

Our Lady of Mont Pelerin: The “Navarra School” of Catholic Neoliberalism

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DURING HOLY WEEK OF 1947, in a smoky room of the Hôtel du Parc overlooking Lake Geneva, Austrian economist Friedrich Hayek opened the first meeting of the Mont Pelerin Society, the invitation-only fraternity that formed the nucleus of the *soi-disant* international neoliberal thought collective.¹ In his

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¹ Mirowski and Plehwe, *Road from Mont Pelerin*, 4. For uses of the term “neoliberalism” as a self-descriptor by these thinkers, see Friedman, “Neo-Liberalism and Its Prospects”; Friedrich, “The Political Thought of Neo-Liberalism.” Many of the contributions to Mirowski and Plehwe’s important volume represent the strand of the scholarship on neoliberalism that approaches it as a system of thought developed by academics and diffused—albeit partially, unevenly, and with considerable variation in different national and temporal contexts—through networks of think tanks, universities, journalists, and policy intellectuals, with the backing of corporate donors, until operationalized as policy and as politics in the late 1970s by states and by supranational organizations. Other works in this vein include Amadae, *Rationalizing Capitalist Democracy*; Amadae, *Prisoners of Reason*; Audier, “Les paradigmes du ‘Néolibéralisme’”; Blyth, *Great Transformations*; Burgin, *Great Persuasion*; Cockett, *Thinking the Unthinkable*; MacLean, *Democracy in Chains*; Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands*; Slobodian, *Globalists*; Stedman-Jones, *Masters of the Universe*. A complementary literature is inspired by

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initial remarks to some forty collaborators from Europe and the United States, Hayek outlined the three critical topics that the group would consider in order to arrive at the Society's fundamental principles: "the relation between 'free enterprise' and a competitive order; the interpretation and teaching of history; and the relationship between liberalism and Christianity."² There could be no hope for a renovation of classical liberalism, no off-ramp from the road to serfdom, if the assembled could not reunite "true liberal and religious convictions" that had been torn asunder by the French Revolution.³ The guests spent Good Friday—the somber commemoration of Christ's agony on the cross—discussing the market order's dependence on religion. Then on Holy Saturday, the nascent neoliberals traveled together to the magnificent Benedictine abbey at Einsiedeln and stood vigil for the entombed Christ as they anticipated His glorious resurrection on Easter Sunday.⁴

Michel Foucault's 1979 lectures at the Collège de France that analyze two varieties of neoliberalism—German "ordoliberalism" and American "anarcho-libertarian" Chicago economics—as systems of governmentality, or the extension of power across the entire social field in order to produce a new kind of economic subject; see Foucault and Senellart, *Birth of Biopolitics*. Examples of influential works in this tradition include Brown, *Undoing the Demos*; Dean, *Governmentality*; Feher, *Rated Agency*; Lazarato, *Governing by Debt*; Rose, *Governing the Soul*. A separate line of analysis addresses neoliberalism as an international class project reacting to the challenge of downward redistribution and the crisis of capital accumulation in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and therefore concentrates on the development of new mechanisms of upward redistribution and the externalization of costs; among the most cited works are Duménil and Lévy, *Capital Resurgent*; Harvey, *Brief History of Neoliberalism*; Prasad, *Politics of Free Markets*. Analyses that correct for the overrepresentation of the "First World" and global North have begun to draw more attention to neoliberalism's origins in development policy and to center its authoritarian dimensions; see, for example, Stephen J. Collier, *Post-Soviet Social*; Li, *Will to Improve*; Tansel, *States of Discipline*. For helpful typological guides to these proliferating literatures across several social science disciplines, see Brady, "Ethnographies of Neoliberal Governmentalities"; Brenner, Peck, and Theodore, "Variegated Neoliberalization"; Collier, "Neoliberalism as Big Leviathan, or . . .?"; Connell and Dados, "Where in the World Does Neoliberalism Come From?"; Eriksen et al., "Concept of Neoliberalism"; Hilgers, "Three Anthropological Approaches"; Wacquant, "Three Steps." Within the discipline of history, see Rodgers, "Uses and Abuses," and Julia Ott, Mike Konczal, N. D. B. Connolly, Timothy Shenk and Daniel Rodgers, "Debating the Uses and Abuses of Neoliberalism: Forum," *Dissent*, January 22, 2019, at https://www.dissentmagazine.org/online_articles/debating-uses-abuses-neoliberalism-forum. Core desiderata of neoliberal policy include privatization of public assets and functions; de- and re-regulation resulting in greater upward distribution of profits and rents; liberalized trade; the insulation of market actors from democratic oversight; disinvestment in social services and re-investment in the punitive, policing, and military functions of the state; and the cultivation of market principles in an ever-widening ambit of human life.

² Hammond and Hammond, "Religion and the Foundation of Liberalism"; Röpkke, "Liberalism and Christianity." Friedman and Friedman, *Two Lucky People*, 161.

³ Innset, "Reinventing Liberalism," 172.

⁴ Innset, "Reinventing Liberalism," 217–18. Innset does not identify the service as a vigil, but that would logically be the form of worship in a Catholic abbey on Easter weekend.

At its very founding, then, the intellectual architects of the self-described neoliberal movement centered Christian theology and worship itself. Despite the rich body of scholarship on the origins and trajectory of neoliberalism, very little of it has cast light on the centrality of Christian theology or practice to that bundle of economic theories.⁵ The most common optic in the American academy, rather, has been the doctrines of the Chicago School economists. These thinkers—many the children of Eastern European Jews who had fled murderous antisemitism—were notably impervious to Christian claims of moral superiority, and exalted rational quantitative expertise as an allegedly value-free tool.⁶ More instrumentally, Frederick Hayek, the Mont Pelerin Society’s reigning intellect among much of its American wing, valued religion for its capacity to inculcate the key virtue demanded by the competitive market order. “It doesn’t matter whether beliefs are true or false,” wrote Hayek. “What really matters is that we should obey those beliefs. I am not religious myself, but I notice that religion has civilized people by making them obey.”⁷ Both committed secularists and cynical pragmatists, in other words, have certainly flourished in the broad neoliberal movement. However, others have found neoliberalism unthinkable without Christianity to secure its conditions of possibility, and some have even defined it as a spiritual technology in itself: “Economics are the method,” Margaret Thatcher explained in 1981, but “the object is to change the heart and soul.”⁸

⁵ An exception is Quinn Slobodian’s discussion of the “*Res Publica Christiana*” in Röpke’s effort to re-establish the pre-1914 “glorious sunny day of the western world” in all its brutal colonial splendor, a vision that helps explain, in Slobodian’s account, the German’s appeal to U.S.-based Christian racists. Slobodian, *Globalists*, 154–55, 165. Reflecting Foucault’s own genealogy of governmentality, which grounds it in Christian pastoral care, analyses of neoliberal subjectivities are more likely to center religious belief, epistemology, or experience; see, for example, Comaroff and Comaroff, “Millennial Capitalism”; Dunn, *Privatizing Poland*; Godrej, “Neoliberal Yogi”; Ong, *Spirits of Resistance*.

⁶ Milton Friedman, for example, called himself an agnostic from the age of twelve. Friedman and Friedman, *Two Lucky People*, 23. More dramatically, Frank Knight, whose influence in faculty hiring and as a teacher was a bridge between “Old Chicago” and the aggressively libertarian postwar generations, was originally destined for the ministry in the rigidly reconstructionist Church of Christ tradition. He turned apostate, making rational atheism a critical element of his economic philosophy and a dissenting voice at the early Mont Pelerin Society. Kern, “Frank Knight”; Knight, *Economic Order*. On the University of Chicago as a pre-World War II oasis of relative non-discrimination for Jewish scholars, see Ebenstein, *Chicagonomics*, 23. On the utility of exquisitely secular mathematical expertise to second-generation Jewish immigrants seeking academic entrée without the social status and networks that had insulated the Christian guild of university economists in the political economy tradition, see Dezalay and Garth, *Palace Wars*, 74–75.

⁷ Hayek quoted in Christoph, “Self-Sufficient Market,” 6.

⁸ Thatcher quoted in Ronald Butt, “Mrs. Thatcher: The First Two Years,” *Sunday Times [London]* (May 3, 1981), archived at <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/104475>.

I argue here that religious doctrine and devotion have been among the principal conduits for neoliberal ideas, policies, and practices, and that attention to them reveals the dependence of free markets on intimate forms of unfreedom. Intellectual historians have recovered the shifting and overlapping neoliberal schools of Geneva and Freiburg, Virginia and Chicago, Vienna and Cologne. This article makes a case for adding a similarly heterogeneous but nonetheless identifiable “Navarra School” to the roster of neoliberal networks. The neologism derives from the flagship university in Spain from which the members of the elite Catholic lay movement Opus Dei disseminated economic policy, business training, and religious practice—a thought collective that was also a deliberate incubator of subjectivity, in the terms borrowed from complementary literatures on neoliberalism.⁹ The evolving Navarra School prioritized sexual conformity, rigid gender distinctions, and women’s domestic subordination as a critical subsidy to the market sanctified by Scholastic “natural law.”¹⁰ Navarra devotees nurtured the Scholastic logic of a society organized along corporatist lines—functionally differentiated, hierarchical, and profoundly opposed to equality. Navarra was never a grand theoretical project. Instead, its very Scholasticism predisposed it to address “practical wisdom” through the new fields of self-improvement, management training, and business ethics. Its key innovation was a reproducible system for cultivating the very subjectivity—the *habitus*, the epistemology, and the techniques of self-governance—that its political and economic worlds demanded.¹¹ Other schools of neoliberal thought advertised their products as positive science and outsourced the hands-on work of making reality conform to the model. In contrast, Navarra explicitly justified business theology and embraced the intimate task of transforming souls for markets.¹²

This candor makes the Navarra School good to think with. Studies of neoliberal policy that start from the specific paradoxes of late twentieth-century U.S. politics—shorthanded elsewhere as “How did Milton Friedman wind up in bed with Jerry Falwell?”—have sought to illuminate the occluded affinities

⁹ See above, note 2.

¹⁰ For a representative statement of these linkages by a “Navarra School” scholar, see George and Tollefsen, “Natural Law.” In his long career as a paid promoter of right-wing causes, judicial appointments, and think tanks, Professor George has hewed closely to this form of moral reasoning, supporting laws against sodomy, adultery, and fornication. Opus Dei Catholic Information Center, <https://cicdc.org/speakers/robert-p-george/>; Blumenthal, “Princeton Tilts Right.”

¹¹ Like so much of the Navarra School’s applied knowledge, the sociological concept of *habitus* itself derives from Aristotle by way of St. Thomas Aquinas; Wacquant, “Concise Genealogy,” 65.

¹² Mirowski, “Physics Envy”; more generally, see Ross, *Origins*.

between these strange bedfellows.¹³ This scholarship argues that the “fusion” between libertarians and religious traditionalists is not a marriage of convenience so much as a necessary but disavowed relation of mutual dependence: the post-Bretton Woods economy requires the hierarchical distribution of labor and risk in which “social” conservatism specializes, while religious conservatives endorse precarity as the appropriate punishment for rebellion against divinely ordained hierarchies. The tools of coercion required to maintain this hidden subsidy—tools like securitization, regressive taxation, hyperincarceration, public asset-stripping, private asset inflation, and “predatory inclusion” in markets structured by race and sex—are justified with the moral logics of religious conservatism when the scientific pretensions of economists and game theorists cannot account for the contradictions.¹⁴

For the Navarra School these affinities never needed to hide. Born Catholic, and in an unabashedly authoritarian regime, this strain of neoliberal praxis has been refreshingly explicit about its contention that social asymmetry and sexual traditionalism are required to secure the market economy. This article therefore follows members of the “Navarra School” as they restructured Hispanophone economies and fitted practitioners for the new sectors of international business and finance. Since the 1960s, they have been agents of neoliberal restructuring across the Spanish-speaking world as business executives and financiers, as management intellectuals and pedagogues, as policymakers and opinion-shapers, and occasionally as jurists and economists. In all these settings, they rigorously opposed the liberalization of family structures through legal access to abortion, birth control, gay rights, and divorce, and in many they supported authoritarian dictatorships. While no one would claim membership in the Navarra School—indeed, enormous effort goes into denying that its many trees make a forest—attending to this disavowed network of institutions and actors allows us to see, as Aihwa Ong urges, “how neoliberal logic is inveigled into constellations of authoritarian politics and cultural ethics.”¹⁵

¹³ Moreton, “Why So Much Sex?”

¹⁴ Brown, *Undoing the Demos*; Camp, *Incarcerating the Crisis*; Cooper, *Family Values*; Duggan, *Twilight of Equality*; Gilmore, *Golden Gulag*; Kohler-Hausmann, *Getting Tough*; MacLean, *Democracy in Chains*; Mahmud, “Debt and Discipline”; Moreton, *God and Wal-Mart*; Ott, “Tax Preference As White Privilege in the United States, 1921–1965”; Taylor, *Race for Profit*; Wacquant, *Punishing the Poor*; Wang, *Carceral Capitalism*. “Fusionism” was the term that came to describe *National Review* editor Frank Meyer’s project of uniting traditionalists and libertarians as a political force; Nash, *Conservative Intellectual Movement*, 269.

¹⁵ Ong, “Neoliberalism,” 3.

Opus Dei: The Work of God

What unites members of the Navarra School across many decades and national borders is their shared association with the global Catholic lay organization Opus Dei.¹⁶ If you are aware of Opus Dei, it may be because you read *The Da Vinci Code*, “a novel so bad it gives bad novels a bad name,” according to Salman Rushdie.¹⁷ In the bestseller and the top-grossing movie adaptation, a malevolent Catholic fraternity suppresses the sex-positive, gender-equalitarian truth of early Christianity for two thousand years. When an albino monk assassinates a museum curator and then whips himself into naked ecstasy before a crucifix, we learn that he works under orders from Opus Dei.¹⁸ While Opus Dei is *not*, in fact, an international conspiracy bent on suppressing knowledge of Jesus’s fruitful marriage to Mary Magdalene, it is a powerful and secretive force grounded in rigid sexual traditionalism, intense self-mortification, and neoliberal economic thought and policy.

What, then, is Opus Dei? The organization is technically a “personal prelatore” of the Catholic Church, which means it answers directly to the Pope and is not subject to local or regional governance under parishes or dioceses.¹⁹ As a lay organization its membership is primarily composed of ordinary Catholics rather than those who have taken religious vows (like monks, priests, or nuns)—although the prelatore is largely managed by the 15 percent of its members who are priests.²⁰ With increasing emphasis since the 1960s, its central mission has been “the sanctifying value of ordinary work”—in theory, all labor. In practice, however, its disciples overwhelmingly work in management, finance, and professions. Opus Dei awakens Catholics to their capacity to attain literal sainthood by performing every

¹⁶ Opus Dei has attracted many scholarly, journalistic, and devotional analysts and commentators. Some of the most authoritative, from which I draw in more general statements about the nature of the organization throughout this article, include Allen, *Opus Dei*; Artigues, *Opus Dei*; Casanova, “Opus Dei Ethic”; Corbière, *Opus Dei*; Estruch, *Saints and Schemers*; Hutchison, *Their Kingdom Come*; Ynfante, *Prodigiosa aventura*; Ynfante, *Santo fundador*. Also useful, though necessarily in a different category, is Moncada, *Hijos del padre*, the fictionalized memoir of one of Opus Dei’s earliest members and defectors.

¹⁷ Rushdie’s widely quoted remark from 2005 appears in Boudway, “Dan Brown’s Enemies List.”

¹⁸ Brown, *Da Vinci Code*; Howard et al., *Da Vinci Code*.

¹⁹ Opus Dei has held this canonical status since the Church’s creation of the category of “personal prelatore” in 1982; previously it functioned under other structures in canon law.

