Pink vs. Brown

How Conservative Journalists Perceive Liberals and vice versa

Contemporary social cultural and ethical discourse both in Slovakia and around the world is marked by the depth of the antagonism between conservatives and progressive liberals, with disputes characterized by mutual accusations of bigotry and prejudice, even extending to hatred. In such a climate, it would therefore be interesting to examine how the two sides of the ideological divide perceive the other and to identify the common internal reasons for the patterns of thought and behavior which they attribute to each other. This study investigates the issue using the classical attributive method on a sample of 543 newspaper opinion pieces (either editorials and columns) from conservative and liberal media sources in Slovakia. The texts are identified, quantified and compared based on "inputs" (the cultural-ethical themes of the articles), "outputs" (the attitudes of the authors) but especially the "attributes" themselves (the character traits attributed to the opposition). At the same time, the study also analyses the lexical-semantic aspect of the examined texts. The author combines qualitative and quantitative research methods in order to outline three general conclusions about the liberal-conservative relationship in Slovakia but also in a broader Central and Eastern European and global context: 1. the difference in perceptions of social and personal threats; 2. the integral role of the Church and Christianity in the dispute; 3. the division of the roles of older and younger "brother".

Key words: conservativism, progressivism, liberalism, culture war, religion, attribution, media

Introduction and the state of the issue

The relationship between liberals and conservatives has taken a variety of forms over the course of its long-term socio-political development, but recent years have seen a

considerable degree of radicalization in the terms of modern right-wing extremism on the one hand (Mikulčíková, 2010; Koziak, & Hvasta, 2019) and progressive excesses on the other (Palko, 2019). While some commentators have expressed optimism over the possibility of mutual agreement and cooperation (Betinský, 2022a; 2022b; Mojžiš, Hríb, 2021), many others have taken a more skeptical view, emphasizing the current impossibility of dialogue (Rončáková, 2018). At the same time, however, it is important to distinguish between the cultural and geographical specificities when discussing this issue. The research presented in this paper is based on the Slovak reality, a context which can be generalized to the contemporary state of affairs across Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) as a whole. Across the region, post-communist countries have made the shift from the liberalism of the 1990s to the conservativism of the 2000s, with liberal parties paying the price for their alliances with the communists, and conservatives capitalizing on the situation by criticizing the union of liberalism and socialism (Rae, 2008; Zalewski, 2016; Buzogány & Varga, 2018). While the post-communist states of the CEE region willingly adopted democratic systems of institutions and economic liberalism without any problems, they did not subscribe to liberal ideology with the same enthusiasm (Kuniski, 1997). With the general consensus among the newly formed democratic parties across the political spectrum on the need for economic transformation, the ideological struggle moved to the sphere of cultural, symbolic and national matters (Kiss, 2002). The label of "authoritarian" was initially used against the anti-liberal political-ideological side of the spectrum, later replaced by the term "illiberal". This epithet is considered by some to be the "personal brand" of the long-serving Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, with Hungary often seen as the "poster child" of illiberalism (Rone, 2021) or as the "trendsetter" (Szelenyi & Csillag, 2015) for the illiberal "avant-garde" (Buzogány & Varga, 2018). Another conservative "flagbearer" in the region is Poland, where a new intellectual conservative movement has also emerged which draws upon the discourse of the interwar period and criticizes liberal atheism,

nihilism and immorality (Rae, 2008). This essentially populist variety of Central and Eastern European conservativism is highly responsive to voter preferences and behaves pragmatically and opportunistically (Kiss, 2002; Blokker, 2020). It focuses primarily on topics such as patriotism, religion and the family, the very same issues which resonate so powerfully with American neo-conservatives. However, unlike their American soul brothers, the post-communist neo-cons see the state as playing a crucial role in preserving these values (Szelenyi & Csillag, 2015). The renaissance of conservativism is a general trend across Western Europe, USA and CEE, but little research has been carried out to date on investigating the parallels in this phenomenon (Behr, 2021). Another feature of this global redefinition of conservative/ right-wing ideology is the tendency towards anti-liberal approaches (Behr, 2021; Nadler, 2020), and therefore recent American studies of conservative – liberal relationships are also of value within the context of the CEE region. For example, Young has revealed the psychological conditionality of conservative or liberal orientations and emphasized the complementarity of both internal settings, the potential of which could serve as a basis for cooperation rather than antagonism and hatred (Young, 2019; 2020). Although he approaches the issue from an (acknowledged) liberal position, Nadler examines the "structure of feeling" of conservative media consumers and claims that conservative identity is based to a large extent on negative feelings of self-pity and victimhood, drawing parallels with similar approaches adopted by conservatives during the French Revolution and as far back as the era of the Early Church. Nadler sees this attitude as a spontaneous reaction of the privileged class to the loss of their positions, status and property privileges, but he also emphasizes the "enormous role" which conservative media plays as amplifiers and disseminators of emotive narratives in order to subsequently offer a healing balm for the wounds they themselves have inflicted (Nadler, 2020, 2022).

Given this situation, it seems especially important to examine the roots and nature of these mutual disagreements from an interdisciplinary perspective. Such an option is offered by, among others, attributive theory and its research methods when applied in various academic and scientific disciplines, including media studies. Journalistic texts serve as a highly suitable material for an in-depth qualitative examination of the explicit and implicit inner beliefs of their authors concerning the character and moral features of their objects of interest. Needless to say, it is also important to draw a distinction between news outlets and opinion outlets; while the former possess more of the traditional features of the journalistic trade in which the editing process, from setting the topic through the choice of resources all the way to text processing and the formulation of the title, is a result of collective work in which the profiling of the media is significantly reflected, the opportunity for expressing subjective opinion is given to established or respected figures who enjoy the trust of the editorial office and are free from interference in the content of their statements. Therefore, the research sample analyzed in this study consists exclusively of opinion newspaper texts, the specific genres of which are outlined in the Methodology section. In such opinion pieces, commentators are thus free to express their inner beliefs, but if these beliefs simultaneously correspond with the expectations of their intended audience and the stance of the media institution, this by no means harms our research aim; on the contrary, it strengthens our approach because journalists can thereby be considered as spokespeople for the wider community, whether liberal or conservative.[1]

Our analysis is based on an interdisciplinary approach which integrates media studies and psychological research. The attributive method will be applied in order to find answers to our main research question: how liberals (or more specifically liberal journalists expressing

[1] In the text, we will use the terms conservative/liberal journalists and conservatives/liberals synonymously but we do so merely for the purpose of linguistic simplification, as we always mean the object of our research – journalists. In the given context, however, we can allow ourselves this generalisation while remaining fully aware that the implication is not necessarily true in reverse; while every conservative journalist is a conservative, not every conservative is a journalist, and this is no less true in the case of liberals.

their opinion in print) perceive conservatives and how conservatives (or conservative journalists expressing their opinion in print) perceive liberals. We specified this perception within three components of the attributive approach: what characteristics are attributed to the object? In which thematic frameworks does the attribution take place? What attitude is eventually adopted by the subject of the attribution?[2] In terms of content, the research focuses on contemporary cultural-ethical topics that are a frequent theme for columnists and opinion writers.

