



UNIVERSITY OF ICELAND

European Culture from a Conservative-Liberal Point of View

Professor Hannes H. Gissurarson

ECR European Culture Weekend

1 April 2023, Split, Croatia

The Conservative-Liberal Political Tradition





Four Principles and the Unifying Theory

1. Private property
2. Free trade
3. Limited government
4. Respect for traditions

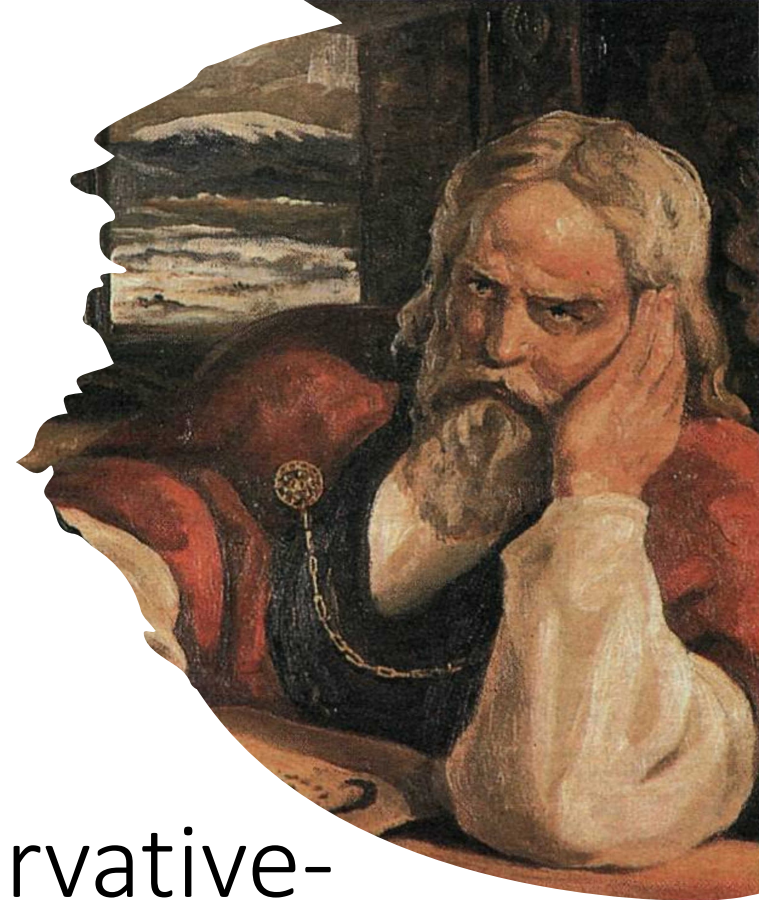
Hayek's theory of spontaneous order:

- Transmission of knowledge in *space*, between individuals and across borders, by accepting the price mechanism
- Transmission of knowledge in *time*, between generations, by respecting venerable traditions



What is it to be a European Conservative Liberal?

- Efficiency desirable, but identity crucial
- Not about what we can *have*, but what we *are* or aspire to be
- Europe defined by two events: Charles Martel, Tours 732; Jan Sobieski, Vienna 1683
- Europe: diversity, not uniformity, no Roman empire, no muslim khalifate
- Oakeshott: the state as civil association, not enterprise association; man has gained the will and ability to make choices; socialism a case of mistaken identity
- But conservative liberalism not only Anglo-Saxon
- Italian, French, Spanish conservative liberalism: Aquinas, Einaudi, Constant, Tocqueville, Bastiat, Jouvenel, Salamanca School



Three Nordic Conservative-Liberal Thinkers

- Snorri Sturluson: Customary law; Government by consent
- Anders Chydenius: Gain from free trade; self-regulation
- N.F.S. Grundtvig: Social cohesion through freedom



Hoff, Gandil, and Rydenfelt at MPS meeting in 1950s

The Nordic Model in International Affairs

Peaceful Secession: Norway from Sweden in 1905, Finland from Russia in 1917, Iceland from Denmark in 1918

Border Changes by Plebiscites: Danish-German border in 1920, Northern Schleswig (=Sønderjylland) to Denmark

Autonomy of Special Regions: Aaland Islands (Finland), Faroe Islands (Denmark), Sami regions

Cooperation without Surrender of Sovereignty: Nordic Council, common labour market, no passports, support of cultural cooperation; EEA (Norway and Iceland)

