

Europe's far-right educational projects and their vision for the international order

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Currently overshadowed by the heat and sparks generated by populists such as former US President Donald Trump and Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, another right-wing project is flourishing in Europe, forging a new vision of the liberal international order. Figures including Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and former French National Front politician Marion Maréchal (who dropped Le Pen from her last name) envisage a global order composed of proud nations and are committed to promoting capitalist market society, while also rejecting the liberal 'cultural' revolution they see as having been wrought by global liberal institutions such as the WTO, IMF and EU.

In contrast to the unilateralism represented by Trumpism in the United States,¹ the political actors and organic intellectuals² of the new right in Europe do not reject the liberal international order wholesale, nor do they argue for deglobalization. These figures have developed a multifaceted approach to the liberal international order which combines both 'globalist' and illiberal positions, together representing what we call 'globalist illiberalism'.

We use the terms 'globalist' and 'illiberal' with care. Historian Quinn Slobodian's study of the intellectual architects of the liberal—and neo-liberal—international order shows how figures like Friedrich Hayek and Ludwig von Mises developed a multigenerational 'globalist' project, one of the most consequential intellectual and institutional undertakings for the twentieth-century world order.³ The group we call 'globalist illiberals', with Viktor Orbán's Hungary in the vanguard, build on some of the foundations of classical globalist ideology, but also seek to transform some of its elements. They link a radicalized Christian democracy with hyper-nationalism, and weave it into a pro-market ideology that argues for barrier-free trade globally, with a strong nationalist state steering the nation's competitiveness in global capitalism.

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¹ Kiran Nasir Gore, 'An introduction to the Trump effect on the future of global dispute resolution', *George Washington International Law Review* 51: 4, 2019, pp. 633–42.

² By organic intellectuals we refer to actors who produce knowledge and advance an ideology in their attempt to establish a new hegemony.

³ Quinn Slobodian, *Globalists: the end of empire and the birth of neoliberalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018).

Slobodian has traced the origins of globalism to the dismantling of the Austro-Hungarian empire at the end of the First World War. Observing with dismay the surge of nationalist movements and imposition of borders within what had been the expanse of the former empire, Hayek and other 'internationalist' economists concluded that nation-states were bad for capitalist markets. Slobodian's examination of three generations of globalists from the 1920s to the 1990s shows that they were never anti-state, but rather understood governance as best employed at a supranational level, and therefore objected to *nation*-states.

Globalists believed that nationalism created borders and tariffs which limited free trade and the movement of commodities. Hence their long-term strategy to develop *global* institutions for regulating capitalism. Slobodian describes this view of the relationship between governance and markets as one of 'encasement': capitalist markets needed to be encased by appropriate institutions on a supranational scale for their ideal regulation.

In contrast to some institutional histories of the liberal international order which see it as a progressive Enlightenment project constructed by the United States in the aftermath of the Second World War,⁴ Slobodian shows that globalism was born in central Europe with the end of empire, and eyed democracy as a threat to capitalism. Unlike G. John Ikenberry's view that the liberal international order was 'open, loosely rules-based and progressively oriented',⁵ Slobodian argues that democratic accountability through institutions like the WTO and the EU was the product of pragmatic political compromise between barrier-free trade and the imposition of some democratic rules of accountability by globalist figures. Here again the metaphor of encasement is apt. Capitalist markets needed to be encased by carefully crafted global regulatory regimes that protected markets from nationalist and democratic excess.

Reimagining globalism

Today central Europe, formerly the intellectual crucible for the rise of globalism, is once again at the heart of an ideological innovation in globalism's latest reformulation. Within Europe, globalist illiberalism is led by Hungary, and has entered into new articulations of the French and Spanish radical right. Viktor Orbán and others do not intend to effect deglobalization, and it is imprecise to label them as opposed to globalization. Within globalist institutions, Orbán and ideological comrades are globalists in that they support the strong encasement of capitalist markets; they favour free trade, and work within the institutional matrix of globalist multilateral institutions to do so.

Globalist illiberals break, however, from classical globalists in two significant ways. First, they embrace a global order made of strong sovereign *nations*. Slobodian's concept of 'encasement' of markets can be extended to the domain of the nation. Globalist illiberals reverse the relationship between international institu-

⁴ See G. John Ikenberry, 'The end of liberal international order?', *International Affairs* 94: 1, 2018, pp. 7–23.

⁵ Ikenberry, 'The end of liberal international order?', p. 8.

tions and nations. Whereas classical globalists were wary of nationalist passions and crafted global institutions that would constrain nationalist instincts, globalist illiberals rather seek to constrain globalist intervention into national culture and ways of life while still supporting the market economy.

The second and related way in which globalist illiberals depart from classical globalism lies in their insistence on national sovereignty on cultural matters to do with family values, gender and sexuality, multiculturalism and immigration. Globalist illiberals reject policies of the liberal international order which they view as creating a valueless, libertine world without moral and racialized boundaries. This is a central feature of their illiberalism, a term which Viktor Orbán has audaciously redefined and even proudly embraced. They do so by striving to carry the mantle of a recrafted Christian democratic politics in Europe.

Globalist illiberals infuse more than neo-liberal authoritarian values into globalist institutions. They bring with them a merger of nationalist conservatism and neo-liberalism, and confront international institutions with an unflinching determination to change their *values*. The European Union project, and broad visions of Europe as a Christian heartland, are of prime importance to this emergent ideology.

The EU and radicalized Christian democracy

In parallel to the formation of the globalist international order following the Second World War, the EU project was set in motion in postwar Europe. The European Community project was imbued with a Christian democratic spirit of capitalism, distinct from that of the IMF and the World Bank. This spirit went well beyond the globalist commitment to a borderless landscape of free trade and incorporated a Christian vision of the relations between individual, community and state that was to go hand in hand with a globalist polity.

While Christian democratic parties in Europe do not subscribe uniformly to the same ideologies, Carlo Invernizzi Accetti argues that the core commitments of Christian democracy in Europe can be summarized as a combined emphasis on market society, 'personalism' (the doctrine that places the universal value of the human person at its centre), autonomy from any formal church affiliation and, crucially to the EU, 'subsidiarity'.⁶

Subsidiarity has been especially important to Christian democracy in structuring its ideal political society. It is not strictly an administrative principle of devolving competences to appropriate levels of governance. For Christian democracy, it is a concept of sovereignty which views the 'human person'—not merely the contractual individual—as embedded in layers of intermediary bodies, especially the family and community, with the state being one organic body among others, not a transcendent sovereign entity whose authority supersedes all others.⁷

⁶ Carlo Invernizzi Accetti, 'Towards a model of Christian democracy? Politics and religion in the Treaty of Lisbon', *Revue française de science politique* 65: 4, 2015, pp. 563–82.

⁷ Carlo Invernizzi Accetti, *What is Christian democracy? Politics, religion and ideology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

In addition to inverting the relationship between the nation and globalist institutions, globalist illiberals are also innovating upon European Christian democracy and its marriage to market society. Like twentieth-century Christian democracy, globalist illiberals accord a central position to the family as a primary organic unit of political society. But they go further by emphasizing heterosexuality as primary to European politics and identity.⁸

Even more important to them than the centrality of the family is the standing of the nation as a subsidiary body within Europe. Also, the value of the human person is not universal and transcendental, as had been the Christian democratic conception of human rights woven into the European project after the Second World War,⁹ but is manifest only for those seen as members of a particular nation within Europe.