²⁰ The approximately four thousand priests in Opus Dei—including bishops, archbishops, and cardinals; diocesan priests; and Opus Dei’s own priests—are technically organized as members of the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross. Opus Dei, “Priestly Society.”

professional task with “technical care,” “down to the last detail,” in a conscious “spirit of service, loyalty and cheerfulness.”²¹ Importantly, this sanctification through work does “not tak[e] anyone out of his place. Rather, it leads each person to fulfill the task and duties of his own position, in the Church and in society, with the greatest possible perfection.”²²

After a long period of official favor under Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI, Opus Dei members came to hold positions of power and influence in the Church as bishops and cardinals, advisors to the Vatican Bank, and director of the Vatican Press Office.²³ But Opus Dei’s ascent to influence in the ecclesiastical institutions of the Catholic Church is only one measure of its impact. Since its establishment in the 1930s, the prelature has catered primarily to elites, serving as a conduit of doctrinal and devotional traditionalism, rigid gender and sexual conformity, and neoliberal thought. Initial adherents were recruited from academic and scientific circles, and then, after the mid-1950s, primarily from business, politics, journalism, and finance.²⁴

With about ninety thousand members—a third of them Latin Americans—Opus Dei operates hundreds of private institutions in ninety countries around the world. These range from retreat centers to private schools, residences for celibate members, and housing for college students, particularly near elite universities. In addition, Opus Dei maintains fifteen universities of its own, principally in Europe and Latin America, anchored by its original University of Navarra in Pamplona, Spain. Its Instituto de Estudios Superiores de la Empresa (IESE), the fourth-ranked business school in Europe, serves as the hub in a network of similar business schools concentrated in the Hispanophone world.²⁵ Opus Dei operates periodicals, academic journals, publishing houses, and digital outlets, and many members own, manage, or contribute to cable TV channels like Televisa and Fox News. Opus Dei today is not legally the owner of the firms and assets operated by its adherents, but regularly collects a tithe of their revenues through donations to its independent charitable foundations, which in turn award grants to Opus Dei’s auxiliary societies. This extraordinarily complex edifice

²¹ Opus Dei, “Working for Love.”

²² St. Josémaría Escrivá quoted in “Sanctity.”

²³ Urquhart, “Opus Dei.”

²⁴ Ynfante, *Prodigiosa aventura*, Chapter 6. See the book’s *anexo* for a list of highly placed Opus Dei members and sympathizers in Spain at the time.

²⁵ IESE Business School, University of Navarra, “IESE’s MBA among Top Five in Europe, According to FT Global MBA Ranking 2020” (January 27, 2020), <https://www.iese.edu/stories/iese-mba-ft-global-ranking/>, accessed August 31, 2020.

of entities and relationships is held together by the spiritual discipline of Opus Dei's members and close friends, who own and direct the assets.²⁶

A few historical examples from the U.S. context suggest the political impact of an orthodox apostolate aimed at the devout and market-friendly. During the decades in which white evangelicals and Catholics coalesced as the New Christian Right, Opus Dei priest and former Merrill Lynch stockbroker Father John McCloskey effected many inside-the-beltway conversions to Catholicism. McCloskey's most notable catechumens included the constitutional originalist Robert Bork, whose nomination to the U.S. Supreme Court by Ronald Reagan failed to clear the Senate in a rancorous 1987 confirmation hearing; Kansas Governor Sam Brownback, architect of the disastrous supply-side "Kansas Experiment" in colossal tax cuts that decimated the state in the early 2010s; supply-side economist and Freedomworks board member Lawrence Kudlow; covert Nicaragua contra-backer Lew Lehrman; and obstetrician Bernard Nathanson, the anti-abortion activist behind the 1984 documentary *The Silent Scream*, whose slow-motion ultrasound footage of an abortion in progress helped erode public support for *Roe v. Wade*.²⁷ As of 2001, St. Catherine of Siena, a parish in suburban Washington, DC, that cooperates with Opus Dei, counted among its active members Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, GOP senator and presidential hopeful Rick Santorum, the *National Review's* Washington correspondent, and the heads of both the FBI and the National Rifle Association.²⁸

The United States, however, is minor terrain for Opus Dei, whose influence has been concentrated in the Hispanophone world ever since it originated under Spanish fascism in the 1930s. Its founder was now-Saint

²⁶ Hutchison, *Their Kingdom Come*, Chapter 15. The issue of Opus Dei's assets, and the extent to which the coordinated financial dealings of its members and their various "corporate works" and "common works" are attributed to the organization, is a contentious one, since the organization blandly maintains that the commercial, financial, and educational undertakings of corporate entities dominated by its like-minded members, acting in concert and under an extraordinary degree of submission to spiritual authority, nonetheless are irrelevant to the legal entity of Opus Dei headquartered in Rome. Thus an "Opus Dei university" is one organized, endowed, and governed by wealthy Opus Dei members and sympathizers, attended by many of the children of Opus Dei supernumeraries, staffed by many graduates of the University of Navarra and IESE, run in strict conformity with the restorationist Catholicism of John Paul II and Benedict XVI—but only "spiritually advised" by Opus Dei as an entity. In addition to the sources cited above, see Mönckeberg, *Imperio*, 579–623. On the prelature's non-ownership more generally, see Allen, *Opus Dei*, chap. 10. Corbière, *Opus Dei*, 151–59, 186–216.

²⁷ Moreton, "Knutie Gingrich." Freedomworks is the donors' clearinghouse behind the Tea Party.

²⁸ Bill Broadway and David Cho, "FBI Spy Case Arrest Blows Parish's Cover," *Washington Post* (March 3, 2001); Redden, "Rick Santorum."

Josemaría Escrivá, a Spanish priest whose canonization was among the fastest in history, thanks in part to a million-dollar advocacy campaign by Opus Dei.²⁹ The organization is inseparable from the biography of its founder, to whom adherents maintain a cult-like devotion.³⁰ The restless son of a bankrupt bourgeois, Escrivá had felt himself marked out for some special calling by God since childhood. In 1927, having earned both priestly ordination and a law degree, he began offering religious instruction in a residential academy that prepared students for law school. After the founding of the democratic Second Spanish Republic in 1931, the constitutional separation of church and state, and the passage of long-sought laws secularizing education in 1933, Escrivá adapted the notion of a private student center as a base for re-Christianizing Spain by cultivating intellectuals. The handful of original devotees drawn to his coffee hours at his mother's house focused their proselytizing on professional colleges of architecture, medicine, law, and engineering in the context of fierce battles between secular Republicans and the Church over the form and content of Spanish higher education.³¹ Initially all male, the cadre that was to become Opus Dei began welcoming women in 1930 and promptly delegated the housekeeping functions to them.³² Ultimately Escrivá established a women's section so that female lifelong celibates could live in Opus Dei centers and dedicate their professional earnings to the organization; like their male equivalents, these are referred to as "numeraries." Still, the focus remained on the bright young men comprising an incipient professional-managerial class. Escrivá launched what he described in 1934 as a "sacerdotal apostolate among intellectuals," drawing his earliest disciples from the ranks of architects, engineers, lawyers, and physicians in training.³³ After 1943, when the founder decided that his project needed its own priests, most of these early white-collar apostles donned

²⁹ Ynfante, *Santo fundador*, 11–30. John R. Allen, Jr., "With Beatification of John Paul II, What Makes a 'Fast-Track' Saint?" *National Catholic Reporter* (Feb. 1, 2011), <https://www.ncronline.org/news/vatican/beatification-john-paul-ii-what-makes-fast-track-saint>, accessed June 11, 2020. On Escrivá's name and its variations, see Corbière, *Opus Dei*, 95.

³⁰ For a well-documented biography, see Ynfante, *Santo fundador*. On the cultic nature of Opus Dei, see Clasen, "Cult-Like"; Moncada, "Sectas."

³¹ The official story vigorously asserts that Opus Dei dates from October 2, 1928, a date on which Escrivá would later claim to have received a vision of the project in its entirety. As the most careful and impartial student of its development establishes, however, no reference is made to this vision, nor to Opus Dei itself, until 1943. See Estruch, *Saints and Schemers*, 72–137.

³² On the archaic gender norms of Opus Dei, see Estruch, 270–74; Moreton, "Discipline"; Mostaza, "Family Model."

³³ Escrivá quoted in Casanova, "Opus Dei Ethic," 159.

clerical collars; the requirement that all Opus Dei priests first earn a professional degree remains in force.

From the moment of its establishment, Opus Dei shaped—and was shaped by—the sacralized authoritarianism of the reactionary Catholic right in Spain. In 1936, following a left-wing victory at the polls, the Spanish military turned the merciless tools of racialized colonial warfare that it had honed against Moroccan rebels on the elected Republic in Spain itself. With the aid of Mussolini and Hitler, the Spanish generals coordinated the coup that Catholic elites—like Escrivá’s devotees—had demanded since the establishment of a secular Republic in 1931. The ensuing civil war was fought, in the words of the coup’s directing general, to eliminate “without scruple or hesitation those who do not think like we do.” The intent was to bury the democratic challenge to the Spanish establishment so far underground that it could never resurface. The Church, the army, the agrarian oligarchy, and their junior partners among the industrial and extractive bourgeoisie would reconstruct the edifice of “Religion, Fatherland, Family, Order, Work, Property” on the tomb of the Republic. Under the leadership of Franco, Nationalist reactionaries massacred of thousands of civilians in the territories they took—from secular trade unionists and schoolteachers to women who had availed themselves of the Republic’s divorce laws. After their victory in 1939, the Nationalists widened their wartime campaign of ideological liquidation into a “Spanish holocaust” that continued for decades. Tens of thousands died in concentration camps, labor camps, political prisons, and summary executions. A eugenic laboratory, with German advisors, conducted experiments on imprisoned Republicans to determine whether a degenerate “red gene” led to political leftism. They concluded in part that women were prone to “revolutionary criminality” when political emancipation encouraged them to “satisfy their latent sexual appetites.”³⁴

From the inception of the Second Republic in 1931, the Catholic Right in Spain had painted the fascist cause as a holy crusade against a Jewish-Bolshevik-Masonic conspiracy to “Africanize” Spanish peasants and proletarians into revolutionary barbarians. As highly visible forces of reaction, priests and religious (that is, vowed members of monastic orders) were targeted for reprisals by supporters of the Republic in the first months after

³⁴ Lannon, *Privilege, Persecution, and Prophecy*, 23–58; Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*. Direct quotations in translation are Preston’s, from General Emilio Mola, p. xiii; from the official slogan of the right-wing party Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas, p. xv; and from the head of the psychiatric services of the Nationalist army, Major Antonio Vallejo Nagera, p. 514, respectively.

the fascist coup. In the zones of the country where the coup was initially defeated, Republican authority was for months overwhelmed by anarcho-syndicalist and revolutionary “popular justice” which took revenge on the Nationalists. Working-class resentment at the Church hierarchy boiled over into the burning of churches, the sacking of wealthy monasteries, and the murder or execution of almost seven thousand churchmen before the parliamentary government was able to reassert authority in the Republican zone. While the Pope hailed fascism as the best defense against the godless left, priests and monks in Republican-held areas went into hiding.³⁵

As stalwart supporters of the coup caught inside Republican zones, Opus Dei’s Father Escrivá and some members of his circle sought protection in foreign embassies; several *Opusdeistas* joined the fascist crusade as soldiers. In an episode that was to acquire sacred significance within the prelature, Escrivá and a small band of his elite recruits crossed the snowy Pyrenees into Andorra in December of 1937, then proceeded to France for the duration of the civil war. Among this handful of early adherents were some of the chemists, physicians, architects, and engineers who would form the kernel of the “Navarra School.”³⁶

In 1939, Father Escrivá returned to the capital in a military truck bearing victorious Nationalist troops and re-established his ministry with the support of Madrid’s archconservative bishop. The same year, he published *El Camino* [*The Way*], a spiritual self-help guide that struck many young readers as a vigorous modern fusion of piety with efficiency.³⁷ In the 1940s, Franco’s bloody purge of democrats and leftists continued, making use of Nazi crematoria to dispose of Spanish refugees, reasserting colonial repression in parts of Africa claimed by Spain, and consolidating a distinctive Catholic fascism across Spain and its territories.³⁸ For his part, Escrivá provided spiritual exercises for the *Generalissimo* and began in earnest the work of proselytizing for what he now referred to as Opus Dei. Escrivá exported evangelists first to Salazar’s corporatist authoritarian regime in neutral Portugal and then to Iberia’s old colonies after 1945.³⁹ Unsatisfied by the organ-

³⁵ Preston, 221–58.

³⁶ Estruch, *Saints and Schemers*, 89–90.

³⁷ Lannon, *Privilege, Persecution*, 226.

³⁸ Tusell, *Spain*, 40–58.

³⁹ Opus Dei’s career in Latin America, like its position in Spain, is distinct from its efforts elsewhere in the world. Estruch, *Saints and Schemers*, 192–96. Opus Dei also branched early into the United States, where it has made a particular appeal to elites of Latin American origin. The current president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops is the Mexico-born Opus

ization's pace of growth, the founder created a new membership category for both married men and women in 1948. These "supernumeraries" would remain in their family homes and workplaces, but dedicate their time and resources to the organization and follow its rigorous devotional practice. This category grew to comprise the majority of Opus Dei membership and provided its most effective means of recruitment, as women often brought their husbands and brothers into the organization.⁴⁰

Under Franco, Opus Dei elaborated its portfolio of commercial and financial investment through a complex system of profit-transfer accounting to obscure ownership, with individual members in executive positions at banks, media outlets, publishing houses, and marketing and investment firms. Following a series of corruption scandals in Spain in the 1960s that implicated some of its members, Opus Dei settled on the present system in which it divides ownership and management of its corporate assets into separate corporations, each of which is then owned by a trust or a holding company.⁴¹

This brief sketch of Opus Dei suggests the overt combination of authoritarian politics, traditionalist religion, and economic interests in the Navarra School that make its history a useful heuristic for students of neoliberalism. The rest of this article explains how its Spanish members first wielded political influence over the form and content of higher education—including platforming German ordoliberalism in the 1940s—and then over economic policy in the 1960s. Final papal approval of Opus Dei's constitution in 1950 opened the doors and pocketbooks of the wealthy and powerful.⁴² This patronage was increasingly channeled into the cultivation of a devout executive class, beginning with the founding of the University of Navarra in 1952 and, especially, of its graduate business school, the Instituto de

Dei priest, University of Navarra alumnus, and Archbishop of Los Angeles José Gómez, whose appointment to the largest archdiocese of Mexican-origin congregants outside of Mexico was interpreted as a definitive papal rebuff to the more progressive strains of Latin American Catholicism that migration has introduced into the U.S. Church; Simon Caldwell, "Pope's 'Revenge' as Opus Dei Bishop Goes to Hollywood," *Daily Telegraph* (April 7, 2010).

⁴⁰ Opus Dei, "First Supernumeraries"; Mönckeberg, *Imperio*, 170. In addition to numeraries and supernumeraries, adherents can be associates, who remain celibate but do not live in the Opus Dei centers; numerary assistants—a celibate servant class of young women recruited through the prelate's string of training schools for domestic service or the hotel industry; or "cooperators," friends of the organization who help further its ends without joining. Opus Dei, *Statutes*, 9, 10S2, 11S1, 16S1.

⁴¹ Casanova, "Opus Dei Ethic," 347–54. On the most significant of the scandals, see Tusell, *Spain*, 220–21.

⁴² The content of this 1950 constitution was a closely guarded secret until Spanish journalist Jesús Ynfante published it in France in 1970; see Ynfante, *Prodigiosa aventura*, Appendix 4, 395–452.

Estudios Superiores de la Empresa (IESE), in 1958. By 1980, the prelature was well established among business and professional elites throughout the Spanish-speaking world. Opus Dei adherents played critical roles in directing national economies away from import substitution strategies and social welfare provision to global trade and finance. The University of Navarra and IESE anchored a network of Opus Dei campuses throughout Latin America, today comprising ten business schools and more than a dozen universities. The economic vision they promote explicitly appeals to Catholic moral reasoning, sexual morality, and gender norms as necessary adjuncts to markets.

