; the communist presidents of Eastern Europe such as Honecker of the former German Democratic Republic, Ceaușescu of Romania, or Tito in Yugoslavia, and many others. Currently in force are the absolutist monarchies of Saudi Arabia, Brunei, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, and Eswatini; and the Arab dictatorships of Africa and parts of Asia. In summary, too many dictatorships and too few and incomplete democracies in the 20th century and today.

It is of the utmost priority to fight so that the greatest number of countries and international political structures fall within the democratic range, and once inside, to improve as much as possible the quality of their freedom, democracy, and human rights. The list of dictators and tyrants, unfortunately, is only an example of what existed and continues to exist. Although most people already know about them, it is important to remember in order to understand how far we still have to go to advance and transform into a free, democratic world where human rights are respected.

In the world, adults and children still die from malnutrition, lack of water and medicine; people are raped, murdered, tortured, imprisoned or kidnapped with impunity; women are stoned and homosexuals hanged under the laws of countries that do not recognize these individual rights and freedoms, not to mention discrimination based on racial, gender, social class,

religious or ideological supremacism. Things are grim, but throughout our history we have always advanced slowly and steadily toward a better world, with ups and downs, continually improving in every aspect. Our obligation is not complacency but the opposite, to demand standards that allow us to move forward more quickly; there is far too much left to do.

We can make a pyramid of sociopolitical values to be called the pyramid of freedom. At the top is Freedom. On the second level would be the following concepts:

1. Democracy, 2. Human Rights, 3. Equality, 4. Market economy, 5. Honesty, and 6. Fraternity. These values are a fundamental and essential part of freedom.

1. Democracy is in turn supported by: 1.1 Free, democratic, and universal elections based on one person, one vote. 1.2 Separation of powers: 1.2.1 Legislative 1.2.2 Executive 1.2.3 Judicial

2. Human Rights rest on: 2.1 The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) issued by the United Nations (UN).

3. Equality rests on: 3.1 We are all equal regardless of our 3.1.1 sex, 3.1.2 race or ethnicity, 3.1.3 sexual orientation, 3.1.4 religion, 3.1.5 language, 3.1.6 social class, 3.1.7 political opinion, 3.2 The right to equal opportunities, and 3.3 We are all equal before the law and have the right to equal protection of the law.

4. The market economy rests on: 4.1 The right to private property, individually and collectively, 4.2 Absence of monopolies, oligopolies, monopsonies, and oligopsonies, 4.3 Respect by countries for economic freedom in the world, without interfering with the economic rights and interests of other countries for their own benefit, 4.4 Every person has the right to an adequate standard of living.

5. Honesty rests on: 5.1 The absence, prosecution, and punishment of corruption, especially among members of the different branches of the State, 5.2 Demanding compliance with the law by setting an example: 5.2.1 Public authorities, 5.2.2 Political parties, 5.2.3 Judges and 5.2.4 Citizens, 5.3 Sincerity, and 5.4 Transparency, which means the prosecution, punishment, and resignation of political leaders or public representatives who lie, deceive, hide, or manipulate important matters, or who do so repeatedly. Unfortunately, the opposite happens in the world. In many countries, politicians and political, social, and economic powers face no consequences even when they commit crimes. Murders are easily covered up, the theft of public money through corruption by leaders of supposedly democratic countries is far too common, not to mention dictatorial countries where theft, looting, and embezzlement reach multimillion-quantity levels.

On one occasion, while talking in Caracas, Venezuela, to my friend Cecilia Sosa, who was a magistrate of the Venezuelan Supreme Court for about ten years and its president for nearly three, she was forced to resign when Hugo Chávez became president. We reached the conclusion

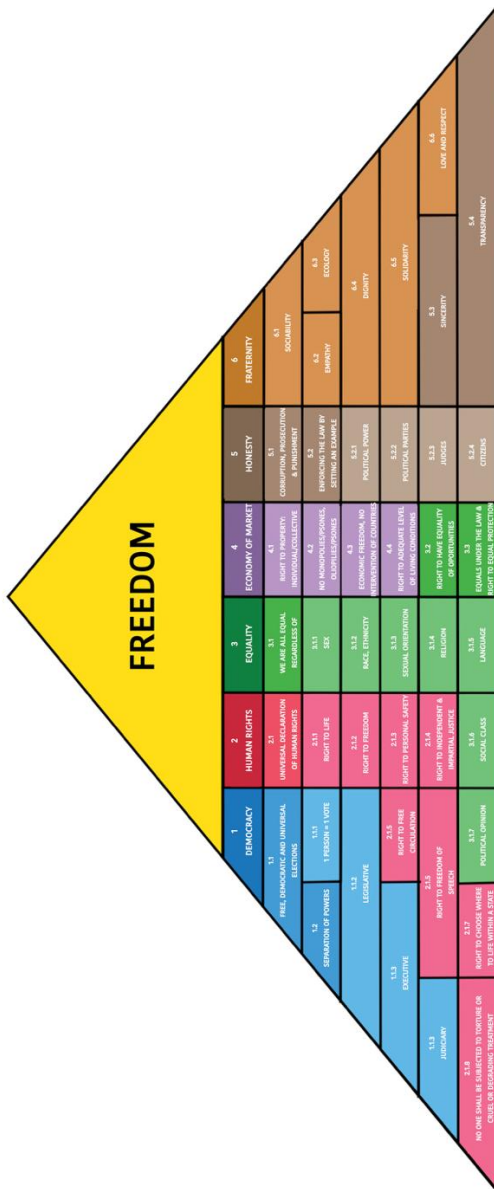
that the Chávez leadership continuously violated dozens of articles of the Venezuelan Penal Code, including the most serious ones, and did so in a widespread manner, amounting to crimes against humanity.

6. Fraternity rests on: 6.1 Sociability, 6.2 Empathy, 6.3 Ecology, the protection of the environment, flora and fauna, the prevention of pollution, and the care of water resources, rivers, lakes, seas, and oceans, fostering proper love and respect for nature, plants, and animals, 6.4 Dignity, 6.5 Solidarity, and 6.6 Love and respect. Fraternity means good relations among people, based on respect for human dignity, the equality of rights of all human beings, and mutual solidarity. In this way, fraternity encourages us to be supportive, respectful, and empathetic toward one another.

Among all the values at the different levels of the *Pyramid of Freedom*, there is continual interaction among them. One must always act with respect for individual freedom, democracy, equality, fairness, respect for and compliance with human rights, justice, honesty and efficiency, sound economic management, and doing so at the appropriate time, since a suitable decision that is poorly executed, very costly economically, or delayed can ultimately become less positive, or even negative, or fail to provide any solution.

In all sociopolitical matters, we must allow its invisible hand to operate freely among the 7.7 billion inhabitants who make up the global parliament of ideas.

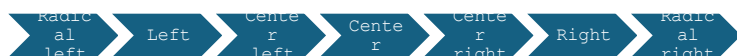
There, ideas are reconciled, and global consensus is achieved within what we have called the market of ideas.



