

Excluding the radical economic left from the Slovak public discourse. A moderate leftist talk show as a case study¹

Abstract

If democracy is a discussion, then the exclusion of radical leftist economic perspectives may hamper democracy. Does this exclusion take place and if so, how? In this case study an analysis of the discourse in the Slovak evening panel discussion *Dinner with Havran* shows the various ways in which the exclusion (and marginalization) of such perspectives is achieved. This exclusionary discursive practice is then explained through interviews with the team behind the show and the norms and constraints that guide the production of the show. The analysis is based on Stuart Hall's critical paradigm, and confirming Hall's insights, it argues that the show is independent from the dominant political and economic forces in Slovakia, yet at the same time the show contributes to the functioning of the Slovak public broadcasting service as an ideological state apparatus that is biased in favor of the interests of economic elites.

Key words

Postcommunism, Discourse Analysis, Dinner with Havran, Ideology, Political Economy, Neoliberalism, Hegemony

1. Introduction

"Democracy is a discussion"² and the exclusion of particular perspectives from a discussion could hamper democracy. This is the basic assumption of my research and it leads me to an analysis of one particular talkshow (i.e. a discussion) with regard to the plurality of perspectives offered to the audience in it.

Such a plurality is demanded by law from both private and public broadcasters³ even though the two differ with regard to the proportion of programs broadcasted in the public interest. If minority perspectives are to be represented on Slovak TV stations, an analysis such as the one presented here should be of interest not only because of some abstract notion of democracy as a discussion, but also due to the Slovak legislation that clearly articulates an obligation of TV broadcasters to provide space for minority views in their programs.

The analysis presented here is theoretically inspired by a detailed empirical analysis of the 1977 program *Panorama*⁴. The latter's authors' position is based on "the critical paradigm"⁵ inspired by Althusser's⁶ notion of the communication ideological state apparatus. From this point of view "no class can hold State power over a long period without at the same time exercising its hegemony over and in the State Ideological Apparatuses"⁷. The reproduction of the relations of production is, according to Althusser, secured by the legal-political and ideological superstructure – the repressive and the ideological state apparatuses.

Hall takes this perspective toward empirical reality in his 1982 analysis. The analysis shows that the media are biased, but they are not biased predominantly against a particular party (even though elsewhere, Hall et al.⁸ show this as well). They are biased toward interests that "have acquired legitimate ascendancy in the state"⁹. The show analyzed by Hall et al. hosted party leaders, and one of the authors' findings was that "the media are not biased in favour of any one Party, but they are biased in favour of the Party-system *as such*"¹⁰. This is not a bias that would be hidden in any way, as the then BBC Director General Sir Charles Curran made it very clear: "Yes, we are biased – biased in favour of parliamentary democracy"¹¹.

What remains concealed is the role of the state in capitalist societies. "It is clear that the State, in capitalist societies, is related in complex ways to the securing of the long-term interests of ruling class alliances [...] It is through the 'relative neutrality' of the State – not in spite of it – that conflicts are settled 'to the profit of the ruling classes'"¹². Simply put, if the state in general secures

the long-term interests of the dominant elites, then its impartiality serves to hide the bias. The actions undertaken within the framework of this impartiality contribute to the fulfillment of the dominant interests. According to Hall et al. the same applies to the media, which also “do some service to the maintenance of hegemony, precisely by providing a ‘relatively independent’ neutral space”.¹³

An important point made by Hall and the reason for choosing his theoretical perspective for the present text is that the relationship between the media and the state “does not function [...] at the level of the conscious intentions and biases of the broadcasters [...] ideology is a function of the discourse and of the logic of social processes, rather than an intention of the agent”¹⁴. The discourse speaks through the broadcaster, who unwittingly and unconsciously serves “as a support for the reproduction of a dominant ideological discursive field”¹⁵. I should add that this does not mean that there are no intentions on the side of the journalists (as my research shows), but merely that they most likely do not intentionally aim to serve the dominant forces in the society.

The theoretical expectation of the non-intentionality of the producers of a show enables the researcher to seek how ideology (in this case the exclusion of a particular perspective) is produced through the everyday functioning of the team behind a show.

The aim of this article is then to answer the following research question: Does an exclusion of radical leftist economic ideas from the talk show *Dinner with Havran* (*Večera s Havranom*) take place and if so, how?

Given the autonomous and even oppositional stance of the show towards the government (see below) it is equally important to ask: Why is this exclusion taking place? Why is the status quo not being challenged? A secondary aim is thus to explain why this is happening, and how the professional traits lead to the exclusionary discursive practices. Hall et al. show the “difficult, ideological work [...] that has to be done in every [...] moment of signification”¹⁶ of the talk show *Panorama*. I try to go one step further in the analysis, and apart from analyzing the exclusionary ideological work, I also analyze the production of a discourse from the perspective of the actors who produce it, focusing just like Hall on the unconscious production of a discourse. Yet, the (likely) non-intentionality of this production is based on numerous intentional actions that eventually lead to the discursive effect of sustaining the pro-capitalist discursive hegemony.¹⁷

The particular meaning of the term “radical left” will be specified in most of the subsections below in relation to their particular topics. The term “left” is most often used here with its economic meaning that could include a more redistributive policy or greater regulation of the market.

Dinner with Havran is an 80-minute talk show aired on the second channel of Slovak Television (the Slovak state-owned TV network) that is oriented toward a non-commercial audience. Apart from the moderator, Michal Havran, there are usually three guests on the show - for example, academics, think-tank employees, activists, journalists, writers or state or municipality officials, but rarely politicians.

The show was supposed to “balance”¹⁸ a similar, but much more right-wing (neoliberal and conservative) show called *Under the Lamp* that appeared on Slovak Television in 2004 during the second right-wing government of Mikuláš Dzurinda. *Under the Lamp* ceased to be aired in 2007 during the first left-wing (more redistributive, but still quite conservative in cultural issues) government of Robert Fico, but returned to Slovak Television in 2011 (as *An Evening Under the Lamp*) under Iveta Radičová’s right-wing government. *Dinner with Havran*, introduced under the previous Fico government in 2014, is now the only TV evening panel discussion dealing with rather serious economic, cultural and political issues in Slovakia. The current director of Slovak Radio and Slovak Television (i.e. the Slovak state-owned media services), who was elected in parliament, apparently by the members of the governmental parties (though the ballot was secret), replaced the previous director, who was continuously criticized by Prime Minister Fico before the election. He is

not planning to cancel the show but would like to see “other representatives of different democratic values” than those who were so far invited.¹⁹

The model that my analysis is based upon is Hall’s²⁰ “critical paradigm”, according to which social actors reproduce a particular dominant perspective as soon as it gains legitimacy as a general perspective.²¹ At this moment the production of ideology is no longer dependent on a class position (or any other position), but acquires “a specificity and a pertinence of its own – needing to be analysed in its own terms”.²² The independence from political interests of the show *Dinner with Havran* has been made explicit by an important member of the dominant political party Smer – Social Democracy. According to him, the show is “a big disappointment” as it takes up the rhetoric of the dailies *SME* and *N*.²³ These newspapers are not only critical of the government, but also promote liberal cultural values that the conservative Slovak social democratic party negates (e.g., LGBT rights, [liberal] feminism, the fight against racism). Thus, it seems that the show is autonomous with respect to the government. The argument of this study, however, is that despite the autonomy, the discourse of the show is in accordance with a general pro-capitalist perspective that can be found in the programmes of all political parties in the parliament.