The cultural-ethical conflict which serves as the basis for the modern-day "culture wars" can be traced back to Bismarck's Germany of the 1870's and throughout history it has invariably been connected to matters of religion. Bismarck's struggle for German unification was aimed directly against the Catholic Church and led to the so-called "Kulturkampf" between secular and church authorities. In the 1920s and 1930s, the term "culture war" was revived by the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, who differentiated between two forms of exercising power: "direct domination" and cultural, or ideological "hegemony". Gramsci deviated from the typical Marxist emphasis on the primacy of economism by shifting the emphasis from the "base" to the "superstructure", arguing that Marxists should forge a "hegemonic bloc" in terms of intellectual and moral leadership (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p.66) in order to gain the acceptance of the masses. Gramsci believed that this gradual acquisition of cultural supremacy would be achieved through a "war of position" (Gramsci, 1971, p. 235), essentially by gaining influence over cultural institutions in fields ranging from education, art, the judiciary and the media to the church and various other mass organizations in a movement theorists later termed the "long march through the institutions" (a term borrowed from the German student activist and sociologist Rudi Dutschke from 1967/68).

[2] In parallel, we also conducted additional linguistic research on the same sample to examine the expressive terms that liberals and conservatives use when refer to their ideological opponents. Our partial findings were presented at the Slavic conference *Language and Religion* in Yekaterinburg (15. – 17. 9. 2021) and at the *Media for Man: Participation and Use of Media – Creativity, Competence, Ethics* conference in Krakow (19. 1. 2022), and the full results were later published in a comprehensive study (Author, 2022).

Gramsci's ideas were updated in the 1970s and 1980s, most notably by the neo-Marxist Ernesto Laclau (with Chantal Mouffe) and the "godfather of multiculturalism" (Butler, 2014) Stuart Hall, primarily in response to the rise of right-wing populism of Margaret Thatcher, the crisis of the left and the emergence of new social movements connected to identity such as feminism, black identity politics and the push for gay rights (Colpani, 2022, p.224). Hall, also seen as a pioneer in the field of cultural studies, perceived hegemony as the "cultural mobilization of consent across society" (Wood, 1998, p.401). He was interested in the origin of social consent, developing the theory of reception (the decoding of messages) which incorporated the issue of consent, more specifically critical consent, and resistance, and he also attempted to balance the role of social discourse and the cohesion of the state (Hall, 1985, p.92-93). In contrast, Laclau emphasized the importance of discourse in a pluralistic society and understood the achievement of hegemony primarily in terms of the construction of new meanings and the creation of moral, cultural and symbolic order. In her theory of antagonistic democracy, Mouffe even praised the concept of ongoing ideological conflict, arguing that the results of the struggle for hegemony are only "temporary hegemonic constructions that gather opponents around a common agenda." (Sekerák, 2015, p.28).

Another revival of the term "cultural war" occurred at the beginning of the 1990s thanks to James Davison Hunter, who drew attention to so-called "hot-button issues" such as abortion, homosexuality, the separation of church and state, recreational drugs, censorship, privacy and gun ownership. In Hunter's understanding, cultural wars are no longer waged on the basis of religion, ethnicity, social class or political affiliation, but instead on the basis of ideological worldviews (Hunter, 1992), most typically expressed by the dichotomy of traditionalists/conservatives v. progressives/liberals. Hunter also suggested that the orthodox/progressive divisions across different religions, ethnicities, social classes or political parties are in fact closer to each other than the differences between orthodox and progressive

individuals within their own communities (Hunter, 2009, p. 1 316; Dreher, 2017, p. 177)[3]. Fonte (2000) referred directly to Gramsci in this context, terming the opposing worldviews as "Gramscian" and "Tocquevillian". While the Gramscian approach sees moral truths as subjective and dependent on historical circumstances, and therefore capable of being socially constructed in order to liberate oppressed minorities (expanded from the Marxist terminology of the economically oppressed to encompass women, racial or sexual minorities), the Tocquevillian worldview is characterized by a belief in objective moral truths which are applicable to all people at all times and the need for these inherent truths to be revitalized in order to allow society to flourish once again. These worldviews can come into conflict when discussing contemporary issues such as "hate crimes" and "institutional discrimination", with the Gramscian approach often criticized for having created a new privileged class (women, minorities) and placing inequality before the law (Rabinowitz, 2000). The culture war is therefore fought over the right to define what is considered right and wrong within a society (Buchanan, 1992), about "the privilege to shape the moral order" (Hunter, 2009, p. 1 319). The discussion is fought out both in the Christian theological context and the social environment, with the two sides perceiving "two different understandings and realization of the culture of human existence" (Rakús, 2005); Pope John Paul II saw the two ideological sides as representing the culture of life[4] and the culture of death (John Paul II, 1995, art. 21, 28, 50, 87, 95; Jeffreys, 2001, p. 360).

Methodology

[3] The labelling of the two sides of current cultural-ethical conflict differs depending on the relevant historic, social, and cultural contexts. We consider the conservative – liberal dichotomy to be the most general and commonly used in the context of this study and therefore we choose to use these terms in the text. The terms "right-wing" and "traditionalist" are also associated with conservatism, while the terms "left-wing" and "progressive" are more commonly used with liberalism. At the same time, however, it is important to emphasize that these concepts are not synonymous with the economic terms of liberalism and conservatism, with only some limited overlap between the two fields in terms of conservative or liberal philosophy (Cíbik, 2017, s. 16).

[4] Some authors prefer the term "the culture of love" (Klembárová, 2013).

This research serves as a contribution towards the analysis of this ideological conflict by revealing the intentions and character traits which those on both sides of the divide ascribe to the other. The way in which individuals make these kinds of judgements can be described in terms of attribution and the discipline of attribution theory, which emerged in the field of social psychology in the second half of the twentieth century, has analyzed this process in considerable detail (Heider, 1958; Kelley, 1967; Jones, et al., 1972). The approach focuses on the question of "why", searching for the causes of phenomena and the behavior of others as well as one's own. The age-old need to answer the question of "why" can drive people to act as "naive psychologists" (Heider, 1958) or "common sense psychologists" (Kelley, 1972), adopting the role of "judges" (Weiner, 1992). Naturally, this process is carried out in a somewhat amateur and irrational manner (Manusov, 2017) and deals with assumed or attributed causes rather than actual motivations (Kasap, & Ünsal, 2021). Attribution is therefore associated with a large degree of bias and error, mainly the so-called self-serving bias in which the wrongdoings of others are explained on the basis of their personal shortcomings and their good deeds by external circumstances, a judgement which is reversed when we evaluate our own behavior (Reimer, 1975; Schmitt, 2015; Kulich, & Wang, 2015). This, however, by no means invalidates the method of attribution for our purposes; indeed, the very opposite is the case because the aim of this research is not to identify the causes as they actually "are" but rather as they are "attributed to be".

Over the course of its existence, attribution theory has proved to be a useful and fruitful approach which has displaced some less complex theories such as, for example, cognitive dissonance theory or the theory of risk-taking (Weiner, 2019); it has expanded considerably and now encompasses a series of inter-related attributive theories (Manusov, 2017), although for reasons of simplicity we continue to use the singular term. Amongst the best-known developments of attributive theory beyond its original framework of social psychology is the

work of Bernard Weiner in the field of motivational theory and educational psychology (Weiner, 2010, 2019). Weiner focused on the evaluation of causes for successes or failures, the process whereby individuals contemplate their own performance (rather than that of others) and try to meaningfully decide on their future actions (i.e., whether it makes sense to continue learning or to give up and continue with other efforts). Attribution theory has been a source of inspiration to scholars in many other fields such as, for example, marketing research (Johnson, 2006; Folkes, 1998; Sparkman, & Locander, 1980), intercultural dialogue (Kulich, & Wang, 2015), education studies, especially in terms of language teaching (Kasap, & Ünsal, 2021), management and organizational behavior (Martinko, & Mackey, 2019), in family communication (Manusov, 2017), the psychology of religion (Spilka, Shaver, & Kirkpatrick, 2019), research into the emotions of tourists (Zhang, Prayag, & Song, 2021), traffic safety (Akter et al., 2021) or the attitudes of readers towards characters in novels (Pollard-Gott, 1993).