CHAPTER 3

CENTRALITY

All those who embrace the values included in the Pyramid of Freedom fall within the democratic range. There is a broad spectrum of political and ideological thought that we can call the ideological range of democracy, which we classify according to historical usage, running from the left to the right, passing through the center. This ideological placement can be specified in seven groups: radical left, left, center-left, center, center-right, right, and radical right, as shown in the following graphic.



Within the democratic range, there is room for everyone from socialists and liberals to the most radical ideas on both ends of the spectrum, as long as they meet the condition of being libertarians in the broad sense, meaning in favor of freedom, democracy, human rights, fraternity, economic freedom, honesty, and equality. This includes, as mentioned, some who call themselves communists, provided they have abandoned restrictions on freedom, human rights, and economic liberty, make this clear, correct course, and call themselves whatever they wish. The radical right may also fit, as long as they accept and respect

freedom in all its expressions. This is why I mentioned earlier that the Communist Party of Spain under Santiago Carrillo fits within the democratic range, as did the former leader of the Italian Communist Party, Enrico Berlinguer. Together with the French Communist Party leader Georges Marchais, they developed a new revisionist theory of communism known as Eurocommunism. They defined themselves by rejecting the Soviet model and embracing democracy and the free market economy. I am not so sure that Podemos and the current PCE, which defend and support various authoritarian regimes, fall within the democratic range.

On the Spanish radical right, we find Santiago Abascal's party Vox, which is actually somewhere between the right and the radical right, somewhat stale and old-fashioned, but still within the democratic range. The PSOE is clearly center-left, perhaps closer to the left than to the center. The PP is center-right and is currently shifting more toward the center. Ciudadanos, formerly led by Albert Rivera and now by Inés Arrimadas, is clearly a centrist party. The PP's journey toward the center — something that has been needed for Spain and for the future of the party for decades — could culminate in a merger with Ciudadanos or in the incorporation of some of its former leaders; some are already there. We might expect the eventual integration of Albert Rivera or Inés Arrimadas. The PSOE, on the other hand, under Pedro Sánchez, is strongly pushing the leftward shift initiated by Zapatero, seemingly more out of a desire to remain in power at all costs than out of

ideological conviction. Yet that does not lessen the harm done to the country and to the party, since in this strange journey, and with partners who display authoritarian tendencies, Sánchez and his party become responsible for actions and attitudes that are far from libertarian.

The journalist Borja Puig of the newspaper El Mundo published an article on July 16, 2021 titled The harassment of judges does not stop, in which he accused the government of Pedro Sánchez of carrying out Caesarian purges and institutional delegitimization offensives, referring to the Judiciary and therefore attacking the separation of powers. On July 2, 2021, the journalist Manuel Trillo wrote an article for the newspaper ABC, *Bildu and the PCE strengthen ties with Chavismo for the advancement of the left in Europe*, where he explained that Nicolás Maduro's regime received in Caracas the so-called delegations from the Basque Country and the Spanish State, made up of various officials from Bildu, Sortu and the Communist Party of Spain (PCE for the initials in Spanish), with the goal of strengthening ties of solidarity. The PCE, through Podemos, is a partner and member of the Government; Bildu is a Basque pro-independence party that comes from the former HB, linked to the terrorist organization ETA, and to some extent acts as an external partner of the Government, supporting it in its formation, beginning with the vote of no confidence, and in important votes such as the most recent approval of the State Budget.

On June 1, 2018, Pedro Sánchez was elected president of Spain after securing the support of 180

deputies, four more than the absolute majority. He obtained that support through the combined votes of his party, PSOE; 67 deputies from Unidas Podemos, the radical left and communists; 9 from ERC, center-left and Catalan pro-independence; 8 from Catalan pro-independence politicians, ultra-nationalist right; 5 from the PNV, Basque nationalist right; 2 from EH-Bildu, far-left Basque pro-independence; 1 from the new Canary Islands center-right; and 4 from Compromís, Valencian left. An unusual ideological-political hodgepodge that Alfredo Pérez Rubalcaba, a historic leader who was secretary-general of the PSOE (just before Pedro Sánchez) and a presidential candidate, referred to as a “Frankenstein government.” In fact, he called it that even before it was formed because the PSOE was aligning itself with nationalist pro-independence groups that want to break apart the Spanish nation, and it was formed using pieces of differing ideologies, which represents a clear political inconsistency and incompatibility.

This development is in line with the motion of no confidence in Israel in June 2021 against Netanyahu and the formation of the new Bennett government with the support of eight parties that encompass different—at times contradictory—ideologies. In his 1992 book, Francis Fukuyama explains that the struggle among ideologies has ended in a world grounded in liberal democracy; the death of ideologies is more real in the realm of ideas than in the actual functioning of politics. There are only acceptable, yet imperfect, democracies in less than half of the world’s

countries and population. The market economy is the only one currently in force worldwide, among other reasons due to the lack of an effective and fair alternative, but freedom and human rights also fail to function in even minimally acceptable ways in most of the world and in its international structures.

It is true that in the field of ideas —therefore ideologies— only what we have described as the democratic spectrum is established and accepted by society, according to the criterion and in line with the Pyramid of Liberty, which I call *libérrima* democracy so as not to confuse it with the liberal concept of the Liberal Party.

This also explains the strange alliances among far-right Russians, radical nationalists, supposed dictatorial leftists, right-wing Arab dictatorships, Islamist terrorist movements, and Islamist countries in collusion with socialist and radical left leaders of democratic countries. It is evident that in the supposed communist countries of the radical left there is no freedom or democracy, nor are human rights respected, but there is also nothing that resembles socialism. In China, savage capitalism is practiced; there are no labor unions or social rights for workers, no workplace safety or hygiene, and there are large social and wage gaps. We have already spoken about the fortunes of the leaders of dictatorial left-wing regimes such as Venezuela, Nicaragua, Cuba, and North Korea. There is not a single country in the world governed by the radical left of a socialist or communist bent that has freedom, democracy, human rights, or social and economic equality.

Even worse, none of the previously mentioned attributes are met in even the slightest way. Nothing at all; everything is based on rather obvious tricks and lies.

It is reasonable to think that over time these lies will stop working, but for now, against logic and reason, they still do. At the same time, logical reasoning has been replaced by emotional reasoning. Within the emotional sphere, all atrocities against freedom, democracy, and human rights are justified. In that space, religious, nationalist, and political dogmatisms and every kind of supremacism, including ideological supremacism, have great strength. In almost all cases, if not all, they are supported by exclusionary feelings—religious, racial, national, territorial, and ideological. All of them show contempt for other groups and therefore persecute them, repress them, exclude them, imprison them, even kill them. It is striking how all of them worldwide, though diametrically opposed, act together and almost in coordination. There we have nationalist, ultracapitalist Russia supporting or colluding with radical Islamists, totalitarian radical left communists, and with the lifelong president Alexander Lukashenko, supposedly elected democratically, although everything points to electoral fraud, with thousands of people detained who have reported torture and brutality, being of communist ideology. Its main allies are the People's Republic of China, ALBA countries, and Middle Eastern countries, especially Iran and Iraq. The ALBA countries (Spanish for Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America) are Venezuela, Cuba, Bolivia,

Nicaragua, the Commonwealth of Dominica, the Republic of Ecuador, Saint Vincent, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Antigua and Barbuda, and Saint Lucia.