Apart from the already mentioned cultural studies represented by Stuart Hall, this article is a contribution to the cultural political economy subfield of International Political Economy.²⁴ Case studies that show an exclusion of radical leftist economic ideas are often based on an analysis of depoliticization and can be found in, e.g., critical development studies²⁵ and Critical Discourse Analysis of globalization²⁶, but also in an analysis of the disappearance of capitalism from the study of social movements²⁷. (Critical) Discourse analysis of the media²⁸ has so far focused mostly on texts (see the July 2014 issue of *Discourse and Society* for an analysis of the reception of the Greek economic crisis in the media) and there is scant analysis of TV shows such as *Dinner with Havran* in it.²⁹

In the following I will present first the method and the corpus, and then the analysis that should respond to the research question. The first analytical part (part three) focuses on the discourse of the show, and the second analytical part (part four) tries to explain its exclusionary discursive practices.

2. Methodology

The production of a discourse is, according to Foucault, organized through a variety of procedures. One of these procedures is exclusion.³⁰ Exclusion can be operationalized into several categories that one may find in the existing discourse-analytical literature. As part of my analysis that was inspired by the Critical Discourse Analysis I used a thematic and a qualitative content analysis based on these categories that were created in a deductive as well as an inductive way. These categories are explained in the empirical part.

The aim of the analysis is not only to show how radical leftist economic ideas are excluded from the talk show, but also to offer an explanation of this exclusion. How is it possible that (from Masaryk’s perspective) an anti-democratic practice is carried out by thoroughly pro-democratic subjects?

The article’s explanation of these issues, based on the assumption of moderate subjects producing a moderate discourse, is achieved through surveys filled out by the guests (and through their public statements, see section 3.7) and through semi-structured interviews with the team that creates the show (see section 3.8). The surveys were sent out and the interviews were conducted after the analysis of the transcripts of the show was finished. I sent the first draft of the text to two interviewees. One did not respond another one in a private email criticized that I only illustrate a thesis with which I started the analysis and the responses of the interviewees could not change that thesis and therefore their voices were unnecessary (anonymized).

The surveys ask the basic question “who is speaking?”³¹, and what kinds of subjects are in the show, and I also ask what kinds of subjects are creating the show (ibid.). The coding of the

interviews was in this case based on statements expressing a political orientation of the respondent, and the surveys asked directly about the political orientation of the guests (using both self-positioning and ten statements on socio-economic issues such as “The poor are responsible for their poverty.”).

Interviews were then used to find out about how the show is created, and how this contributes to the exclusion of radical leftist economic ideas from it, and to explain why this exclusion takes place. The coding was done inductively as factors contributing to the explanation emerged from the reading.

The corpus

I focused on the episodes of the talk show from a ten-month period - from 29.4.2014 until 3.3.2015. Out of 31 episodes I selected seven that seemed to have an economic topic:

29.4.2014	Are Conspiracies Dangerous?
17.6.2014	A Crisis or the End of Capitalism?
16.9.2014	The Visual Smog
11.11.2014	Media in the Hands of an Oligarchy
3.2.2015	Shell Companies
17.2.2015	The Greek Leftist Threat
3.3.2015	The Demise of the Middle Class

Table 1: Analyzed episodes with an economic topic.

I also selected four more episodes that dealt primarily with non-economic issues, but were to some extent connected with the Slovak or the global economy:

24.6.2014	The Growth of Extremism – a Threat for a Democracy?
23.9.2014	The Future of a Stupid Country
30.9.2014	What Is Threatening the Family?
18.11.2014	Are We Free?

Table 2: Analyzed episodes with a non-economic topic.

3. Analysis of the discourse of the show

The analysis is divided into six sections that show various ways of excluding the radical leftist economic perspective.

3.1 Direct and indirect legitimizations of capitalism

The first and most obvious way of excluding radical leftist perspectives was achieved through a direct endorsement of capitalism and the omission (or rejection) of different economic systems. However, capitalism was legitimized also in a more indirect way through the invocation of the importance of the tradition³² of advertising and through communication and aesthetic functions of advertisements. The exclusion is in both cases based on the lack of an alternative to capitalism and a lack of fundamental criticism of its crucial component – advertising.

One of the guests in the episode “A Crisis or the End of Capitalism?” was very clear regarding the capitalist system: “There is no better system [than capitalism]. The environmental costs during communism were even worse”³³. He later qualified his statement by specifying that he supports “democratic capitalism”.³⁴ The term “democratic”, in his view, means that “we are capable

of controlling it, modifying it [...] Capitalism is what we can make of it [...] as a [...] democratic society”.³⁵

Thus, capitalism is politicized by the guest as he speaks of power relations within this system and the possibility of its democratic control; however, “[w]e do not know what kind of change should be introduced *into the system*”.³⁶ Whatever the change might be, it is not going to be a change *of the system*, but *within the system*. The legitimation here is direct as the guest endorses the system directly.

An indirect legitimation was present in the episode “The Visual Smog”. One of the guests in the episode, the president of the Slovak Association of Outdoor Advertisements, began the episode with the argument that “when one speaks about outdoor [advertisements], this is here a *space for communication*. And humankind wanted to communicate *since ages ago*”³⁷. Commercial advertising is legitimized because it is a communication tool (ie, it is legitimate through its instrumental rationality³⁸) that has always existed (ie, it is legitimate because of its authority of tradition³⁹).

Another guest, Bratislava’s chief architect, frames the discussion into a question of a regulation that is necessary for aesthetic reasons: “We need to face what has an *impact on the public space*; it is not just buildings and facades [...] but also these advertisement constructions”⁴⁰. Advertisement is discussed, but not as part of a large economic system, but only as having an aesthetic impact on the public space. The question of its connection to the larger economic system is omitted and implicitly accepted as it precedes the question of the aesthetic impact.

In sum, in the show capitalism is legitimized through its direct acceptance, and its crucial part – commercial advertising – is legitimized through its own tradition and the fact that any advert serves people by helping them communicate, and it also has an aesthetic function in the public space. The radical leftist idea that a society could reject commercial advertising completely because of its negative social impact is not mentioned in the discourse of the show.

3.2 There is only one position presented in the discussion

The second way to exclude radical leftist economic ideas was achieved through the presentation of only one perspective on a particular issue within the show. Other perspectives were simply completely missing. The discussion was thus turned into a single voice articulated by three guests and a moderator. There were three themes articulated in such a united way – the issues of shell companies, the issue of economic growth and the issue of ethical companies. Whereas in the first case the unity among the guests was openly presented by the guests themselves, in the second case the unity was implicit and in the third case it was somewhat hidden below a personal disagreement between the guests.

First, the guests and the moderator achieved unity in the episode “Shell Companies” as instances of explanations and expressions of agreement between the guests replaced any meaningful conflict between them. During the discussion, the explanations were introduced through statements such as: “... maybe we should begin with what a shell company actually is...”⁴¹ or “In order to clarify for the viewers...”⁴² The guests did not confront, but complemented each other in presenting the basic information about shell companies, tax havens and public procurement. Such an approach is certainly legitimate, but the problem is that it does not discuss the various ways of dealing with tax avoidance or shell companies.