In this study, we focus on internal, more specifically dispositional attribution (Heider, 1958) which focuses on perceptions of the behavior of others (rather than our own acts) in the mutual relationship of conservatives and liberals. As Harold Kelley (1971) noted, we are prone to internal attribution when we consider the behavior of others to be non-consensual (others do not do that), consistent (they always do that) or non-distinctive (they do that to everyone). This approach applies to both individuals and entire social groups and is linked to the perpetuation of stereotypes (Jaspars & Hewstone, 1990). As Steve J. Kulich and Xiaoling Wang (2014) stated, the process depends on the internal settings of the attributor. In order to gain a better understanding of how this process works, some research methods use a tree-step process in which the attribution itself is accompanied by observations of the conditions beforehand (input) and the conditions afterward (output). This approach is also applied in this study, and the topic of journalistic texts (input) and the attitude adopted by the authors (output) are used as supplementary indicators.

In the quantitative-qualitative content analysis, three analytical variables were ascribed determined for each of the examined texts (in addition to the identification variables, such as the media outlet, date, author) (Scherer, 2004):

- input: the specific cultural-ethical issue that the text addressed;
- attribute: the character traits and reasons for attitudes and behaviors which the author of the text ascribed to their opponents;
- output: the author's reaction to the issue at hand.

The research sample was composed of journalistic opinion pieces (Rončáková, 2019, p. 113; Schmidtová, & Mirvajová, 2014, p. 146–190), more specifically editorials, columns and related journalism genres expressing distinctive subjective opinions on contemporary socio-political events. The texts were taken from Slovak media outlets with a national readership; in terms of conservative media, the selected outlets were *Konzervatívny denník Postoj, Denník Štandard* and *Christianitas*, all of which operate online and do not issue print editions, while the selected liberal media outlets were *Denník N* and *SME*;[5] although both liberal outlets also publish a print edition, the research used the online version of these newspapers (Table 1). The texts were collected over a thirteen-month period, from July 2020 to July 2021.

media name		**total number of texts**		**share of texts in its group**		**total share of texts**	
conservative	Postoj	58	236	25%	100%	11%	43%
	Štandard	61		2%		11%	
	Christianitas	117		50%		22%	
liberal	Denník N	143	307	4%	100%	26%	57%
	SME	164		53%		30%	
total		**543**					**100%**

Table 1. Number of texts in the sample.

[5] We originally intended to examine three media outlets from each ideological side, but finally only two liberal outlets were chosen; these two alone provided the study with more samples of opinion pieces that the three conservative outlets combined, and therefore we decided to adjust the plan.

During the research, detailed notes were taken for each of the texts pertaining to each category, and based on this information, we specified overarching subcategories within each variable that represented the central ideas of the texts in terms of input, attribute and output. This approach enabled the individual variables to be evaluated both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Findings

Input: topic

In the category of "input", we recorded topics from the category of culture wars that were featured subjects of the texts. Opinion pieces often touch upon several topics, however, and therefore the recorded cultural-ethical topic could be either the main topic of the text or a secondary, complementary topic; for example, a text discussing the Slovak government's unsuccessful anti-pandemic policy could mock a conservative health minister and tangentially criticize their pro-life attitudes.

In the conservative sample, we identified a relatively wide range of "inputs" (Figure 1). The LGBT agenda was clearly the dominant topic, primarily in terms of the issue of the official recognition of homosexual partnerships or marriages and other related agendas such as transgender rights. The issues of abortion and euthanasia were combined into a single category given the fact that conservatives adopt the same bioethical approach to the topics, and this category accounted for almost a quarter of the inputs. The categories of liberalism, such as gender ideology and cancel culture, also comprised more than 10% of all inputs, while the category of neo-Marxism, a significant narrative in conservative arguments against liberalism, was also rather prominent. Neo-Marxism was linked to the category of revolutionary character because many conservatives perceive the progressive-liberal agenda as revolutionary in nature, drawing comparisons with the both the Bolshevik Revolution and the French Revolution. As a

result, conservatives often refer to liberals using terminology relating to these historical events such as Marxists, comrades, Bolsheviks, Komsomols, udarnik (or shock worker), revolutionaries or Jacobins (Author, 2022).

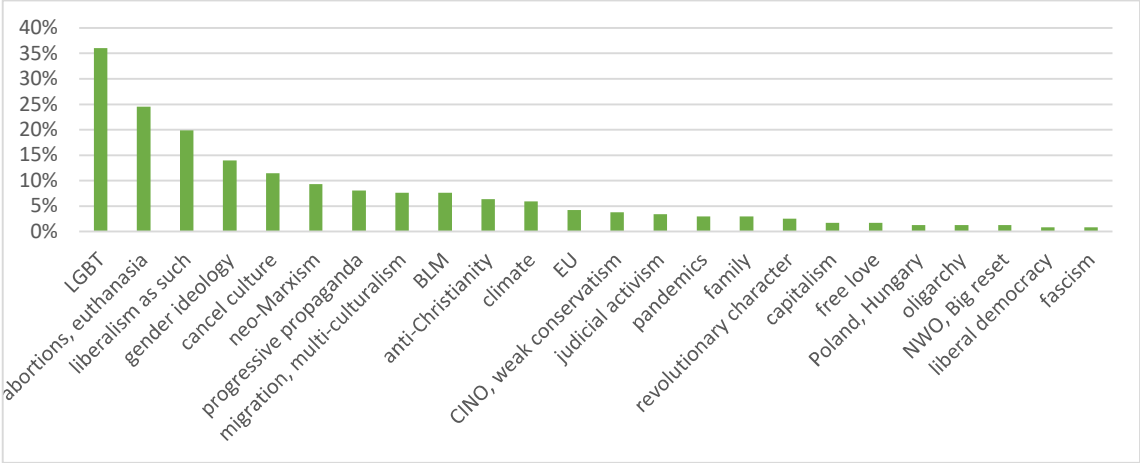


Figure 1. "Inputs" in conservative media.

The other categories achieved values of eight percent or lower. The BLM label refers to the Black Lives Matter movement which came to public attention following the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, USA in May 2020. Conservative journalists typically referred to the European Union in terms of its intrusive progressive tendencies. The abbreviation CINO stands for "Catholic in Name Only" and is used by conservative commentators to disparage weak-willed, non-practicing, liberal Catholics. The category of Poland and Hungary included texts on the topic of the liberal pressures which these two states were subjected to regarding the threat to the rule of law and the possible suspension of European subsidies. The category of oligarchy refers to the global (liberal) elites and their efforts to push for a progressive agenda, while the terms New World Order (NWO) and the Great Reset represent what some conservatives believe to be a systematic liberal effort to create a new social order based on progressive ideas. The parallels with fascism and Nazism were referred to in texts about abortion, euthanasia and pedophilia, with these topics all sharing the same ideological basis.

Fewer "inputs" were identified in **the liberal sample**, but there was a greater difference between the most frequently mentioned topics and the others (Figure 2). There is a considerable overlap between the most frequently discussed categories from the conservative and liberal samples, but the category of Church and Christianity is the predominant topic in the liberal media, an important field of the cultural war that has long been the target of liberal criticism. Also noteworthy is the fact that the liberal sample was much more oriented towards foreign politics than was the case with the conservative texts. Commentators frequently wrote about conservatism in the USA (with an emphasis on the soon-to-depart President Donald Trump), in Hungary and Poland (which they criticized for their perceived authoritarianism and undemocratic behavior).