Catholic Economic Theology in the Twentieth Century

Opus Dei's utility as a vehicle of Christian neoliberalism can only be understood against the larger backdrop of centuries of Catholic theological engagement with classical liberalism and modern capitalism. Since the late nineteenth century, the body of economic theology referred to as "Catholic social doctrine" has positioned itself as an alternative to socialism and laissez-faire alike—those accursed twin offspring of the Church's perennial foe, classical philosophical liberalism. This "pox-on-both-your-houses" approach, found in papal pronouncements on the "social question" of economic immiseration, has characterized authoritative Church teachings for over a century.⁴³ In the landmark 1891 papal encyclical *Rerum Novarum*—"On the rights and duties of labor and capital"—Pope Leo XIII lamented that ever since the French Revolution had abolished the guilds, "working men have been surrendered, isolated and helpless, to the hardheartedness of employers and the greed of unchecked competition" and "rapacious usury," driving an immiserated working class into the arms of the socialists. The anti-liberal ideal against which both are measured is the productive, heritable, patriarchal agrarian household, the Aristotelean *oikos* that Thomas Aquinas and his fellow Scholastics had Christianized in the thirteenth century.⁴⁴

⁴³ Case, "Social Question"; Colom Costa, *Curso*; Schmiesing, *Within the Market Strife*. While liberalism in the Hispanophone world was itself originally a Reform Catholic discourse more than a secular Enlightenment one, its ultramontane rival was implacably dedicated to its suppression, producing exemplars like the polemicist Félix Sardá i Salvany and his popular 1884 *El Liberalismo es un pecado* [*Liberalism Is a Sin*]. This handbook of the rabidly intolerant Integrist movement, which declared "war without quarter" on the liberal enemy, garnered an endorsement by the Holy See. Voekel, *Alone before God*; Schumacher, "Integristism," 358–60.

⁴⁴ The Scholasticism that flourished in the thirteenth through sixteenth centuries was revived in the nineteenth century, and this neo-Scholasticism or neo-Thomism became official Church policy in 1879, when Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Aeterni Patris* exhorted Catholic schools and

The neo-Scholastic or neo-Thomist theologians who drafted *Rerum Novarum* elevated the patriarchal reproductive family as the supreme model for all other corporate communities. Family heads enjoyed rights at least equal to those of states, for “[a] family, no less than a State, is a true society, governed by an authority peculiar to itself, that is to say, by the authority of the father.” The family, in which the distinct functions of different members theoretically harmonize into a common interest through loving obedience to this natural authority, offered a model for society as a whole: hierarchically defined, functionally differentiated, with common interests but without common property since “a man in his capacity of head of a family” was the privileged natural bearer of private property rights. Class conflict could be resolved by generalizing from the family relation, which was naturally unequal yet loving and whole.⁴⁵ *Rerum Novarum* set the terms and limits of Catholic debate on economic justice that endure down to the present day.

It had immediate effects. The 1891 encyclical did not use the term “corporatism,” but Leo XIII drew upon this nineteenth-century intellectual tradition of Catholic reaction in drafting it, and spoke wistfully of the “confraternities, societies, and religious orders” that had been stripped of their feudal corporate privileges, opening the door to the evil of secular, socialist labor unions.⁴⁶ This call to repopulate the political space between the individual and the state with intermediate institutions stimulated intellectual interest in the nineteenth-century body of Catholic corporate thought and inspired movements for corporatism far beyond what the encyclical pondered, from the land schemes of the English distributists to the authoritarian regimes

seminaries to emphasize “the teachings of Thomas on the true meaning of liberty, which at this time is running into license, on the divine origin of all authority, on laws and their force, on the paternal and just rule of princes, on obedience to the higher powers, on mutual charity one toward another” in order to defend correct dogma and public order from “this plague of perverse opinions.” Pope Leo XIII, *Aeterni Patris*; quoted passages from paragraphs 29 and 28 respectively. Importantly, Leo defended scholastic philosophy as entirely consistent with the natural sciences. In pursuit of this goal, Leo also founded the Pontifical Academy of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome and ordered the preparation of the critical edition of St. Thomas’s complete works; see Misner, “Predecessors.” A. M. C. Waterman points out, however, that an oddly Lockean strain of property theory crept into the landmark encyclical as well; see Waterman, “Intellectual Context.” Aquinas is virtually the only authority the encyclical cites outside of Scripture itself.

⁴⁵ Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, paragraph 13.

⁴⁶ The Pope was influenced by the multinational Catholic lay association of well-born conservatives, the Fribourg Union, led by corporative theorist René de La Tour du Pin. Du Pin’s influence on *Quadragesimo Anno* is much more pronounced; Sladky, “Program for a Christian Social Order.” Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, paragraph 53.

of interwar Europe.⁴⁷ In place of class conflict and the inexorable math of mass democracy, corporate societies would blunt the power of the majority by organizing representation through constituent units that were “noncompetitive, hierarchically organized, functionally differentiated,” and officially authorized.⁴⁸ One of the most influential Catholic blueprints for an “organic” society argued for representation of four “estates”—agriculture; industry and commerce; public service and authorities; and the moral sector, comprising the Church, family, education, arts, and “personal nurture.” The family would be represented only by a male *paterfamilias*.⁴⁹ A military coup against the “excesses” of liberal constitutional parliamentarianism in 1923 established the eight-year dictatorship of Miguel Primo de Rivera in Spain and instituted the first corporatist governing body in Europe.⁵⁰

The same economic stressors that brought down Primo de Rivera’s original corporatist government in Spain in 1930, however, stimulated the model elsewhere in Europe, again with intellectual impetus from the Church. In his 1931 encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*, Pope Pius XI revisited *Rerum Novarum* on its fortieth anniversary. Largely written by German enthusiasts of corporatism, this papal encyclical went further in excoriating laissez-faire as the womb from which communism was born. Corporatism modeled on the male-dominated, reproductive family could steer mankind between individualism and collectivism, those “twin rocks of shipwreck.”⁵¹ *Quadragesimo Anno* offered a Catholic alternative to liberal egotism—and to the collectivist rejoinders of communism, socialism, and welfare-statism—by acknowledging private property as a guarantee of a husband’s dominion and his family’s fruitful labor. Unlike classical liberal views of private property, this *explicitly* gendered and family-based concept of property sought to cultivate social and moral bonds among people. Drawing heavily on the nineteenth-century body of Catholic corporate theory, the encyclical acknowledged and even celebrated the hierarchical, gendered power relations within the family—as well as those found in larger organic communities like guilds, corporations, and governments that ought to be modeled upon the family. This “subsidiarity”—the principle that the state should “let subordinate groups handle matters and

⁴⁷ Bovée, *Church and the Land*, 25–27; Brinkmeyer, *Fourth Ghost*, 40–47; Corrin, *G. K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc*, 44–45.

⁴⁸ Pike, *New Corporatism*, 93.

⁴⁹ Pollard, “Corporatism,” 43.

⁵⁰ Martínez, “Representación política,” 131–37; on the gender dimensions of this corporatism, see Aresti, “Real Men”; Ortega López, “Conservadurismo.”

⁵¹ Pope Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno*, paragraph 46.

concerns of lesser importance”—would become a boon to opponents of the welfare state as they sought to privatize social costs.⁵² The encyclical’s effort to distinguish Mussolini’s state-centered fascist corporatism from a properly Catholic reorganization of society was lost on many in the pews.⁵³ Fascist movements embraced this Catholic vision of “organic” society as consistent with their own models of society, polity, and economy. Across interwar Europe, various Catholic parties championed some degree of corporatism, while full-blown corporate political representation returned to Spain with the Nationalists’ victory in the Civil War.⁵⁴

After the Second World War, however, Catholicism’s center of gravity moved decisively toward the global South. There, anticolonial movements forced a radical reorientation of economic theology just as the Second Vatican Council assembled. Between 1962 and 1965, this sweeping renovation of the theology and liturgy of the Church abandoned the Vatican’s long war of attrition against modernity and engaged with urgent social, political, and economic issues. The authority that successive popes had sought to centralize now flowed outward and downward from Rome: To dilute the stranglehold of octogenarian Italians on papal elections, Pope Paul VI added a slew of new cardinals from the global South and devolved power to regional bodies from which new perspectives could be raised. His 1967 encyclical *Progressio Populorum* [*On the Development of Peoples*] was the first to center the global South. The *Wall Street Journal* called it “warmed-over Marxism,” but the creditor class hadn’t seen anything yet. A group of self-described “Third World Bishops” and their clerical fellow-travelers in Brazil, Argentina, Peru, Colombia, and Mexico quickly began to issue statements affirming that “[a]uthentic socialism is Christianity lived in full, in basic equality and with a fair distribution of goods.”⁵⁵

In 1968, the Pope traveled to Colombia to open one of the regional conferences of bishops that Vatican II had encouraged. The decentralizing

⁵² Moreton, “Knutte Gingrich.”

⁵³ Almodovar and Teixeira, “Ascent and Decline”; Chamedes, *Twentieth-Century Crusade*.

⁵⁴ John Pollard, following Pius XI himself, distinguishes between Catholic and fascist corporatism in assessing the many corporate forms of representation or social organization that gained the force of law in interwar Europe. In this typology, the distinction hinges on the fascist embrace of compulsion to force labor into vertically organized syndicates and corporations, and thus to quell coercively the fundamental class divide that the Catholic theorists seemed to imagine would heal itself. Such a view, however, does not seem to consider as compulsion the structures required to force women into the similarly vertically organized unit of the family, another pillar of Catholic corporatist theory. Pollard, “Corporatism.”

⁵⁵ Berryman, *Liberation Theology*, 20–21.

innovations authorized by Vatican II had dislodged many of Latin America's prelates and theologians from the Church's traditional position of support for conservative elites. Now they engaged more fully with the lay majority, dialoguing with their flocks over the region's grossly unequal and repressive social structures. Latin American bishops prepared for their gathering in Medellín by soliciting input from social scientists and theologians like Peru's Gustavo Gutiérrez and stressing the Biblical "preferential option for the poor" that came to be known as liberation theology. The resulting pronouncement at Medellín opened with a survey of the intolerable conditions of the poor in Latin America and concluded with an unabashed denunciation of neocolonialism and the systemic production of "extreme inequality among social classes."⁵⁶ Three years later, the General Synod of Bishops adopted liberation theology along with the economic platform of the Group of 77 ex-colonial nations. Gathered together in the Vatican, the world's Catholic prelates named God "the liberator of the oppressed and the defender of the poor" and endorsed the redistributionary development goals of the non-aligned movement and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).⁵⁷

The early 1970s represented the highwater mark of liberation theology. The reaction against it within the Catholic Church fueled the growth and development of Opus Dei, a movement that would reach back and draw very different conclusions from the theological legacy of *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno*. In an attempt to refute liberation theology's moral critique of systemic exploitation and repression as institutionalized violence, a more conservative faction of Latin American bishops took control of the regional synod in 1972. In 1978, the conclave called to name a successor to the short-lived Pope John Paul I selected Polish theologian Karol Wojtyła, who was destined to enroll the Church as a theological combatant in the Cold War. Viewing the Catholic engagement with economic and political oppression through a firmly East-West frame, Pope John Paul II and his doctrinal enforcer Cardinal Ratzinger (the future Pope Benedict XVI)

⁵⁶ Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano (CELAM), "Medellín Conference Statement."

⁵⁷ In their words, "These [goals] include the transfer of a precise percentage of the annual income of the richer countries to the developing nations, fairer prices for raw materials, the opening of the markets of the richer nations and, in some fields, preferential treatment for exports of manufactured goods from the developing nations. These aims represent first guidelines for a graduated taxation of income as well as for an economic and social plan for the entire world." World Synod of Catholic Bishops, "Justice in the World." On UNCTAD in this period, see Prashad, *Darker Nations*, 70–74.

interpreted Latin America's theology of liberation as a mere cover for Marxist revolution.⁵⁸ Under this papacy, Opus Dei flourished.

Pope John Paul II relied on Opus Dei, especially in Latin America, as the “point of the spear” in combatting liberation theology's powerful combination of humble evangelism and systemic economic critique.⁵⁹ Opus Dei had long cultivated a relationship with Wojtyla; it had thrown its weight behind his candidacy for the papacy. Soon after the new pope's election, the Vatican struck back at the “Marxist” priests. And John Paul II began to claw back the devolution of power that his immediate predecessors had encouraged, replacing clerics sympathetic to liberation theology across the region with ones who were deeply anticommunist in politics and economics and militantly traditional in sexual values. He stressed as well the neo-Scholastic version of “personalism”—a broad philosophical emphasis on the “dignity of the human person” and his fundamentally social nature that championed relationality without equality. This model proved critical for Catholic neoliberalism, licensing universal compassion without requiring any redistribution of resources or power.⁶⁰

Across Latin America, Opus Dei prelates and members demonstrated a reliable affinity for the military, authoritarian leaders, and neoliberal economic policies—advocacy always coupled tightly with militant sexual conservatism. Whereas religious traditionalism has often served as the unacknowledged supplement to Chicago's secular economics, the Navarra School embraces mutually dependent commitments rooted in a deep intellectual history of Catholic theology and unapologetically authoritarian politics.⁶¹ Opus Dei devotees and cooperators helped to bring about conservative social policy in at least half a dozen Latin American countries after the 1970s; they supported or participated in right-wing coups across

⁵⁸ Duffy, *Saints and Sinners*, 358–78; Lernoux, *People of God*, 92, 100–104 and passim. John Paul I—the former Albino Luciani—was elevated to the papacy following the death of Paul VI, but died himself 33 days later, making 1978 the “year of three popes.”

⁵⁹ Vassallo, “Prólogo,” 3.

⁶⁰ Diego Cevallos, “Pope Curbed Latin American Progressives in 25-Year Reign,” *Global Information Network*, Mexico City (October 15, 2003); Houtart, “Pontificados”; Normand, “Troublante ascension”; Balech, *Opus Dei*. On John Paul II's deeply Thomistic concern with the “person as subject and object of action”—his chief focus as a theologian—see Reimers, “Christian Personalism.” For an example of personalism's application to labor, see Cusick, “Management, Labor.”

⁶¹ See above, note 17. On the concept of the Derridean supplement in this context, see Joseph, *Against the Romance of Community*.

four decades in Chile, Argentina, Venezuela, Honduras, and Peru.⁶² In the Spanish-speaking world today, Opus Dei membership is prevalent among professional and upper-class beneficiaries of economic restructuring as well as inherited wealth; the traditionalist Catholic and pro-business Mexican Partido de Acción Nacional, for example, is the taken-for-granted political home of many of the country's approximately seven thousand Opus Dei members.⁶³ As one analyst of the organization put it, Opus Dei represented the "preferential option for the rich."⁶⁴ God, it turned out, was on the side with the biggest investment portfolios.

In the wake of Vatican II and the rise liberation theology in the global South, then, Opus Dei was the officer corps for the papal reassertion of a more authoritarian and doctrinally conservative Catholicism. Yet in matters of theology and devotional practice, Opus Dei innovated as much as it reacted. In seeking to contain the radical challenge of liberation theology and to stress the captivity of Christians behind the Iron Curtain, Pope John Paul II—to the discomfort of some of his Cold War allies—doubled down on two centuries of Catholic disdain for liberalism in all its guises. Echoing *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno*, he sternly reiterated the denunciations of "liberal capitalism" that had always accompanied the rejection of socialism, "both concepts being imperfect and in need of radical correction."⁶⁵ Like its red spawn, he argued on the hundredth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, economic liberalism embraces mechanistic Enlightenment atheism and "totally reduces man to the sphere of economics and the satisfaction of material needs."⁶⁶ "Idolatry" of the market, the hero of Polish anti-communism warned the triumphant capitalist world, "ignores the existence of goods which by their nature are not and cannot be mere commodities."⁶⁷ Even as the Pope resurrected aspects of the pre-Vatican II Church and gave aid and comfort to its conservative wing, his allegiance to the anti-liberalism of his predecessors' landmark encyclicals caused consternation among those who sought his unalloyed blessing for free-market capitalism.⁶⁸

⁶² Catholics for Choice, "Primer on Opus Dei," 9–11. Chávez and Mujica, "Politicization of the Pulpit." Corbière, *Opus Dei*, 238–44.

