

Finding Europe's Hidden Conservatives

By Daniel Pipes

Does Europe have any conservatives? That is, believers in individual responsibility, national independence, free markets, a single law for all, the traditional family, and maximum freedom of speech and religion.

Seemingly not. Politicians called conservative – such as Angela Merkel of Germany Jacques Chirac of France, and Fredrik Reinfeldt of Sweden – are often in reality mild leftists, as are their parties. One might conclude that conservatism is defunct in its homeland.

One would be wrong. A substantial conservative movement exists and is growing in Europe. It is hiding in plain sight, obscured by being tarred as populists, nationalists, extreme-right, or even Neo-Nazis. I call this group by another name: [civilizationists](#), acknowledging that (1) they focus on preserving Western civilization and (2) they forward some distinctly un-conservative policies (such as increased welfare and pension payments). In Spain, VOX fits this profile.

Civilizationists' top concern is not battling climate change, building the European Union, or staving off Russian and Chinese aggression; rather, they focus on preserving Europe's historic civilization of the past two millennia. They worry about Europe becoming an extension of the Middle East or Africa. Already, indigenous Europeans complain of feeling like strangers in their hometowns, of pensioners too scared to leave their houses, and of a school's few Christian and Jewish students beat up by immigrant bullies. Imagine how things will look as the proportions change.

The civilizationists' anxiety contains four main elements: demography, immigration, multiculturalism, and Islamization (or DIMI, recalling the Arabic word *dhimmi*, the status of Jews and Christians who submit to the rule of Muslims).

DIMI's quartet are closely related: Demographic failure creates a need for Immigration which encourages a Multiculturalism that prominently features Islamization.

Start with demographics: Each year, because of its low birth rate of about [1.5 children per woman](#), the indigenous population of Europe declines by more than one million persons, a number that steadily increases over time. To maintain the population requires an annual immigration of more than that number (few immigrants arrive in Europe as new-borns).

The potential pool of immigrants vastly exceeds that number. To cite just two figures: A former [Iranian minister of agriculture](#) predicts that, due to water shortages, up to 70% of the country's population, or 57 million Iranians, will emigrate. The population of Africa is expected to triple by the year 2100, leading to hundreds of millions seeking homes in Europe. One-quarter of the European Union's population in thirty years will be of African origin, according to [Stephen Smith](#).

Non-Western immigration brings a variety of practical difficulties: new diseases, linguistic incomprehension, a lack of necessary work skills, and high unemployment.

Multiculturalism results from a mix of immigrant assertiveness and European guilt and self-doubts. Multiculturalism assumes cultures to be morally equivalent and sees no reason to prefer European civilization over any other. Burqas are as valid ball gowns, burkinis as bikinis.

Finally, Islamization brings a number of hostile actions and superior attitudes incompatible with existing Western ways: compulsory headscarves, partial no-go zones, *taharrush* (sexual predation), *förnedringsrån* (humiliation robberies), rape gangs, slavery, first-cousin marriages, polygyny, honor killings, female genital mutilation, the [Rushdie Rules](#), jihadi violence, imposing Islamic law on all, and a deep nihilism.

The Establishment, or what I call the “Six Ps” (police, politicians, press, priests, professors, and prosecutors) tends to respond smugly to the DIMI quartet. Focused on the negatives in Europe’s history, especially imperialism, fascism, and racism, the elite expresses a [pervasive guilt](#) and generally acquiesces to, or even encourages, a transformation of Europe away from its historic culture-

Civilizationists respond to this trend with conservative alarm and work to resist that transformation. They do not feel guilty; on the contrary, they appreciate national traditions, and they see Europe becoming an extension of the Middle East or Africa as a collapse of values and an as existential cultural threat.

The Establishment dismisses them as old-fashioned, weak, elderly, ignorant losers. Even analysts sympathetic to civilizationists, including-distinguished writers such as Bat Ye’or, Oriana Fallaci, and Mark Steyn, see the cause as lost, and see “Londonistan” and the Islamic Republic of France as inevitable.

But it is not. Civilizationists are already a powerful force, having advanced from a marginal position twenty years ago to a central role in many countries. They have been or are the main parliamentary opposition in Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, and Sweden. They have been or are part of the government in Austria, Estonia, Italy, Norway, and Switzerland. They govern in a coalition in Poland and on their own in Hungary. Their failure is far from inevitable.

In this light, some predictions:

First, because no one says, “I used to worry about DIMI but no longer,” the number of civilizationists will continue to grow. Within 15 or at most 20 years they are likely to dominate Europe’s politics, with the possible major exception of the United Kingdom, where they are stalled. After a long and bitter struggle, this countermovement to restore traditional ways will ultimately prevail.

Second, the civilizationists have three paths to power: control of the government, as in Hungary and Poland; joining with nominal conservatives, as in Austria; or joining with the Left, as in Italy. Also, in limited ways, the Left itself can bring some conservative ideas to power, as in Denmark. Further new paths may yet appear.

Third, the former Warsaw Pact countries will lead the way toward this future. Watching the mistakes of NATO Europe, they resolve not to repeat them. This includes the Visegrád Four (Poland, Slovakia, Czechia, Hungary) as well as eastern Germany, Romania, and Bulgaria. The eastern part of Europe has for a millennium lagged behind the western part, so this is a remarkable turnaround.

Fourth, civilizationists are hardly known for their intellectualism or principles, so seeing them as conservatives may come as a surprise. But they are moving erratically in that direction. What begins with instinct, raw populism, and crude majoritarianism is evolving into something more refined, as civilizationists move to the political center to win support. Experience modulates self-indulgence. Intellectuals are emerging; these include Douglas Murray (UK), Alejandro Macarón (Spain), Renaud Camus (France), Bat Ye'or (Switzerland), Thilo Sarrazin (Germany), Christian Zeitz (Austria), Viktor Orbán (Hungary), and Lars Hedegaard (Denmark).

Staving off the crisis created by demographics, immigration, multiculturalism, and Islamization means preserving the continent's best features. Civilizationists represent the hope for conservatism and for the future of Europe.

Mr. Pipes (DanielPipes.org, @DanielPipes) is president of the Middle East Forum.