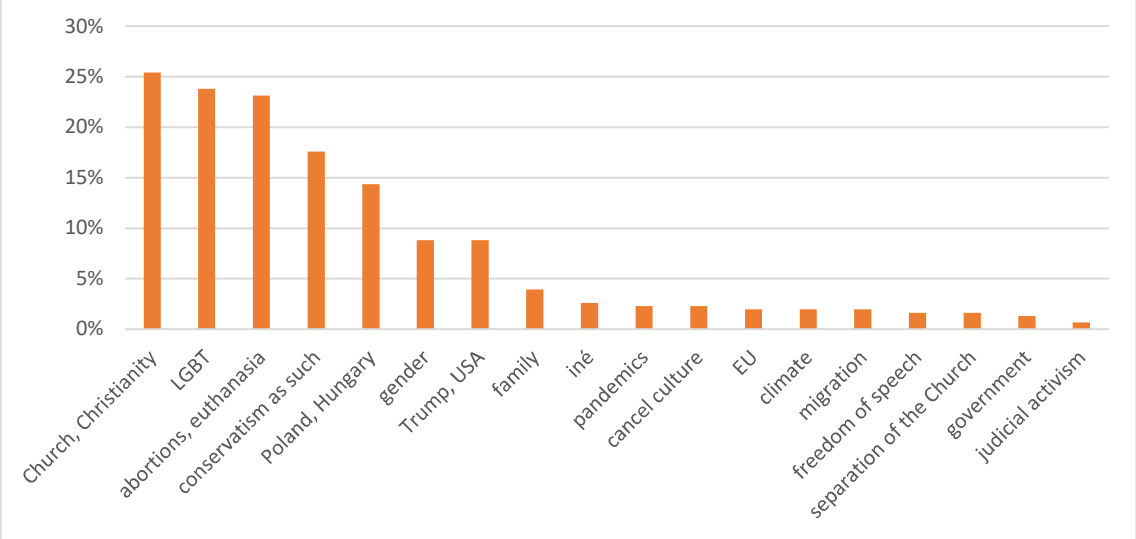


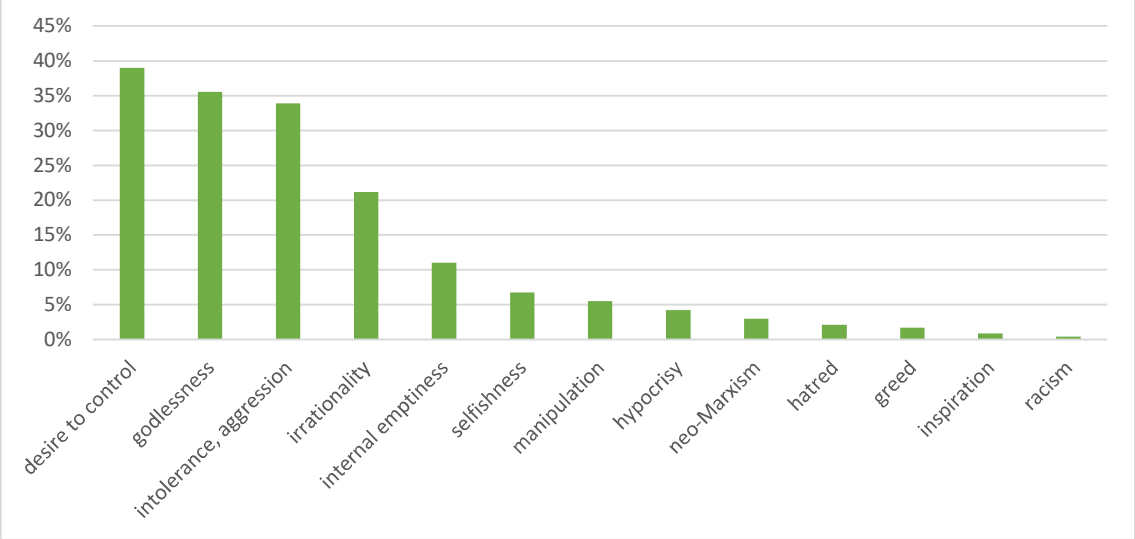
Figure 2. "Inputs" in liberal media.

The comparison of the liberal and conservative "inputs" reveals that the main difference was the greater liberal tendency towards criticism of Christianity and the Church (25%). This topic was absent from the conservative media sample, on the contrary, although we identified a category discussing "anti-Christianity" (6%), in which conservative journalists reacted to liberal attacks and criticism. The LGBT agenda was of greater interest to conservative

journalists (36%) than liberal commentators (24%); similarly, conservatives were more interested in gender ideology, cancel culture,[6] climate issues, migration, judicial activism, the European Union and BLM. While conservative approaches to these issues invariably criticized supposedly unfair progressive pressure, liberal journalists did not consider these issues to be sufficiently important and disregarded conservative concerns as unjustified and exaggerated. Liberals, on the other hand, were more concerned with political developments in the USA, Poland and Hungary in addition to the separation of church and state and criticism of the current Slovak government (particularly in terms of its conservative representatives).

Attribute: character

The category of "attribute" is the most important variable in terms of our research aim. In this category, we recorded the reasons for thinking and acting which liberal and conservative journalists ascribed to their opponents; more specifically, the character traits, moral settings and personal qualities which they assume for them. As was also the case with the "input" variable, multiple attributes could occur in an individual text.



[6] The liberal sample also featured the category of freedom of speech, which was distinct from the issue of cancel culture, relating not to the modern trend of excluding certain individuals from the public domain but instead to the philosophical issue of freedom of speech.

Figure 3. "Attributes" in conservative media (directed at liberals).

Conservative commentators primarily criticized liberals (Figure 3) for their desire to control, their godlessness and their aggressive intolerance. First and foremost (39%) they attributed to them the desire to concentrate power in their own hands, to control the rest of society and force their agenda on everyone regardless of the wishes of the majority. In conservative thinking, liberals do not shy away from using any means necessary to achieve their goals; they behave unfairly, with cunning, aggressively, ruthlessly and their self-confessed concern for democracy is fake. They are seen as highly ambitious, invasive, expansive and manipulative, and they constantly massage and trick society and public opinion. In this context, conservative journalists often used the metaphor of slicing salami or referred to the Gramscian "march through the institutions".

The category of godlessness (36%) includes attributes directly linked to the definition of this compound word. Conservative columnists perceive liberals as lacking a relationship with God, as neo-pagans who have abandoned God, lost contact with God's order and with nature. Instead, they worship various substitute gods, led by their instincts, emotions and passions. As a result, conservatives consider liberals to be not only non-Christian but actively anti-Christian, offensive and aggressive. In terms of values, they are often seen as unnatural, immoral, perverted, debauched, selfish and haughty.

Under the term intolerance and aggression (34%) we included conservatives who attributed the characteristic of snobbish arrogance to liberals; many note the perceived inability of liberals to tolerate differing opinions and those who hold them, with liberals also accused of wishing to destroy their ideological opponents, radiating malice, acting as informers, ruthless, cruel and inflicting unjust harm on others such as hounding them from their jobs. Liberals were also seen as exhibiting a tendency to exclude, persecute, discriminate and build their own ghettos. "*Liberal pseudo-culture has shifted from the position of a benevolent roommate to the*

position of a bullying tyrant" (Michalka, 2021). Terms such as bullying and tyranny appeared frequently in the texts, and conservatives attributed to liberals an internal anger, resentment or malice that drove them to aggressive and vulgar behavior, suggesting that these extreme acts served to prop up their own uncertainty over their indefensible attitudes. Liberals were also criticized for their tendency to claim exclusive rights to the truth, often being compared to the postwar Communist Party in this respect (Palko, 2021).