One can see the united position of the guests also in the striking amount of approvals (22) among them. These included sentences or phrases such as: “I agree with you that...”⁴³ or “... What Mr. Pala said is a crucial thing”.⁴⁴ The five disagreements between the guests were related to much less important topics and were much rarer.⁴⁵ Overall, the perspective that there is one way to deal with the problem of tax avoidance and shell companies and that is through regulation was the only perspective in the episode. The radical leftist perspective that tax evasion should be perceived as a symptom of an unjust economy rather than an anomaly within a just society was excluded by the

dominance of the preference for regulation within a system that enables the creation of seriously problematic political inequality.

In a similar vein, there was a clear even if not explicit consensus about the need for growth, e.g., to “invest in economic growth”⁴⁶. An opposing radical leftist voice that would question the need for growth or argue for degrowth was completely missing.

Third, there was a single perspective on the nature of private companies despite strong personal disagreements between the guests in the episodes “Media in the Hands of an Oligarchy” and “The Visual Smog”. The companies that in the latter were termed “predators”⁴⁷ were in the former represented by the dubious Czech and Slovak entrepreneurs Andrej Babiš and Zdeněk Bakala, and the companies Penta Investments and J&T. On the other hand, the “regular”, “virtuous” and “proper entrepreneurs”⁴⁸ from the episode “The Visual Smog” were represented, e.g., by Bill Gates⁴⁹, or the owners of the *Washington Post* and *The New York Times*⁵⁰ in the episode “Media in the Hands of an Oligarchy”. The bad media capitalists were, according to two guests (a media analyst and an editor-in-chief), in a conflict of interest due to their wide portfolios and dealings with the state.⁵¹ On the other side was the alleged predator himself, a representative of a company (Penta) that just bought a newspaper, and he tried to persuade the viewers that “there are better and worse owners and [...] maybe we consider ourselves to be among the better ones”⁵². There was thus a “personal” rather than “topic-related” disagreement as both sides agreed that there are “better and worse owners”, but they only disagreed about who the owners in each category are.

The story about the relationship between the media and the entrepreneur is therefore one of a potential harmony. Media in capitalism can function as long as good owners behave in the right way⁵³. In the episode “The Visual Smog” both sides agreed that “proper entrepreneurs” should be allowed to use outdoor advertisements for commercial purposes and that this should be regulated⁵⁴. Again, there was a personal disagreement about who is a “virtuous” entrepreneur and who is a “predator”, and this time it was between an activist and Bratislava’s chief architect on the one hand and the president of the Slovak Association of Outdoor Advertisements on the other, but entrepreneurship as such was not questioned.

In sum, despite the personal disagreement between the guests, there was an agreement between them with regard to the particular topic of the show. None of them engaged in the radically leftist problematization of the systemic imperatives of economic competition that could lead to social problems regardless of the intentions of the owners of capital either in the field of the media or in that of advertising. In a similar vein, there was an implicit unity that excluded a discussion about the problems related to economic growth, and there was also an explicit unity that excluded the various ways that could be used in dealing with the problem of tax avoidance or shell companies.

3.3 The only alternatives are within the capitalist system – social democracy and neoliberalism

The third way to exclude radical leftist economic ideas was achieved through the representation of moderate leftist economic ideas as an alternative to neoliberal policies. These two positions enabled a dealing with a left-right antagonism in discussions that contained not only personal, but also topical disagreements. The discussions were thereby self-sufficient and created the illusion of completeness. The argument put forth in this article is that the discussions in the episode “The Greek Leftist Threat,” about the Greek political party Syriza, and the discussion in the episode “A Crisis or the End of Capitalism?,” which is not analyzed here due to space constraints, actually excluded a radical leftist economic position and were therefore incomplete. In both cases the social-democratic and neoliberal “points of diffraction”⁵⁵ – ie sets of arguments or concepts that have commonalities related to the whole discourse, but differ in less general issues – enabled the deeper unity of these perspectives to go unnoticed. A discussion at the level of these points occurs, but the discourse of the show is united at the level of more general rules of formation of the capitalist discourse.

On the side closer to neoliberalism was the guest according to whom Syriza's demands are radical and belong in the trash⁵⁶. The moderator described Syriza in a similar fashion as an "extreme" and/or "radical" party.⁵⁷ Meanwhile, the guest closer to social democracy claimed that Syriza actually "does not have a radical economic program [...] if one compares its economic program with that of the interwar German social democrats, then I would label Syriza strongly revisionist".⁵⁸ This guest rhetorically asked in which way Syriza is different from the European Commission president Jean-Claude Juncker, who also demands a support for economic growth, and he supported this approach. What was represented as radical by the moderator and one of the guests was thus considered to be social democratic by this guest.

A third guest argued about the topic in a mixed fashion.⁵⁹ The discourse in the episode about Syriza thus moved between, on the one hand, a more neoliberal perspective depicting Syriza as a radical party, criticizing Syriza's populist promises and holding the Greeks responsible for the crisis and, on the other hand, a social-democratic position that equated Syriza with the interwar German social democracy and called for a return to the traditional value of employment⁶⁰. Neither of these positions engaged in the radically leftist questioning of the rules of formation of the capitalist discourse such as the acceptance of ideas like the maximization of profit, the possibility of endless accumulation of capital or the competition of subjects on the market. These assumptions were implicitly accepted as the basis upon which the discussion about Syriza's demands can be judged. These demands can then be either accepted as socially democratic or rejected as too radical, but they cannot be rejected as based on the mute assumptions of the capitalist system. Such a radically leftist voice was excluded from the show.

3.4 Even when sharp social criticism is articulated, radical approaches are not discussed

The fourth way to exclude radical leftist economic ideas was achieved through the omission of the causes of social problems and the actors who cause these social problems. There were several episodes that dealt primarily with non-economic issues, but touched upon economic issues during the discussion⁶¹. In these cases, it was either the moderator⁶² or the guests (see below) who tried to steer the discussion toward a more social and economic discussion. However, in each case, after the economic issues were mentioned, these economic issues were not discussed in greater depth.

A more critical perspective was articulated by one of the guests, who even spoke in relation to the rise of NSDAP in Germany about "a failure of the coexistence of democracy and capitalism as a certain economic system that was [...] producing great inequalities"⁶³. According to him the social effects of the crisis stand behind the success of the Golden Dawn in Greece and Marie Le Pen in France. Yet, the discussion did not turn to the question of how capitalism or who in capitalism produces inequality. The radical leftist perspective was thus not discussed.

Socio-economic issues were mentioned only as the reasons for the main problems discussed during the non-economic episodes – those on right-wing extremism, segregation of schools, family problems and freedom. The socio-economic issues themselves were not discussed, though. They were deagentialized through representations of social actions as simply existing (e.g. there are people without work) or through nominalizations (e.g. social inequality). Meanwhile, the actors responsible for, e.g., low wages, social inequality, tax evasion, unemployment or the struggle for survival were not mentioned. It is not clear from the show what causes these phenomena and how they could be rectified.