Putin has built a structure based on and supported by oligarchs, politicians, businessmen, and financiers, all managed in an authoritarian and entirely undemocratic manner under his direction. According to Arnold Beichman, "Putinism in the 21st century has become as significant a slogan as Stalinism once was." Journalist George Will describes Putinism as national-socialism. Putin's party, United Russia, is classified as centrist, placed between the far left represented by Gennady Zyuganov, and the far right of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia represented by Vladimir Zhirinovsky, with the center-left party A Just Russia represented by Nikolai Levichev.

From my point of view, Putin is a far-right figure with a freedom-destroying political structure in the style of the old days of Stalinist repression, governing in favor of the power of the wealthy and the oligarchs.

Current governments of supposed communist or socialist left have abandoned the core pillar of their political theory, which centered on eliminating private property, the means of production, and social classes, due to its total inefficiency in practice. In fact, communism in Russia and in the countries of the former USSR and Eastern Europe collapsed because its system led them into poverty and social and economic backwardness. Not because of social protests or revolution, since their capacity for police

repression and social and personal control made them invulnerable. It was Mikhail Gorbachev, the last head of state of the USSR and secretary-general of the Soviet Communist Party, who began a transition process known as perestroika, which returned the Soviets to a market economy and to democracy. Perestroika was an economic reform aimed at restructuring the Soviet Union from a planned communist economy to a market economy, from totalitarianism to democratic openness, and ultimately to the dissolution of the USSR and the independence of fifteen republics.

All the people who, from within totalitarian systems, made democratic transitions possible, such as Adolfo Suárez and Mikhail Gorbachev, deserve our gratitude. In many cases, they are only the tip of the iceberg. In Spain, it involved millions, because behind and alongside Adolfo Suárez and King Juan Carlos I were political leaders Felipe González, Manuel Fraga, Santiago Carrillo and their respective political parties, all political forces with a minimum level of representation, the Catholic Church, business leaders, labor unions, the cultural sphere, intellectuals, artists, most of the military, and the vast majority of Spanish citizens. The United States is a champion of freedom, recognized as the world's leading economic power, with great virtues as well as certain shortcomings and limitations. In some matters, it intensifies an excess of individual freedom. According to the Second Amendment of the Constitution, citizens have the right to possess and carry weapons; it is the country with

the greatest freedom in the use of firearms. One can buy, use, and transport weapons such as pistols, revolvers, or shotguns for self-defense, sports activities, or hunting. Of all the constitutions in the world, only three include the right to own and carry firearms, and only the United States does so without explicit restrictions; the other two are Mexico and Guatemala. In advanced countries with democracy and well-trained police forces, security bodies guarantee citizen safety adequately, and the indiscriminate possession of weapons severely undermines it. From my point of view, the presence of armed individuals in my immediate surroundings without justification, without a defined social purpose, even when duly authorized, harms the freedom of others and my own. The United States is the country with the most massacres of innocent people without justification carried out by a single individual. From 1935 to the present, there have been 27 shootings with 10 or more fatalities, generally committed with pistols or semiautomatic rifles. The ultraliberals, focusing solely on the economy without social considerations or the pursuit of collective benefit, also harm the freedom of many people. It is a matter of seeking balance and coordination to maximize the freedom of everyone and of each individual.

The European Union is an example for understanding this form of freedom as I have defined it in the Pyramid of Freedom. It is reasonable not to allow driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or at excessive speed, just as it is reasonable not to allow noise that disturbs your neighbors' rest. In general, individual

freedom must be achieved in a complex conjunction with all the values that give freedom its concrete form. For this purpose, there are norms and laws of democratic origin, the product of popular sovereignty. With the world still immersed in the COVID pandemic, where is the limit of personal freedom and individual behavior in relation to the possible transmission of the disease to the rest of the citizens? It is evident that the intentional transmission of any disease is a criminal act, as has been considered in the case of HIV/AIDS. Nor is it logical to carry out an unjustified witch hunt around the pandemic, but rules and laws must be established regarding personal and social behavior to prevent illness, death, and social harm. It is also undoubtedly an aggressive and antisocial behavior not to take measures to prevent contagion and the spread of a disease that has clearly shown it causes harm, deaths, and devastation throughout the world. When people suffer globally and extensively, we must act with prudence, tolerance, and sensitivity. There is debate about whether people can be forced to be vaccinated despite the scientific evidence of vaccine effectiveness. Probably, this extreme should not be reached, but citizens should indeed be encouraged to do so. Access to vaccines around the world is practically universal and free, more clearly in some countries than in others. It is reasonable that in countries, regions, and certain workplaces or leisure settings, tests or vaccination certificates be required. Criticizing, as some radicals in the United States do, attempts to ban personalized vaccination campaigns on the grounds that they violate individual freedom is a philosophical absurdity.

In the overall balance, certain individual rights of lesser importance cannot be placed above the death of millions of people and the tremendous health, psychological, social, and economic damage suffered in a given country and in the world in general. The behavior of the world's citizens during the pandemic has been exceptional, and all of them deserved the applause given from windows and balconies during the early days of the crisis. Quite different has been the behavior of many politicians who chose authoritarianism, restrictions on freedoms beyond what was necessary, a lack of transparency, attempts to gain political advantage, and, in some cases, an increase in corruption in the procurement of goods and services.

In the Pyramid of Freedom, we represent the main sociopolitical value in an integral and balanced way, giving strength to each of the values that compose it. In a global shift in which some intellectuals seek to confuse values and concepts with lies, tricks, and devices meant to distort reality, it is important to classify each definition as precisely as possible. Cuba is not only clearly and evidently a dictatorship; there are no freedoms of any kind, there is constant oppression and repression, human rights are not respected in a generalized way, and the population is condemned to hunger and deprivation. It is absolutely inefficient, there is ideological, gender, and sexual-preference supremacism. Despite the immense poverty generated by the system itself, there is opulence among its leaders, their families, and friends. Equality does not exist, torture is practiced, and dissenters are persecuted. All who,

in one way or another, support, justify, endorse, or lie about its obvious reality are accomplices and responsible for everything that happens there. For some aberrant enemies of freedom, the trick is to lie and take refuge in supposed ideologies that they themselves blatantly and crudely violate. It is not possible to be egalitarian in economic terms or in wealth distribution while living in opulence and holding multimillion-dollar accounts obtained through usury, theft, and corruption. Nor can one claim to support freedom of sexual orientation while supporting and never criticizing the homophobic positions of other countries. Among the countries that restrict homosexual freedom of expression are China and Russia. Tolerance is, as defined by the RAE, "the respect for the ideas, beliefs, or practices of others when they are different from or contrary to one's own." It is a fundamental concept for understanding the Pyramid of Freedom, for exercising it, and for respecting that of others. Ideological supremacism is the most common form of intolerance. When we define the democratic range, it is by starting from the broadest possible way of including everyone within the libérrimo sphere in order to create a better world and give space to different types of thought. Thanks to the opening of thought, we moved from slavery to the medieval system and later to democracy with equality among citizens, always within the weaknesses of the human condition. Without a doubt, we are progressing toward a better world and will continue to do so, without achieving absolute perfection, which is the limit toward which we must aim, although we will never reach it in total and absolute form. In mathematics, a limit

is defined as the value or point that the results of an infinite sequence of magnitudes continuously and progressively approach. In our struggle for absolute and perfect freedom, controversy and discussion are necessary. Through the scientific method, based on accurate observation, induction from measurements, the formulation of hypotheses, and their verification or refutation, we arrive, in the latter case, at a thesis or scientific theory.