Subsidiarity and personalism are each undergoing redefinition by globalist illiberals in their remapping of Christian democracy. These values are apparent in the work of associated intellectuals and political actors striving to graft their vision of radicalized Christian democracy on the EU.

Viktor Orbán's formulation of an illiberal Christian democracy

Orbán's political career, and his vision of a conservative and free-trade Europe, have long been linked to universities—in terms of audience and public platform, and as objects of reform. We analyse here programmatic statements made by Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, who is seriously engaged in exchanges with, and support of, organic intellectuals who have assisted him in formulating his world-view.

In 1999, at a high-profile conference hosted by Vienna's Institute for Human Sciences focusing on 'Ten years after 1989: politics, ideology, and the international order,'¹⁰ while serving his first term as Hungarian prime minister, Orbán expressed dissatisfaction with the ideational status quo in post-Cold War Europe:

Have the events in Central Europe changed thinking in the region and beyond? Neither, on the contrary. Hardly any politicians of the new democracies have produced new ideas; most of them have rather preferred to import Western European labels and ideologies en masse. They call themselves Christian democrats, liberals or conservatives, without always quite understanding what these terms mean and whether they are at all appropriate to Central European conditions.¹¹

Orbán spent the next decade rethinking these terms. After losing two elections, on being re-elected in 2010 he returned to power with a conception of what liber-

⁸ David Paternotte and Roman Kuhar, 'Disentangling and locating the "global right": anti-gender campaigns in Europe', *Politics and Governance* 6: 3, 2018, pp. 6–19.

⁹ Marco Duranti, *The conservative human rights revolution: European identity, transnational politics, and the origins of the European Convention* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

¹⁰ Transcripts from the panel, 'What remains from 1989?' in the conference 'Ten years after 1989: politics, ideology and the international order', organized by the Institute for Human Sciences (IWM) and the Project Syndicate, 26 June 1999. From the archives of the Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), Vienna.

¹¹ Transcripts from the panel, 'What remains from 1989?'.

alism, conservatism and Christian democracy could mean in contemporary central Europe. Orbán has used the annual Bálványos Summer University in Romania, deliberately located outside Hungary's sovereign borders, to articulate his vision for the Hungarian nation and for Europe at large. These speeches have shown an evolution in the constitutive elements of Christian democracy, liberalism and conservatism, with innovations introduced by Orbán and organic intellectuals in his circle. They reject the conventional political alignments of west European party politics and make good on his suggestion in 1999 that these terms needed to be reworked for 'central European conditions'.

The theme of claiming Christian identity is prominent in these speeches. What had been an obscure event organized for ethnic Hungarians in Romania caught the world's attention following Orbán's notorious speech at the Summer University in 2014, in which he announced that he had steered Hungary to become an 'illiberal state'. Orbán's self-proclaimed illiberalism has since been linked to degradation of the rule of law in Hungary.¹² Yet, within the context of the speech, Orbán was contrasting illiberalism to liberal democracy. That 2014 speech was a far-reaching philosophical rumination on the nature of the good society and the political form which he argued best represented it.

The speech made an innovative link between the Hungarian state, nationalism and competitiveness in global capitalism. It argued that liberalism not only emptied relations between individuals of ethical content, but had also eradicated community, and had weakened the ability of the state to act in the interests of the national community. Under such circumstances, the Hungarian nation could not compete in the brutal competition presented by global capitalism. Orbán elaborated:

In the great world race that is a race to come up with the most competitive way of organizing state and society, Hungarian voters expect from their leaders to figure out ... a new form of state-organization that will make the community of Hungarians competitive once again after the era of liberal state and liberal democracy, one that will of course still respect values of Christianity, freedom and human rights ... the Hungarian nation is not a simple sum of individuals, but a community that needs to be organized, strengthened and developed, and in this sense, the new state that we are building is an illiberal state, a non-liberal state.¹³

And, as if to assuage concerns that illiberalism was incompatible with EU membership, Orbán assured his public that it was possible to build such an illiberal nation state within the EU: 'Our EU membership does not rule out this option.'¹⁴

By 2017, three years after the much-cited 'illiberal state' speech, Orbán's ambitions had expanded yet further. No longer seeking the mere accommodation of an illiberal state within the EU, in his Summer University speech this year Orbán set about redefining the Christian democratic tradition in Europe. He

¹² Péter Krekó and Zsolt Enyedi, 'Explaining eastern Europe: Orbán's laboratory of illiberalism', *Journal of Democracy* 29: 3, 2018, pp. 39–51.

¹³ 'Full text of Viktor Orbán's speech at Băile Tușnad (Tusnádfürdő) of 26 July 2014', *Budapest Beacon*, 29 July 2014, <https://budapestbeacon.com/full-text-of-viktor-orban-speech-at-baile-tusnad-tusnadfurdo-of-26-july-2014/>.

¹⁴ 'Full text of Viktor Orbán's speech'.

has since declared that Hungary, like Poland, now carries the mantle of Christian democracy in the EU. In that 2017 speech, he bluntly asserted: 'Christian democratic parties in Europe have become un-Christian.'¹⁵

In his 2017 speech, Orbán claimed to be leading Europe in a renewed commitment to Christian democracy and in defending the primacy of a Christian population against Muslim immigrants. He cited Deputy Prime Minister Zsolt Semjén, leader of Hungary's Christian Democratic People's Party, a longstanding coalition partner of Orbán's Fidesz Party, who had lauded the Hungarian government as 'Europe's most Christian democratic government'. How had Orbán's government achieved this? By taking 'the large profits being generated [by multinationals] in order to give [them] to those who are both working and raising children—and thereby providing for the future of the nation'. Orbán claimed that by attracting foreign capital investment in Hungary, and then heavily taxing multinational corporations, his government was redistributing 500 billion forints (about €1.375 billion) annually of state revenue to support the demographic growth of Christian families.

Orbán's Summer University speech in 2019, prior to a pause in the annual event because of the COVID-19 pandemic, reached a peak in his espousal of illiberal democracy and its equation with European Christian democracy. Relishing the scandalized response he had generated by declaring Hungary to be an illiberal state in 2014, Orbán asserted:

They've come up with two propositions: democracy is necessarily liberal; and Christian democracy is necessarily liberal. I'm convinced that these are two misconceptions, because obviously the opposite is true. Liberal democracy could never have come into being without its Christian cultural underpinning.¹⁶

On the contrary, liberal democracy could only survive so long as it was underpinned by Christian values. But liberal democracy had become unmoored once 'it began to break the bonds that bind people to real life: when it questioned the identity of a person's sex, devalued people's religious identity, and deemed people's national affiliation superfluous'. Drawing a clear connection between Christian democracy and the illiberal state, Orbán continued: 'There has been the emergence of an illiberal state and a true model of state and political theory: a distinctive Christian democratic state.'¹⁷

With a final rhetorical flourish, he concluded that this was, furthermore, a return to the founding principles of the EU:

To quote Schumann, who as one of the founding fathers of Europe is accorded due respect even by liberals: 'Democracy owes its existence to Christianity. It was born the day man was called to realise in his temporal life the dignity of the human person, in his individual freedom, in respect for the rights of each and by the practice of brotherly love towards all.'¹⁸

¹⁵ 'Full text of Viktor Orbán's speech'.