Some distance behind the other categories (but still comprising over a fifth of all "attributes") was irrationality (21%), with conservative authors primarily criticizing liberals for their lack of common sense and disconnection from reality. While some commentators concede that "this is not required in ideologies" (Michalka, 2020), others note that the "current mutation of progressive ideology relies to an unprecedented level on denial of reality" (Potocký, 2021). Conservatives perceive a foolish delusion at the heart of liberal ideology, arguing that liberals have succumbed to ideology, propaganda, self-deception and a willful disregard for reality. They lack sound judgement, they are uncritical, superficial, one-sided and overly emotional at the expense of reason. Furthermore, they are seen as immature in character, lacking sufficient education (mainly in history and philosophy), intellectually weak, lacking a capacity for logical argument, relying on memorized arguments, often contradicting themselves.

The attribute of internal emptiness (11%) is partially linked to those of irrationality and godlessness, but it has its own foundation in the assumption of a life lived without values, principles or character. Conservative journalists perceived liberals as shallow, internally vacuous, immature, wounded, unhappy, mentally instable, subject to their passions and obsessions. As a result, they are weak and malleable, entirely dependent on current mainstream ideologies. They have built their lives on sand (cf. Mt 7:26) and place their own satisfaction as their highest goal.

Closely related to this category is that of selfishness (7%), which includes any reproaches aimed at liberals for their ruthlessness towards the legitimate claims of others. Conservatives accused liberals for prioritizing their own personal benefit over the common good, for a lack of self-discipline and a reluctance to give up their pleasure and comfort. They also attributed aggressive tendencies to liberals when defending their privileges and a willingness to resort to violence on innocents (such as unborn children, potential drug addicts or surrogate mothers and their children). At the same time, conservatives see liberals as elitists who are unsympathetic to the needs of ordinary people.

The attribute of manipulation (6%) was most often accompanied by the perception of a desire to control others or intolerance and aggression. The implication in the attribute of hypocrisy (4%) was the conservative belief in liberals' discrepancies between their words and their actions; they make strenuous call for more environmentally friendly policies but also advocate lifestyles which are by no means green (for example, Ikea circumvents environmental regulations, while advocates of electric cars turn a blind eye to the true environmental cost of the technology). Liberals regularly criticizing corruption and plagiarism, but they themselves also steal from the public purse and plagiarize; they celebrate gender ideology but remain silent on the issue when visiting Islamic countries; they protest on behalf of political prisoners but show an eagerness to arrest those whose views they disagree with; they also condemn judicial activism but appear to support it when it is politically convenient for them. This category also included more extreme attributions of covert racism and the advocacy of eugenics, and is associated with criticisms of tepid Christians or CINOs who were described as hypocritical for supporting the liberal agenda.

One category which deserves a special mention is that of neo-Marxism (3%), because although it appeared relatively infrequently as an "attribute", it is a distinctive conservative narrative that has already been discussed in the section dedicated to "inputs". In terms of hatred

(2%), conservative journalists criticized liberals both for the use of hate speech and also for the perceived program of spreading hatred in society, such as in the case of references to racial issues. The attribute of greed (2%) was connected to the attribution that liberals profit financially from the misfortunes or deaths of others (for example, in transgender activism among young people and in abortion activism), with reference also being made to the corrupt practices of well-known liberal organizations such as Amnesty International. Only two examples (1%) of conservatives' appreciation of liberal arguments were identified, in cases when the commentator praised the political skill and creativity of their opponents in contrast to conservative feebleness. Only a single allegation of racism was revealed in the sample in the specific context of the renaming the family planning organization Marie Stopes International (MSI) to MSI Reproductive Choices and the unconvincing excuses made by the organization in an effort to distance itself from its founder's views on racism and eugenics.

In the liberal media, the perception of the conservative desire to control also featured regularly (Figure 4) but the most common category of irrationality exceeded the second placed category by as much as 15 percent (50%). This means that half of all liberal commentators ascribed intellectual parochialism and obstinacy to their counterparts, suggesting that conservatives are more susceptible to (religious) ideology and radicalization, unable to grasp the full scope of issues, and trapped in their complacent black-and-white moral worlds. Liberal commentaries depicted conservatives as less mentally capable, uninformed, unintelligent, uncivilized, often downright stupid and primitive, often comparing them to sheep who only follow the flock rather than think for themselves. Conservatives were seen as subject to magical systems of thought and prone to prejudices, stereotypes, conspiracy theories and hoaxes, giving them the appearance of being weird, ridiculous, embarrassing or tragicomical. However, some commentators also noted the dangerous aspect of conservative belief, more specifically an

overreliance on the influence of supernatural forces and a willingness to prioritize ideology over scientific knowledge.

In terms of "attributes", there was a partial overlap between liberal perceptions of their ideological opponents and those of conservative commentators, with liberal journalists also criticizing their counterparts for their perceived disconnection from reality and an inability to understand the actual needs of the contemporary world, such as ecological concerns. Liberals tend to believe that conservatives possess their own fixed set of facts, and that it is therefore impossible to have a meaningful exchange of opinions with them. The key conservative cultural-ethical agendas were seen as secondary or marginal in nature, yet actively promoted by conservatives at the expense of much more important socio-political topics.

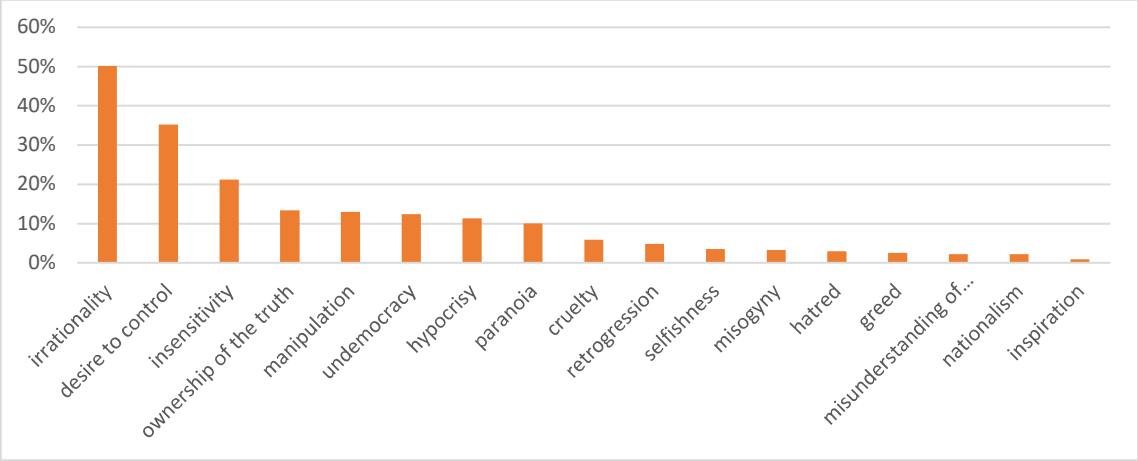


Figure 4. "Attributes" in liberal media (directed at conservatives).

