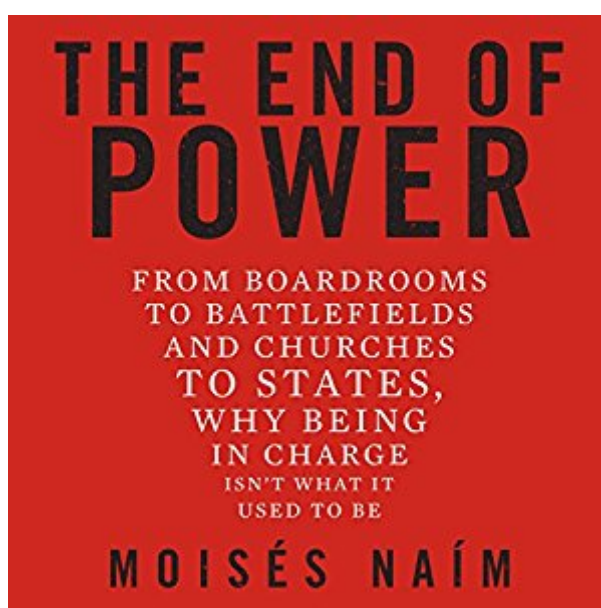


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# The End Of Power: From Boardrooms To Battlefields And Churches To States, Why Being In Charge Isn't What It Used To Be



## Synopsis

Power is shifting - from large, stable armies to loose bands of insurgents, from corporate leviathans to nimble start-ups, and from presidential palaces to public squares. But power is also changing, becoming harder to use and easier to lose. As a result, argues award-winning columnist and former Foreign Policy editor Niall Ferguson, all leaders have less power than their predecessors, and the potential for upheaval is unprecedented. In *The End of Power*, Niall Ferguson illuminates the struggle between once-dominant megaplayers and the new micropowers challenging them in every field of human endeavor. The antiestablishment drive of micropowers can topple tyrants, dislodge monopolies, and open remarkable new opportunities, but it can also lead to chaos and paralysis. Drawing on provocative, original research and a lifetime of experience in global affairs, Niall Ferguson explains how the end of power is reconfiguring our world.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Mark Zuckerberg hit it out of the park with this one, the first selection in his attempt to channel Oprah Winfrey with his own "book club." • *The End of Power* is a remarkably insightful inquiry into the limits of power in today's wired world, when a tiny group of fanatics can upend national policy half a world away. As Naim writes, referring not just to global leadership but to corporate executive suites, established churches, and the military,

“the powerful are experiencing increasingly greater limits on their power. . . In the twenty-first century, power is easier to get, harder to use and easier to lose. We often speak of the complexity of the modern world, but we tend to lose sight of just how complex it is. Consider this: in 1941, when I was born, world population stood at roughly 2.3 billion, whereas today we humans number 7.2 billion. Then, there was a total of 61 sovereign states on the planet. Today, there are 193 members of the United Nations, more than three times as many. But the number of players on the world stage today is far greater than that, including a plethora of global and regional organizations and what the media has come to call “non-state players” such as ISIS and Al Qaeda, all of which have come into being in the last seventy years. The upshot is that a US State Department list of treaties currently in force runs to almost five hundred pages! Add to these facts the speed and breadth of reach of information technologies and “profound shifts in expectations, values, and social norms, and the case seems made. “But the more fundamental explanation as to why barriers to power have become more feeble, Naim writes, “has to do with the transformation in such diverse factors as rapid economic growth in many poor countries, migratory patterns, medicine and healthcare, education, and even attitudes and cultural mores. In the midst of all this complexity, how could anyone hope to be the master of all he surveys? Naim analyzes the means by which power is expressed, referring to them as Muscle (coercion), Code (obligation), Pitch (persuasion), and Reward (inducement). He posits three overarching phenomena that give rise to weakening the barriers to power: the More revolution (there’s more of everything now), the Mobility revolution (we and our money, not just communications, move around a lot faster now), and the Mentality revolution (“taking nothing for granted anymore”). Like any typology, Naim’s are debatable – other thinkers may carve up reality along different lines – but they ring true to my ear. After all, to note what he calls “a cascading diffusion of power, we have only to look at the gridlock that has overtaken the political process in many nations (not just the US) and the shocking ability of micropowers – those “non-state actors” – to change the course of world history. Even “a core axiom of war has been stood on its head. Once upon a time, superior firepower ultimately prevailed. Now that is no longer true. There are parallel developments in nearly every realm of human endeavor. For example, “the advantage long considered to be built into corporate scale, scope, and hierarchy has been blunted, or even transformed into a