One guest pushed this approach one step further in the discussion about "The Future of a Stupid Country" as he connected the segregation of children with the need to "restart the economy in the regions"⁶⁴. Here the reasoning does not stop at connecting the topic of education with social inequality, but on top of it, it is necessary to restart the economy. Moreover, to address the issue, the guest even speaks in neo-Marxist terms, claiming that "Slovakia is a country on the semi-periphery which is oscillating on the orbit of the European Union"⁶⁵. However, this is not somehow problematic but "it is a very advantageous position in the sense that we have access to resources

[...] The problem is how we use it, how the investment will be used in the long-term horizon”⁶⁶. The restarting of the economy thus should be done in an interaction with the exploiting core region of the world-economy. The inequality of the world-system should not be abolished, but should be used to our advantage. Thus, even though this guest speaks of social problems and, unlike other guests, connects social problems with the functioning of the economy, he remains within the capitalist (world) system as he addresses the connection between the social problem (segregated schools) and the economic performance. A radical leftist economic perspective seeking equality that would go beyond the current world-system is excluded from the show.

Finally, in the episode “The Demise of the Middle Class” the depoliticization of class relations is achieved in the show through the dominance of the cultural features of the middle class. Income is backgrounded, while the questions of education, occupation, reading habits and the building of a civil society are foregrounded as typical issues for the middle class.⁶⁷ As the guests discuss the middle class, the cultural logic of late capitalism⁶⁸ overcomes the economic side of the original understanding of classes and the antagonistic relationship between them based on material inequality.

In sum, despite social criticism being brought into the discussion by the moderator and some of the guests the reasons for social ills were, in general, not discussed, and the discourse on the demise of the middle class was overwhelmed by cultural and not economic issues. When one guest called for a restart of the economy, he preferred this restart to remain within the unequal framework of the world-economy.

3.5 The vox populi present in the show mostly follows the mainstream

The fifth way to exclude radical leftist economic ideas was achieved through the presentation of short films with inquiries as these mostly included only moderate perspectives. This is not surprising given the lack of spreading of radical leftist economic ideas in the population; however, the surveys also occasionally enabled more radical perspectives to be voiced in the show.

The script writer of the short films Peter Balko made clear the non-manipulative approach to the inquiries: “what made it to the final cut was the reflection of what we heard within the framework of the whole [inquiry] [...] we went into the inquiry with an open mind, because we were really looking for something authentic and not something with which we would manipulate”⁶⁹.

Whereas I believe this to be correct for most of the cases, the inquiries were on occasion also supposed to fit a particular perspective. In the episode “The Greek Leftist Threat”, a short documentary presented two young people from Greece, one of whom voted for To Potami (a social-liberal party), and the other one for Syriza, but there were no voters for either the New Democracy (center-right), PASOK (social democrats) or the communists in the film. The young Greeks were acquaintances of an acquaintance of the producer of the show. The creators of the show “were happy to get two people who were willing to discuss [the issue]”⁷⁰; however, one of them said, “we certainly were trying to find out where they lean [...] we would not play it if it would not suit us for the beginning of the episode”⁷¹. Next to an effort to remain neutral, there was thus also an intention to use a short documentary to show a particular perspective.

But my argument is that the inquiries and documentaries, even without such an intention, promoted moderate perspectives. One such inquiry in the episode “A Crisis or the End of Capitalism?” pronounced that the crisis did not have an impact on people. The mentioned possible solutions of the crisis included investment into education that those on the top should do something, and self-sacrifice, and the crisis was also represented as a chance for a change. But a perspective that would, for example, see the crisis as a possibility to substantially alter the economic rules of the current system was not included as none of the respondents mentioned it. The radical perspective did not make it into the show, because the respondents were not radical.

On the other hand, it was almost exclusively through non-expert people’s responses that more radical ideas found their way into the show. It seems as if as soon as the speaking subject was

changed from the knowledgeable expert to the vox populi, radical perspectives were allowed to enter the show. Not only foolishness (see the next section), but also the general population served as a source of radicalism. In the episode about the crisis of capitalism 39% of the respondents in a survey did not think capitalism was good, and 36% said that capitalism should be replaced with socialism or a modified socialism⁷². Furthermore, according to a survey from the episode on conspiracies, 55% of the population think that the world is run by corporations, 49% think it is run by financial organizations, and 23% think it is run by secret associations⁷³.

Less suggestive questions than the ones asked might have brought different answers, but still, it is worth noticing that people's responses enabled more radical perspectives to be articulated in the show. However, these were then neutralized by the guests. More importantly, as the creators of the show "never conducted the survey with the aim to find an extreme in one direction or another"⁷⁴, the moderate perspective prevailed and confirmed the moderate perspective of the show.

3.6 Radical ideas are represented as conspiracy theories

As I hope is clear by now, radical ideas were very rarely voiced during the discussions. However, the very first episode gave space to such ideas, but delegitimized them as conspiracy theories⁷⁵. Thus, the final way to deal with radical leftist economic ideas was not to exclude them, but to ridicule and delegitimize them as conspiracy theories. The theories that were mentioned in the show were related to several conspiracy theories such as the 9/11 conspiracy theories and included the conspiracy theory that the World Bank rules the world and conspires against various countries.

The delegitimization in the case of the last issue began with an ironic question from the moderator to one of the guests, who was introduced as having worked for the World Bank: "Have you been going to those meetings where you conspired against other countries, [and discussed] how to impoverish or how to destroy them? [laughter]"⁷⁶. The framework for the discussion about the World Bank was thus a conspiracy theory that enabled the Bank's former employee as well as the moderator, clearly siding with the guest, to first delegitimize the issue of criticism of the World Bank as a conspiracy theory and then to ridicule this conspiracy theory for its conspiratorial nature.

The response of the Bank's former employee to the first question further delegitimized the criticism of the Bank by portraying it as coming from people who are unable to understand our complex world, and are simple-minded and anti-American and therefore against the World Bank, which is allegedly dominated by the US:

Mesík: "The world is very complex [...] [T]he people are not able to understand how institutions such as the World Bank function."

Moderator: "Why aren't they able to understand it?"

Mesík: "... when people hear that the World Bank resides in Washington and that Americans have a decisive influence there [...] then it ends up being that Americans are bad and therefore the World Bank is bad as well."⁷⁷

There is thus yet another way to delegitimize criticism of the World Bank. In the corresponding argument, not only is criticism of the Bank a part of a conspiracy theory and therefore unworthy of a serious discussion, but at the same time the reason for the adherence to a perspective critical of the World Bank is a lack of intellectual capacity and a simple-minded anti-Americanism. A meaningful radical criticism of the Bank (or any criticism of it, for that matter) did not make it into the show. The question is, why was this the case? The next part provides an answer.

4. Explaining the results of the analysis

This part analyzes the conduct of the team behind the show and tries to answer the question, "Why is the exclusion of the radical leftist economic ideas taking place?" The explanation uses selected

concepts from the sociology of professions. The (actual or possible) explanatory factors include *personal factors* (the non-radical moderately leftist economic orientation of the team behind the show, the team members' non-economic focus, and the non-radical orientation of the advisors and of the invited guests chosen by the team), *factors related to the journalistic profession* (the professional ethos to produce a good quality show for a wider audience, which backgrounds the norm of the balancing of opinions and the norm of public education) and an *institutional factor* that protects the exclusion of the radical leftist economic perspectives by state legislation.