¹⁶ 'Full text of Viktor Orbán's speech'.

¹⁷ 'Full text of Viktor Orbán's speech'.

¹⁸ 'Full text of Viktor Orbán's speech'.

Hungary today, according to Orbán, has therefore rejected liberalism, while reviving true democracy by reaching deeply into its Christian heritage. In so doing, he claims, it is actualizing the original vision promoted by the founding fathers of the European Community.

Creating globalist illiberal knowledge

We turn now to examine globalist illiberalism's extensions of, and departures from, classical globalism by scrutinizing several new institutions of higher education in Europe. These institutions focus on training professionals for careers in national and international public service and in business leadership, established by figures for whom these educational projects are aimed at a slow but steady transformation of global institutions, especially the EU.

In contrast to the denigration of academia by Trump and many of his supporters, Orbán views universities and intellectuals as being of great significance for realizing his national and European ambitions.¹⁹ In recognition of the importance he attaches to universities, we examine Hungary's National University of Public Service Ludovika (Ludovika-UPS), established after his return to power in 2010 and a significant new presence in the higher education landscape of Hungary, which we consider the pre-eminent case of a country whose leadership has positioned itself at the vanguard of globalist illiberalism in Europe.

The second, more minor, project we examine is the Institut de sciences sociales, économiques et politiques (Institute of Social Sciences, Economics and Politics—ISSEP) established in Lyon, France, and more recently in Madrid, Spain, by former French National Front politician Marion Maréchal, the niece of National Rally president Marine Le Pen. Examining these institutions' mission, curricula and teaching staff offers a view into the minds of globalist illiberal actors for whom these educational projects are an important structural plank in a Trojan horse strategy to change European politics, and the EU, from within.

Institutions of higher education specializing in international affairs and diplomacy have long been closely linked to national governments and state ministries. They produce 'international knowledge',²⁰ and can be of paramount importance in producing new practices in international politics. The appearance of several new institutions of higher education in Hungary, France and Spain affiliated with right-wing leaders is a notable development in the higher education landscape in Europe. They are indicative of the ambitions of these right-wing figures, who understand their project as one of extensive socio-political transformation, working through domains of action which extend well beyond the noise of protest parties. In the context of gauging the likely future direction of the

¹⁹ On the significance of universities to European conservatives, see Dorit Geva, 'Non au gender: moral epistemics and French conservative strategies of distinction', *European Journal of Cultural and Political Sociology* 6: 4, 2019, pp. 393–420.

²⁰ Jonas Hagmann and Marina Lebedeva, 'Teaching (as) statist practice: diplomatic schools as sites of international education', *International Studies Review* 18: 2, 2016, pp. 349–53.

liberal international order, they point to vectors of change we can already witness within, and outside, the core institutions of that order.

While Ludovika-UPS and ISSEP are both a clear indication of globalist illiberals' efforts to train a new generation of actors who are able to shape politics from positions of influence in national bodies, international institutions, civil society organizations and the private sector, their characteristics, and those of their staff, are different. Thanks to Orbán's hegemony in Hungary over the past decade, Ludovika-UPS has increased funding and networks within Hungarian politics and industry, turning the university into a more ambitious and influential project compared to ISSEP.

Ludovika-UPS and ISSEP also differ from each other in their styles of education and model of public engagement. Ludovika-UPS faculty are academics who have obtained doctoral degrees, or—in the case of the Faculty of Military Science and Officer Training—have extensive experience in the military. They publish in conventional academic journals, including a slate of 14 scientific journals, and through a new university press.²¹ Some academic articles by Ludovika-UPS faculty cautiously approach general social science topics, such as diaspora politics or pastoral care provided by churches to migrants in Hungary,²² but avoid criticism of the Hungarian government. Conversely, the proportion of faculty with PhDs at ISSEP is considerably lower. Also, while the majority of publications and lectures by Ludovika-UPS academic staff are geared towards a scholarly audience, most intellectual outputs from ISSEP staff can be found in outlets aimed at the general public, where, unlike Ludovika-UPS staff, they openly express radical political opinions.

Whereas Ludovika-UPS is clear in its nationalist and European mission, ISSEP's mission statements try to present the group as detached from any ideology. Ludovika-UPS's founding principle is to foster 'construction of the Europe of Nations, respect of Christian values and cultural traditions of other nations'.²³ ISSEP, on the other hand, seeks to present itself as an educational project with no political affiliation, and states that its staff 'prefer teaching, over ideologies' and espouse an 'objective of respecting true intellectual pluralism'.²⁴

Despite these differences, we show that both Ludovika-UPS and ISSEP seek to develop the same globalist illiberal project. By this we do not mean that the two institutions share a collaborative strategy; rather, that they share an ideology which they seek to extend within Europe and even beyond. Through their intellectual activities, both institutions promote a capitalist international order based

²¹ See <https://folyoirat.ludovika.hu>.

²² See e.g. Dániel Gazsó, 'Diaspora policies in theory and practice', *Hungarian Journal of Minority Studies* 1: 1, 2017, pp. 65–87; Fischl Vilmos, 'The role of churches in Hungary in providing pastoral care and humanitarian help for migrants', *AARMS: Academic and Applied Research in Military and Public Management Science* 17: 2, 2018, pp. 17–28.

²³ UPS, *Mission, vision, strategy* (Ludovika: University of Public Service, 2021), <https://en.uni-nke.hu/about-ludovika-ups/mission-vision-strategy>. (Unless otherwise noted at point of citation, all URLs cited in this article were accessed on 22 May 2021.)

²⁴ ISSEP, *Présentation—Institut de Sciences Sociales Économiques et Politiques (ISSEP)*, n.d., <https://www.issep.fr/presentation/>.

on strong nation-states. They also have the common aim of training students to reform EU institutions from within, preparing them to achieve positions of influence in the European project and guide it towards a 'Europe of nations'. Finally, we also show Ludovika-UPS and ISSEP as attempting to resignify Christian democracy as a radicalized, conservative project inspired by an exclusionary understanding of Christianity.

Hungary's National University of Public Service

Ludovika-UPS was designed to serve the Hungarian state and cultivate its new civil servants, diplomats and EU professionals. It is closely aligned with the art and science of government, with a curriculum devoted exclusively to public management, law enforcement and the military, and to public administration, with a niche focus on water management. Given the institution's standing, and the extent of the Orbán regime's investment in it, Ludovika-UPS is a prime site for examining the ambitions of right-wing globalists who see themselves as playing a long game of working to transform globalist institutions from within.

Ludovika-UPS began operating as a university in early 2012. Shortly after Orbán's re-election in 2010, his government established a working group charged with founding an educational framework for cultivating public service leaders whose priority would be to reform the Hungarian state and to serve the national interest.²⁵ Representatives concerned with education in policing, national defence, legal studies and public administration proposed merging three existing universities to create Ludovika-UPS, with major investment being devoted to rebuilding the Ludovika campus, originally the site of a military academy built in Budapest in 1836. Some of the institutions that were merged into Ludovika-UPS hark back to the Austro-Hungarian empire, including an academy for military officers established in 1808 and supported initially by Hapsburg Empress Maria Ludovika, after whom the new university is named.