In the category of desire to control (35%), two distinct tendencies can be distinguished. The less significant of these concerned the political ambitions of conservatives. Liberal commentators perceived conservatives as power-hungry, willing to implement their ideological aims at any cost and to act with a cynical pragmatism. Conservatives are seen as failing to act in the true interest of ordinary people and exhibiting authoritarian tendencies. However, this attribute was more pronounced at the micro-level, where the desire to control others was seen

in the light of the morbid need of conservatives to interfere in the lives of individuals, to pry into their consciences, decide for them, control them, dictate how they should live and generally suppress their personal freedom. This attribute was frequently linked to the conservative desire to control female bodies (mainly in connection with the issue of abortion but also with gender issues). The metaphor of peering into other people's bedrooms appeared regularly in the sample; for example, "on tiptoe and with raised eyebrows" (Leksa, 2021). Liberals attributed an ideological motivation for conservative beliefs and actions, a sense of "catechism" (Kepplová, 2021), with this belief justifying their attempts to enforce their "revealed things" on others on both an individual and political level (Šrobár, 2021).

Although accounting for a fifth of all identified "attributes", the third most common "attribute" of insensitivity (21%) featured far less frequently than the first two categories. Liberal journalists typically depicted this attribute as the lack of humanity exhibited by conservatives, portraying them as unkind, callous, disrespectful, or blind and deaf to the needs and rights of others. Conservatives were seen as refusing to treat their opponents with sufficient respect and causing hurt by their behavior. These harsh attitudes are mainly targeted at women (victims of abuse, women undergoing abortions or seeking a child through IVF), but also various other marginalized or victimized groups (child victims of sexual abuse, migrants, LGBT people).

The "attributes" of ownership of the truth (13%), manipulation (13%), undemocracy (12%), hypocrisy (11%) and paranoia (10%) each accounted for more than ten percent of identified "attributes". The category of ownership of the truth is seemingly related to the desire to control, but the "god-like" sentiment in this case does not translate to aggression or injustice but suffices with a subjectively experienced sense of moral superiority. Liberal authors ascribed haughtiness, moral arrogance, Savior complex to conservatives, with many commentators criticizing the tendency of conservatives to consider themselves as the chosen ones with the

audacity to believe that they alone can interpret God's intentions and will. They see this approach as dangerous, because conservatives frequently set their own religious values above democracy and force their often bizarre religious beliefs on the wider population both politically and legislatively.

The category of manipulation mainly refers to the liberal belief that conservatives are inwardly insidious and perfidious, unjustly demanding more than they are entitled to, and willing to act unfairly, deceitfully, pushing their agenda "behind the scenes", skillfully prevaricating at the expense of their opponents. The evidence for this belief includes examples of legislative deceit, court packing, twisting scientific findings in their favor, seeking global influence and financing their own activist networks. The undemocracy attribute represents the liberal belief that conservatives are intolerant of any opposition, exhibiting an inherent authoritarian tendency, enthusiastically censoring or suppressing free media, open discussion and even their opponents, collaborating with Russia and China and even willing to ally with extremist ideologies such as fascism in order to achieve their aims. The attribute of hypocrisy included the belief that conservatives care more about how they appear to others rather than how they truly behave; or alternatively, that they apply different parameters to themselves than to others. In this context, conservatives were often described as false and were compared to pharisees. The "attribute" of paranoia also appeared relatively frequently, with liberal commentators believing that conservatives suffered from unhealthy phobias (for example, an irrational fear of LGBT persons), conjuring up imaginary threats and enemies, inflating, exaggerating, scaremongering and feeding cultural wars. Conservatives were accused of whining, playing the victim, cultivating a sense of dolorism, and of acting hysterically (for example, in connection with cancel culture); metaphorically, we could say they "see the Devil hiding behind every corner".

Other identified "attributes" included cruelty (6%), understood as an inner toxicity, a desire for revenge, violence, tyrannical behavior, coldness, and even taking pleasure in the suffering of others (for example, the refusal to permit morning-after pills "*so that women would really suffer during abortions*", Jánošová, 2020).

The category of retrogression (5%) indicated backwardness, mental staleness or medieval thinking, the failure to accept the need for reform and overattachment to outdated traditions. In terms of selfishness (4%), liberal columnists criticized conservatives for a perceived narrow-minded ruthlessness towards the actual needs of society and what would truly benefit others. Under the attribute of misogyny (3%) we included the belief that conservatives see women as subordinate or inferior, choosing to humiliate them and treat them with masculine disregard. The attribute of hatred was a latent element in various other attributes, but inner hatred as an extremely negative trait appeared only marginally (3%), as was the case for greed (3%) which was related to corrupt pragmatic behavior. Under the term "misunderstanding of Christianity" (2%) we included reproaches aimed at conservatives for deviating from Christ's original message of all-encompassing love at the expense of a more limited cultural-ethical agenda. Nationalism (2%) was ascribed to conservatives in the sense of their inner chauvinist characteristics. Interestingly, the attribute of inspiration (1%) appeared three times in the sample, but all three examples were from texts by the same author, Martin M. Šimečka[7] who praised the kindness, wisdom and philosophy of the conservative intellectual Jordan Peterson (Šimečka, 2021b) and commended conservatives for drawing attention to progressive excesses (Šimečka, 2021a) or not succumbing to the ideas of young radicals (Šimečka, 2020).

[7] Martin M. Šimečka, a journalist for *Denník N*. Šimečka (born 1957) is the son of the well-known Slovak dissident and anti-communism fighter Milan Šimečka and the father of the MEP Michal Šimečka, a Vice-President of the European Parliament representing the liberal group. Šimečka has been editor-in-chief of several authoritative media outlets and is a co-founder of *Denník N*.

When comparing the conservative and liberal attributes, the intersecting attribute seems to be the desire to control, a characteristic that both sides perceive in their opponents to a relatively equal degree, although the occurrence of this attribute was slightly higher among conservatives. In contrast, we noted a significant difference in the attribute of irrationality, with liberals criticizing conservatives for a perceived lack of intelligence on a much larger scale; as was noted above, this was the most common "attribute" in this group. A similar difference was observed in the category of ownership of the truth, but in reverse; conservatives were more likely to perceive intolerance and aggression in liberals than liberals on the conservative side. At the same time, we chose a somewhat different names for these attributes, in order to more accurately express the subtlety of their meaning; while conservatives were more likely to attribute an inability to accept a different view to liberals and suggest the possibility of subsequent aggression, liberals objected to the moral superiority and god-like self-regard of conservatives.

We also identified two attributes that were not present on both ideological sides; godlessness only occurred in conservative perceptions of liberals, and insensitivity or inhumanity only occurred in liberal perceptions of conservatives. Based on this finding, it is possible to speak of an emphasis on "God" and "non-God", and "human" and "non-human". This pertains to the ideological settings of both sides; while conservatives recognize a higher Authority from which they derive their conception of what is good for a person or what makes them truly "human", liberals reject the applicability of religious principles into social rules, valuing an empathic individual approach over rules and regulations given "from above" (i.e., from the Catholic Church), regardless of their personal religious faith. Our research showed that these two approaches will inevitably come into conflict.

Another related pair of attributes are those of inner emptiness and cruelty; conservative commentators criticized liberals for their supposed lack of values and superficiality, reflecting

the accompanying effect of godlessness (the renunciation of piety), while liberal writers accused conservatives for their coldness and harshness, an accompanying effect of inhumanity (the renunciation of humanity).

Some other common attributes which both sides ascribed to each other were those of manipulation, hypocrisy, selfishness, hatred and greed. Liberals criticized conservatives more frequently for manipulation and hypocrisy, while conservatives were more likely to criticize liberals for their selfishness. The attribute of inspiration was highly infrequent and marginal on both sides.

Conservatives also suggested that liberals possessed an inner predisposition to neo-Marxism, while liberals ascribed patterns of retrogression, misogyny and a misunderstanding of Christianity and nationalism to conservatives.

Output: attitude

While the categories of "input" and "attribute" represent the acts or stimuli that journalists process and which enable them to develop their stance, the category of "output" classifies the response of the author of the analyzed text. Journalistic attitudes were not assessed in terms of opinions and arguments but in how the commentators responded to a stimulus.