4.1 Centrist and moderate leftist members of the team and guests

As one member of the team producing the talk show rightly stated: “Whatever one is going to try to do, it will always be related to the personal set-up, to the internal mindset of the creators of the show”⁷⁸. It is thus crucial to analyze “who is speaking”⁷⁹ in the show in order to understand its discursive effects. In particular it is necessary to find out about the economic positioning of the team behind the show. The findings demonstrate that a moderately leftist team invites mostly moderately leftist guests who then mostly present moderately leftist perspectives. However, this does not mean that there is a causal relation between the two phenomena, only their concurrence.

The moderator publicly positioned himself as being on the “center-left”⁸⁰ and called himself a “champagne leftist”⁸¹. Others seem to accept his label “social liberal”⁸². *Dinner with Havran* was supposed to balance the talk show *Under the Lamp*, which was moderated by a well-known right-wing journalist⁸³. Simply put, a moderately leftist moderator was supposed to do a moderately leftist talk show.

The director of the show positioned himself politically between two former Ministers of Finance: the neoliberal Ivan Mikloš and the social democrat Brigita Schmögnerová⁸⁴. Another member of the team believes in the “strong will of the state, regulation [...] the legitimacy of a state”⁸⁵. The show’s writer publicly argues for the increase of television fees and, in my interview with him that focused on economic issues, called Margaret Thatcher’s decisions “bad”⁸⁶. The members of the team thus seem to be similarly positioned on the left as the moderator.

The question is whether the moderate leftist leaning of the team influences the choice of guests. In order to find out about the guests’ ideological positions on the economic right-left scale, I sent them questionnaires.

Fifteen out of twenty guests from seven episodes who filled out questionnaires, which I sent to them reached, on average, 3.54 points on the right-left five point scale of the questionnaire. This means that the respondents mostly gave the answers “neither agree nor disagree” and “partly disagree” in response to ten more or less neoliberal statements. Eleven guests had an average result higher than three (i.e. one could argue that they were on the left), two guests had an average of exactly three points and two guests had an average below three (i.e. they were on the right).

The guests’ self-positioning showed similar results. The guests were supposed to state where they would put themselves on a seven point economic right-left scale. Only one guest positioned himself as “center-right”. Five guests see themselves as being in the “center”, five other guests see themselves as “center-left” and one guest sees him- or herself as “left”. None of the guests see themselves as radical leftists. The analysis of the self-positioning of the guests thus shows that those who are invited to the show perceive themselves to be mostly either in the center or to the left of the center with regard to economic questions.

In sum, a moderately leftist team occasionally invites neoliberal guests to the show, but most of the guests are centrist or moderately leftist subjects who then present centrist and moderately leftist perspectives during the show. As much as this finding may sound trivial, this is how a capitalist discursive hegemony is practically secured – through an exclusion of guests with radical opinions in the dominant media. The next section shows how and on what basis the team chooses the guests.

4.2 “Quality” instead of “balance of perspectives” determine the choice of guests

In order to find out how the show is created I interviewed four members of the team – the director⁸⁷, the dramaturge of the show during 2014-2015⁸⁸, and two coworkers who help with research on the topics of the show and with suggesting the guests⁸⁹. Furthermore I interviewed the director of the section of programming services of Slovak Television⁹⁰, the current president of the Council for Broadcasting and Retransmission (CBR), which monitors the “plurality of opinion” on TV⁹¹, and one more member of the CBR and a former lawyer of the Council, both of whom preferred to remain anonymous. I failed to obtain an interview from the moderator of the show despite almost three months of effort in this regard.

The crucial element of the talk show is a “quality discussion”⁹² reflecting the very basic professional norm of doing quality work⁹³. This quality discussion is defined as not “boring”⁹⁴, “working well”⁹⁵, or “good to watch”⁹⁶. This main feature strongly influenced the choice of the guests. They were supposed to possess two qualities. First, they had to be “good quality people”⁹⁷ and “experts”⁹⁸, as “expertise [...] came first”⁹⁹. The professional norm of quality work is specified through the legitimate sources of information based on the expert knowledge. The second quality was very much connected with the need for the show to be good to watch. The guests should “be able to talk in front of the camera”¹⁰⁰, it should be “people who have something to say [...] and know how to say it, expert and able speakers”¹⁰¹, and they should have a “media capability”¹⁰².

The prevalence of these two criteria (the expertise and media capability of the guests) backgrounded the importance of another professional norm typical of journalism – balance of opinions. The show’s lack of balance was further strengthened by the aim not to turn the show into a “ring”¹⁰³. The director said, “[I]t is not an entertainment program [...] we do not want to make the difference in opinions lead to a conflict or dramatic situations behind the table, as we used to do in the past”¹⁰⁴.

This seems to be the most important part of the answer to the question of why the exclusion of radical leftist ideas is taking place. The balance of opinions is not a priority. If this were the case, the selection of guests would most likely look different regardless of the ideological position of the members of the team behind the show or other particular aims and practices of this team.

One of the factors that contributed to the evasion of the question of the balance of opinions was the need to explain a topic (see also section 3.2). As Marek Leščák made clear, “[the choice of guests] depends on the topic. If you take the topic of the Islamic State, then you do not need to build a controversy, but you need to explain it to the people”¹⁰⁵.

The dramaturge openly approved of a show promoting a particular opinion and of being engaged in public education even if it may sound “puffed up”¹⁰⁶. Overall, the members of the team sometimes care about the opinion spectrum when choosing the guests, and sometimes they don’t¹⁰⁷.

The information above might explain why some of the episodes are not confrontations of different perspectives, and others are such confrontations, but only within certain limits. However, I was also interested in the exclusion of the radical leftist economic ideas. The strategies to explain this varied among the respondents.¹⁰⁸ One of the arguments was that “the main opinion streams have to be represented there, but it is obvious that you cannot have all the opinion streams [...] you cannot invite all of them”¹⁰⁹.

Another argument was that none of the members of the team are economists¹¹⁰, and the team is “not oriented primarily toward economic topics”¹¹¹, but “why should there be [an economist]? [...] Why isn’t there a botanist [...] and a gardener? [...] Then you would have to have 500 people”¹¹².

The solution is to take advice from other people who have experience with the economy. One such person was Petr Šabata, who advised Zuzana Kepplová to invite Jindřich Šídlo from Czechia to talk about privatization (in a recent episode that I did not analyze), and another was Dalibor Roháč, who suggested a person who would have “a euroskeptic, but sane perspective”¹¹³. Whereas Roháč is a known conservative, Šabata used to be the editor-in-chief of the non-tabloid

centrist (or center-right) Czech papers *MF Today* (*MF Dnes*) and *Economic Newspaper* (*Hospodářské noviny*). It is unlikely that such people would propose guests with a radical-leftist economic perspective on either the EU or privatization.

Finally, the marginality of economic issues in general and of radical perspectives in particular was crucial for the exclusionary practices. First, the discussion “does not represent itself as an economic discussion, but as a discussion about the whole society”¹¹⁴; simply put, “we cannot cover everything”¹¹⁵. The two respondents who said these things called for two more shows like *Dinner with Havran* in order for a wider spectrum of perspectives to be on TV¹¹⁶.