Scientific theory also serves to advance political concepts. I try to demonstrate this in my essays, in the previous one and this one, and I will probably focus on it more in the next, or in the one after that. It is also open for others to do the same so that together we can try and move forward. It is evident that, as of today, it is impossible to prove the existence or nonexistence of God, but in the human world almost everything philosophical, political, and social can be demonstrated or refuted sociologically, at least with today's knowledge.

Many who deny freedom, liberticides, reinvent concepts they attempt to appropriate to defend their political and ideological principles based on this specific point. They are intolerant of anyone who does not strictly follow their way of thinking; they take their superiority in this matter for granted, with their rules and their license, and they attempt to turn it into the fundamental cause of the world, positioning themselves as the owners of the concept and its development.

Equality is an intrinsic part of freedom, whatever type it may be. No one can be a good political or ideological example of equality if they do not practice and defend it in all fields, or if they are intolerant, corrupt, deceitful, fraudulent, or enemies of freedom. I insist that absolute perfection should not be demanded, but there must be an overall line of thought and action aligned with honesty, which is properly reflected in the Pyramid of Freedom. Philosophically speaking, one must stand with both the whole and the part; it is impossible to stand properly with the part when one is not right with the whole. In contrast, if one stands with the whole, one stands with the part—always imperfectly, with acceptable intention and personal and collective practice.

In recent decades, after a certain recognition of the essential values of freedom and democracy, we have entered a regressive process marked by structural falsehood, propaganda, the excessive and partisan use of the media, and the manipulation of emotions, passion, and growing radicalization.

They seek the ideological goal of maximizing certain differences, almost always false ones, avoiding consensus and promoting extremism and emotional confrontation between false opposing poles. On a personal and psychological level, the control and regulation of emotions is necessary, which psychologists and psychiatrists consider essential for well-being, happiness, social relationships, facing setbacks and problems in life, and enjoying everything good, appealing, and pleasant. Dr.

Augusto Cury states that he discovered Accelerated Thought Syndrome (ATS), which he considers the illness of the century. Living habitually through emotions, without time for reflection, calm, physical exercise, and constant exposure to messages is very harmful to people's physical and psychological health. Emotions are inherent to human beings, but manipulation, radicalization, deceit, and excessive conflict based on exaggeration are harmful to individuals, society, happiness, and even efficiency in any type of management. They increase stress, anxiety, fears, depression, and mental health disorders, and they incite violence.

In marketing and politics, many leaders have found in the intensification of emotions, blocking rationality and reflection, an effective way to radicalize political and social positions, proposing extreme alternatives solely to easily gain followers, social support, and votes. They generate social and personal harm, unnecessary conflicts, and general inefficiency, but they can win elections or fuel social movements that, through the use of force or revolution, allow them to govern in a populist, authoritarian, and totalitarian way. It is the pursuit of civil, social, and political confrontation for the benefit of certain social groups, political alternatives, personal interests, and false sectarian ideologies. It is not harmful to include emotions in social and political messages, but it is harmful to do so in a radicalized, deceitful way, generating hatred and even inciting violence while ignoring rationality in an absolutely liberticidal strategy. Curiously, in many countries such as

Spain, there are articles in the Penal Code punishing the incitement of hatred, but they are applied in a very particular manner when they should be enforced fairly and equally. Those who most strategically use radicalized emotional discourse are nationalists, ideological radicals, and those radicalized around race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, social class, and, in general, all supremacists. They base their actions on the belief that they are superior, that their interests are a priority and must be above everything and everyone, asserting the moral superiority of their ideas and believing they have the right to impose them on the rest of us. It is evident that we must reject any political ideological system that is liberticidal and does not accept the complete structure of *The Pyramid of Freedom*, always with the imperfections inherent to the human being. We are not perfect, individually or collectively, as facts and evidence show.

We have progressed continuously, especially over the last century, but we will never reach absolute perfection, even though we will keep moving in that direction. It is no longer possible to frame ideological debate around communism, socialism, or capitalism, because communism and socialism, both in their foundational theory and in practice, have been complete failures, liberticidal in concept and reality. Socialist and communist regimes have always collapsed due to their inefficient and unworkable systems. Freedom is and must be the heritage of humanity, belonging to everyone and for everyone. From my point of view, through my broad and complete interpretation of the

Pyramid of Freedom, the market economy is without a doubt the most just and efficient system, and practically the only economic system currently in force in the world. It is embraced and used even by former planned-economy countries after the failure of that model. To understand what remains of historical socialism and communism, we only need to look at the People's Republic of China. Officially, they remain communist and liberticidal, and they have not advanced at all politically in terms of freedom, human rights, or democracy. Yet they practice a radical, abusive capitalist system marked by deep social inequalities. They have become hyper-nationalist and are beginning to show certain imperialist tendencies, another striking oxymoron in which part of the democratic world participates through perverse, deceitful, and liberticidal interests. It resembles Hans Christian Andersen's well-known tale *The Emperor's New Clothes*, popularly called the naked king. Will anyone tell the king he is naked? Or will we continue trapped in grand, continuous, and scandalous lies?

Let us hope that, as in the story, there will be an innocent child who says that the king is naked, and that the rest of us will accept the obvious reality. In the tale, the weavers of the false suit fled, taking from the castle all the money, jewels, gold, and even the silks that had been given to them to make the garment.

Behind all these lies there are profits, power, corruption, and economic interests, along with accomplices driven by fear and shared incentives. Some people say that this short story was inspired by, or almost copied from, *Tale*

XXXII of *Count Lucanor*, written centuries earlier by Infante Don Juan Manuel.

