

# **ANTANAS MOCKUS, FROM URBAN LEADER TO PRESIDENT OF COLOMBIA?**

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Antanas Mockus (former mayor of Bogotá in the 1995 periods -1998 and 2001-2004) is [very well placed for the Colombian presidential elections](#) and it also does so from the [Green Party](#). **A Colombian president of the Green Party?** Who is [Antanas Mockus](#)?

A strange character, of course, strange by European standards (his appearances dressed as [are famous superhero](#)), that kind of strange character that we easily label around here as a populist. However, he is a political leader who is similar to other personalities who have stood out in Latin America for their **vision and career path in urban politics**. Characters like [Sergio Fajardo](#) (former mayor of Medellín 2004-2007), [Jaime Lerner](#) (former mayor of Curitiba in the periods 1971-1975, 1979-1983 and 1989-1992 ) or [Enrique Peñalosa](#) (former mayor of Bogotá 1997-2001). All of them, significant names of some of the main **most emblematic actions of recent years** of intervention in Latin American cities. The transformation of the marginal neighborhoods of Bogotá through the extension of civic and citizen attention centers, the generalization of massive public transport systems, the introduction of large areas exclusively for pedestrian use, the creation of rapid bus transport systems (such as the case of [Transmilenio](#) of Bogotá, based in turn on the Curitiba model) , the processes of social pedagogy to put an end to the levels of insecurity in the streets, to save water among citizens, the opening to the presence of the [bicycle](#) on the streets, etc.

In the Green Party primaries, in fact, Enrique Peñalosa and Antanas Mockus came to present themselves as opponents, the latter emerging as the winner and candidate, who was later joined in his candidacy as second Sergio Fajardo. In the [government program](#) defended by the Green Party of Colombia -signed also by Peñalosa and even by another former mayor of Bogotá and also a candidate in the primaries, [Luis Eduardo Garzón](#)- for the presidential elections, his proposal can be understood a little better and the imprint that his trajectories in urban management have left on him. Specifically, along the lines of [Human Cities](#) we can find related proposals with the reactivation of urban space, the rationalization of land use, the improvement of street safety, etc., but even in the rest of the proposals there is a high component of proposals closely linked to urban issues in terms of transport , environment, attention to citizenship, etc.

All this seems almost an abnormality; We already know that the party system outside of Europe has other different keys that make the rise and fall of these parties constant in many countries because they depend more on the faces that represent them at all times. It is also abnormal that a green party - without going into the substance of the question about the ecological political movement - can manage to govern a country of the importance of Colombia. The most curious thing is the conjunction of forces of urban leaders who are a reference for having introduced courageous urban improvement policies in different orders. **El País** titled it a few days ago as the "[green tsunami](#)" and **El Mundo** highlights Mockus's [use of pedagogy and symbols](#).

On May 30 will be the elections; it is expected that there will have to be a second round in June because no candidate will reach an absolute majority. If the results are consolidated, we may see Antanas Mockus as president. So, if the case arises, it is possible that things will start to get mixed up, attention will be focused on what relationship he will have with Venezuela and Hugo Chávez, his eccentric character will be highlighted and we will be left with the anecdotal. But beyond that, it is good to put on the table the names of some mayors who have made courageous efforts to improve their cities.

In the video you can find an interview with Antanas Mockus that I found through [Ciudad Posible](#), in which your vision can be understood, for example , on the **public space**. It is worth watching the

interview and realizing that, beyond his personality, we are dealing with a person who has a social discourse that is difficult to find in most political leaders.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=BufUVi\\_JEW8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=BufUVi_JEW8)

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