More importantly, the following points were raised: “maybe it is about where we are in the society with what kinds of topics”¹¹⁷, “how important is [this instrumental Marxism-Leninism] today?”¹¹⁸, and “do you think that these radical-leftist ideas are represented in this society, and to what extent?”¹¹⁹. In other words, it is not just that the aim of the show seems to be to “avoid extremes”¹²⁰, but why should the show present these ideas if they are so marginal? The average viewer is probably not interested in marginal topics and perspectives. More particularly, the criticism of Syriza from the left was considered too specific and one member of the team questioned “whether the Slovak viewer is interested in and capable of perceiving such a deep debate”¹²¹. The aim of the second channel to be there for the “specific viewer” and function as an “alternative to the more universal first channel”¹²² clearly has its limits.

The question then becomes “What is marginal, and what is relevant?” According to the last president of the CBR, the relevance is defined not only by popular support in an election, but also qualitatively – by, for example, academic importance or the functioning of alternative systems in the world¹²³. According to this perspective, radical leftist economic ideas should be considered relevant for the talk show.

In sum, several factors, contribute to the choice of guests, who then present moderate views on the show. The first factor is that the choice of guests is most determined by the aim to produce good quality shows. This most important factor backgrounds the occasional aim to balance different perspectives in the show. Second, *Dinner with Havran* is not focused on economic issues, or on radical leftist perspectives on such issues, the team of the show does not consist of economists, and the advisors to the team in this regard are not radical leftists. It is thus unlikely that marginal economic perspectives will be voiced on the show or that these perspectives will be radically leftist if they actually do appear on the show in some form. Finally, the question is whether a radical leftist economic perspective is relevant enough to be aired on national TV. Whereas according to an institution legally superior to the show, this is relevant, the team was uncertain in this regard and this uncertainty further contributes to the exclusion of guests who could present radically leftist economic ideas.

Lastly, there is one more practical problem that contributes to the exclusion of such guests. The respondents mentioned a lack of radical leftists that they could invite. Under the term “radical leftist economic opinions” one respondent understood “bizarre figures represented by Blaha¹²⁴, figures of whom the whole of Facebook makes fun”¹²⁵. These people talk about Marxism, which is according to Csino “passé” (ibid.). This argument is a variation on the madness (foolishness)-reason distinction. The Marxist here, however, is not a conspiracy theorist, but simply a bizarre figure of whom people make fun.

Thus, “the problem is to find a representative”¹²⁶. Should this respondent find a person who would present radical leftist ideas, for example, someone from the Institute for Human Sciences in Vienna, such a person would be welcome on the show. In fact the show often invites guests from Czechia: “If we did not have many Czechs here [...] then there would be a great problem with [finding] people [to be on the show]”¹²⁷. Clearly, not all radical subjects can speak, but they could be legitimized by the “institutional site”¹²⁸ from which they would speak. The journalistic professional norm of expertise would legitimize such subjects.

Here, it is possible to return to Hall's theoretical perspective that ideology is not a function of the agent's intention. On the one hand we see a clear intention not to invite those ridiculous Marxists; however, I would argue that this intention is not based on an intention to "do some service to the maintenance of hegemony"¹²⁹. As one respondent even welcomes radical leftist economic perspectives as long as they come from a credible source, there does not seem to be a conscious intention to exclude radical leftist economic ideas at work. The exclusion occurs through the moderate political orientation of the team behind the show as well as the professional traits of journalism that result in the practical issues that are taken into consideration during the production of the show.

The choice of guests contributes to the independence of the show from political and economic interests. This independence, which was criticized by one MP from the governmental party, is clear from the respondents' answers. They spoke about external pressure as being extremely rare; most of the time they simply deal with practical issues when choosing guests. The independence of the show contributes to the image of the independence of the whole TV network and of the "relative neutrality" of the state¹³⁰. As the state is impartial and enables freedom in public broadcasting, it conceals the national TV network's non-radical bias. The discussion of a leftist bias (and, before that, of a rightist bias in the show *Under the Lamp*) in fact even contributes to the exclusion of a discussion about the centrist bias that I showed in this research.

The public broadcasting service thus serves as such a state apparatus¹³¹ – just as the state is biased in favor of the economic elite, so is the medium that serves as an ideological apparatus. The relative neutrality of both makes it possible for the promotion of the capitalists' interests to go unnoticed¹³². These interests would be substantially questioned by radical leftist ideas, but they are accepted as legitimate by moderate ideological positions.

5. Conclusion

The case study presented here was inspired by an analysis of the program *Panorama*¹³³. In both of the analysed shows – *Dinner with Havran* and *Panorama* – there seems to be a free discussion and an open endorsement of the current political and economic regime. Just like *Panorama*, *Dinner with Havran* provides a relatively independent neutral space that does not question the current economic system and, on the contrary, represents it as the best possible option. At the same time, radical leftist economic ideas are excluded from the discourse of the show.

This is achieved through direct and indirect legitimizations of the capitalist system, through a "discussion" that transmits only one perspective, through a discussion between two positions united by the same rules of formation of the capitalist discourse, through the ignorance of causes of problematic social phenomena when these are mentioned, through a foregrounding of cultural and a backgrounding of economic issues in relation to these social problems, through having inquiries confirm moderate discursive positions and through a representation of radical perspectives as conspiracy theories.

The originality of my analysis that makes it different from Hall's lies in the explanation of the exclusion. Whereas Hall et al. stop at the analysis of ideological mechanisms I go one step further and try to answer the question of why the exclusion of the radical leftist perspective takes place. It is not just an explicit bias "in favor of parliamentary democracy"¹³⁴ that explains the behavior of the team behind the show. There are other institutional factors, such as the traits of the journalistic profession, that contribute to the final result – a moderate show that is autonomous from the state and is even broadcast against the wishes of the main governmental party. The contribution of this study lies in showing how this is done in one particular case and thereby it offers a potential for a theoretical contribution to Hall et al.'s pioneering work.

The explanatory factors include the moderately leftist economic orientation of the team that creates the show and the choice of guests with a similar economic orientation. The choice of these guests, however, is based more on the expertise and media capability of the guests than on the basis

of their economic orientation, and the choice is sometimes also based on the aim to avoid a conflict and introduce an issue instead of discussing it from different perspectives. This seems to be the most important part of the explanation: the balance of opinions is not the overriding norm that would guide the team behind the show in its conduct.

Moreover, the talk show is not primarily concerned with economic issues and is even less concerned with marginal economic perspectives. Finally, one of the radical leftist perspectives – Marxism – is considered passé by the director of the show. All of this contributes to the choice of guests with a moderate economic orientation.

Furthermore, the law prevents any action from being taken against the pro-capitalist bias on the show. In case of an official complaint, the episodes analyzed in this research would, according to the president of the CBR¹³⁵, probably not belong among the “political affairs programmes”¹³⁶, which would require “objectivity and impartiality” of the show, but would be most likely judged as a programme “within a broadcast programme service”¹³⁷. This means that a few quotes from a Communist Party member from an election campaign period would most likely satisfy the criterion of “plurality of opinion”¹³⁸ within this service should one consider the Communist Party to be the representative of the radical left in Slovakia¹³⁹. The exclusion of radical leftist economic ideas from *Dinner with Havran* is thereby legalized by the state.