In the overwhelming majority of cases, **conservative** commentaries (Figure 5) adopted the attitude of exposing and warning (44%). The authors also took the stance of criticism and argumentation, not only at the academic, theoretical level but also with an emphasis on the investigative element of exposing a specific threat (that others may have wanted to keep hidden) or warning their readers (i.e., other conservatives). Another type of critical-argumentative stance was the expression of shock and outrage (24%). Here, too, we can identify the perceived need to move beyond a more detached academic argumentation and to engage on a more personal level, to express strong opposition and proclaim outrage over the supposed immorality

of behavior, mainly related to LGBT issues or the abortion debate. In the third most common category, we see even some form of a call for action or resistance (19%), addressed either to politicians (for example, demands for the introduction of new legislation or the cancelation of funding for specific programs) or to ordinary citizens (for example, raising awareness, calls to protest or boycott certain products or voting recommendations). The fourth most common conservative "output" was the category of concerns over pressure and rebellion (17%), in which the above-mentioned attitudes of exposure or outrage were supplemented by an emphasis on fear of the liberal machinery, concern over the future or the direction of an increasingly liberal society.

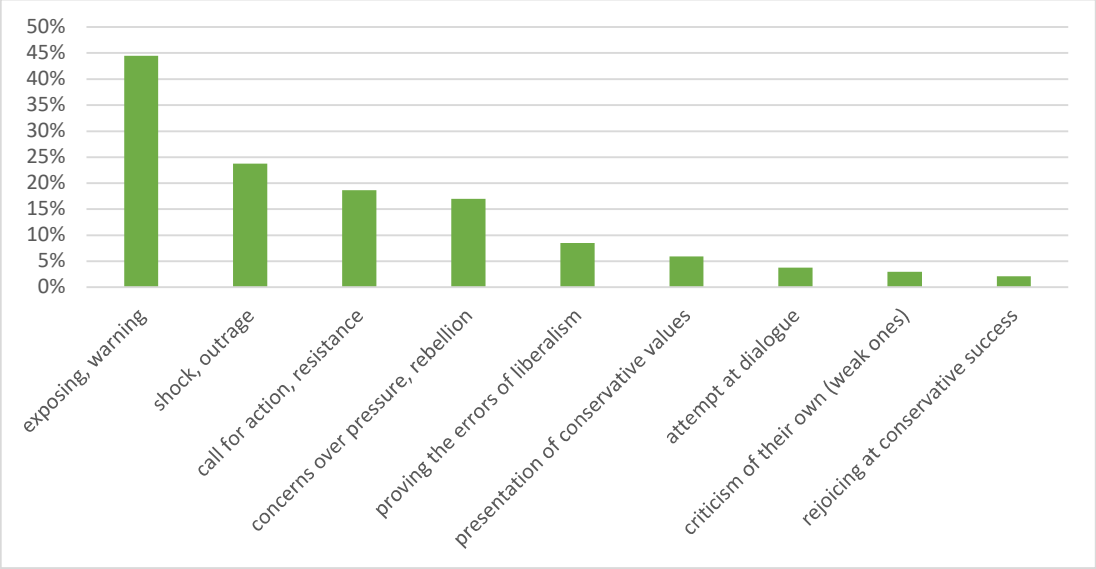


Figure 5. "Outputs" in conservative media.

The remaining five marginal categories each comprised less than 10% of the total number of "outputs". The commentators who adopted the stance of proving the errors of liberalism (8%) mainly provided detailed and in-depth argumentation, often employing references to history and philosophy to point out, for example, the parallels between contemporary progressive trends and their left-wing and revolutionary historical predecessors that had ended in failure. Similar methods of argumentation were used in the case of the

"outputs" focused on the presentation of conservative values (6%), for example defending the freedom of speech, the importance of family, the justification of nation-states, the need for Christian values or the presentation of the advantages of monarchism. We identified some attempts towards fostering dialogue (4%) in the texts that sought inspiration from liberals, trying to understand their principles and attempting to establish common ground and peaceful cooperation. One aspect which is by no means insignificant in the conservative environment was also the criticism of weak conservatives (3%), with many being perceived as hypocritical "culture Catholics" who lacked true faith. In this category we also included criticisms of overzealous conservatives whose overenthusiasm is often counterproductive. Finally, some texts represented rejoicing at conservative success (2%), with authors gaining encouragement from the story of an active pro-lifer, delight at a conservative being appointed to a judicial position, or the announcement of an EU plenipotentiary for religious freedom.

In the liberal media texts (Figure 6) there was a significantly greater representation of argumentation and criticism (36%). This term was chosen in contrast to the conservative category of shock and outrage because the criticism voiced by liberals was less vociferous, being more in the spirit of charitable, slightly condescending admonition, while the expression of shock was rare. The second most frequent stance was mockery (17%), with liberal authors often discussing opponents with derision or even disgust, making extensive use of irony and sarcasm, primarily addressing the religious belief and supposed mental inadequacy of their opponents. Exposing and warning (14%) had a similar character as was identified in the case of conservatives, linked to, among others, anti-democratic, fundamentalist and fascist threats. Sermon (12%) was also a relatively frequent stance adopted by liberal writers, representing appeals to conservatives for greater reflection, calling on them to change their mind and behavior. This type of "output" was frequently present in the texts of liberal theologians that

presented modern, progressive understandings of Christianity and it was this aspect that led us to term the category as “sermon”.

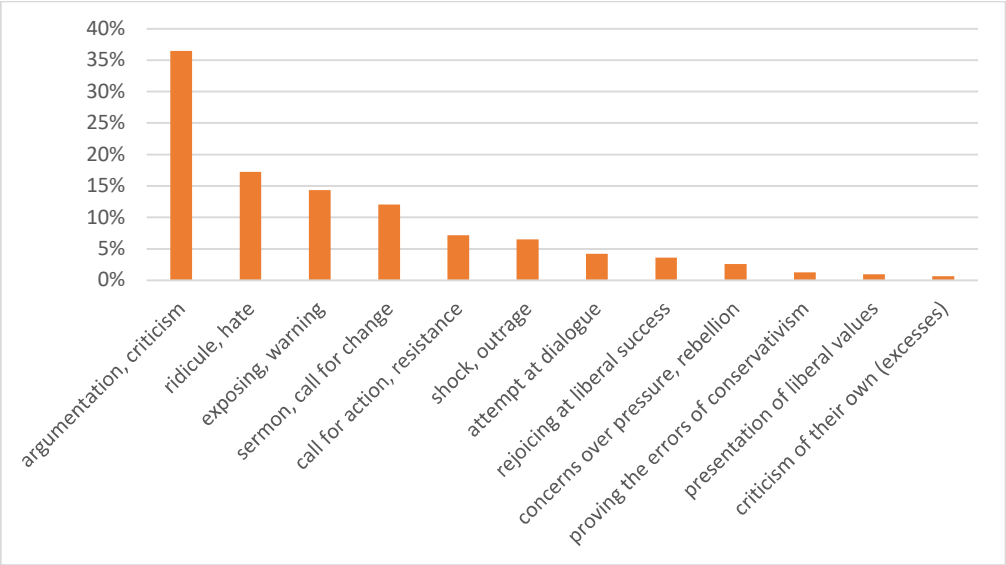


Figure 6. “Outputs” in liberal media.