In early 2011 the government announced the establishment of Ludovika-UPS, declaring at a press conference that it was imperative to educate a 'new generation of people for the operation of a good state',²⁶ and formally establishing the university by a government decree issued that same day. Since its creation, the Orbán government has twice tried to further Ludovika-UPS dominance in national higher education. The first occasion was an attempt in 2015 to make the university the sole institution in Hungary that could deliver education in public administration and law.²⁷ The second was the introduction in 2017 of a draft bill in parliament which tried to establish that as of 2023 only graduates of Ludovika-UPS could be employed in the Hungarian public service. Neither bill was passed; both,

²⁵ István Sárkány, 'A nemzeti közszolgálati egyetem létrejöttének vázlatos áttekintése', *Belügyi Szemle* 66: 11, 2018, pp. 9–14.

²⁶ MTI, '2012-ben indul a közszolgálati egyetem', Index.hu, 23 Feb. 2011, http://index.hu/belfold/2011/02/23/kozszolgalmati_egyetemem_hoznak_letre/.

²⁷ MTI, 'A közszolgálati egyetem szerint ők nem tartanak be a jogászképzésnek', 11 June 2015, https://hvg.hu/itthon/20150611_A_kozszolgalmati_egyetem_szerint_ok_nem_ta.

nevertheless, indicate the importance attached to Ludovika-UPS by the Orbán regime as an educational and ideological institution for training future leaders.

The key figures leading the conceptualization and development of the new university have credible higher degrees to their names in fields such as law, political science or defence, having participated in various programmes across Europe. Their educational and professional development prior to their involvement with Ludovika-UPS had entailed a mix of academic leadership within Hungary and, for several of them, positions of political leadership within the EU.

There is a revolving door connecting Ludovika-UPS leadership with top government positions. One exemplary figure is Tibor Navracsics, who heads the university's Research Centre for European Strategy. Having gained a PhD in political science at Eötvös Loránd University of Budapest (ELTE), Navracsics followed an academic career before switching to politics. He headed the working group appointed by Orbán to found a new university of public service while he was both deputy prime minister and minister of public administration and justice, with a special mandate to reform public administration of the Hungarian state. The establishment of Ludovika-UPS was part of this larger project. Thereafter he was European Commissioner for Culture, Youth and Sport between 2014 and 2019 within the Juncker Commission. Navracsics and other Ludovika-UPS figures, such as the former rector András Patyi and the current rector András Koltay, have demonstrated unswerving loyalty to Orbán and his Fidesz Party. Patyi, for example, had been head of the national election committee from 2013 to 2018, and was considered by opposition critics to be slavishly loyal to the Orbán government.²⁸ On stepping down from his role as rector in 2018, he was appointed to be a judge in the Curia of Hungary, the country's highest court.

Ludovika-UPS' mission statement indicates that it aims to achieve international excellence, to serve the needs of the Hungarian state and, importantly, to uphold Hungarian national identity. According to the awkwardly worded English version of its mission statement, 'the university builds on the protection of the Hungarian national identity and cultural heritage, the country's population retention power, and the national competitiveness'.²⁹ The mention of 'population retention' emphasizes a concern with demographic renewal in Hungary, in line with a broader preoccupation with 'demographic nationalism' in the country.³⁰ Because of its close relationship to government, Ludovika-UPS is meant to support 'the service of the Hungarian nation above all, as the vocation of the homeland'.³¹

The reference to serving the Hungarian nation, not just the state, is a subtle but telling reflection of how the university is shaped in Orbán's image to serve the globalist illiberal project. Orbán's hyper-nationalism is a dominant feature of his

²⁸ After Fidesz was fined for illegal campaigning in 2018, Patyi explained himself on camera to Viktor Orbán: see 'Orbán szóvá tette az NVB elnökének, hogy 345 ezerre megbüntette a kampányban', Index.hu, 3 April 2018, https://index.hu/belfold/2018/valasztas/2018/04/13/orban_szova_tette_az_nvbnokenek_hogy_345_ezerre_megbuntette_a_kampanyban/.

²⁹ UPS, *Mission, vision, strategy*.

³⁰ Attila Melegh, 'Unequal exchanges and the radicalization of demographic nationalism in Hungary', *Intersections: East European Journal of Society and Politics* 2: 4, 2016, pp. 87–108.

³¹ UPS, *Mission, vision, strategy*.

political regime. This is manifest in the focus of Ludovika-UPS's programming on the seemingly benign topic of minority rights, including an annual international summer school on 'Global Minority Rights'.³² Support for Hungarian minorities in neighbouring states such as Romania and Slovakia is a pillar of the Orbán regime. Moreover, the priority of the nation over the state is in line with globalist illiberals' effort to protect national cultural sovereignty from international influences. Cultural sovereignty prioritizes the connection among individuals by virtue of their ethnicity or, as we discuss in more detail below, their common Christian heritage, over their common allegiance to a particular state.

A Europe of nations

Ludovika-UPS's mission reflects Orbán's vision of the European project, which is 'the construction of the Europe of Nations, the respect of Christian values and cultural traditions of other nations, tolerance, the protection of individual freedom and human dignity'.³³ This framing encapsulates support for the EU as a union of nations, not merely of states, all with common roots in Christian civilization. These themes permeate Ludovika-UPS's training and intellectual output. The former Hungarian foreign minister János Martonyi, who is also an occasional teacher at Ludovika-UPS, wrote an essay celebrating the 70th anniversary of the Schuman Declaration of 1950, in which Robert Schuman proposed the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community. Martonyi's essay claimed that Schuman was himself the founder of the idea of a 'Europe of nations', and—echoing Orbán's interpretation of the role of Christian democracy in the EU—that the spirit of Schuman's declaration suggested that it was vital to strengthen 'the common elements of European identity based upon the Christian roots of Schuman's "espace de civilisation"'.³⁴

In order to advance Hungary's aspirations for the EU, Ludovika-UPS recently launched a six-month training programme offered free of charge, called the 'Europe of Nations Career Programme'. Ludovika-UPS Rector Koltay explained in an interview for a Hungarian diplomatic magazine that 'we consider it extremely important to have Hungarian professionals working in the EU institutions who are fully aware of the Hungarian circumstances and the common European goals'.³⁵ The training programme includes several courses focusing on EU law and administration.³⁶ Other courses revolve around how to achieve good strategic and communications outcomes within the complex political and communications environment of the EU. The programme includes training in languages needed for working in the EU, and a module preparing students for the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO) exams, a competitive route into an EU career.

³² UPS, *Global Minority Rights Summer School 2021*, National University of Public Service Tom Lantos Institute, <https://mrss.uni-nke.hu/>.

³³ UPS, *Mission, vision, strategy*.

³⁴ János Martonyi, 'A Schuman-deklaráció: 70 éve és most', *Európai Tükör* 23: 2, 2020, pp. 117–27.

³⁵ 'Dynamic international presence: interview with Dr András Koltay, Rector of the National University of Public Service', *Diplomata Magazin*, June issue, 2020, http://www.diplomatamagazin.hu/ftp/3b74dx1_rektor.pdf.

³⁶ UPS, 'A Képzésről', *Nemzetek Európája Karrierprogram*, n.d., <https://nemzetekeuropaja.uni-nke.hu/kepzes>.