⁶³ De Los Reyes and Rich, "Opus Dei and Mexico."

⁶⁴ Bustamante Olguín, "Formación," 114.

⁶⁵ Pope John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, paragraph 21.

⁶⁶ Pope John Paul II, *Centisimus Annus*, paragraph 30.

⁶⁷ Pope John Paul II, paragraph 40.

⁶⁸ Paternot, *Dieu est-il contre l'économie?*; Lay Commission on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy, *Toward the Future*; Novak, *Catholic Ethic*.

This, then, was the complex legacy of Catholic economic theology with which the Navarra School would meet the challenge of spreading market-friendly economic policy and crafting a Catholic business praxis for the post-Bretton Woods landscape. Their neo-Scholastic epistemology would recast the “social question” as “business ethics” and turn it into a distinctive intellectual product. And in the most literal, bodily tradition of Scholastic “*habitus*,” their pious discipline of self-mortification and sexual chastity would produce the proper subject for the economy that they helped construct.

Traditionalists in the Vanguard: Neoliberal Restructuring under Franco

Against the backdrop of this decades-long struggle for the soul of Catholic social doctrine, Spanish dictator Francisco Franco found critical allies in the ranks of Opus Dei. Faced with the necessity of adapting the regime’s economic model to the continental common market taking shape in Western Europe, his government entrusted the task of economic restructuring to the prelature’s spiritual and technical virtuosi. At the same time, Opus Dei itself launched the University of Navarra and its business school as training grounds for the new professional-managerial elite that a neoliberalized Spain would demand.

Between 1957 and 1973, Opus Dei members appointed to Franco’s cabinet were responsible for a new economic policy designed to bring Spain’s economy into line with the European Economic Community (EEC) as the first step toward its ultimate inclusion in the European Union three decades later.⁶⁹ To achieve integration into the EEC, agrarian Spain’s state-led development and import substitution policies would have to be jettisoned—a move with profound political and ideological implications. Nationalist Spain had attempted a course of national economic self-sufficiency, or

⁶⁹ Slobodian emphasizes the lack of a single unified “neoliberal” position on the EEC; for some it represented a first step to encasing a global free trade order in a supranational constitutional order, while for others the point was its continental scope, which fell far short of a worldwide “Open Door” policy. The Treaty of Rome was a product of compromise, both among neoliberal influencers and between German neoliberals and French promoters of “Eurafrique.” While it enshrined some of the key desiderata of the neoliberal consensus, it lacked enforcement mechanisms and maintained “special relationships” with the signatories’ ex-colonies; further, for the “universalist” wing of the Mont Pelerin Society, it was a surrender to regional protectionism. However, under the influence of Erhard advisor Alfred Müller-Armack—a German ordoliberal economist and long-time Nazi Party member—the Treaty of Rome did lay some of the groundwork for a recognizably ordoliberal constitutional order in Europe. Slobodian, *Globalists*, 184–210.

autarky, which met Franco's ideological goals but left Spain under food rationing for fifteen years after the close of the Civil War. The autarkic position, theologically congruent with Catholic corporatism's imagined national *oikos*, commanded the loyalty the regime's key power bloc, the Falange party.⁷⁰ But with the ascent of Pope John XXIII in 1958, Europe's only remaining fascist regimes lost their support in Rome.⁷¹ Opus Dei provided Franco with a substitute: economic modernizers whose Catholic credentials were beyond reproach, and who could be counted upon to insure that the religious basis of authoritarianism in Spain would not be compromised by integration into European markets.

Although it had very little in the way of economic expertise at its founding, Opus Dei had played a key role in remaking Spanish higher education along neo-Scholastic lines in the decades after the Civil War, and then increasingly shifted its primary focus to the world of business and investment. These strands came together with the prelature's well-earned reputation for technical proficiency and discipline to make Opus Dei a key contributor to the new economic order.

During the 1940s, after the victorious Nationalists had purged the (briefly) secular universities of their independent faculties and suppressed the secular Instituto Liberal de Enseñanza (Institute of Liberal Education; ILE), Opus Dei members played leading roles in the re-Christianization of scientific and technical research in Spain.⁷² Beginning in 1942, a Franquista scientific complex was launched under the direction of some of the earliest members of Opus Dei, repurposing and expanding an independent prewar research center into a triumphant scientific "City of God." Here the nation's institutes of

⁷⁰ Saraiva and Wise, "Autarky/Autarchy"; Anderson, *Political Economy*, 101–103. The original fascist Falange party of 1934 had been merged and reorganized under Franco; its full name by this point was Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista.

⁷¹ Plural, because in addition to Spain's Nationalist regime, Portugal's Estado Novo was a corporatist authoritarian, and arguably fascist, dictatorship. In Spain, the Nationalist codes imposed after the fall of the Republic suppressed birth control, re-criminalized abortion, discouraged female employment, segregated education by sex, and revived the nineteenth-century civil code that defined men as household heads and women as obligated to obey them, up to a legal dispensation for husbands who murdered wives caught in adultery. For women, a six-month course in religious values and domestic arts was required for a driver's license, passport, university matriculation, or government employment. Spanish clerics devoted obsessive attention to the threats of immodest dress and movies, and counseled women to adopt an attitude of pious submission to their husbands. Callahan, *Catholic Church*, 484–89; Ortega López, "Conservadurismo."

⁷² The ILE was the institutional home of the scholar José Castillejo Duarte, the lone Spaniard in attendance at the 1938 precursor meeting to the Mont Pelerin Society.

physics, chemistry, and history shared a walled fortress with a massive Romanesque Church of the Holy Spirit and a formerly secular secondary school—now aggressively rechristened the Instituto Ramiro de Maeztu in honor of the influential Spanish Catholic distributist martyred in the Civil War.⁷³ At this newly established Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC), conservative, neo-Scholastic Catholic theology was represented as the trunk of the tree of knowledge, with the various sciences conceived as dependent branches; the influential journal that platformed many midcentury Opusdeistas was even titled *Arbor [Tree]*. Franco's Spain aimed to demonstrate that godless Jacobinism was not the price of technical knowledge.⁷⁴

Opus Dei numerary José María Albareda, a soil scientist and ultimately an ordained priest, was named general secretary of CSIC, and he vowed to “link scientific production with the service of the spiritual and material interests of the Homeland.” Occupying for more than a quarter century the most influential post in Spanish academe, this early devotee of Escrivá steered the nation's professoriate toward applied research and Catholic orthodoxy. By the early 1950s, an estimated 20 percent of university chairs were occupied by Opus Dei adherents.⁷⁵ All faculty were evaluated on their piety, with Albareda actively encouraging narrowness and obedience as positive virtues for researchers. Favoring technological and applied topics that would contribute to national economic development, CSIC under its Opus Dei leader exercised complete control of Spanish universities. In this effort to model practical, obedient, and devout intellectual life for Spain's “spiritual empire,” the humanities and social sciences withered. Funding flowed instead to politically vetted, spiritually assessed technical experts throughout the provincial university system. In 1962, Albareda managed to win legal accreditation from Generalissimo Franco for Opus Dei's University of Navarra, the only new private institution that the fascist dictator authorized.⁷⁶

⁷³ Camprubi Bueno, “Political Engineering,” 83–85. The essayist and editor Ramiro de Maeztu, a former enthusiast of Fabianism won over to distributism, was a leader in the far right cultural movement Acción Española during the Second Republic and was a major influence on Chilean historian Jaime Eyzaguirre. Eyzaguirre in turn counted as a devoted student of Chilean neoliberal Jaime Guzmán, on whom more below. Moncada Durruti, *Jaime Guzmán*, 28–29.

⁷⁴ Camprubi Bueno, “Political Engineering,” 83–85.

⁷⁵ Canales Serrano and Gómez Rodríguez, *Larga noche*, 207.

⁷⁶ Malet, “José María Albareda.” Claret Miranda, *Atroz desmoche*, 51–70. Other Opus Dei members who were crucial to the creation and elaboration of CSIC included Alfredo Sánchez Bella, later minister of information and tourism, and close collaborator with Albareda in CSIC's founding; José María Casciario, a financial counselor to CSIC; and Angel González Alvarez. Artigues, *Opus Dei*, 47.

El Ordoliberalismo

This incipient “Navarra School” drew inspiration from German ordoliberalism. Recall that the relationship between liberalism and Christianity ranked among the most urgent issues covered at the founding of the Mont Pelerin Society in 1947, thanks to the Protestant economists of the Freiburg School—led by Walter Eucken—who came to be known collectively as “ordoliberals” upon the 1948 founding of their journal *Ordo*. Ordoliberalism’s principal distinguishing feature within the big tent of neoliberal thought has been its explicit acknowledgement of the need for a strong patriarchal state as a tool for establishing and ensuring a competitive market order.⁷⁷ The state, they contended in the early 1930s, must set and enforce the rules by which markets operate through an “economic constitution;” further, it must create social and moral conditions that inculcate “entrepreneurialism as a character trait into society at large.”⁷⁸ Like their colleagues in Virginia, Vienna, and other hubs of neoliberal theory, the Freiburg School frankly acknowledged that parliamentary democracy represented a threat to free markets.⁷⁹ However, the authoritarianism that German ordoliberals sought in the 1930s and 1940s was explicitly Christian, and thus proved useful for the emerging Navarra School.⁸⁰ As early as 1932, Eucken had asserted in “Religion—Economy—The State” that belief in God was the necessary precondition for political and economic order.⁸¹ Drawing upon the Lutheran doctrine that fallen, sinful man could not properly discern the good or the just, Eucken’s circle in Freiburg viewed the state as depraved and sinful simply by virtue of its status as a human artifact. Their ideal was therefore a state deprived of any power to impose a conception of the commonweal—one confined to technical roles and inflexible rules.⁸²

⁷⁷ Wilkinson, “Authoritarian Liberalism.”

⁷⁸ Bonefeld, “Freedom and the Strong State,” 635. Foucault and Senellart, *Birth of Biopolitics*, chapters 4, 5, and 6.

⁷⁹ Ralf Ptak points out that the foundational writings of what was to become ordoliberalism called for the power of an “independent”—that is, democratically unresponsive—state to control the selfish particularism that menaced markets, and that the postwar ordoliberal social market economy sought to substitute a subjective “feeling of contentment” for the concrete labor demands of “higher income, better working conditions, or shorter work time.” Ptak, “Neoliberalism in Germany,” 98–138, quotations from pp. 105–106.

⁸⁰ Troels Krarup provides a brief genealogy of this argument in the largely German-language literature on ordoliberalism; see Krarup, “‘Ordo’ versus ‘Ordnung,’” 306.

⁸¹ Goldschmidt, “Walter Eucken.”

⁸² Krarup, “‘Ordo’ versus ‘Ordnung.’” Krarup reports that the Freiburg Council—one of the iterations of the shifting group—was hamstrung by Luther’s own emphasis on obedience to worldly

This line of reasoning excused the Freiburg circle from actively opposing the Nazi regime, but in 1942, at the invitation of a genuine martyr of the resistance, theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a number of the Freiburg thinkers authored a rough outline for postwar Germany.⁸³ Their plan appealed exclusively to Lutheran theology and the Ten Commandments for its philosophical justification, stressing patriarchal authority and sexual probity as the moral prerequisites of a social order grounded in competitive markets. In such an order, the economists asserted, all actors would

authority (based in St. Paul's epistle to the Romans, 13:1–2) when it comes into conflict with other equally urgent Christian requirements to enact neighborly love and combat sin. They rejected the path of "martyrdom," or public opposition to Nazism; none took the course—urged by their theologian in exile, Karl Barth—of disobeying a regime that had forfeited its legitimacy through the rank immorality of its rule. Wall, "Confessing Church," 17.

⁸³ The status of the proto-ordoliberalists under Nazism has been a bone of contention as their critics and their supporters seek to stake out their subjects' collective position as either *de facto* enablers or heroic dissenters. Some of the contention arises from the existence of a genuine continuum among the core group. On one hand, Wilhelm Röpke and Alexander Rüstow, for example—as well as Lüdwig von Mises—engendered enough official censure to depart Germany altogether after being dismissed from their university posts along with, of course, Marxist economists of any "race" and Jewish economists of all ideologies. Ludwig Erhard and Alfred Müller-Armack, on the other hand, actively contributed to and were rewarded by the Nazi government. Others of the Freiburg School fell somewhere in between, although their continued employment after 1933 demonstrates their acceptability to the regime—like Eucken, who defended individual Jewish colleagues but not systematically or overtly enough to suffer any fate worse than political irrelevance, and whose pre-occupations during the age of the Shoah and a war of colonial conquest centered on fears of state interference in the market. See Kurlander, "Between Detroit and Moscow," 298–304; Ptak, "Neoliberalism in Germany"; Biebacher and Vogelmann, "Contextualization." Ralf Ptak explicitly rejects as unsupported by the evidence the claim "that the ordoliberalists who did not emigrate from Germany opposed, or even persistently resisted" the Nazi regime, as their publications up through the early 1940s "unquestionably reveal that ordoliberal concepts were designed to be implemented under the auspices of a Nazi government." Ptak points to Germany's defeat at Stalingrad and the implementation of the "Final Solution" in 1942 as the somewhat "opportunistic" turning point for many, including liberals who were subsequently questioned by the Gestapo and one, Jens Jessen, who lost his life. Ptak, "Neoliberalism in Germany," 117–19. Conversely, Nils Goldschmidt repeats the assertion that Eucken was "active in resistance circles" but offers no specifics beyond his participation in the "Bonhoeffer Memorandum," of which more below. Goldschmidt, "Walter Eucken." Daniel Johnson likewise refers to the Freiburg circle as "anti-Nazis," but his evidence is again only their post-Stalingrad authorship of the Bonhoeffer memo. Johnson, "Exiles," 48. For efforts to typologize ordoliberalism in German economic intellectual history, see Rieter and Schmolz, "German Ordoliberalism"; Tribe, *Strategies of Economic Order*, 169–262. The Freiburgers' spiritual home was the Confessing Church, the rump Protestant league that parted ways with official "German Christians" in 1934, not over anti-semitism or Nazi policy more generally, but over the degree of control the party sought over German Protestantism itself. With only scattered individual exceptions, the Confessing Church continued to accommodate the Nazi regime and support the war until its end. Wall, "Confessing Church."

observe the fourth commandment—“Thou shalt honor thy Father and Mother”—and the sixth, “Thou shalt not commit adultery.”⁸⁴ Faced with what they perceived as “the internal decomposition of families” in wartime Germany, the Freiburg group called for positive state action to encourage and protect family businesses and to stimulate self-sufficiency among all families through home gardens—always with the labor of wife and children commanded by male heads of household. “Above all,” German ordoliberalists assigned to the family “its due position as the foundation of all social life.”⁸⁵

Even before the war’s end, this Lutheran free-market vision was actively promoted to German Catholics and platformed in fascist Spain by the proto-Navarra School of Opus Dei celibates. Seeking the newly decisive votes of West Germany’s Catholic minority, the Protestant Röpke energetically pursued the cooperation of Oswald Nell-Breuning, the country’s foremost Catholic theologian and co-drafter of Pope Pius XI’s 1931 *Quadragesimo Anno*.⁸⁶ Röpke’s 1942 *The Social Crisis of Our Time* painted the “free peasantry” as the bedrock of the competitive order because it fostered the “type of family which gives each member a productive function.”⁸⁷ Echoing the romantic medievalism of Catholic corporatism—and eliding the fact that in such a model the landowning peasant’s workforce of wife, children, and hired hands were necessarily unfree and propertyless—the book sold briskly among German-speaking Catholics. It soon attracted an influential following in Franco’s Spain among the Opus Dei academicians who were poised to restructure the economy.