In any kind of philosophical or political analysis, it is very important to avoid maximalism and fundamentalism. It is not advisable to disparage those who disagree; everything should be discussed and examined. Without a doubt, there is evidence and scientific conclusions in the realm of ideas as well, along with well-established and broadly accepted concepts throughout history that must be taken into account. In this sense, I base my analysis on the global concept of freedom in its widest scope, as the axis and principal sociopolitical value of human beings. Even this can and should be debated, although I am sure that the vast majority of the 7.7 billion people who inhabit the world would agree. Creating an extensive catalog of what is politically correct falls into the realm of aberration and sectarian indoctrination, which, when taken to the extreme, becomes ideological supremacism. We will advance more, better, and faster in creating a better world with an open mind, through dialogue and creativity. Those who readily disparage people who think differently act in a freedom-killing and undemocratic way. I am not at all in favor of persecuting anyone for thinking or expressing certain opinions, no matter how different they are, as long as they do not transgress democratically approved laws. Let us remember that within the Pyramid and definition of Freedom is the requirement to comply with democratic laws. We must be very careful with laws. In my view, they should never be made against a significant part of the

country, much less on the difficult issue of freedom of expression or against human rights as clearly described in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Someone may say that I label people as freedom-killing too easily when they are not in favor of freedom or act against it, but in this case I state clearly the definition of liberticida, just as a murderer is one who murders or a rapist is one who rapes. A current mistake is trying to judge people of the past using today's mindset and today's laws. By the same logic, people of the future could judge us with their new ways of thinking and future laws. It is absurd and unjust.

The past of Spain in Latin America should not be stigmatized while the past of Indigenous cultures is praised without criticism, as the recent president of Peru, Pedro Castillo, or the president of Mexico, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, have done. It is good to acknowledge and remember history with fair and analytical critical evaluation, but not as a political weapon or as part of everyday rhetoric. Rather, it belongs in the realm of historians, analysts, and writers, who have the obligation to be objective, rigorous, and to work without ideological, sectarian, or inflammatory filters. Analyzing with today's political lens what happened centuries or millennia ago is inappropriate, lacking rigor, and opportunistic.

During the pandemic, it seemed as though armed conflicts around the world had disappeared, with the exception of Cameroon and Ethiopia and other smaller, recurring ones such as those in the Middle East, Syria, and the Central African Republic, although this was really just

an illusion. In mid-August 2021, after 20 years of democracy imposed by the Americans, when international forces decided to leave Afghanistan, the Taliban quickly and unexpectedly seized most of the Afghan state by force. The Taliban are a paramilitary, political, fundamentalist Islamic movement that severely represses women's rights. As reported by journalist Jesús Buitrago on August 18, 2021, in the Spanish newspaper *La Razón*, the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) published a list of 29 prohibitions accompanied by harsh punishments, including death, directed against women. These include the prohibition on working outside the home except for a few doctors or nurses, any activity outside the home without the accompaniment of a male family member, and any interaction with male shopkeepers or being treated by male doctors; the prohibition on studying in any educational institution; the obligation to wear the burqa from head to toe; the prohibition on cosmetics, shaking hands with men, laughing loudly, wearing high-heeled shoes, traveling by taxi without a male family escort; the prohibition on appearing on radio, television, or in public gatherings; riding a bicycle or motorcycle; wearing brightly colored clothing; attending festive or public events; looking out from balconies or windows, which must be covered; and the prohibition of women's public baths. Men and women must be separated on buses; flared trousers are banned even under the burqa; photographing women is forbidden, and photographs of women printed in newspapers and books or hung on the walls of homes and shops are also banned. We must wait to see how the

situation evolves under the Taliban, who claim to come with different approaches but nevertheless insist on the compulsory application of sharia, or Islamic law, which is the basis for the prohibitions mentioned. Although women are the most mistreated, Islamism also harms and represses the rest of the population, with liberticidal practices and views that take us back thousands of years.

Many political commentators and journalists highlight these events as a resounding failure of the United States and its allies in their military intervention, even speaking of a military defeat and comparing it to the end of the Vietnam War on April 30, 1975, when a North Vietnamese tank entered the presidential palace. I do not fully agree with this characterization, and even less with the idea that the military intervention itself was a failure or that it should never have taken place. It is true that the withdrawal of US and allied forces can be described as improvised, disorderly, and deeply disappointing. At this moment, it is impossible to make a fair and minimally precise assessment of the 20 years of intervention.

On August 26, 2021, as reported by the newspaper ABC in a chronicle by Mikel Ayestaran and David Alandete, “at least 95 people, including 13 US soldiers, were killed in two attacks around the Kabul airport.” Unfortunately, the situation in Afghanistan has become more complicated; the fragile and incomplete democracy has collapsed, and a return to an implacable and bloody regime of radical Islamism is expected.

Also in ABC, on August 18, 2021, Josep Borrell said, “the Taliban have won the war and we have to talk to them.” I do not share this analysis or justification. In the worst-case scenario, there may be some specific agreements in line with The Hague treaties regarding the laws of war. Often, it is difficult to understand certain supposedly democratic leaders in their excessive tolerance toward genocidal, crimes-against-humanity perpetrators, and extreme liberticidal actors. Some become extremely particular in their demands in certain situations and, in far more serious cases, do the exact opposite. These are the same leaders who define Cuba as a democratic country, failing to condemn the continuous mistreatment of its citizens and the liberticidal actions against democracy and human rights. Somehow, they manage to justify the unjustifiable through excuses or parallel arguments. For example, in Venezuela, supported by liberticidal structures worldwide, such as China, Russia, North Korea, Iran, and radical leftist movements including hyper-nationalist far-right groups, they continuously call for lifting international pressure, citing the suffering of the population, when it is evident that this suffering is the direct result of crimes against humanity committed by Nicolás Maduro’s government. They claim that for humanitarian reasons, sanctions and blockades against governments like the Chavista regime should be lifted for the sake of the people, when what the Venezuelan people truly want is an end to the torture they have endured for over 20 years. The harsh reality is that those advocating

tolerance and leniency toward the Venezuelan government are actually seeking to benefit the leaders, their ideology, and ensure the continuity of the regime, severely harming the country, its economy, and, above all, its impoverished and exploited citizens. These circumstances demand a more democratic and minimally organized regulation of global political structures. Greater understanding, negotiation, and consensus among the libérrimos are urgently needed. It is incomprehensible that certain sectors seek conflict among democrats and defenders of freedom while negotiating with or even supporting clearly liberticidal countries and structures.

This also occurs in democratic countries where, due to an excessive vision of certain powers, political forces within the democratic range prefer to make deals, negotiate, and reach consensus with other political groups outside the range of ideological behavior—at least partially liberticidal—and constantly seek confrontation with their politically libérrimo competitors.

In this case, let us take the example of Pedro Sánchez and his government. I prefer to refer to the current Prime Minister of Spain rather than the PSOE, whose conduct during the Spanish political transition was exemplary. This includes former President Felipe González and the vast majority of the party's historical leaders over the last fifty years, such as Alfonso Guerra, Javier Solana, Francisco Fernández Ordóñez, Narcís Serra, Miguel Boyer, Carlos Solchaga, Enrique Barón, Gregorio Peces Barba,

Alfredo Pérez Rubalcaba, Joaquín Leguina, and Nicolás Redondo, father and son, among many others.