One prominent lecturer in this programme is the current Hungarian justice minister, Judit Varga. Varga is listed as teaching several practice-oriented courses in the Europe of Nations Career Programme, focusing on how to leverage messaging and influence communication outcomes within the EU. In Ludovika-UPS's own messaging, Varga is reported to have stated on her Facebook page: 'Patriotism, stable professional foundations, international outlook, commitment, great work ethic. These are our slogans in the training of future Hungarian diplomats and EU specialists. I am proud to have jointly created the Europe of Nations Career Programme.'³⁷

Varga is an unapologetic defender of the Orbán regime. She is also no Euro-sceptic: Varga spent nine years living and working in Brussels as a policy adviser to MEPs. While she has supported Hungary's anti-migration policies and unflinchingly defends the Orbán regime's record on rule of law matters when faced with criticism from the EU, Varga also unquestionably sees a place for Hungary in the Union, as long as her country can keep its sovereignty over cultural issues. A 2019 editorial she wrote for *Euronews* expresses this dual view, emphasizing that [Hungary has] differences in: how we relate to the Christian roots of Europe, on the role of nations and national cultures; how we see the nature and mission of families in our societies; and in our approaches to migration. But to claim that a Member State no longer belongs to the community of values at the heart of the EU simply because it holds different positions on issues like this would create a dangerous precedent and undermine the very foundations of European integration.³⁸

Varga follows the globalist illiberal playbook, seeking to further international institutions while defending national sovereignty over cultural issues, in which Christianity is accorded a central role. Varga's efforts to defend Hungary's sovereignty over migration and family issues—which encompass also matters to do with gender and LGBTQ policies—are aimed at protecting Hungary's Christian roots by limiting migration from non-Christian backgrounds and contesting progressive policies that would endanger the traditional view of the Christian family.

Recent developments in Hungary indicate that Ludovika-UPS may become the model for the rest of the country's higher education system. Orbán's most recent political manoeuvre has been a successful vote in the Hungarian parliament to allocate eleven Hungarian universities to foundations whose boards would be appointed by the Hungarian government, in addition to transferring billions of euros' worth of their assets away from the Hungarian state and to those foundations.³⁹ The reform was designed by István Stumpf,⁴⁰ a Ludovika-UPS professor

³⁷ Ádám Szőőr, 'Varga Judit: jöhet az utánpótlás!', Nemzeti Közszerológiai Egyetem, n.d., <https://www.uni-nke.hu/hirek/2020/04/25/varga-judit-johet-az-utanpotlas>.

³⁸ Judit Varga, 'Facts you always wanted to know about rule of law but never dared to ask', *Euronews*, 19 Nov. 2019, <https://www.euronews.com/2019/11/19/judit-varga-facts-you-always-wanted-to-know-about-rule-of-law-hungary-view>.

³⁹ Ábrahám Vass, 'Higher education restructuring in Hungary rolls on', *Hungary Today*, 4 March 2021, <https://hungarytoday.hu/higher-education-uni-restructuring-model-change-fidesz-govt-force-palkovics/>.

⁴⁰ 'The model change in higher education is coordinated by a researcher of Ludovika', 3 Feb. 2021, University of Public Service, Ludovika, <https://en.uni-nke.hu/hirek/2021/02/03/the-model-change-in-higher-education-is-coordinated-by-a-researcher-of-ludovika>.

and political scientist, who also once served as a judge in Hungary's constitutional court despite lacking formal legal education. At the time of writing, it is still unclear what the purpose of this reform is, but it is likely that the intellectual output of Hungary's universities beyond Ludovika-UPS will increasingly reflect Orbán's political vision.

The Institute of Social Sciences, Economics and Politics

Although the French and Spanish ISSEP are less significant than Hungary's Ludovika-UPS, through them Marion Maréchal has aimed to train a new class of right-wing leaders who will be able to influence the future of their countries from their positions not only in politics, but also in other realms such as media and business. While ISSEP's institutional communications emphasizes its 'non-ideological teaching', Maréchal was explicit about this objective when she introduced her plans for ISSEP at a 2018 Conservative Political Action Conference in the United States:

Our fight cannot take place in elections. We need to convey our ideas through the media, culture, and education to stop the domination of liberals and socialists. That is why I have recently launched a school of management and political science.⁴¹

The existence of these institutes, and their close ties with France's National Rally and Spain's Vox parties, enable us to trace the views of the French and Spanish far right regarding globalization. In particular, we can discern their pragmatic acceptance of global capitalism, but also their insistence on cultural sovereignty in the face of global capitalism. As part of their globalist illiberal agenda, the French and Spanish far right are training their future leadership to occupy positions of power within key economic and political international institutions and transform globalization from within.

Participants in global capitalism At ISSEP, the future leaders of the French and Spanish far right are trained to sustain global capitalism. Students take courses on international law and international trade, and several lecturers emphasize their active engagement in international firms in the profiles published on the Institute's website.⁴² Moreover, in its promotional videos the Institute emphasizes the professional opportunities that its alumni have found in 'global companies from the CAC40',⁴³ and institutions that promote international trade such as the Franco-Russian Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Moscow.⁴⁴ Beyond training its students to be active participants in global capitalism, ISSEP also seeks to recruit people interested in working in multinational corporations.

⁴¹ American Conservative Union, *CPAC 2018: Marion Maréchal-Le Pen*, 22 Feb. 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RclfcjQfJKY&t=17s>.

⁴² ISSEP, *Les Enseignants*, n.d., <https://www.issep.fr/les-enseignants/>.

⁴³ The CAC40 is France's main stock index, which covers the biggest, and most globalized, companies in the country.

⁴⁴ ISSEP Lyon, *Ils ont choisi de se forer pour servir la France et la société!*, 6 April 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R8ZqgXyWsFQ>.

The professional histories of those who teach economics-related subjects at ISSEP include periods working in international firms. Anthony Lacoudre, who teaches a course on the international tax system, also works at HUB4US.⁴⁵ This company supports French businesses that wish to invest in the United States, and also helps US corporations expand into Europe, especially in France. Among its services, HUB4US includes helping multinationals identify ‘the most efficient tax option’ and supporting them in the process of applying for visas for their employees.⁴⁶ Similarly, Luis del Rivero Asensio, an instructor at the Spanish ISSEP, is the founder and former president of Sacyr Vallehermoso, one of the biggest Spanish construction companies with projects in more than 30 countries across all continents.⁴⁷

Learning how to transform global institutions from within Like their counterparts at Ludovika-UPS, ISSEP teaching staff support the robustness of liberal international institutions, especially the EU. A number of instructors have worked in senior positions within EU institutions, expressed their support for greater European integration, led programmes of European studies in other universities, worked in think tanks to improve the functioning of the EU, and/or have been part of the intergovernmental European army corps Eurocorps. Like Maréchal, they combine pro-market ideology with conservative family values and in some cases also Islamophobia.