The gradually coalescing Navarra School encountered this patriarchal, authoritarian vision of competitive markets by way of the Freiburg School’s aristocratic advance man on the ground in Spain, longtime Nazi Party and SS member Heinrich von Stackelberg. When faced with the likely defeat of the Third Reich, von Stackelberg took up a faculty position in the first economics department in Spain, at the University of Madrid, in 1943. There, von Stackelberg trained a cohort of graduate students who translated Eucken into Spanish and went on to play important roles in Spanish economic

⁸⁴ This is the ordering of the Decalogue according to the Lutheran catechism, which follows Catholic precedent; other Protestant traditions use a slightly different system by which the injunction to honor the parents becomes the fifth commandment and the prohibition against adultery the seventh.

⁸⁵ Dietze, Eucken, and Lampe, “A Political Order of Communal Life,” 7, 11.

⁸⁶ Strote, *Lions and Lambs*, 175–96. I am indebted to my colleague Udi Greenberg for this reference.

⁸⁷ Röpke, *Social Crisis*, 203.

policy for the next four decades.⁸⁸ In 1949, CSIC created a new Economic Section at Universidad Internacional Menéndez y Palayo in Santander—that is, a national hub of research funded directly by CSIC—and hosted both Hayek and Eucken for a week of lectures on “Liberty and Planning in the Economy” (Röpke was invited but declined).⁸⁹ The Christian Eucken reportedly outshone his secular comrade in the eyes of the assembled Spaniards.⁹⁰ In the front row sat von Stackelberg’s student, the Opus Dei numerary and future Minister of Commerce Roberto Ullastres.⁹¹ Ullastres’s own area of expertise was the Scholastic economists of the School of Salamanca, whose thought he combined with the Lutheran theories from Freiburg.⁹² Ullastres and fellow Opus Dei numeraries Antonio Pérez and banker Luis Valls Taberner organized a network of companies under the name Esfina to oversee the organization’s growing portfolio of businesses and investment in finance, commerce, and media. Ullastres served as the president of Esfina and collaborated with Valls Taberner in running the Banco Popular Español.⁹³ Within a few years he was rewriting the nation’s economic policy.

Opus Dei’s primary commitment now shifted from academic influence to cultivating a following among the business elite of Spain, such that the Navarra School would grow to emphasize management training and “business ethics” more than formal economics. Still, the CSIC network played an important role in fostering the ordoliberal vision through the country’s relatively vibrant economic debates. *Arbor* ran multi-issue excerpts from Hayek’s and Eucken’s lectures under the editorship of Ullastres; Eucken’s contributions laid out the “competition order” and its necessary adjunct, the family economy.⁹⁴ Professor and editor Rafael Calvo Serer, another of Escrivá’s inner circle at the Opus fraternity in Madrid, and his fellow Opusdeista Florentino Pérez Embid, Franco’s director general of censorship and information,

⁸⁸ Ban, *Ruling Ideas*, 108–13. See also Fradejas, “Liberal Economics in Spain.”

⁸⁹ Paredes Marcos and Ullastres, “Laissez-faire”; Díaz Hernández, *Rafael Calvo Serer y el grupo Arbor*, 198.

⁹⁰ Santos, “Ordoliberalismo.” This brief review also credits Ullastres’s CSIC/*Arbor* colleague Miguel Paredes Marcos. Eucken, “Política económica I,” “Política económica II,” and “Política económica III.”

⁹¹ Velarde Fuertes, “Stackelberg,” 137–38. The other members of the “Stackelberg network,” later important forces in the country’s neoliberalization, were Valentín Andrés Álvarez, José Castaneda, Miguel Paredes, José Antonio Piera, and José Vergara Doncel; the second generation includes Luis Ángel Rojo and Enrique Fuentes Quintana. Ban, *Ruling Ideas*, 111.

⁹² Juana, “Scholastic Morality.”

⁹³ Casanova, “Opus Dei Ethic,” 353–54.

⁹⁴ Eucken, “Política económica III,” 328.

worked together through CSIC, *Arbor*, the Atheneo, and the Opus publishing house Rialp to develop these ideas into a viable “third force” within Spanish politics.⁹⁵ “Contemporary neoliberal economists,” wrote Calvo Serer in 1958, “are fully conscious that liberalism has failed precisely because of its fundamental theological error,” which the ordoliberal policies inspired by Eucken were correcting in Germany. Invoking the 1956 national gathering of German Catholics that had celebrated the Adenauer government’s fidelity to Church teaching, Calvo Serer speculated that the class war had yielded to this Christian vision of “cooperation among professionals.” At last, the cycle of revolution unleashed by the Reformation and exacerbated by the unpleasantness in France could come to a close, and Christian civilization could be restored.⁹⁶ Such a frankly Christian liberalism, he was pleased to note, could make common cause with the conservatism that was beginning to be detectable in the writing of Americans like Russell Kirk, Peter Viereck, and the Russian émigré Pitrim Sorokin, who was then vigorously denouncing the “American sex revolution” from his post at Harvard.⁹⁷

CSIC and, later, the University of Navarra shared a Scholastic belief in the unity of religious and technical knowledge, and the “Navarra School”—including the Opus Dei members appointed to critical government positions between 1957 and 1973—drew upon this tradition as they restructured the Spanish economy. Opusdeistas first wielded influence in the Ministry of Tourism in the 1940s and 1950s, as that sector became the primary source of foreign currency. Then in major overhaul of the cabinet early in 1957, Opus Dei adherents were appointed to key posts: numerary Laureano López Rodó, highly placed in both Opus Dei and CSIC, became technical secretary to the functional head of government; Alberto Ullastres, the von Stackelberg student who was likewise a celibate member of the prelature and head of the Opus financial network Esfina, became minister of commerce; and supernumerary Opus member Mariano Navarro Rubio became minister of the treasury. As the nucleus of the “technocratic” cabinet, they engineered the

⁹⁵ Casanova, “Opus Dei Ethic,” 94, 104–105. “Third force” here is less expansive than the ordoliberal claims to a “third way” between the “extremes” of capitalism and socialism; rather, Calvo Serer’s term named the coalescing Catholic neoliberals in contradistinction to the rival forces jostling over Franco’s potential successor. On Rialp and the relatively diverse range of authors it published under Calvo Serer’s editorship, see Artigues, *Opus Dei*, 151.

⁹⁶ Calvo Serer, *La fuerza creadora*, 63–64, 195, 231–32.

⁹⁷ Calvo Serer, 175, 192, 195; Uzlauer and Stoeckl, “Legacy of Pitirim Sorokin.” For an overview of the branch of U.S. traditionalist conservatism inspired by Kirk and Viereck, see Nash, *Conservative Intellectual Movement*, 99–114.

policies that turned Spain away from the goal of economic self-sufficiency and towards global trade, tourism, finance, and communication. The service sector was to swap places with agriculture to become the main employer by the end of the Franco era. Replicating the experience of the postwar “developing world,” most Spaniards therefore went from agriculture to service without a sojourn in industry, and Spain likewise replaced a faltering import substitution strategy with policies oriented to global market integration.⁹⁸

The Opus Dei technocrats entered their positions of influence at a propitious moment. Spain had been locked out of the Marshall Plan’s largesse by its cozy relationship with the Axis powers. But as the Cold War intensified, an organized Catholic “Spanish Lobby” in Washington pushed for diplomatic ties with Franco and stressed the strategic and economic advantages of turning a blind eye to his brutal dictatorship. Catholic anticommunists like Senators Pat McCarran and Joe McCarthy leveraged U.S. Catholics’ disproportionate approval of Franco as a defender of the faith, and Southern cotton growers, ever sanguine about authoritarianism, stressed how much business they were losing in Iberia.⁹⁹ In 1953, Truman reluctantly signed the Madrid Agreements authorizing U.S. economic and military aid to Spain totaling about \$1.1 billion in return for the privilege of constructing military bases near Spanish population centers like Madrid and Cádiz. Washington’s official embrace—followed soon after by Eisenhower’s literal physical embrace of Franco, in full view of the press—cleansed Spain of its status as an international pariah. Commerce and investment resumed as the embassies re-opened.¹⁰⁰

However, with the increased growth came inflation; the official price index rose 50 percent between 1953 and 1957. The existing cabinet, representing the various wings of the Franquista coalition, deadlocked over monetary

⁹⁸ The 1957 cabinet shake-up—twelve of eighteen ministers were replaced, and several positions redefined—drew upon recommendations that López Rodó had published in a University of Navarra magazine, urging the rationalization of Spain’s national administration and economy. In the article, López Rodó described the position that was promptly created for him as assistant to Admiral Luis Carrero Blanco, whose unofficial position as Franco’s right-hand man carried a series of official titles from undersecretary of the presidency to, finally, prime minister. In addition to Carrero Blanco’s vital support, the Opus Dei ministers also enjoyed the patronage of Opus Dei member Luis Valls Taberner, president of the Banco Popular. Artigues, *Opus Dei*, 186; Casanova, “Opus Dei Ethic,” 20, 39, 281, 366–67; Moncada, “Opus Dei over Time,” 2; Ramos-Gorostiza and Pires-Jiménez, “Spanish Economists,” 84n19. On neoliberalism as a replacement development strategy in the global South, see Connell and Dados, “Where in the World Does Neoliberalism Come From?”

⁹⁹ Liedtke, “International Relations,” 75–77; Byrnes, “Overruled and Worn Down”; Ybarra, *Washington Gone Crazy*, 223, 445, 472–75.

¹⁰⁰ Liedtke, “Spain and the United States,” 235–38.

policy.¹⁰¹ Into the impasse stepped the Opus Dei members, free from obligations to any constituency and unblemished by any whiff of corruption or moral laxity. With the threat of bankruptcy looming, Navarro Rubio won Franco's acquiescence to what became the Economic Stabilization Plan of 1959: sharp limits on public spending, a cap on bank credits, the liberalization of foreign trade, a devaluation of the peseta, and an exchange rate pegged to the dollar. The results were as expected: a move into the black in the balance of payments and currency reserves coupled with a sharp recession and a wave of outmigration as devastated rural workers left for neighboring countries. Spain was positioned for membership in the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (later absorbed into the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (later the World Bank), and there would be no going back to its autarkic isolation.¹⁰²

Once stabilization had been achieved—thanks in part to the massive influx of foreign aid—the Opus Dei team pushed for development. Their rivals were the Falangists who fought the liberalization plans out of commitment to syndicalism and to the socially ameliorative side of *Quadragesimo Anno's* corporatism. Syndicalist ministers affiliated with the Falange considered the Opusdeistas “cold, mechanical, ruthless,” but the Opus appointees successfully spun these same characteristics as indicators of their impartial technical expertise.¹⁰³ In their development plans, the Opus Dei ministers constructed a new apparatus for coordinating with the nation's entrepreneurs and major businesses, cutting out the syndicates.¹⁰⁴ López Rodó, as the development plan's commissioner, reached over the Franquista coalition's longstanding circuits of ideology and influence, and instead borrowed virtually whole cloth the French approach of “indicative” planning.¹⁰⁵ Navarro Rubio, for his part, solicited guidance from the World Bank and undertook to reshape financial structures to appeal to foreign investors,

¹⁰¹ Tusell, *Spain*, 148–53; Artigues, *Opus Dei*, 185; Anderson, *Political Economy*, 99–107.

¹⁰² Tusell, *Spain*, 152–58.

¹⁰³ Anderson, *Political Economy*, 168; Ramos-Gorostiza and Pires-Jiménez, “Spanish Economists,” 85.

¹⁰⁴ Anderson, *Political Economy*, 164–69; Velarde Fuertes, “Stackelberg.”

¹⁰⁵ Ramos-Gorostiza and Pires-Jiménez, “Spanish Economists,” 87–88. Indicative planning formulated policy projections that were mandatory for the public sector but only “indicative” for the private sector; planning was therefore non-coercive but removed the entrepreneur's worst enemy, risk.

while Ullastres oversaw the parallel process for trade. Meanwhile, the Opus imprint on Spain's economic policy grew: another Opusdeista, Gregorio López Bravo, was promoted from director of the currency exchange to minister of industry. When Navarro Rubio left in 1965 to head the Banco de España and Ullastres became ambassador to the European Community, each was replaced by another Opus Dei member, while López Rodó's influence further waxed. Precise counts of the number of Opus Dei members in the cabinet vary, but by 1969 it was commonly referred to as the "monochromatic"—that is, all-Opus—government.¹⁰⁶

The 1973 assassination of their chief patron in the regime and the impact of the oil shocks displaced Opus Dei from the cabinet and brought an abrupt end to indicative planning in Spain as in its model, France. But for the prior seventeen years, supported by a number of additional technocrats with connections to Opus Dei, they had created the "ideological substratum" for economic liberalization insulated from democracy.¹⁰⁷ They restructured Spain's fiscal policies and trade and financial infrastructure in line with the dictates of the IMF and the larval World Bank, positioned Spain to join the European Economic Community, and subjected Spanish enterprise to market "discipline," a concept they were uniquely qualified to wield. The 1960s became known as the "Spanish miracle:" macroeconomic growth coupled with increasing inequality, underwritten by the constant shedding of surplus rural workers through emigration and the windfall of foreign investment won through the efforts of Catholic Cold Warriors in the U.S.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Estruch, *Saints and Schemers*, 223; Casanova, "Opus Dei Ethic," 298; Ban, *Ruling Ideas*, 104. In his fourth and fifth chapters on professional economists as agents of Spanish neoliberalization, Ban stresses that "the deep transformations of the Spanish economics profession during the post-war decades were influenced as much by British-trained neoclassical economists as they were by the local followers of ordoliberalism," and that the same combination of influences intensified after Franco's death.

¹⁰⁷ Although public discourse of the era tended to conflate the two categories of technocrats and Opus Dei members, in fact many of the former were not followers of Escrivá. However, of the recognized "technocrats"—defined in contradistinction to the sclerotic bureaucracy of the 1940s and 1950s, when Franco had divvied up cabinet positions among representatives of his competing constituencies—the non-members were largely subordinates of the members, who occupied the higher positions and set the agenda. For some additional early appointees linked to Opus Dei and the nature of their relationship to the then-institute, see Artigues, *Opus Dei*, 151n8, 183–84. For examples of important technocrats who had no connection to Opus Dei, see Casanova, "Opus Dei Ethic," 308–16. For a useful review of the literature on the significance of Opus Dei membership to policies, see Estruch, *Saints and Schemers*, 225–27; Tusell, *Spain*, 151. On López Rodó's ideology, see Casanova, "Opus Dei Ethic," 284–91.

¹⁰⁸ Tusell, *Spain*, 151.

The policy intellectuals of the incipient Navarra School, then, built the bridge between authoritarian, autarkic, neo-Scholastic midcentury Spain and the post-Franco neoliberal economy led by tourism and international finance. With their ideology spiritualized as Catholic orthodoxy, they understood themselves as apolitical, technical engineers of the market. These disciplined spiritual adepts, trained in Opus Dei's intensive self-mortification and consecrated to authority in defense of sacred order, recast profoundly political decisions about the country's economic order as purely technical and utterly compatible with Catholic doctrine.