One should not come to power at any cost, and even less so through pacts and concessions with liberticidal forces. Within the democratic range, possibly close to or even above 80% of the population falls, so it is almost mandatory to form a government based on the forces within this range and to try to build consensus on major national policies with the largest number of people who fall within that democratic spectrum. Politics should be understood as the organization and management of society's interests for the benefit of all, in the most just and equitable way possible, with maximum efficiency and with strict respect for freedoms, democracy, and human rights. With these concepts in mind, it is also desirable to govern for everyone, never seeking to pit one part of the population against another, especially when the groups are of similar size. Radicalism and division are traps within the system that we should overcome; for now, they sometimes work and allow opportunists and populists with outdated ideologies to gain power and its perks. They exaggerate problems, invent others, manipulate and deceive about facts, the past, and history, presenting themselves as saviors of the nation, even though they ultimately cause harm and, in some cases, bring countries to the brink of destruction. Dictators, once the people are fully repressed, punished, and controlled, and problems arise—which happens frequently—make external enemies up.

Most of the time, dictatorships generate a generalized state of terror through imprisonments, torture, all kinds of socioeconomic damage, kidnappings, and murders. In the case of the Taliban in Afghanistan, they threaten to kill not only those who think differently or collaborated with the previous democratic system but also their immediate family members. Soon, there will be those who, once established after the armed takeover, appeal to the suffering of the people to gain certain support. The more external support these regimes and dictatorships receive, the more they insist on maintaining internal terror. The harsher the dictatorship, the more it makes the population suffer, especially women and children. According to ABC on August 31, 2021, in an article by Montañés, Spanish government minister Irene Montero stated regarding Afghanistan that “in all countries, women are oppressed” and “this happens in Afghanistan, regarding access to education, health, and work; but it also happens in Spain, with intolerable rates of gender-based violence.”

Evidently, these statements are misleading and attempt to homogenize everyone’s behavior in order to radicalize discourse in Spain for particular interests, while subtly lending support to tyrants and despots. This type of rhetoric departs from centrality, as seen in advanced European Union countries, where the Nordic nations, Germany, France, Italy, the United Kingdom, Spain, the Benelux, and others are clear examples. Political parties within the democratic range share very similar and advanced positions on issues such as gender equality and

respect for sexual freedom, including liberals, social democrats, conservatives, Christian democrats, centrists, and greens. To a lesser extent, nationalists and far-right or far-left groups fall outside the democratic range and maintain liberticidal behaviors.

The concept of centrality does not strictly include only those of center, center-left, or center-right—though they form the vast majority—but also those who believe government should serve everyone, involving all citizens in decision-making, and seeking to reach consensus on the most important policies. It does not include those who consider themselves “kings of dialogue” because they only align policies within their own ideology, sometimes to oppose others, when true and necessary consensus involves engaging with different perspectives to find intermediate points of convergence. Centrality lies within the democratic range, but even within this range, there is a minority that does not seek centrality, dialogue, or consensus. In my view, centrality is both desirable and essential within the framework of freedom, democracy, and human rights.

Today it is more difficult to define what is left and right, since the theories of utopian socialism, communism, and theoretical socialism—defined by the RAE as “a system of social and economic organization based on the collective or state ownership and management of the means of production and distribution of goods”—have collapsed due to inefficiency and deeply liberticidal practices. Social-democratic parties still exist, calling themselves socialist,

but their theories and practices are far removed from the original socialist model. After abandoning totalitarian models and embracing freedom and democracy for more than seventy years, most of these parties have positioned themselves within the democratic range, often near the center. Currently, some, like the Spanish socialists, have abandoned centrality and are associating with positions, groups, and political parties—both domestic and foreign—that are liberticidal, operating outside the democratic range. I hope this recent regression of certain social-democratic parties is merely a short-term tactical move and that they will return to the democratic range and, if possible, to centrality.

This backward process, which is harmful both for them and for the health of global democracy, seems driven by the loss of influence of democratic society and the search by parties and leaders for shortcuts to regain power, even opportunistically and temporarily. The global political spectrum is often structured from extreme left to extreme right, passing through radical left, center-left, center, center-right, and right. Extremes, both left and right, tend to be liberticidal and lie outside the democratic range; radicals are partially liberticidal, hovering inside or just outside the range; moderate left and right and the center occupy the heart of the democratic range and centrality. One could define someone as more left-leaning to the extent that they prioritize economic equality, collectivism, public policies, higher taxes, and state intervention as the highest social values, even at the expense of freedoms. Conversely,

someone is more right-leaning to the extent that they prioritize liberty, a market economy, and competition, becoming more radical as they disregard equality, collectivism, social policies, and the welfare state. At the extremes are parties advocating for unrestrained capitalism, supremacists, and nationalists; within the extreme left, certain forms of supremacism also appear, such as ideological supremacy.

In this updated definition of the left-right political spectrum, unusual and difficult-to-understand agreements occur between highly divergent politicians, which can only be explained by an excessive ambition for power, of any kind.

At the extremes are the divisive, deceitful, liberticidal, dictatorial, tyrannical, populist, and, in many cases, perpetrators of crimes against humanity; the extremes feed off themselves. In the United States, the radicalism and populism of Donald Trump generated and increased the radicalism of certain leftist sectors within the Democratic Party, such as leaders Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren, currently serving as senators. In June 2021, the Maduro government reported a meeting it held with the Democratic Socialists of America, a group that includes four Democratic Party representatives in Congress. This group pressures to lift sanctions on Maduro's regime despite its repeated violations of human rights and crimes against humanity.

We live in a time of rapid change, including shifts in ideologies and their content. Today, the banner of freedom and the principles of its Pyramid are embraced by the majority of the world's population, though not by their rulers, who often prioritize power for themselves, their families, friends, and allies. Many more changes will occur, which will evolve public management systems, ideologies, and economic and financial structures. However, in times of structural problems, upheavals, and economic crises, authoritarian and totalitarian positions often resurface and strengthen. This has been evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, in which many public officials—especially heads of government and state—have taken advantage of the situation to limit freedoms beyond what was strictly necessary, reduce transparency, and in some cases attempt to establish a “new normal” or even a shift toward a new political order. I believe and hope this will ultimately fail, and that once the pandemic is reasonably controlled, we can return to our previous normality and, in some measure, hold those who overstepped accountable for their excesses, measures, and mistakes. As I have repeatedly noted, the Chinese Communist government has been especially culpable for failing to prevent the pandemic, maintaining dangerous food practices, being responsible for the origin of the pandemic, mismanaging its control, lacking transparency and international cooperation, spreading misinformation about the virus, and using its questionable and mediocre vaccines to gain political influence worldwide. This is what is known so far, but it is likely that further information will emerge in the coming months and years,

revealing greater culpability and further exposing the perverse nature of their actions.

Along the same lines, the World Health Organization is also culpable for failing to prevent the pandemic, despite sufficient early indications that such an event was possible and likely, for not providing timely information, for lacking transparency, and for what clearly appears to be an attempt to cover up the actions of the Chinese government. The United Nations is likewise responsible for the WHO's conduct and for failing to take any corrective measures—a stance that continues to this day, September 2021.