Among those ISSEP instructors with backgrounds working within the EU is the Spanish teacher Alejo Vidal Quadras, founder and first president of Vox between 2014 and 2015, who was vice-president of the European Parliament between July 2009 and January 2012, representing the European People’s Party.⁴⁸ During the financial crisis of 2008, which challenged the stability of the European monetary union, he argued that the solution to this challenge was to be found in greater integration.⁴⁹ During the 2019 EU elections, he argued that the main division was between systemic and anti-systemic parties⁵⁰ and positioned himself in the former camp, showing great concern for the risk that anti-systemic parties posed to the EU.⁵¹

In France, Pierre-Emmanuel Thomann, professor of geopolitics at ISSEP, is the founder of Eurocontinent, a Brussels-based think tank whose objective is to reinforce the EU as a geopolitical project with ‘autonomy of reflection, decision and action at the international level with the objective to secure its security, defend its strategic and vital interests, and promote the conditions for the flourishing

⁴⁵ HUB4US, *Hub4US News*, <http://hub4us.com/en/news.html>.

⁴⁶ HUB4US, *HUB4US Services*, <http://hub4us.com/en/services.html>.

⁴⁷ See http://www.sacyr.com/es_es/empresa-global/actividad-corporativa/default.aspx.

⁴⁸ ‘Alejo Vidal-Quadras’, *MEPs, European Parliament—7th parliamentary term*, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/4308/ALEJO_VIDAL-QUADRAS/history/7.

⁴⁹ ‘¿Hacia dónde va Europa?’, UC3M Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, 7 May 2012, <https://media.uc3m.es/video/5b3013188f420863d08b9ffb>.

⁵⁰ In Spanish political discourse, some mainstream actors use the term ‘anti-systemic’ to refer pejoratively to left and right actors whom they claim are dangerously seeking to upend the existing order.

⁵¹ Alejo Vidal-Quadras, ‘Europa se tambalea’, *Vozpópuli*, 28 April 2019, https://www.vozpopuli.com/opinion/Europa-tambalea_o_1240076287.html.

of its common civilization'.⁵² On similar lines, Patrick Louis, another teacher of geopolitics, was secretary-general of the Mouvement pour la France and represented the party as MEP during the sixth term of the European Parliament.⁵³ Despite being part of the Eurosceptic political grouping, Mouvement pour la France advocated EU-wide protectionism.⁵⁴

Cultural national sovereignty The French ISSEP has an extensive curriculum aimed at teaching its students about iconic parts of French culture through courses about oenology, dancing and protocol, with the objective of teaching them the French 'way of life'.⁵⁵ This is complemented by visits to key historical sites and cultural venues such as wine cellars. The objective of these activities is for ISSEP students to develop a 'finesse and education that is typically French and largely shared in Europe'.⁵⁶

For ISSEP instructors, maintaining national culture also involves protecting it from external interference originating in the cultural changes brought about by globalization. ISSEP lecturer Matthieu Baumier's latest book, *Voyage au bout des ruines libérales-libertaires* (Journey to the end of the liberal-libertarian ruins),⁵⁷ is probably the most comprehensive expression of the threat to national cultures as perceived by globalist illiberals. Baumier criticizes what he calls the 'globalist elites' for having developed a world without limits, which endangers the French way of life and threatens France's 'deculturation'.⁵⁸ Like Baumier, certain other French academics such as Frédéric Beth advocate 'recovering the understanding of the nation as a cultural community'.⁵⁹

Miguel Ángel Quintana Paz, Academic Director of ISSEP in Spain, has written extensively about the need to fight a 'cultural war' and ideologically rebuild the political right around these themes.⁶⁰ The emphasis on the nation as a cultural community allows globalist illiberals to overcome the national limits of anti-globalism and develop an alternative perspective to globalization that can be built from the perspective of an exclusionary European nationalism. In line with Ludovika-UPS's promotion of a 'Europe of Nations' in Hungary, Baumier argues:

The cultural community is the base of society. There is therefore a French and European community and squandering its heritage for the benefit of everything from elsewhere is

⁵² See <http://www.eurocontinent.eu/eurocontinent/>.

⁵³ 'Patrick Louis', *MEPs, European Parliament—6th parliamentary term*, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/28217/PATRICK_LOUIS/history/6.

⁵⁴ 'Interview de M. Philippe de Villiers, Président du Mouvement', *Republique Française*, 27 March 2009, <https://www.vie-publique.fr/discours/174760-interview-de-m-philippe-de-villiers-president-du-mouvement-pour-la-fra>.

⁵⁵ ISSEP, *Magistère Bac+5 science politique et management de projet*, n.d., <https://www.issep.fr/les-magisteres/magistere-2eme-annee/>.

⁵⁶ ISSEP, *Magistère Bac+4 Science politique et management de projet*, n.d., <https://www.issep.fr/les-magisteres/magistere-1ere-annee/>.

⁵⁷ Matthieu Baumier, *Voyage au bout des ruines libérales-libertaires* (Paris: P-G. de Roux, 2019).

⁵⁸ Baumier, *Voyage au bout des ruines*, pp. 38–9.

⁵⁹ Frédéric Beth, 'Quelle vision pour demain?', *L'Incorrect*, 14 May 2020.

⁶⁰ Miguel Ángel Quintana Paz, '¿Qué queremos decir cuando decimos que estamos en una guerra cultural?', *El Subjetivo, Objective*, 5 Dec. 2019, <https://theobjective.com/elsubjetivo/que-queremos-decir-cuando-decimos-que-estamos-en-una-guerra-cultural>.

a way of betraying our ancestors, those who built with their sweat what has been transmitted to us; that prioritizing civilization is a norm, rather than an exception.⁶¹

Radicalization of Christian democratic internationalism Beyond nations, the globalist illiberal international order is organized around another cultural community, which is European civilization, perceived as representing the common Christian roots of European nations and the common threats they face. As summarized by Kiko Méndez-Monasterio, a lecturer at the Spanish ISSEP,

Europe only exists thanks to Christian fertilization ... Those who aim at destroying the ruins of Christian humanism are taking a key step introducing a suicidal cultural relativism that questions our own survival, and the legitimacy of our way of living and understanding the world.⁶²

Restoring clear limits on two matters is paramount for the defence of European civilization, according to globalist illiberals. First, European nations need to redraw the lines blurred by gender-progressive policies; second, Europe and its nations need to establish clear boundaries to limit the diversity of cultures brought by migration, particularly from Muslim countries.

Some of the most active opponents of progressive gender policies at ISSEP have passed through the ranks of Christian democratic parties and Christian organizations. Jaime Mayor Oreja was an influential member of the Christian democrat Partido Popular, Spanish minister of internal affairs between 1996 and 2001,⁶³ and vice-chair of the European People's Party between 2009 and 2014.⁶⁴ Mayor Oreja was also one of the founders of One of Us, a European Citizens' Initiative that united the main ultra-Catholic groups in Europe to demand that the EU ban or limit abortion. This initiative collected 2 million signatures and became the European Federation for Life and Human Dignity, over which Mayor Oreja presides.⁶⁵ Similarly, Julio Ariza Irigoyen campaigned during his time as member of the Catalan parliament in 1997, sitting for the Christian Democratic Partido Popular, for greater control over abortions,⁶⁶ and signed a letter along with a group of university professors against same-sex marriage in 2013.⁶⁷ ISSEP lecturers in France have also campaigned to reimpose traditional gender roles. Guillaume Drago, who teaches law courses at ISSEP, is the President of the Christian-inspired think tank *Institute famille et république*, which mounted a legal challenge

⁶¹ Baumier, *Voyage au bout des ruines*, p. 195.