handicap. These are not superficial changes or limited to one region of the globe. [S]ince 2004, Naim writes, “three-quarters of the world’s economies have made it easier to start a business. Rising competition, indeed! Naim sees these developments as fraught with risk. He writes of five significant ones: Disorder (obviously), De-Skilling and Loss of Knowledge (witness Fox News), the Banalization of Social Movements (through social media, “sound bites, and oversimplified pitches by politicians and NGOs), Boosting Impatience and Shortening Attention Spans (just look around), and Alienation (obviously). The End of Power is endlessly thought-provoking a worthy addition to our understanding of the way the world works today. Moises Naim has an extraordinary resume. Born in Libya, educated at MIT, a former Venezuelan Minister of Trade and Industry and former Executive Director of the World Bank, he was the editor in chief of Foreign Policy magazine from 1996 to 2010. The End of Power is only the latest of the more than ten books he has written or edited.

It is definitely a book to get you thinking. That being said, I feel like it maybe is a little too dedicated to the idea that power is only tending towards fracturing and cumulative dissolution. I feel that the threat of a broader consolidation of power has only become easier in the sense of the effective power. In 1950, there was only 1 nuclear power, and now there are many. That DOESN'T mean that that single nuclear power has gotten weaker, but rather that there is altogether more destructive power in play in the world. Even in 1950, it isn't as though the US could have "conquered the world" because it was the only country with nuclear weapons- that alone wouldn't have been sufficient. The same remains true today. The USA is the strongest nuclear power, and military power, but, comparatively the other major powers have ALSO become more powerful. The difference is, that while the US wasn't capable of decimating the world single-handedly in 1950... it could now. So could Russia. So can China. Perhaps so could France and Great Britain. The OVERALL ability to project force/destruction/power has only increased across the board. The same could be said about economic power. While there was a global economy in 1950, it wasn't nearly as large and developed as it is now. That gives another lever of power to large countries which they really didn't have before. Hard and soft power have become much more interchangeable and mutually supporting. Economic sanctions in 1950 might not have had much of an effect on many smaller countries in 1950... but in the modern world? Besides countries which have explicitly prepared for them, they can be more economically devastating than an actual war, in some cases. Definitely should be read!

I started the book with great enthusiasm, but after a few dozen pages started perceiving a rotten smell. It started smelling like apologism and rethoric. You start reading things like 'trust your leaders or nothing will ever get done'. Or 'social media doesn't really empower people that much, don't feel too enthusiastic'. Of course these are not exact quotes, I'm just paraphrasing here. Honestly, I could not finish the book. I started reading Noham Chomsky's Understanding Power to wash it away. I would suggest anyone to go read that instead.

To many people, there is a yes or no answer to everything. Power cannot please all the people, but shifting the power through the use of four channels is what this book is based upon, not the end of power. Moises Niam, a talented commentator having had a career in both government and journalism tries to cover the globe and explains his theory on the structure of power, from his statistics and anecdotes developed through his own writing formula. For those wishing to enter leadership of any kind, then this does become a must read, as its content is about mind changing actions regarding world-views. Everything and anything to do with power and how one attains it, or loses it, is covered by conversational interviews and examples to prove his points. With interest, I delved into the chapter regarding the power of advertising and how the mighty players yield their power of persuasion through many worldly channels. Right there is worth the money to purchase this book if you are in any way contemplating a marketing career. Moises Niam, also cleverly uses words to build up his readers knowledge on an abundant of faith following powers. There use of future actions, and how they have their own job banks for their followers, is described through his pitch and how he sees their rewards given. However, I don't think this book is for everyone as it could have been condensed, and not so repetitious as he steers you in his outlook of some surprising powerful mind opening possibilities. Your choice, if you have an open mind and not closed to others opinions it is a very insightful read.

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