Moreover, speaking about potential sanctions against Slovak TV due to its lack of plurality of opinions, the president of the CBR emphasized yet another professional norm, the importance of the freedom of press: “everyone everywhere in Europe is afraid, [and they want to make sure that sanctions] do not sound like censorship. [...] In [the Federal Communication Commission] they hated the word [regulation]. [...] It is being said that the way of the future is that these councils in Europe will disappear and they [the TV networks] will be self-regulating”¹⁴⁰. Rather than demanding a more serious plurality of opinions on TV, it is possible to expect more freedom for the producers. As power often operates through subjects, moderate subjects will most likely keep on producing moderate discourses in their discussions. The importance of this article lies in pointing to the problematic state of the Slovak democracy, of which public discussion is a crucial part.

¹This output was realized with the financial support from the Czech Science Foundation within the framework of the project 1821864S Mainstream and Alternative Economic Discourses in Czechia and Slovakia.

² K. Čapek, Masaryk v rozhovoru s Karlem Čapkem: Co je to demokracie. *Svobodné fórum*, (2015). <<http://svobodneforum.cz/t-g-masaryk-v-rozhovoru-s-karlem-capkem-co-je-to-demokracie/>>

³ NCSR (2000). Act of 14 September 2000 on Broadcasting and Retransmission and on the Amendment of Act No. 195/2000 on Telecommunications. National Council of the Slovak Republic.

<http://www.rvr.sk/cms/data/modules/download/1462523380_act_on_broadcasting_and_retransmission.pdf>

NCSR (2010). Act of 15 December 2010 on Radio and Television Slovakia and on the amendment of certain acts. National Council of the Slovak Republic.

<http://www.culture.gov.sk/extdoc/3651/act_RTVS_340>

⁴ S. Hall, I. Connell and L. Curti, “The “Unity” of Current Affairs Television” in *CCCS Selected Working Papers. Volume 2*, ed. A. Gray, J. Campbell, M. Erickson, S. Hanson, and H. Wood, 325–364 (London and New York: Routledge, 2007).

⁵ S. Hall, The Rediscovery of “Ideology”: Return of the Repressed in *Media Studies Culture, Society and the Media*, 56–90 (London and New York: Methuen, 1982).

⁶ L. Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1971).

⁷ *ibid.*, 147.

⁸ Hall et al. 2007

⁹ Hall 1982, 87

¹⁰ Hall et al. 2007, 363, italics in orig.

¹¹ *ibid.*, 331.

¹² *ibid.*, 360.

¹³ *ibid.*

¹⁴ Hall 1982, 88

¹⁵ *ibid.*; for the same argument see M. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality. Volume 1: An Introduction* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

¹⁶ Hall et al. 2007, 364

¹⁷ If one speaks of the exclusion of the radical left economic ideas, one may wonder whether radical right perspectives on different cultures and ethnicities should be included in TV programs. After all, democracy is still a discussion. Apart from hate speech being forbidden by the constitution, I think that given the prevalence of such perspectives among the population (which makes them mainstream rather than radical), such perspectives should be on TV, but they should be represented on programs only when they are balanced with a strong opposition. Democracy is a discussion, but it is also a power struggle, and instead of having a militant democracy that leaves this struggle to legal affairs, we should constantly engage in this struggle; otherwise, our legal institutions may soon be overwhelmed and history may repeat itself.

¹⁸ M. Poláš, RTVS „vyváží“ Hríba, Vlastnú šou dostane aj Havran (16 April 2014) *medialne.etrend.sk*

<<http://medialne.etrend.sk/televizia/rvts-vyvazi-hriba-vlastnu-sou-dostane-aj-havran.html>>.

¹⁹ quoted in: A. Žitná Lučaiová, Ja som si nikdy nepotrpel na duševný striptíz, vraví nový riaditeľ RTVS Rezník, 23 July 2017, Plus 7 dní

<<https://plus7dni.pluska.sk/Rozhovory/Ja-som-si-nikdy-nepotrpel-na-dusevny-striptiz-vravi-novy-riaditel-RTVS-Reznik>>.

²⁰ Hall 1982, 65

²¹ *ibid.*, 75

²² *ibid.*

²³ D. Mikušovič, “Novinárov RTVS ovplyvňuje bratislavská kaviareň” (Na SME, vyčítal Číž Mikovi. *Denník N*, 2016).

<<https://dennikn.sk/482196/novinarov-rtvs-ovplyvnuje-bratislavska-kaviaren-n-vycital-ciz-mikovi/>>.

²⁴ J. Best, and M. Paterson, (eds.), *Cultural Political Economy* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), B. Jessop and N.-L. Sum, *Towards a Cultural Political Economy: Putting Culture in Its Place in Political Economy* (Cheltenham and Northampton: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2013).

²⁵ N. Dogra, *Representations of Global Povert. Aid, Development and International NGOs* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2014).

²⁶ N. Fairclough, *Language and Globalization*. (London and New York: Routledge, 2007).

²⁷ G. Hetland, J. Goodwin, The Strange Disappearance of Capitalism from Social Movement Studies in *Marxism and Social Movements*, ed. C. Baker, L. Cox, J. Krinsky and A. G. Nilsen, 83–102 (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

²⁸for a more theoretical approach see, e.g., J. Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse. Laclau, Mouffe and Žižek*. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001).

²⁹But to give an exception, for a conversation analysis of TV interviews with politicians see M. Ekström, Politicians Interviewed on Television News, 563-584 (*Discourse & Society*, Vol. 12, No. 5, 2001).

³⁰ M. Foucault, The Order of Discourse in *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader*, ed. Young, Robert, 48–78 (Boston, London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981): 52.

³¹M. Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 2002): 55.

³² T. van Leeuwen, *Discourse and Practice. New Tools for Critical Discourse Analysis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008): 108.

³³ Bělohradský in RTVS, Kríza alebo koniec kapitalizmu? *Večera s Havranom* (2014b): 33:30.

³⁴*ibid.*, 36:14.

³⁵*ibid.*; for a similar claim coming from the moderator see Havran in *ibid.*, 1:21:04.

³⁶Bělohradský in *ibid.*, 20:01, *italics by author*

³⁷Peller in RTVS Vizuálny smog, *Večera s Havranom* (2014d): 9:11, *italics by author*

³⁸T. van Leeuwen, *Discourse and Practice. New Tools for Critical Discourse Analysis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008): 113.

³⁹ie, it is legitimate because of its authority of tradition, see *ibid.*, 108.

⁴⁰Konrad in RTVS Vizuálny smog. *Večera s Havranom* (2014d): 13:15.

⁴¹Filko in RTVS Schránkové firmy. *Večera s Havranom*, (2015a): 10:02.

⁴²Havran in *ibid.*, 10:10.

⁴³Sičáková-Beblavá in *ibid.*, 50:34.

⁴⁴Filko in *ibid.*, 19:05.

⁴⁵ It should be noted that two guests mentioned the problem of tax avoidance by transnational corporations (Filko in *ibid.*, 36:15, Pala in *ibid.*, 18:40); however, there was no mention of alternative solutions to the problem of tax avoidance in the episode.

⁴⁶ Geist in RTVS Grécka ľavicová hrozba. *Večera s Havranom* (2015b): 44:40. see also Karpiš in RTVS (2014b): 14:20; Štefunko in *ibid.*, 11:18; Baláž in RTVS (2015b): 49:45

⁴⁷Konrad in *ibid.*, 45:38. See also Peller in *ibid.*, 43:41.