⁶² Kiko Méndez-Monasterio, 'El relativismo totalitario colonizando el PP', *La Gaceta de la Iberosfera*, 25 Sept. 2014, <https://gaceta.es/uncategorized/relativismo-totalitario-colonizando-pp-26092014-2245-20140926-0000/>.

⁶³ See Government of Spain, *Gobiernos de la VI Legislatura*, n.d., <https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/gobierno/gobiernosporlegislaturas/paginas/VI%20Legislatura.aspx>.

⁶⁴ 'Jamie Mayor Oreja', *MEPs European Parliament—7th parliamentary term*, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/28362/JAIME_MAYOR+OREJA/history/7.

⁶⁵ Ana del Pino, 'Crisis of values in 21st century Europe', European Federation for Life and Human Dignity, One of Us, 6 Nov. 2016, <https://oneofus.eu/crisis-of-values-in-21st-century-europe/>.

⁶⁶ 'Un diputado del PP dice que Cataluña se ha convertido en la meca Europea del aborto', ABC Madrid, 4 Dec. 1997.

⁶⁷ Écrit par Collectif de professeurs de droit, '170 professeurs de droit rentrent en résistance face au projet de Loi Taubira', Cadureso.com, 15 March 2013, <http://www.cadureso.com/actualite/actualite-sante/3331-170-professeurs-de-droit-rentrent-en-resistance-face-au-projet-de-loi-taubira>.

to same-sex marriage and continues to propose legal reforms to reverse the law.⁶⁸ Other lecturers, such as Jean-Luc Coronel, defended similar views.⁶⁹

Globalist illiberals also seek to limit the cultures and religions allowed to populate European civilization. For Baumier, multiculturalism is at the core of the globalist project he criticizes and the source of France's 'deculturation'.⁷⁰ Similarly, Lionel Rondouin is an ardent critic of the 'threat' that migration has brought to France, and has emphasized that European civilization has to face the choice between transmitting its culture and values to those who enter the continent, and disappearing.⁷¹ Similarly, in Spain, instructors such as Kiko Méndez-Monasterio and José Javier Esparza have made numerous public appearances speaking against Muslim communities. The latter even declared that those who were themselves born in Europe but whose ancestors were Muslim migrants 'see the European societies as their enemies'.⁷²

This exclusionary view of religion originates from a radicalization of the Christian democratic principles of many ISSEP members. Jean-Frédéric Poisson, president of the French Christian Democratic Party, which changed its name in 2020 to VIA, La Voie du peuple, is an active contributor to the Institute's life and debates,⁷³ and in 2018 wrote a book titled *Islam: towards the conquest of the West*, in which he argues that Muslim states have the ambition to 'replace the declining Western society with a "substitute civilization"'.⁷⁴ Similarly, Julio Ariza Irigoyen is the owner of media group Intereconomía, a key media platform in the early stages of the far-right Vox party,⁷⁵ and well known for its opposition to Islam and Muslims in Europe. Examples of the many instances of Intereconomía juxtaposing Islam and western or European civilization include its deputy director Beatriz Rojo Polo wearing a niqab, despite not being Muslim, and wondering whether 'we are doomed to see European, western women subjugated to the dictates of radical Islam';⁷⁶ and Eduardo García Serrano, a frequent political commentator on the channel, stating that 'Islam, in any of its forms, is the West's number one enemy'.⁷⁷

⁶⁸ Marine Lamoureux, 'Des juristes veulent l'abrogation du mariage pour tous', *La Croix*, 14 Jan. 2016, <https://www.la-croix.com/France/Des-juristes-veulent-abrogation-mariage-pour-tous-2016-01-14-1200731252>.

⁶⁹ Agnès Leclair, 'Mariage gay: 170 juristes interpellent les sénateurs', *Le Figaro*, 15 March 2013, <https://www.lefigaro.fr/actualite-france/2013/03/15/01016-20130315ARTFIG00525-mariage-gay-170-juristes-interpellent-les-senateurs.php>.

⁷⁰ Baumier, *Voyage au bout des ruines*.

⁷¹ Institut Iliade, Lionel Rondouin: 'Quel récit civilisationnel pour les Européens?', Colloque 2017, 25 March 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OCpjEN7QJjk&list=PLMVv13dHDFXgXpOxXfiehBIaLByXbe7TA&index=6>.

⁷² Periodista Digital, José Javier Esparza: 'Los inmigrantes Musulmanes ven a nuestra sociedad como enemiga', 16 April 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=chDtuPxsIN8>.

⁷³ See e.g. ISSEP, Jean-Frédéric Poisson: *Présentation de son ouvrage 'L'islam à la conquête de l'Occident'*, 22 May 2021, <https://www.issep.fr/evenement/jean-frederic-poisson-presentacion-de-son-ouvrage-lislam-a-la-conquete-de-loccident/>; *Conférence de Jean-Frédéric Poisson à l'ISSEP*, 31 Dec. 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bvsnDR15QBM>.

⁷⁴ Jean-Frédéric Poisson, *L'islam à la conquête de l'Occident: La stratégie dévoilée* (Monaco: Du Rocher, 2018).

⁷⁵ Antonio Álvarez-Benavides and Francisco Jiménez Aguilar, 'Estrategias de comunicación de la nueva extrema derecha Española: de hogar social a Vox, del alter-activismo a la doctrina del shock', *Estudios de La Paz y El Conflicto Revista Latinoamericana* 1: 2, 2020, pp. 55–78.

⁷⁶ Intereconomiatube, *La subdirectora de Intereconomía TV se pone un niqab para denunciar la imposición del Islam radical*, 21 March 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cTVSINwEAF4>.

⁷⁷ Intereconomiatube, *García Serrano: 'El Islam es el enemigo número uno de Occidente'*, 28 March 2019, <https://www>.

The aim of ISSEP lecturers to reinvent Christian democracy from a conservative and exclusionary perspective is clear from their active presence in Christian media. Marion Maréchal often gives interviews to Catholic magazines that had once eschewed any association with the Le Pen clan at the heart of French radical right party politics,⁷⁸ and repeatedly expresses concern that France is losing its Christian roots.⁷⁹ In line with these public appearances and statements by the founder of the institute, several other ISSEP figures are regular contributors to Catholic outlets. Jacques de Guillebon, co-president of ISSEP's Scientific Council, was managing director of the monthly Christian magazine *La Nef*.⁸⁰ Frédéric Pons is chief editor of *Valeurs actuelles*, in which he has often written about the importance of 'reaffirming Europe's Christian roots'.⁸¹ In Spain, Carlos Esteban Rodríguez is an active contributor to the InfoVaticana magazine,⁸² and Jose Javier Esparza Torres had a radio programme on the COPE station,⁸³ itself owned by the Spanish Episcopal Conference,⁸⁴ the administrative body for Spanish and Andorran bishops. For his part, Miguel Ángel Quintana Paz has written in several outlets about the need for Christian intellectuals to take a central role in political debates.⁸⁵

Conclusion

The ambitions of Europe's far right reach well beyond national borders. Instead of opposing globalization, they seek to transform the international order to conform to their illiberal world-view. In this article, through an analysis of two institutions of higher education—Hungary's National University of Public Service, and the Institute of Social Sciences, Economics and Politics in France and Spain—we have unveiled the characteristics of the emerging globalist illiberal project that is being developed by leading political figures and organic intellectuals of Europe's far right. We call these figures globalists because they embrace the economics and institutions of the globalist international order. We call them illiberal because they seek to transform globalization, emphasizing national sovereignty on cultural matters in order to promote their radicalized vision of Christianity, which seeks to

[youtube.com/watch?v=yIMGrmfqzSs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yIMGrmfqzSs).