The Scholastic MBA

The end of Opus Dei's power over Spanish economic policy in the final year of the Franco dictatorship did not mean that the Navarra School's influence in political economy dwindled. As important as the "monochrome" cabinet, finds their authoritative analyst José Casanova, was the Opus technocrats' "historical role as catalysts in the formation of an entire social stratum of professional economists, technical experts, bureaucrats and administrators" in the authoritarian public sphere and, in business and finance, a corresponding new breed of economic actors.¹⁰⁹ This new class would need credentials to assume their ascendant role in Spanish business and society, and the Navarra School obliged by concentrating on managerial training rather than academic economics in its growing network of business schools. This focus would ultimately generate a flagship intellectual product: neo-Scholastic business ethics, an approach which canceled out the global "social question" while claiming capitalism for Christ.

Spain's initial pivot away from autarky and toward Europe in the 1950s created a market for the relatively novel project of management education. After it won Franco's approval for the University of Navarra, Opus Dei astutely judged the coming demand for graduate-level business programs. In 1958, the Instituto de Estudios Superiores de la Empresa (IESE) opened in Barcelona as an extension project of the University of Navarra. This capital city of Catalonia was one of Spain's few traditional industrial centers and the base for the labor and anarchist movements that had bled for the doomed Republic. When the European Community forced the Franquista regime to remove its restrictions on labor organizing in 1958, the need to replace

¹⁰⁹ Casanova, "Opus Dei Ethic." The quotation is from p. 371; the argument, it should be noted, is the burden of the entire dissertation.

outright suppression with the softer power of management spurred new interest in establishing business schools and training programs.¹¹⁰

The future Saint Josemaría Escrivá, founder of Opus Dei and Grand Chancellor of the University of Navarra, invited the scion of a family textile firm to make a study of the possibilities for Christian business education, and then installed him as the dean of the university's new business institute. Under Antonio Valero Vicente's leadership, IESE concentrated at first on offering mid-career, short-form training for those already at the helms of Catalonia's family-owned industrial firms—the business form lionized in both ordoliberal thought and Scholastic Catholic theology. In the early 1960s, this Navarra offshoot began to develop a full-fledged graduate business degree, the first MBA program in Europe.¹¹¹

Surveying the available models for his new undertaking, Valero had been impressed by the Harvard Business School's proprietary method, the business case study. Harvard Business School (HBS) had entered postwar Europe already at the behest of the Ford Foundation, which provided both a sweeping remit to “improve human welfare” and \$500 million to do so.¹¹² In the two decades prior to its partnership with IESE, HBS had enthusiastically deployed the practice of business management to stave off communism, socialism, and militant unionism in Western Europe. “We face a long continuing struggle throughout the world for men's minds and indeed men's souls,” exhorted Dean Donald K. David in 1948, “in this conflict of systems, the best way to preserve our system is to make it work.”¹¹³ In truth, American business schools in Cold War Europe did not seek to engage minds in a war of ideas. Rather, they rendered ideas irrelevant by studiously avoiding discussion of ultimate ends in favor of cultivating technical means.¹¹⁴ In the 1950s, Marshall-funded organs like the U.S. Technical Assistance and Productivity Program were throwing everything they had at overcoming the atavistic, unprofessional European manager in order to preempt the labor-left: training seminars, tours of U.S. corporate headquarters, specially designed courses at

¹¹⁰ Puig and Fernández, “The Education of Spanish Entrepreneurs and Managers,” 656; Raposo and Moya, “Guerra fría.”

¹¹¹ Argandoña, “Josemaría Escrivá.” Not for the first time, Escrivá was probably further inspired by rivalry with the Jesuits, whose Madrid-based business school ICADE was already developing a Catholic version of U.S. business education for Spain's growing class of private businessmen; Frederick, *Management Education*.

¹¹² Khurana, *From Higher Aims*, 201.

¹¹³ David quoted in Khurana, 172.

¹¹⁴ Khurana, 173–75, 198.

HBS or the Sloan School of Management at MIT, mentoring sessions with American CEOs and business activists from the National Association of Manufacturers. “To me,” reflected the HBS dean, “the brightest ray of hope in these troubled times is my firm belief that the business men can and will measure up to the task.”¹¹⁵

Because it was not included in the Marshall Plan, Spain did not participate in these early managerial missions until the official cleansing of its reputation by the 1953 Madrid Agreements with the Eisenhower administration. For American proselytizers of business education, this new climate provided an opportunity to reform what they saw as Catalonia’s archaic family firms. IESE partnered directly with Harvard Business School, both for the glow of its patrician brand and because its trademark instructional method—the case study—dovetailed with the Navarra School’s neo-Scholastic epistemology.¹¹⁶ In their case studies, Harvard’s faculty curated data-rich descriptions of actual firms facing real-world problems and options. The epistemology of the case and the unit of analysis of the firm divorced management from any systemic analysis, abstract knowledge, or broader social awareness, much less responsibility. In the words of HBS co-founder Arthur Dewing, “the purpose of business education is not to teach truths . . . but to teach men to think in new situations.”¹¹⁷

This goal, as it turned out, fit with the Navarra School’s own imperative to ground business praxis in the latest revival of St. Thomas Aquinas’s medieval Scholasticism.¹¹⁸ In the 1970s, the neo-Scholasticism that had lost so much moral authority during the heady days of Vatican II and liberation theology now began to win new champions in the field of moral philosophy. The social ruptures of the 1960s had revealed utterly incommensurable definitions of the common good; rather than attempt to reconcile these, the Scholastic tradition of case morality—casuistry—instead offered a guide to ethical behavior based in the practical demands of particular situations. The case method isolated business decisions from social and political context

¹¹⁵ McGlade, “Big Push.” On NAM as a force in combatting the postwar labor-left domestically, see Waterhouse, *Lobbying America*, 49–58.

¹¹⁶ Calleja and Melé, “Valero’s ‘Enterprise Politics,’” 646–47.

¹¹⁷ Augier and March, *Roots, Rituals, and Rhetorics*, 197–204; Dewing, 1954, quoted on p. 200–201.

¹¹⁸ Valero was also part of the founding generation of Barcelona’s rather misleadingly named “Círculo de Economía,” a business organization primarily concerned with influencing public opinion and lobbying government, not elaborating economic theory. Molins and Casademunt, “Pressure Groups,” 129.

and limited the unit of analysis to the body of the corporation itself. And by comparing each new case only to previous cases, the HBS case method—like Scholastic casuistry—reinforced the past as authority without questioning its premises.¹¹⁹

The approach developed by the Navarra School was “general management” or, as Valero’s successors at IESE explained, citing St. Thomas Aquinas, “the ruling of the head of household over his property, including slaves and even wife and minors.” This orientation was based on the image of the firm as a community organized by function, like the corporate state and the patriarchal family, in which “the exercise of power should be related to the necessary expertise, contrary to what is typical in liberal democracies.” Such a functionalist, corporatist model, IESE’s business theorists asserted, resolved the Marxist opposition between capital and labor while also repudiating the Chicago School’s justification of profit maximization.¹²⁰

Employing the narrow version of ethics available within the case method, the Navarra School pioneered the field of business ethics in Spain just as Catholics had done in the United States, where the field first achieved institutional legitimacy.¹²¹ In 1986, a group of businessmen from the financial and energy sectors, “convinced of the necessity to redesign society,” approached Opus Dei’s University of Navarra. In collaboration with priests and theologians from the thoroughly neo-Scholastic philosophy department, the group launched the Instituto Empresa y Humanismo [Institute of Enterprise and Humanism], which sought to train upper management in Aristotelian and Scholastic philosophy and conservative Catholic social teaching.¹²² The institute’s river of publications include scholarly reflections on the ordoliberalism of Röpke and Erhard; the virtue ethics of Alistair MacIntyre; and

¹¹⁹ Tremblay, “New Casuistry”; Arras, “Getting Down to Cases”; Calkins, “Casuistry.” The philosophical revival of casuistry is usually dated to the publication of Jonsen and Toulmin, *The Abuse of Casuistry*; see Toulmin, *Oral History of the Belmont Report and the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research*.

¹²⁰ Calleja and Melé, “Valero’s ‘Enterprise Politics,’” 647–49.

¹²¹ The first systematized curricula were initiated by a handful of Catholic college instructors in the U.S., with Jesuit priests prominent among them. Among these was Fr. Theodore Purcell, S.J., who subsequently joined the board of the Reagan-era anticommunist Institute on Religion and Democracy, alongside figures of the Christian right like Michael Novak of the American Enterprise Institute—beloved of the Navarra School. De George, “History of Business Ethics”; Society of Jesus, “In Memoriam: Fr. Raymond C. Baumhart, SJ”; Letter, Timothy H. Smith to Theodore V. Purcell, July 26, 1983, folder “Institute on Religion and Democracy,” box 11, Morton Blackwell Files, Ronald Reagan Library.

¹²² Universidad de Navarra, “30° aniversario.”

Peter Drucker's corporatist romance of the firm.¹²³ All such business theorization, however, stands on the solid rock of sexual traditionalism: the "fundamental reality brilliantly commented by Aristotle," according to a recent and representative distillation, is that "'economics' (*Oikos*: home; *Nomos*: law) is a function of the natural family." This truth was preserved by the ordoliberal Freiburg School and the papal encyclicals, but in recent years it has faced a new threat: "a new radical 'gender' philosophy such as the one promoted by the post-feminism of Judith Butler."¹²⁴ The chief menace to the business order, that is, lies in disruptive gender trouble spread by queer theorists.

At IESE itself, where mass is celebrated daily and paintings of St. Josemaría Escrivá adorn the administrative offices, the dedicated religious virtuosi unified theology and managerial training at every level. Navarra School theorists even claimed business ethics as a Spanish invention, tracing its origin to the Scholastics of the sixteenth-century School of Salamanca.¹²⁵ Management was affirmed as an art in the Aristotelian sense, dependent on both technical skill and on the *phronesis*—practical reason—that governs

¹²³ Molina Cano, "Tercera Via."

¹²⁴ Alvira Domínguez and Hurtado Domínguez, "Truth about Poverty," 107. The biographies of these authors suggest the tight network within which the Navarra School publishes and circulates: the distinguished Rafael Alvira Domínguez earned two degrees at the University of Navarra, where since 1980 he has also been a professor and has served in some half-dozen administrative posts. He was a founder of Navarra's Instituto Humanismo y Empresa, edits and publishes through its presses and periodicals, and has taught at Opus Dei universities in Chile and Mexico and lectured on marriage at others. Moreover, he is the son of Tomás Alvira, one of the small group of devotees who fled the Spanish Republic for Vichy France with Escrivá during the Civil War. Tomás and his wife Paquita were among the very first supernumerary couples inducted into Opus Dei; see Opus Dei, "Alviras." Rafael Hurtado Domínguez in turn holds a doctorate from the University of Navarra's Instituto de Humanism y Empresa and teaches at one of the branch campuses of the IESE offshoot in Mexico, the IPADE. He also earned a certificate in Marriage and Family Studies from the John Paul II Institute for Marriage and Family in Melbourne. He publishes on the sacred dimensions of housework and the family home, almost exclusively in the book series and periodicals of these same institutions; see Universidad Panamericana, "Dr. Rafael Hurtado Domínguez."

¹²⁵ Melé, "Early Business Ethics." This intellectual genealogy, which argues for the Salamanca School as a Spanish Catholic antecedent to even libertarian neoliberalism, has been nurtured not only by Opus Dei's own Antonio Ullastres. The hard-right Ludwig von Mises Institute promotes the Salamanca School research of the distinguished economic historian Marjorie Grice-Hutchinson, an English-born student of Hayek's who lived most of her life in Spain, where she married a Nazi veteran of the Condor Legion that Hitler sent to aid Franco's Nationalist coup in the Civil War. More recently, the Salamanca heritage has been claimed by the Argentine Alejandro Chafuen, member of the Mont Pelerin Society and the long-time president of the libertarian Atlas Network who spearheaded its dramatic expansion in Latin America. Gómez Rivas, "School of Salamanca Bibliography"; Navas, "Family Memories"; Barry, "Origins of Liberty"; Fang, "Sphere of Influence."

intentional human action. Phronesis transforms the subject even as it acts upon the object; it is developed through cultivating the habits of “practical wisdom” that Aquinas systematized for Christians.¹²⁶

The revival of casuistry, its marriage to the HBS case method, and the promotion of the “natural family” as the basis of economic liberty also dovetailed with the revival of Scholastic and Aristotelean “virtue ethics.” Philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre, a former Marxist who converted to Catholicism and moved to the University of Notre Dame, sparked a flurry of interest in the topic. His 1981 book, *After Virtue*, traced the alleged moral chaos of the 1960s to the liberal rejection of Aristotle’s ethics of virtue cultivation.¹²⁷ He was celebrated by Catholic traditionalists and brought renewed attention to both Aristotle and Aquinas.¹²⁸ At the same time, John Paul II’s personalism offered a sentimental reading of the power differentials within firms, turning the owners of wealth into tender fatherly developers of their employees’ talents rather than overseers who extracted value from their labor.¹²⁹ Business ethics embraced the Scholastic revival with fervor.¹³⁰

Beyond the well-appointed classrooms of IESE, its faculty wielded influence on Spain’s top-heavy financial sector and in the broader world of international neoliberal networks. A spectacular case in point was Opus Dei numerary Rafael Termes, a founding professor of finance at IESE and early president of the Spanish Banking Association upon its formation in 1977. Spain’s private banks under Franco had reaped the reward of their early material support for the Nationalists, borrowing cheaply from depositors who lacked a secure pension system and then selling their services dear to state industries and to cover budget shortfalls when the regime refused to tax. When Spain entered the European Community, the banking sector remained the last redoubt of oligopolistic autarky. When deregulation began in 1974, however, Spain struggled to catch up with innovations elsewhere in the continent’s financial systems and experienced a severe financial crisis. The heads of the “Big Seven” banks—in one of which Termes served as an officer—initially sought to forestall integration and deregulation in the

¹²⁶ Calleja and Melé, “Valero’s ‘Enterprise Politics,’” 349–50. Tsoukas and Cummings, “Marginalization and Recovery”; Canals, *Sabiduría práctica*, 366–68. I am indebted to Marie T. Oates for this reference.

¹²⁷ MacIntyre, *After Virtue*.

¹²⁸ See, for example, MacIntyre’s popularity in outlets such as *Modern Age*, the Acton Institute’s *Journal of Markets and Morality*, and the traditionalist online journal *Imaginative Conservative*.

¹²⁹ Gronbacher, “Economic Personalism”; Maloney, “Acting (Economic) Persons.”

¹³⁰ Roca, “Introducing Practical Wisdom.”

financial sector. But the election of the Opusdeista Rafael Termes to the presidency of the new private bankers' guild put a Catholic neoliberal in a position to influence the creation of a new banking order in Spain. Termes helped broker the 1977 Moncloa Pacts that imposed austerity measures—freezing wages and salaries, slashing public spending, and tightening access to credit—in return for a more progressive tax structure and a promise to open the financial system further.¹³¹ At the helm of the bankers' guild for more than a dozen years, in his service to IESE, and as a prolific public intellectual, Termes fought indefatigably into his nineties for austerity policies and balanced budgets, and also for sexual conservatism as a cultural bulwark of Spain's financial system. Catholics should not confuse “economic liberalism—which the Church has never condemned”—with moral or philosophical liberalism that incorrectly views man as autonomous before God, Termes argued. Since the technical adepts had determined that free-market capitalism would end poverty and enhance human liberty, there was no contradiction—so long as the Church continued to fight the culture war that the sustained capitalism's conditions of possibility.¹³² This line of argument was developing more vigorously in Latin America than in Europe itself.¹³³

Missionaries of Catholic Neoliberalism

The founding of IESE represented the first step in the creation of a network of elite business schools under the spiritual direction of Opus Dei. Today the network comprises ten campuses across the Hispanophone world, each with an advisory board that includes representatives from HBS and IESE. The establishment of the campuses followed a recognizable pattern in each country: in the 1950s, first a few Opus Dei priests and celibate numeraries were sent ahead to make contact—men whose dedication to Escrivá and his elite project of authoritarian Catholicism were forged in the battle for a Nationalist Catholic Spain. In constant contact with Escrivá, who was now settled in Rome, where he was to remain for the rest of his life, the advance men recruited potential members and generous “cooperators” from among the established wealthy families. An early priority was founding private uni-

¹³¹ Tortella Casares, *Spanish Money and Banking*, 142.