The only real success of global leaders during the pandemic was supporting the urgent development of vaccines and policies for rapid, universal, and free distribution to the population. Even so, more public funding could have been allocated to accelerate development, production, and distribution. Accelerating vaccine approval systems was certainly positive. The funding provided by the European Union through the WARP SPE operation—\$3.79 billion—was very modest compared to the \$18 billion spent by the United States, despite the EU having a larger population (446 million versus 328 million in the U.S.). Moreover, the U.S. acted much earlier. In this regard, the war against the pandemic has largely been won by the United States, which deserves significant global recognition. Even Donald Trump, often criticized for populism and his refusal to acknowledge Biden's victory, should be credited for supporting vaccine development, which has saved tens of

millions of people from severe health problems and mitigated profound economic and democratic damage worldwide. To put the EU's contribution in perspective, the \$3.79 billion spent on vaccine development is just 1/531 of the nearly €2 trillion earmarked for the European Recovery Plan at current prices. This highlights how insignificant the funding was in comparison to broader economic recovery efforts. While the EU's recovery plan can leverage this structural action to address other pending issues, the speed and effectiveness of U.S. vaccine development and distribution clearly surpassed Europe's efforts. The three most efficient vaccines were American, and one only needs to imagine the global situation today if U.S. vaccines and leadership had not existed.

The political and marketing tactic of divisionism aims to radicalize discourse by portraying anyone who thinks differently as an extreme of the opposite side. For example, left-wing divisionists often label even moderate right-wing individuals as fascists, while right-wing divisionists label left-wing individuals as communists. Neither is correct. The truth is that the radicals and liberticides are those who seek to demonize and discredit their opponents. This becomes especially clear when these radical divisionists gain power, often through force or underhanded tactics, and reveal their authoritarian and totalitarian style of governance. They exacerbate the situation by targeting those they oppose with insults and hatred, labeling them as haters according to their own personal or political interests.

There are three concepts that currently dominate political debate in the countries with the most effective democracies: gender equality, freedom of sexual orientation and practice—including all LGBTIQ+ identities—and the green, ecological mindset that seeks balance with nature, flora, and fauna while combating climate change. In principle, these are essential values for anyone who considers themselves committed to liberty and a defender of the Pyramid of Freedom. Historically, these concepts have been severely violated by tyrannies and political dictatorships. We cannot assume that defenders of these values are strictly left- or right-leaning; rather, they are champions of freedom and centrality, and have little or nothing in common with divisionists who strategically defend these issues partially for instrumental purposes.

The defense of any democratic value is always positive, better still when it is embraced by everyone in a comprehensive, open-minded, inclusive, and participatory way. It is impossible for a liberticide, totalitarian, or perpetrator of crimes against humanity to be a champion of any specific democratic or freedom-related value. It is also a worrying and undemocratic sign when someone sets themselves up as the guardian or near-owner of a democratic value, issuing “certificates of suitability” to others. I recall that in 1990, the director of the publishing house *Temas de Hoy* of Grupo Planeta, Imelda Navajo, invited me along with another writer, sociologist, and columnist for *El País* to write a new essay on sexuality. By that time, I had already published another work in 1989

with my friend, journalist and writer Antonio Pérez Henares, and psychiatrist José María Valls Blanco, titled *La conducta sexual de los españoles* (The sexual conduct of Spanish people) in the Reporter series of Ediciones B, part of Grupo Zeta.

The writer and sociologist, a contributor to *El País*, was considered by himself to be the only feminist man in Spain. I agreed with the majority of what he wrote and was enthusiastic about the idea of being a man and a feminist, understanding this as a full defense of total gender equality and a denunciation of practices deemed sexist. Independently, through my good friend, journalist Julián Lago, I met the wife of this journalist, a well-known actress. I will not mention the columnist's name with whom I ultimately did not collaborate, though I did write and publish on my own in Imelda Navajo's publishing house in 1992, *Los españoles y la sexualidad Informe Malo de Molina*. (The Spanish people and sexuality. Report Malo de Molina). Later, through Julián, I learned of the serious and ongoing physical abuse that this supposed champion of feminism inflicted on his wife. This does not mean that everyone who defends a cause vehemently is necessarily deceitful or hypocritical, but those who try to instrumentalize and claim ownership over values that belong to everyone and serve society demonstrate ulterior motives and a lack of honesty. The actress publicly denounced her husband's behavior, who passed away in 2008. Even if one does not hold religious beliefs, allow me to mention a verse from the

evangelist Saint Matthew, written almost 2,000 years ago: “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead bones and decay. In the same way, on the outside you appear righteous, but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.” It is positive and necessary to encourage all political groups: parties, unions, associations, or pressure groups, to defend the Pyramid of Freedom in its entirety, including the contemporary values of gender equality, sexual freedom, and environmentalism. Each group can then position itself according to its own judgment—right, center, or left—while always defending the supreme value of freedom within what we have termed the democratic range. Beyond these three prominent values, we must lament new problems or the worsening of existing ones: the rise of populism, the manipulative use of social media and the virtual world, the constant spread of lies often presented cynically and live, the perpetual search for confrontation, ideological supremacism, and the appropriation of the state, power, and government management for the benefit of certain people, ideologies, or political parties. The COVID-19 pandemic and its management have exacerbated these liberticidal tendencies. In general, these anti-democratic actions tend to cluster around divisionism, the fostering of social conflict, lack of consensus, the promotion of hatred, and visceral reactions. Ultimately, they represent a drift away from centrality and a weakening of the democratic range.

There are political practices that are common in democracies, historically accepted as part of usual negotiation, considered democratic and honest, but which ultimately involve exchanging votes and support for economic benefits, improvements for specific groups, regions, laws, or even pardons. From my perspective, votes should not be traded for such favors. Sometimes the exchange is subtle, but other times it is a clear barter: “you give me this, I give you that; you help me govern, and I allocate more state budget for certain projects, groups, regions, or towns... or you support a law in exchange for targeted funds.” In politics, the phrase “Caesar’s wife must not only be honest, but also appear so” is often cited. Plutarch originally said this 2084 years ago referring to the divorce of Julius Caesar and Pompeia: “Caesar’s wife must be above suspicion.” Applying this proverb today, politicians should at least avoid being so explicit in their maneuvers, which ideally should not be allowed, or at the very least should not appear so. Currently, it seems that such exchanges are legal; hopefully, laws will change soon. I greatly appreciate the parliamentary system, where governments are obliged to continuously explain their actions, and everything is decided through open political debate, including the drafting of laws, approval of state budgets, and oversight of the political, economic, legal, and social system. If even these debates are subject to exchanges, favors, compensations, public appointments, or pardons, the concept of Parliament and open debate becomes clearly corrupted, even if the practice appears legal and is not classified as a crime.

Laws should be enacted so that the exchange of votes for favors and privileges is not allowed and is therefore clearly defined as corruption and considered a crime. Today, on the CNN en Español program, I heard the host José Antonio Montenegro, prior to an interview with Mauro F. Guillén, a professor at the University of Cambridge, present a scenario of the world over the past decades in which, according to him, the real problems were social inequalities and climate change, without mentioning freedom, and only adding at the end a very appropriate caveat: “always with the imperative of democracy and human rights.”