⁷⁸ See e.g. Dominique Gerbaud, 'Marion Maréchal Le Pen: "Je suis désarçonnée par le pape François"', *La Croix*, 9 Feb. 2017, <https://www.la-croix.com/France/Politique/Marion-Marechal-Le-Pen-Je-suis-desarconnee-Pape-Francois-2017-02-09-1200823641>; 'Marion Maréchal-Le Pen: "Emmanuel Macron est un danger civilisationnel"', *Famille Chrétienne*, 9 Oct. 2020, <https://www.famillechretienne.fr/politique-societe/presidentielle-2017/marion-marechal-le-pen-emmanuel-macron-est-un-danger-civilisationnel-217163>.

⁷⁹ Lucie Soullier, 'Aux États-Unis, Marion Maréchal-Le Pen veut "make France great again"', *Le Monde*, 22 Feb. 2018, https://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2018/02/22/aux-etats-unis-marion-marechal-le-pen-veut-make-france-great-again_5261135_823448.html.

⁸⁰ See 'La rédaction', *La Nef*, n.d., <https://lanef.net/la-redaction/>.

⁸¹ Frédéric Pons, 'L'Europe des peuples se réveille', *Valeurs actuelles*, 29 Oct. 2015, <https://www.valeursactuelles.com/monde/leurope-des-peuples-se-reveille/>.

⁸² 'Carlos Esteban, autor en InfoVaticana', InfoVaticana, n.d., <https://infovaticana.com/autor/carlosesteban/>.

⁸³ Xosé M. Núñez Seixas, *Suspiros de España: el nacionalismo español 1808-2018* (Barcelona: Editorial Crítica, 2018).

⁸⁴ 'Ideario', COPE, 20 March 2017, <https://www.cope.es/pagina/ideario>.

⁸⁵ Miguel Ángel Quintana Paz, '¿Dónde están (escondidos) los intelectuales Cristianos?', *Opinion, El Subjetivo, Objective*, 19 Nov. 2020, <https://theobjective.com/elsubjetivo/donde-estan-escondidos-los-intelectuales-cristianos>.

impose clear boundaries on matters to do with family values, gender and sexuality, multiculturalism and immigration.

Fidesz's exit from the European People's Party grouping in the EU has opened the possibility of fundamental realignments within the European right. Currently in discussion with Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, and Italian party leader and former deputy prime minister Matteo Salvini, with a view to formulating an alliance, Orbán has capitalized on the bad blood between Fidesz and the EPP and has accused the EPP of having lost its Christian democratic values. Consequently, he believes, 'Christian democrats are not properly represented in Europe today, and [Orbán, Morawiecki and Salvini] shall work to provide these people with a voice, with representation and with weight in European politics'.⁸⁶

Viktor Orbán and Marion Maréchal are also applauded outside Europe. A new conservative annual conference called the Conference on National Conservatism, first launched in the United States in 2019, met in February 2020 in Rome, where it featured both Orbán and Maréchal. Maréchal delivered a speech on the long history of conservatism in France, claiming, like other ISSEP figures, that developments such as 'population replacement' and the 'anthropological revolution', which has inverted natural sexual and family relations, pose the great threat to French and European civilization.⁸⁷ Using powerful Catholic imagery, Maréchal ended her speech by likening the present moment to the 2019 fire that ravaged Notre Dame de Paris. Much had miraculously survived, despite the rapid and destructive flames. She therefore chose to see the fire at Notre Dame Cathedral as a sign of hope based on 'the still-standing foundations of our civilization in spite of the perils of the times—and a call: to rebuild this roof that protects us and this spire that connects us to Heaven'.

Orbán was given a special platform at the conference, featured in an interview which lasted nearly an hour, in which he revealed to the audience how he had been inspired by Ronald Reagan as a young man, and that on his first state visit to the UK as prime minister of Hungary in 1999 he went to visit the former British prime minister Margaret Thatcher. He was also proud that he had met Pope John Paul II several times. Despite himself being Calvinist, Orbán asserted at the conference that Christian democracy, with its Catholic roots, is unique in that it is the only political philosophy that embraces national sovereignty.

Libertarian commentators in the United States took note. One later described Orbán as providing a 'masterclass in statecraft'.⁸⁸ Another commentator did not refer to Orbán specifically, but rather seems to have discovered Christian democracy as the ideal political philosophy which—using an American conservative gloss—supposedly advocates a 'free enterprise system', rejects the centralized state

⁸⁶ 'Press statement by Viktor Orbán after his talks with Mateusz Morawiecki, prime minister of Poland, and Matteo Salvini, president of the Italian government party Lega', *Visegrad Post*, 7 April 2021, <https://visegradpost.com/en/2021/04/07/press-statement-by-viktor-orban-after-his-talks-with-mateusz-morawiecki-prime-minister-of-poland-and-matteo-salvini-president-of-the-italian-government-party-lega/>.

⁸⁷ Marion Maréchal, 'The faces of national conservatism', *European Conservative*, 27 Feb. 2020, <https://european-conservative.com/2020/02/the-faces-of-national-conservatism/>.

⁸⁸ Titus Techera, 'Victor Orbán's lesson in prudence for western intellectuals', *American Greatness*, 10 Feb. 2020, <https://amgreatness.com/2020/02/09/viktor-orbans-lesson-in-prudence-for-western-intellectuals/>.

through the principle of subsidiarity, and is rooted in deeply religious conviction, as represented by the founders of European Christian democracy such as Konrad Adenauer, Alcide de Gasperi, Robert Schuman and Jean Monnet.⁸⁹ Other Hungarian figures working along the same lines include Tristan Azbej, State Secretary for the Aid of Persecuted Christians and the Hungary Helps programme, who appeared on an obscure American Christian podcast to describe how Hungary is leading the way in making Christian democracy an international political force.⁹⁰

Globalist illiberals in Europe are thus cultivating intensive networks of cooperation within the older globalist institutions, at the same time as they are working outside these institutions to develop an alternative vision of globalization based on cultural nations, their concept of European civilization and the protection of Christianity. Europe's far right is reframing Christian democracy with the aim of recreating an international order on a model in which the encasement of markets goes hand in hand with the encasement of nations, and in which conservative Christian values establish clear limits on matters of gender, multiculturalism and migration. These developments together suggest that surging nationalism among small and medium powers is not resulting in deglobalization, but is instead fostering illiberal globalization.

⁸⁹ Kai Weiss and Nathaniel Bald, 'Lessons from the Christian democrats', *Law and Liberty*, 21 April 2021, <https://lawliberty.org/lessons-from-the-christian-democrats/>.

⁹⁰ *Hungary Helps with Tristan Azbej, Part 2*, Christian Research Institute, 20 April 2021, <https://www.equip.org/broadcast/hungary-helps-with-tristan-azbej-part-2/>.