¹³² Sánchez-Robles, “Converción En Madrid,” direct quotation from p. 341–42, translation mine.

¹³³ Not that it was without European bases of support; see Catholics for a Free Choice, “Preserving Power.”

versities under tight supervision from Navarra, but in concert with local elite efforts to combat student organizing and left intellectual currents in higher education. Some of these served as launching pads for full-fledged graduate business schools tied to IESE; others developed their business and economics departments within the existing faculty structure. Although Harvard Business School's blue-chip name was deployed for prestige, and HBS representatives continued to advise the network, the schools are more usefully considered part of the Hispanophone Navarra circuits. For half a century, they have trained and then shared one another's faculty, participated in one another's conferences and institutes, platformed the resulting scholarship and advocacy via the same Opus Dei publishing houses and in the same journals and crossover periodicals. A distinctly Navarra School economic vision has been consistently visible across all venues: corporatist and authoritarian, wielding the theological tools of Catholic personalism and subsidiarity while exercising the "preferential option for the rich," simultaneously focused on family firms and on global markets. This vision is not a paradoxical hybrid that is economically neoliberal *yet* sexually traditionalist; rather, it is sexually traditionalist *because* it is economically liberal, and vice versa.

Tracing the spread of the Navarra School through sites in the former Spanish Empire makes clear that it was not a metropolitan project that radiated outward, but rather a circuit through which knowledge passed in multiple directions, as actors responded to similar challenges. From the 1950s through the first two decades of the twenty-first century, the Navarra network answered particular needs among Catholic elites in Latin America, as it did in Spain—itsself an agrarian periphery at midcentury. From the 1930s until the definitive defeat of developmentalism at the end of the 1970s, Latin American elites were confronted with bottom-up pressures against the region's traditional feudal relations of wealth distribution. On the one hand, hereditary landowners in the region faced popular demands for agrarian reforms that could undercut their traditional sources of wealth. At the same time, developmentalist critiques of global market integration threatened to close off foreign investment and blocked entrepreneurs from joining world trade and finance circuits. Through supranational organizations like the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Latin America took a leading role in "Third World" resistance to the neocolonial free-trade order that neoliberals in Geneva were seeking to construct. State-led development projects and land reform forced some downward redistribution in the region; life expectancy, literacy, and per

capita GNP all rose alongside output.¹³⁴ After 1959, the example of Cuba kept even revolution a lively possibility. Elites were right to worry, and a project of social order and class quietism emanating from the successful reactionary counterrevolution of Franco's Spain was a very ready help in time of trouble. As the examples below suggest, however, Navarra learned from its New World outposts as well: the branch campuses of IESE and the militant Catholic traditionalism of Opus Dei more generally became part of a broad wave of Latin American right neoliberalism that arose in the 1970s and took decisive prominence during the debt crisis of the early 1980s. It increasingly seems like the harbinger rather than the trailing edge of twenty-first-century neoliberalism.

In Mexico, for example, Escrivá's early apostle and Nationalist war veteran Father Pedro Casciaro was the chosen emissary for the organization's first foray into Latin America in 1948.¹³⁵ With two Navarra professors, he found ready interest in Opus Dei among a network of wealthy industrialists and university students.¹³⁶ These connections ultimately bore fruit with the 1967 establishment of the IESE-style business school, the Instituto Panamericano de Alta Dirección de la Empresa (IPADE), located north of Mexico City. Instructors traveled to Spain to learn the case method directly from Valero's neo-Scholastic adepts at IESE and returned to Mexico to implement a virtually identical curriculum. After launching, as IESE itself had done, with executive education for senior management, IPADE inaugurated its MBA program in 1970.¹³⁷

The timing was not accidental. Export-oriented businessmen had seethed through the populist surges of the 1930s and 40s, when leftist President Lázaro Cárdenas had famously informed them that if Mexico's capitalists grew "tired of the social struggle," they were welcome to "turn their industries over to the workers or the government." As early as 1943, industrialists in the northern city of Monterrey established a private, U.S.-style business school to combat the prevailing economic currents.¹³⁸ But under the developmentalist

¹³⁴ Escobar, *Encountering Development*, 73–85; Love, "Rise and Decline."

¹³⁵ Estruch, *Saints and Schemers*, 83; Cano, "Primeros pasos."

¹³⁶ These were legal historian Ignacio de la Concha Martínez and José Vilma Selma, a champion of Catholic literature and "Hispanidad." Cano, "Primeros pasos," 45n17. For their intellectual preoccupations, see Concha y Martínez, *Presura*; Vila Selma, *André Gide y Paul Claudel*.

¹³⁷ Batiz-Lazo, "Adoption," 171–72; Olivares, "Orígenes del IESE"; Cano, "Primeros pasos." The full list of founding entrepreneurs appears at <https://www.ipadebusinessschool.com/deans-message/history/>, accessed October 9, 2020.

¹³⁸ Babb, *Managing Mexico*.

paradigm that held official sway, Mexico's own miracle period of "stabilization development" had lasted from 1954 until the late 1960s, based on fixed exchange rates, substantial social investment by the state, and a resulting substantial reduction of poverty, with GNP growing at an average of 6 percent annually.¹³⁹ The ascension of Luis Echeverría Álvarez to the presidency in 1970 added gasoline to the smoldering fire of business resentment: the new administration increased state investment in health, housing, education, and food subsidies; expanded social security coverage; and distributed land to peasants. External debt exploded, and Mexico was forced to devalue the peso. Business associations reacted to the adversarial relations with a burst of organizing, creating domestic institutional bases of dissent and building relations with international ones. As historian Derek Bentley has shown, this initial mobilization was the dress rehearsal for a ferocious business reaction to the debt crisis and the nationalization of Mexico's banks in 1982. From an ever-deepening base of pro-business institutions and organizations, the entrepreneurs pushed across a policy agenda of privatization, market liberalization, financial deregulation—and "pro-family" sexual and gender authoritarianism.¹⁴⁰

The Navarra School campuses of the Universidad Panamericana and its graduate business school IPADE sat squarely within these circuits. In the 1970s, Mexican hotel magnate Gastón Azcárraga Tamayo financed a national promotional campaign for Opus Dei, bringing into the prelature some of the country's most important players and connecting the Spanish representatives to a small circle of prominent businessmen.¹⁴¹ Among the circle of wealthy founders was Carlos Llano Cifuentes, who led IPADE for decades while promoting neo-Scholastic business philosophy: the case method, "practical wisdom," a corporatist and personalist understanding of the firm, and the dependence of the economy on the family.¹⁴² Others among IPADE's founders launched key institutional centers of reaction to the bank nationalization like the Confederación Patronal de la República Mexicana (Coparmex, the Employers Federation of the Mexican Republic). Coparmex taught Catholic social doctrine to thousands of businessmen

¹³⁹ Buffie, "Stabilizing Development," 141–42.

¹⁴⁰ Bentley, "Democratic Openings"; Salas-Porras, "Changing the Bases."

¹⁴¹ De Los Reyes and Rich, "Opus Dei and Mexico." The authors seem to err in naming Miguel, rather than Gastón, Azcárraga; see "Grupo Posadas S.A. de C.V. History," <http://www.fundinguniverse.com/company-histories/grupo-posadas-s-a-de-c-v-history/>, accessed October 9, 2020.

¹⁴² For a sampling, see Llano Cifuentes, "Enseñanza," "Aprendizaje," "Idea práctica," and "Abortar es jugar."

in the early 1980s, an IPADE founder was pleased to recall, creating many opposition political leaders who “lost their fear and came to understand that the businessman must also be a politician.”¹⁴³

The influence of the Navarra School on an assertively Catholic neoliberalism in Mexico and its success in electoral politics represents one end of the spectrum in the region. The U.S.-backed coup in Chile that installed the bloody military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet in 1973 lies at the other pole.¹⁴⁴ Chicago-trained economists at Santiago’s Universidad Católica devised the free-market neoliberal restructuring that Pinochet imposed. The secular Chicago School and its “cult of rationality and individual liberty” is usually the star of this story, but Chile’s economic restructuring at the point of a gun was an explicitly Catholic project, with intellectual and ideological roots outside the Loop.¹⁴⁵ Not only were the economic programs of Pinochet’s technocratic advisors based in Catholic corporatism and personalism, but they also explicitly required the roll-back of civil advances for women in order to promote their domestic labor as mothers.¹⁴⁶ Opus Dei’s proselytizers played an important role in the incubation of this premiere example of authoritarian neoliberalism.

Some of the “Chicago Boys” themselves had “close ties” to Opus Dei.¹⁴⁷ Moreover, in the 1960s Opus Dei thrived at Universidad Católica under the charismatic leadership of Father José Miguel Ibañez Langlois—scholar, University of Navarra graduate, and champion of chastity.¹⁴⁸ One of his followers, Jaime Guzmán, helped craft the country’s Hayekian constitution in 1980, ghosted many of Pinochet’s key speeches, and served as the dictator’s most important advisor on constitutional and political issues. Guzmán and the Opus recruiter Ibañez collaborated in forming the Institute for General Studies, a think tank that served as a seedbed for the coup.¹⁴⁹ Guzmán referenced fascist corporatism and medieval social forms as compatible with

¹⁴³ Basagoiti, “Nacionalización de La Banca,” 161.

¹⁴⁴ Where it is far from alone; space prevents consideration of Opus Dei’s role in the neoliberal dictatorships in Peru and Argentina, for example.

¹⁴⁵ Valdes, *Pinochet’s Economists*, 8. In addition to the literature on this “ideological transfer” of the Chicago School specifically, the influence of other strains of neoliberalism on the Pinochet revolution are evidenced in Clark, “Rethinking Chile’s ‘Chicago Boys’”; MacLean, *Democracy in Chains*, chap. 10.

¹⁴⁶ Htun, *Sex and the State*, 58–77, 110; Valdivia Ortiz de Zárate, “¿Las ‘mamitas de Chile?’”

¹⁴⁷ Constable, *A Nation of Enemies*, 187.

¹⁴⁸ Ibañez Langlois, *Sexualidad, amor, santa pureza*.

¹⁴⁹ Hutchison, *Their Kingdom Come*, 212–13.

markets and market competition.¹⁵⁰ This *gremialismo*, or “guildism,” helped forge the coalition behind the 1973 military coup. Upon its success, the economists who had drafted the authoritarian plan to discipline Chile through the market were given a chance to put their technocratic vision in place, but Chile’s technocracy was no more exclusively secular than Spain’s. While they portrayed themselves as mere stenographers for the market, many of the regime’s architects shared a theological bond through their background in *gremialismo*.¹⁵¹ As in Spain, the designation “technocrat” in Chile served to depoliticize a mode of governance through the market: “politics”—that is, democracy—was futile, according to this logic, and only the rational policies achieved by “technifying” the country could produce solutions to Chile’s problems.¹⁵² The Christian patriarchal family was the necessary cornerstone of such a mission, and restoration of the traditionalist gender order was a key element of the *gremialista* project that found support in the dictatorship.¹⁵³ The anti-democratic 1980 constitution that Guzmán drafted preserved patriarchal corporatist priorities and excluded from political participation people, parties, and movements that “propagate[d] doctrines that are antagonistic to the family.”¹⁵⁴ Invoking the principle of subsidiarity first articulated in the papal encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*, it interposed intermediate organizations—*gremios*, or “guilds,” re-imagined as entrepreneurial groups and professional associations—between citizens and the state, checking majoritarian democracy with corporatist constitutionalism.¹⁵⁵ Ibañez is today a professor of moral theology at the Opus Dei university in Chile, Universidad de los Andes.

¹⁵⁰ Santoni and Elgueta, “Chile viene de vuelta.”

¹⁵¹ Huneeus, “Technocrats and Politicians”; Clark, “Rethinking Chile’s Chicago Boys.”

¹⁵² Silva, “Technocrats and Politics in Chile”; Valdés, *Pinochet’s Economists*.

¹⁵³ Santoni and Elgueta, “Chile viene de vuelta.”

¹⁵⁴ Text of the 1980 constitution, in translation, quoted in Hudson, “Chile: A Country Study.” Guzmán embraced the medieval competition order theorized by Vásquez de Mella, like Ramiro de Maeztu a promoter of Catholic distributism in pre-Civil War Spain. According to later accounts, Guzmán replicated this political theorist almost word for word in his classes, and Chilean critics see the clear imprint of Mella’s theories on the corporatist and authoritarian 1980 constitution that Guzmán influenced; see José Díaz Nieva, “Influencias.” In this article, Díaz Nieva relates the intense debate in the Chilean press over the extent of Guzmán’s affinity for Mella; since Guzmán met his death at the hands of a leftist assassin in 1991, efforts to enshrine his memory have animated public debate. Díaz Nieva, it should be noted, comes down on the side of Guzmán’s defenders, denying that Mella had any significant influence on the mature Guzmán; he is contradicted by Cristi, *Pensamiento político*.

¹⁵⁵ Fischer, “The Influence of Neoliberals in Chile,” 312; Fundación Jaime Guzmán, “El gremialismo.”

As similar origin stories recount, generous industrialists and financiers dedicated to Opus Dei's devotional path established business schools in Chile, Argentina, Colombia, Peru, Brazil, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Uruguay. Together with IESE, which now has campuses in Madrid and New York in addition to Barcelona, this network of 1,800 students and 350 professors today rivals HBS itself. Although they deny any formal affiliation with one another, representatives of these ten Opus Dei-run business schools meet every two years. Faculty regularly rotate on visiting contracts in a closed system.¹⁵⁶ At the same time the campuses and their sponsors promote corporate family values, from dynastic businesses and private inheritance to "work-life balance," and oppose any policy based on a distinction between sexuality and reproduction.¹⁵⁷

In these various Hispanophone sites, the pairing of Catholic sexual traditionalism and putatively apolitical technocracy characterized the Navarra School's contributions to neoliberal policy and practice. At the level of formal ideology, the Navarra School joined midcentury enthusiasm for German ordoliberalism to older theological currents of neo-Scholastic corporatism and a nostalgic longing for an imagined medieval order. Opus Dei's dynamic fusion of these elements was disseminated far beyond its own narrow ranks through the network of business schools anchored by IESE, an energetic revival of Aristotelian epistemology and ethics, and a larger theological war to define "Catholic social teaching" in which Latin America was the prime battleground. Loyal to corporatist social theory, to neo-Scholastic theology, and to maintaining the weight of law on the side of sexual and gender traditionalism, the Navarra School achieved prodigious feats of "depoliticization"—really, de-democratization—of the economic sphere.

In truth, though, the Navarra School has little to show by way of intellectual innovation. As might be expected in a tradition defined by obedience, its ideas have been thoroughly derivative. Instead, and fittingly, the novel product it had to offer was not theory but technique and praxis: for the new subjects of neoliberal economies, the prelature deployed the formidable arsenal of Catholic self-discipline. The techniques developed over centuries for the formation of vowed religious could be turned to creating ideal white-collar workers. In the words of a twenty-first-century Opus Dei

¹⁵⁶ Osorio, "Red de escuelas." In addition to the business schools—and sometimes attached to them—there are also dozens of Opus Dei universities and secondary schools that blend Catholic orthodoxy, professional and technical preparation, and Opus Dei devotion.