⁴⁸Peller in *ibid.*, 25:10, 45:45.

⁴⁹ Havran in RTVS Média v rukách oligarchie. *Večera s Havranom* (2014g): 10:55.

- ⁵⁰Hvížďala in *ibid.*, 52:20. Kostolný in *ibid.*, 1:03:34.
- ⁵¹Kostolný in *ibid.*, 17:56. Hvížďala and Havran in *ibid.* 20:15, 25:16, respectively.
- ⁵²Danko in *ibid.*, 23:00.
- ⁵³e.g. fighting for democracy or against fascism as in the case of the *Washington Post*; Hvížďala in *ibid.*, 37:35.
- ⁵⁴Čupka in RTVS *Vizuálny smog, Večera s Havranom* (2014d): 1:03:05. Peller in *ibid.*, 18:00.
- ⁵⁵Foucault 2002, 73.
- ⁵⁶Baláž in RTVS *Grécka ľavicová hrozba. Večera s Havranom* (2015b): 1:05:45.
- ⁵⁷Havran in RTVS 2015b, 33:53. See also Malová in *ibid.*, 38:07.
- ⁵⁸Geist in *ibid.*, 41:07, 43:23.
- ⁵⁹Malová in *ibid.*
- ⁶⁰*ibid.*, 40:24.
- ⁶¹RTVS Rast extrémizmu - hrozba demokracie. *Večera s Havranom* (2014c). RTVS Budúcnosť hlúpej krajiny. *Večera s Havranom* (2014e). RTVS Čo ohrozuje rodinu? *Večera s Havranom* (2014f). RTVS Sme slobodní? *Večera s Havranom* (2014h). RTVS Reštrukturalizácia po Slovensky. *Večera s Havranom* (2015d).
- ⁶²e.g. Havran in RTVS 2014h, 28:33, 35:50, 40:34, 48:35.
- ⁶³Geist in RTVS 2014c, 53:21.
- ⁶⁴*ibid.*, 49:40.
- ⁶⁵Filčák in RTVS 2014e, 40:30.
- ⁶⁶*ibid.*
- ⁶⁷RTVS Zánik strednej triedy. *Večera s Havranom* (2015c).
- ⁶⁸F. Jameson, Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism, 53–92 (*New Left Review*, No. 1/146, 1984).
- ⁶⁹P. Balko, Interview with Peter Balko (2016).
- ⁷⁰*ibid.*
- ⁷¹*ibid.*
- ⁷²RTVS 2014b, 35:30.
- ⁷³RTVS Sú konšpirácie nebezpečné? *Večera s Havranom* (2014a): 1:08:11.
- ⁷⁴Balko 2016
- ⁷⁵On the procedure of exclusion based on the reason-madness distinction see Foucault 1981, 53.
- ⁷⁶Havran in RTVS 2015a, 7:25. for a very similar question see *ibid.*, 1:11:30.
- ⁷⁷Mesík and Havran in *ibid.*, 7:46.
- ⁷⁸V. Csino, Interview with Viliam Csino (2016).
- ⁷⁹Foucault 2002, 55.
- ⁸⁰“Memory control” *Socializmus* (2012).
<<http://www.memorykontrol.org/socializmus-diskutuju-michal-havran-a-michal-polak-moderuje-fedor-blascak>>.
- ⁸¹M. Havran, “Som kaviarenský ľavičiar,” *Pravda.sk*, 16. July 2012.
<<http://nazory.pravda.sk/dnes-pise/clanok/67778-som-kaviarensky-laviciar/>>
- ⁸²M. Piško, “Havran: Čo je normálne vo Viedni, z toho sú u nás nepričetní,” *SME*, 26. May 2014.
<<http://ekonomika.sme.sk/c/7216151/havran-co-je-normalne-vo-viedni-z-toho-su-u-nas-nepričetni.html>>
- ⁸³Poláš 2014
- ⁸⁴Csino 2016
- ⁸⁵Z. Kepplová, Interview with Zuzana Kepplová (2016).

- ⁸⁶ M. Leščák, Interview with Marek Leščák (2016).
- ⁸⁷ Csino 2016
- ⁸⁸ Balko 2016
- ⁸⁹ Kepplová 2016. Leščák 2016
- ⁹⁰ T. Búza, Interview with Tibor Búza (2016).
- ⁹¹ M. Mistrík, Interview with Miloš Mistrík (2016).
- ⁹² Balko 2016
- ⁹³ D.C. Hallin, and P. Mancini, *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics*. (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
- ⁹⁴ Csino 2016
- ⁹⁵ Balko 2016. Kepplová 2016
- ⁹⁶ Kepplová 2016
- ⁹⁷ Csino 2016
- ⁹⁸ Kepplová 2016
- ⁹⁹ Balko 2016
- ¹⁰⁰ Csino 2016
- ¹⁰¹ Kepplová 2016
- ¹⁰² Leščák 2016
- ¹⁰³ Kepplová 2016
- ¹⁰⁴ Csino 2016
- ¹⁰⁵ Leščák 2016. See also Kepplová 2016.
- ¹⁰⁶ *ibid.*
- ¹⁰⁷ Kepplová 2016
- ¹⁰⁸ Despite the extreme right having been elected to the parliament, this perspective was not represented by any guest in the show either. This was a deliberate decision of the team behind the show. It is noteworthy that none of the members of the team used the argument of the equivalence between the radical left and right to legitimize the exclusion of the radical left.
- ¹⁰⁹ Búza 2016
- ¹¹⁰ Kepplová 2016. Leščák 2016
- ¹¹¹ Kepplová 2016
- ¹¹² Leščák 2016
- ¹¹³ Kepplová 2016
- ¹¹⁴ Leščák 2016
- ¹¹⁵ Csino 2016
- ¹¹⁶ Csino 2016. Leščák 2016
- ¹¹⁷ Kepplová 2016
- ¹¹⁸ Csino 2016
- ¹¹⁹ Leščák 2016
- ¹²⁰ A famous BBC moderator quoted in Csino 2016.
- ¹²¹ Kepplová 2016
- ¹²² V. Mika, *Koncepcia riadenia a rozvoja RTVS a programovej služby*, RTVS (2012): 25.
<www.rtv.org/download.pl?ID=51&hash=LpWKs90PUJ8bxWl82xxZrONEJnSvdFo7>
- ¹²³ Mistrík 2016
- ¹²⁴ Ľuboš Blaha is one of the more leftist members of the ruling party Smer – Social Democracy. He used to work in the secretariat of the Communist Party of Slovakia in the 2000s.
- ¹²⁵ Csino 2016
- ¹²⁶ Kepplová 2016
- ¹²⁷ Csino 2016
- ¹²⁸ Foucault 2002, 56.
- ¹²⁹ Hall et al. 2007, 360.

¹³⁰ibid

¹³¹Althusser 1971

¹³²ibid.

¹³³Hall et al. 2007

¹³⁴Hall et al. 2007, 363.

¹³⁵Mistrík 2016

¹³⁶NCSR 2000, §16/3/b.

¹³⁷ibid., §16/3/a.

¹³⁸ ibid.

¹³⁹ Mistrík 2016

¹⁴⁰ibid.