The essence of democracy and social values lies in freedom, and these two factors—equality and democracy—are part of the Pyramid of Freedom. Economic equality is one aspect of equality, as are equality of economic rights and duties, gender equality, and other fundamental elements such as the equality of human rights as outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. I mention this because many people divert attention from the fundamental issue to highlight secondary topics, avoiding the core discussion. Social equality cannot exist without freedom, democracy, and human rights, and at the same time, the lack of equality and insufficient attention to ecology and potential climate change problems weakens freedom. However, all of this must always be seen under the primacy of freedom, democracy, and human rights—or, as Montenegro also said, “with the imperative of democracy and human rights.”

Yesterday, October 5, 2021, Frances Haugen testified before the United States Senate after filing a complaint against Facebook, as reported by almost all media outlets. The former product manager stated that she was the source of the documents leaked to The Wall Street Journal, accusing Mark Zuckerberg's company of prioritizing economic interests over public benefits and welfare. Criticism and debate about any topic, company, media outlet, or social network are very positive and enriching. It is evident that all media companies or social networks prioritize their corporate interests, including their ideology, professional success, and especially the economic success of their projects over social welfare, which is quite obvious. Personally, I am not very fond of Facebook or Instagram, but I consider them an intrinsic part of the digital era and the communication revolution, as are other social networks.

Social networks undoubtedly have many peculiarities and flaws that should be corrected, always without infringing on freedom of opinion, communication, or free enterprise. These new forms of communication, called social networks, are recent, and given the pace of change, they will likely undergo many transformations and be replaced by alternatives with different characteristics. In most media, there is too much low-quality content, and in digital media, the amount of false information and fake news is probably even worse than in traditional outlets. Perhaps the biggest problem is activity through fake

identities and bots, used for manipulative and deceptive purposes. As I have written before, the virtues of the digital world far outweigh its flaws. Among these are the universal access to culture, information, communication, and education at little or no cost—essentially the democratization of knowledge. The problem with social networks and the digital world is that they are the closest thing to a monopoly and, in most cases, an oligopoly. Control is concentrated in the hands of Google, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp (the last three owned by the same company), Twitter, TikTok, and other platforms like dating apps such as Tinder. Within each sector, there are pseudo-oligopolies. Since there is no global government and even less global democracy, there are no international laws beyond national legislation and agreements, which have little enforcement power worldwide. Digital communication, whether streaming, videos, movies, audio, written texts, newspapers, essays, educational books, novels, illustrations, images, and photographs, will dominate everything we know and consume. Digital media already reigns over the world and will do so increasingly, almost absolutely, which is why it must be governed in a free and democratic way, in line with the Pyramid of Freedom. It is both sad and abusive that companies controlling global information and knowledge, such as Google and the others mentioned, not only form an oligopoly but also control content, acting as both judge and party while imposing their ethical and ideological codes on users.

The digital oligopoly must be broken, and ideological control over the distribution and use of ideas through digital systems should not be allowed. Shortly after the denunciation and frontal attack on Facebook, its CEO and main shareholder, Mark Zuckerberg, launched a new concept, the Metaverse, together with his former Harvard classmates Eduardo Saverin, Dustin Moskovitz, and Chris Hughes. This represents a new leap in the digital world across entertainment, culture, education, and the economy, aligning closely with ideas presented in *The Market of Ideas*. In any case, the digital world, supported by technology, is set to revolutionize ideology, moving toward greater decentralization and democratization. Far from returning to a past of ideological radicalism and political control, or even totalitarianism, we are advancing toward increased freedom, including in finance and the economy. This freedom does not mean greater power for economic systems, large corporations, or monopolies; quite the opposite, it is the empowerment of individuals. It represents another step toward a more efficient and evolved market within the Pyramid of Freedom. The role of traditional banking will be significantly affected by tokens and cryptocurrencies, especially with the upcoming introduction of the crypto-dollar and crypto-euro. The classic monetary system and its management will also evolve and change. Other assets may gain more significance as benchmarks, such as real estate, both construction and land, as well as agricultural and development land. This will

be akin to a revolution within capitalism itself, but likely more just, democratic, and efficient, especially in a freer world with fewer dictatorships. This transformation will take time and follow a jagged path, but the concept is already among us, and sooner or later, it will prevail.

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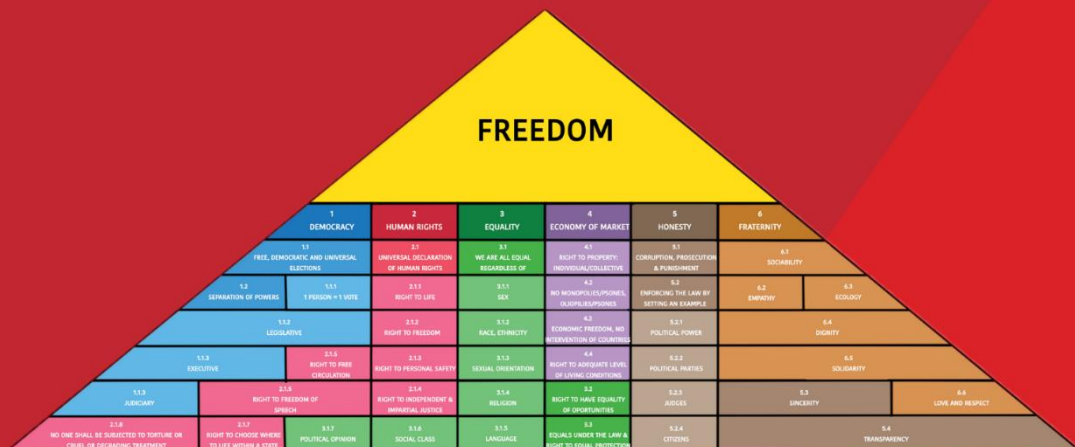
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This work by Carlos Malo de Molina is an homage to freedom where he develops the sociopolitical values pyramid that freedom makes up, where on the second level would be the following concepts: 1. Democracy, 2. Human Rights, 3. Equality, 4. Market economy, 5. Honesty, and 6. Fraternity. These values are a fundamental and essential part of freedom.

1. Democracy is in turn supported by: 1.1 Free, democratic, and universal elections. 1.2 Separation of powers.

2. Human Rights rest on: 2.1 The Universal Declaration of Human Rights issued by the United Nations.

3. Equality rests on: 3.1 We are all equal regardless of our sex, race or ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, language, social class, or political opinion, 3.2 The right to equal opportunities, and 3.3 We are all equal before the law.

4. The market economy rests on: 4.1 The right to private property, individually and collectively, 4.2 Absence of monopolies, oligopolies, monopsonies, and oligopsonies, 4.3 Respect by countries for economic freedom in the world, 4.4 Welfare State, health, transportation and public security.

5. Honesty rests on: 5.1 The absence, prosecution, and punishment of corruption, 5.2 Demanding compliance with the law, 5.3 Sincerity, and 5.4 Transparency.

6. Fraternity rests on: 6.1 Sociability, 6.2 Empathy, 6.3 Ecology, the protection of the environment, 6.4 Dignity, 6.5 Solidarity, and 6.6 Love and respect.