¹⁵⁷ de Certeau and Said Cares, *Opus Dei en Chile*; Vaggione, "Evangelium Vitae Today."

promotional video, the organization's devotional advice made it "the best life coach imaginable!"¹⁵⁸

"Our Altar Is Our Desktop:"
Theology for the Corner Office

Opus Dei's approach to work attempts to reconcile the twentieth- and twenty-first-century experience of executive white-collar work with constant self-mortification, or "prayer of the senses." In the pursuit of personal sanctity, the "plan of life" demanded by Opus Dei annexed a rigid sexual traditionalism and an ascetic contemplative tradition to the explicit challenge of equipping highly efficient, productive managers in the postindustrial economy. The self-discipline practiced by Opus Dei members enlists medieval practices of mortifying the flesh, including daily fasting, sleep deprivation, work exhaustion, and sleeping on the bare floor. Most spectacularly, the routine requires the daily wearing of a spiked chain around the upper thigh and self-flagellation with a knotted whip called, in a spasm of interpretive overdetermination, a "discipline."¹⁵⁹

Opus Dei's techniques, in fact, are congruent with the recent emphasis on the will in cognitive psychology and corporate-driven educational restructuring. Training willpower through the inculcation of habits was a primary focus of early twentieth-century psychologists, who urged on their clients systematic exercises of both the body and the mind to increase self-control—a "gymnastics of the will." After falling out of favor in the mid-twentieth century, the will experienced a renaissance under the conditions of postindustrial work, the employment polarization that hollowed out middle-class jobs, and the growing wealth gap: the ability to sit still and concentrate suddenly became a high-stakes skill when career options narrowed to software engineer or Walmart greeter, with little in between.¹⁶⁰

Exemplary tools for training the will were available in the rich devotional endowment of Catholic monasticism.¹⁶¹ As Escrivá had discerned early on in the professional-managerial class's rise to dominance, religious orders were experts in self-denial. The catechism of the Catholic Church explains

¹⁵⁸ Silvia Ugolini in Opus Dei, "Lawyer, Mother."

¹⁵⁹ For an explanation of self-mortification from the prelature's position, see Burggraf, "Christian Mortification." "Our altar is our desktop" is quoted from Hahn, *Ordinary Work, Extraordinary Grace*, 8.

¹⁶⁰ Moreton, "S'More Inequality"; Cowan, *Cult of the Will*.

¹⁶¹ Sluhovsky, "St. Ignatius of Loyola."

that “[s]piritual progress entails the asceticism and mortification that gradually lead to living in the peace and joy of the Beatitudes.”¹⁶² Those who wish to belong to Christ must “crucif[y] their flesh with its passions and desires” (Galatians 5:24), training their souls to virtuous and holy living just as physical exercise builds strength and endurance. Opus Dei’s founder seized upon the venerable methods of monastic discipline but deployed them innovatively in the context of postindustrial work.¹⁶³ According to Saint Josemaría, the origin of labor lay not in God’s curse on Adam for the sin of disobedience (“in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread,” Genesis 3:19), but rather in creation itself (God places Adam in the Garden “in order that he cultivate and tend it,” Genesis 2:15). Since God speaks these words to Adam in the Garden before the Fall, they precede the original sin of the first couple. Thus “[l]abor is an essential part of God’s plan for man, it is a natural function which the creator willed for His creatures, even before any estrangement arose between them,” wrote Escrivá. Man need not be alienated from his labor, and ordinary Christians, in Escrivá’s theology, “should not be forced to be ‘perfect’ (as the Gospel asks) *in spite of* their profession or their trade, but rather *by means of it and thanks to it.*” Accordingly, one of Escrivá’s key maxims enjoins the faithful to “[s]anctify work; sanctify yourself in the perfect carrying out of your work; and sanctify others through your work.”¹⁶⁴ There is no need to retreat to the cloister to harry the flesh and focus the mind. Opus Dei guides ordinary lay people to impose monastic discipline on themselves and thereby achieve spiritual perfection through the performance of their professional and domestic duties.

Chastity—including, for numerary members, celibacy—occupies a hallowed place in the process of cultivating the will for Opus Dei, as for the Church as a whole. In the theology of the seven deadly sins, all forms of temptation lead back ultimately to sexual appetite, the desire to possess and surrender to carnal sensation. Controlling sexual desires is the key to all other operations of the will. The body is “your enemy,” an object of discipline on every front; the engine of this universal contempt for the corporeal is the constant rebellion against “brutal, savage sexuality” that Escrivá’s organization demands, especially of the early adolescents who are its primary

¹⁶² Ratzinger, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 488.

¹⁶³ The Weberian implications of Escrivá’s creation have been widely aired, from the popular press to full-scale scholarly studies, ever since the 1957 cabinet appointments first brought the issue to public attention in Spain; the most comprehensive of these is Casanova, “Opus Dei Ethic.” See also Estruch, *Saints and Schemers*, 219–76.

¹⁶⁴ Messori, *Opus Dei*, 93, 96, 97.

recruits.¹⁶⁵ “To defend his purity, Saint Francis of Assisi rolled in the snow, Saint Benedict threw himself into a thorn bush, Saint Bernard plunged into an icy pond,” pointed out the founder. “You . . . what have you done?”¹⁶⁶

Just as monastic disciplines of obedience, chastity, and self-mortification rely on a spiritual director’s constant, face-to-face authority, Opus Dei combines the training of the will with the constant supervision of a spiritual advisor.¹⁶⁷ One of the nearly fifty maxims stressing the need for perpetual “spiritual childhood” captures the cognitive discipline the organization demands of its adherents:

Spiritual childhood demands submission of the mind, more difficult than submission of the will. In order to subject our mind we need not only God’s grace, but also the continual exercise of our will, which says “no” again and again, just as it says “no” to the flesh. And so we get the paradox that whoever wants to follow this “little” way in order to become a child, needs to add strength and virility to his will.¹⁶⁸

New adherents are placed under the meticulous, intense authority of an older numerary. If young recruits join as celibate members, they isolate in a residence, with all of their communication and access to books and media monitored by the spiritual director. First-person accounts by former members refer to rituals of self-abnegation and coerced denunciations of peers. If instead a member enrolls as a supernumerary and therefore lives in a family home, discipline is exercised through constant meetings with the priest, spiritual director, and peers who are encouraged to report on any failures of diligence they detect in one another, as well as by limiting contact with non-members.¹⁶⁹

From a spiritual perspective, obedience is only virtuous if it is uncoupled from any rational assessment of the act demanded. Maxim number 618 in

¹⁶⁵ Escrivá de Balaguer, *Way*, 36; Escrivá de Balaguer, *Forge*, maxim 15.

¹⁶⁶ Escrivá de Balaguer, *Way*, 23.

¹⁶⁷ Casanova, “Opus Dei Ethic,” 241–47.

¹⁶⁸ Escrivá de Balaguer, *Way*, 151.

¹⁶⁹ Testimonials of former adherents are posted at https://odan.org/testimonies_and_writings and at http://opuslibros.org/nuevaweb/modules.php?name=Listatema_rec&author=&topic=0&min=0&query=%&type=stories&category=2; some of these have been analyzed in E. B. E., *Opus Dei como revelación*. See also book-length memoirs like Brolezzi, *Memórias sexuais*; Duborgel, *Dans l'enfer de l'Opus Dei*; Azanza Elío, *Caminando en una mentira*; Moncada, *Hijos del padre*; Tapia, *Beyond the Threshold*. Defenders of Opus Dei have responded with their own reminiscences; see, for example, Hahn, *Ordinary Work, Extraordinary Grace*; Oates, Ruf, and Driver, *Women of Opus Dei*, and personal testimonials posted at <https://opusdei.org/en-us/>.

Escrivá's *The Way* offers the following imagined dialogue between a tempting demon and a virtuous, resisting subject:

The enemy: Will you obey . . . even in this “ridiculous” little detail?
 You, with God's grace: I will obey . . . even in this “heroic” little detail.¹⁷⁰

Adapting monastic obedience for a lay population through surveillance, atomization, and one-on-one “accountability” structures is a project with clear affinity for the authoritarian order that Opus Dei was born defending. However, what permitted this heritage to be repurposed for the very different power structures of cognitive capitalism—of accumulation based on intangible assets and immaterial labor—was the coupling of these techniques of domination with extremely elaborate techniques of the self.¹⁷¹

Techniques of the Self

The cornerstone of Opus Dei observance for all categories of members is faithful adherence to an extremely demanding “plan of life.” An Opus Dei member awakes at a set time every day, springs out of bed to kiss the floor without an instant's lingering, and makes an offering of the day's work to God by declaring “*Serviam!*” [I will serve!]—just as the Archangel Michael responded to Lucifer's rebellious “*Non serviam!*” He reads the New Testament or another spiritual book twice a day for fifteen minutes each time, prays silently twice a day, attends mass daily, prays a rosary daily, and makes an examination of conscience before bed using questions authored by Opus Dei. Every week he confesses to an Opus Dei priest and meets privately with an Opus Dei spiritual director. Every month he attends an “evening of recollection” with other men where he hears spiritual lectures from an Opus Dei priest. Annually he attends an Opus Dei retreat with a more intense version of the same activities. The obligation of obedience is a moment-by-moment annihilation of the will, the “complete control of behavior by the master” as a “permanent sacrifice.” Strikingly, the organization cannot conceive of a relationship outside of vertical power. “Whenever there are two members of the Institute,” read statutes that have been in effect since 1950, “lest they

¹⁷⁰ Escrivá de Balaguer, *Way*, 107, ellipses in original.

¹⁷¹ Moulier Boutang and Emery, *Cognitive Capitalism*. Private penance is the crucial innovation that Foucault identifies in the genealogy of governmentality, or the “encounter between the technologies of the domination of others and those of the self.” Foucault, *Ethics*, 225.

be deprived of the merit of obedience, a certain subordination is always observed, in which one is subject to the other according to the order of precedence.¹⁷² This obedience also requires ceaseless conscious contemplation of God and the ongoing conquest of the self to the point that unwanted distractions cannot intrude. The meticulous examination of conscience and the constant scrutiny of one's thoughts to discern their purity is the active element in this Catholic technology of self-audit.¹⁷³

Opus Dei's vigorous redeployment of medieval monasticism for the office bridges theory and practice in authoritarian neoliberalism. It was for young students acquiring professional credentials that Escrivá initially launched "the Work," and beginning in the 1960s, training business and professional agents in perfection on the job became its central mission.¹⁷⁴ For the professional elites at whom Opus Dei is aimed, the trained will internalizes rigor: "Do you really want to be a saint?" demands a founding maxim. "Carry out the little duty of each moment: do what you ought and concentrate on what you are doing."¹⁷⁵ Attention, focus, organization, punctuality, promptly answering emails and returning phone calls—these grating irritants of office life are transformed into the heroic mastery of the self. Maxim number 983 reads "To begin is easy; to persevere is sanctity."¹⁷⁶ As one Opus Dei CEO exhorted his staff:

[W]atch the schedule, be organised about the things that one is in charge of, plan the things that must be done, take care of the details in the relationship with others, use time well, and accept the troubles of the day. A man capable of behaving that way builds around him a sort of walled fortress.¹⁷⁷

The trademark mindful tedium of postindustrial labor becomes an opportunity for sanctification. "Oh blessed perseverance of the donkey that turns the water-wheel!" cries Escrivá. "Always the same pace. Always the same circles. One day after another: every day the same."¹⁷⁸ Devotees are presented

¹⁷² Opus Dei, *Constitutions of Opus Dei*, no. 31, section 3.

¹⁷³ Foucault, "Technologies of the Self," in Foucault, *Ethics*, 248. On the historical connections between confession and audit, see Aho, *Confession and Bookkeeping*.

¹⁷⁴ On the timing of Opus Dei's vastly increased emphasis on the sanctification of work, see Estruch, *Saints and Schemers*, 247.

¹⁷⁵ Escrivá de Balaguer, *Way*, 279.

¹⁷⁶ Escrivá de Balaguer, *Way*.

¹⁷⁷ Mauricio Larrain, "The Sin of Sloth and the Company" (1997), quoted in Thumala Olave, "Aristocracy of the Will," 57.

¹⁷⁸ Escrivá de Balaguer, *Way*, maxim no. 998.

with a bare cross rather than the usual Catholic crucifix and invited to imagine their own bodies hoisted on it in the place of Christ's, through the literal physical and cognitive mortification that professional work demands. A professional elite, motivated by a sacred will to prestige and efficient action, is the intended product.¹⁷⁹

To apprehend how these devotional practices shaped the larger political-economic transformation in neoliberalizing Chile under the Pinochet dictatorship, consider that the entrepreneur became the central figure of the political imaginary. As Fabian Gaspar Bustamante writes, “interior asceticism, methodical self-regulation, and the sanctification of work ‘well done’ [were] adapted to the new system and, in effect, favored by incentivizing the capitalist entrepreneurial spirit required by the project of the ‘Chicago Boys’”—and, we should add, the Navarra School. The message came through loud and clear: “The Chilean entrepreneur could live a life of sanctification by working rationally,” consolidating capitalism for the glory of God and the good of the whole nation. That many such rising entrepreneurs also consolidated familial fortunes through the privatization of state-owned enterprises, he points out, was less remarked upon but no less real. A model of sanctification through work was admirably oriented to the “rhythms and demands imposed by neoliberalism” that remake daily life, personal relations, and supreme values.¹⁸⁰ In the age of “cognitive capitalism,” the scarce resources are “cognitive attention, time, and ‘affective attention,’” and Opus Dei’s devotional regime is exquisitely designed to maximize all three.¹⁸¹ Here was a technique for internalizing the authoritarian structures that brought neoliberalism to Spain and Chile, Peru and Argentina.

In Chile as elsewhere, Opus Dei gained ground after a period in the 1960s in which the country’s traditional ruling class had been challenged by the Church’s new emphasis on social and economic justice following Vatican II. Accordingly, an ethical and devotional system that valorized personal success as a social contribution and a holy undertaking was a welcome alternative for many.¹⁸² In a study of the executives of Chile’s largest conglomerates conducted in 2000–2001, Angelica Thumala’s interviewees justified the market in technical terms as a proven means for achieving the moral and religious ends of alleviating poverty.¹⁸³ Executives attributed their affluence and suc-

¹⁷⁹ Aguiló Bonet, “Notas críticas.”

¹⁸⁰ Bustamante Olgúin, “Formación,” 117–18.

¹⁸¹ Moulrier Boutang and Emery, *Cognitive Capitalism*, 72.

¹⁸² Olave, “Richness of Ordinary Life,” 23; Mönckeberg, *Imperio*, 156–57.

¹⁸³ Olave, “Richness of Ordinary Life,” 21.

cess to the kinds of self-discipline and self-improvement at which Opus Dei excels. The goal of perfection in their professional activities, she writes, was expressed as both “rational use of time” and “control of the body:”

Train your will with resolute attention to small responsibilities and methodical approach to the duties demanded moment by moment. Begin your work day with the most distasteful tasks first; deny yourself treats; arise the moment you awake; plan the disposition of your time and stick closely to schedules.¹⁸⁴

Opus Dei’s intensive rigor encourages sanctity both by making formal prayer inseparable from the other activities of daily life and by consecrating work itself as prayer through intentionality, discipline, attention, and constant self-denial.

The story of the Navarra School reveals the critical role of both formal theology and embodied devotion in establishing the conditions of possibility for a market-based social order. Where Chicago School libertarianism quietly outsourced the chore of discipline, the subsidy of care labor, and the function of private wealth capture to the New Christian Right, the Navarra School forthrightly evangelized the gospel of the free market’s dependence on sacred, intimate forms of unfreedom. To give a full accounting of those, we must take seriously the Christian commitments of economic policy, and never more so than when the authoritarian face of neoliberalism is turned resolutely to the sun.¹⁸⁵

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¹⁸⁴ Thumala Olave, “Aristocracy of the Will,” 57; Olave, “Richness of Ordinary Life,” 22.

¹⁸⁵ “Cara al sol” is the Falangist anthem. On the rise of authoritarian neoliberalism, see Bruff, “Rise of Authoritarian Neoliberalism”; Wilkinson, “Authoritarian Liberalism.” On “lived religion,” as distinct from formal theology, see Ammerman, “Lived Religion.”

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