Call for action and resistance (7%) included, among others, advice on how to break free from the bondage of the power-hungry Church, how to access abortions in Poland, how to distance oneself from the undemocratic policies of Hungary and Poland, or calls to vote for Joe Biden rather than Donald Trump in the US presidential election. The stance of shock and strong opposition (7%) showed a similar level of representation in the text sample, with authors expressing their anger and outrage over various absurdities of conservative beliefs. Attempts at dialogue (4%) signified an effort on the part of liberal authors to understand their opponents, including the proposal to join forces in the fight against extremism, attempts to recognize and accept some of their opponents’ arguments (for example, in the case of cancel culture). The category of rejoicing at liberal success (4%) was linked mainly to the election victory of Joe Biden but also the EU sanctions against Hungary and Poland or the partial successes of some of liberal Slovak politicians. Concerns over conservative pressure (3%) had both a societal dimension (the power of the Church, the threat of extremist violence) and a personal dimension

(rejecting the attempts of conservatives to interfere in the personal lives of others). Marginal values of around 1% were recorded for the "outputs" of proving the errors of conservatism (straying from the path of true Christianity, bearing responsibility for Trumpism), the presentation of liberal values (the defense of progressive trends), and criticism of their own ranks (progressive excesses in the USA, the threat of left-wing dogmatization and radicalization).

The comparison of conservative and liberal reactions shows significant differences in the accentuation of argumentation: while conservatives feel under threat, focusing on exposing of insidious nature of their opposition and warning against the angers which they pose, to a greater extent they declare shock and outrage, voicing concerns over liberal pressures and expressing the need for resistance and calls for action and rebellion. In the case of liberal texts, however, the predominant attitude was one of charitable, even ironic-satirical criticism of opponents, towards whom they often took a condescending or patronizing attitude. Shock, warnings and concerns over conservative pressures are present, but on a considerably lesser scale. In the case of liberals, we recorded two specific categories of "outputs", hate and sermon, which were not present in the case of conservatives. These were, in essence, two different forms of "admonition": one kind and the other one sharp, both a caress and a threat, carrot and stick, good and bad cop.

Conservative authors also evinced a greater need to prove the errors of liberalism and to present conservative values in a positive light, but they also showed a willingness to criticize their own for either their insufficient or excessive zeal. Nonetheless, attempts at dialogue were relatively similar (and ultimately very low) on both sides of the divide.

Interpretation and conclusion

In addition to the more detailed findings outlined above, the summary view of the outputs identified in the study three complex evaluations which may help to develop a specific paradigm:

1. distinguishing between the micro and macro levels of conservative-liberal concerns and criticism;
2. the specific role of Christianity and the Church in the conservative-liberal dispute;
3. the differences in the degree of perceived threats and the consequent division of the role of the stronger and weaker "brother".

We chose the terms "micro" and "macro" to categorize the personal, internal, intimate level and the socio-political level (on both a national and global level), respectively. The analysis reveals that liberal criticism of conservatives over their desire for power is more prevalent on the micro level; when liberals criticize conservatives for their desire for power, they mean the desire to "peer into people's bedrooms", to interfere with the private lives of others and dictate their own moral rules, rather than a wider attempt to systematically control the society culturally and politically. In contrast, conservatives use the attribute of desire to control others more than liberals, and they define the issue more precisely as the liberal effort to gain control of the state, society and even civilization as a whole. At the same time, liberals were found to be 2.5 times more likely to criticize conservatives for their perceived stupidity, obstinacy, mental inadequacy or lack of education, and were also more likely to use irony and sarcasm, an approach which is implemented much more effectively on a personal level. These findings correlate with our earlier conclusions regarding the linguistic features of mutual conservative-liberal criticisms (Author, 2022) which revealed that liberals showed a greater tendency to focus on specific people in comparison to general phenomena, using more direct evaluative adjectives and names and less imagery and metaphors.

In terms of the thematic focus of liberal commentaries, the category that emerged most frequently was that of religion (more specifically, Christianity and the Church) which surpassed all of the other controversial cultural-ethical topics. Liberal journalists do not discriminate between the impact of the Church and the impact of conservatives; on the contrary, they focus their criticism largely on the interconnected relationship of socio-political life and the Church, an approach which is illustrated by expressive language aimed at achieving an ironic or satirical effect (for example, bigoted, fundamentalist, medieval, pious, sanctimonious, clerical, dogmatic, demagogic, clerico-fascist, Inquisition, Savior complex, Crusader, etc.) (Author, 2022). This kind of vocabulary is also widely used by liberals who describe themselves as Christians or who are openminded towards Christianity, because they perceive conservatives as having deviated from the loving, all-encompassing nature of Christianity. Conservatives respond to this accusation by emphasizing the pagan, and even anti-Christian tendencies of liberals, openly criticizing their ideological opponents for godlessness associated with an inner emptiness. They see them as having detached themselves from God's order, deliberately turning away from God's plan for the world, and therefore as internally corrupt, perverted, shallow, lustful and subject to their base instincts and passions, adopting lifestyles which will inevitably leave them unhappy, lonely and desperate. In contrast, liberals see conservatives as afflicted by a sense of inhumanity, an aspect which is presented as a specific opposition to godlessness. Liberals characterize humanity as inner goodness, harmony and kindness, accusing conservatives of lacking these qualities and regarding them as insensitive, ruthless and harsh or even as cruel, sadistic and dangerously monstrous due to their tendency to prioritize abstract "higher" principles above the ordinary, human values. The centrality of the relationship to Christianity and, above all, Catholicism and the Church (whether positive or negative) in the culture wars contradicts those theoreticians who attempt to downplay the significance of religious matters in this dispute; they typically undervalue the significance of, for example,

Gramcsi's atheism or the effort to attain a non-religious "counter-hegemony" (Bertsch, 1996, p. 15).

The third conclusion is linked to the degree of perceived threat, with conservatives found to be considerably more susceptible to such fears. The thematic structure of their commentaries encompasses all kinds of cultural-ethical topics, including LGBT issues, abortion, euthanasia, gender, cancel culture, climate, migration, judicial activism, EU progressivism and racial issues. Liberals perceive their concerns as exaggerated or fabricated and accuse conservatives of paranoia. Here, too, one can argue with Bertsch who claims that the feeling of being threatened is mutual and both parties are "mirroring" each other in perceiving the loss of their own positions and strengthening of the enemy (Bertsch, 1996, p. 13). In contrast, our results correlate with the findings of Nadler who proved the objective existence of feelings of being threatened, humiliated and excluded among conservative media consumers, as well as their belief that "liberal media" turn a blind eye to the wrongdoings of their own. At the same time, Nadler confirms that liberals perceive these concerns as feigned and self-interested rhetorical postures (Nadler, 2020).

In our research, the differences in threat perception were most pronounced in the category of "outputs", the attitudes and reactions of the commentators. While conservatives escalated their argumentation and criticism and adopted positions of shock, strong disagreement, the forensic exposure of harmful intentions and fears over the future development of the situation, liberal journalists had little need for such engaged criticism and took a more condescending position, offering disapproving reprimands to the "younger brother"; either by giving a "sermon" in the sense of an affectionate call for "conversion" or by "spitting" on him in disgust using irony and sarcasm.

Also noteworthy are the mutual recriminations regarding two totalitarian ideologies of the 20th century; conservatives tend to compare liberals to Communists or Marxists (or neo-

Marxists) and apply terms such as comrades, Bolsheviks, Komsomols or udarniks, while liberals consider conservatives to be prone to (neo)fascism or (neo)Nazism and make accusations of chauvinism, nationalism, clerico-fascism[8]. Conservatives see liberals as red (or progressively pink), while liberals perceive conservatives as brown.

In summary, liberals and conservatives criticize each other for a set of identical aspects, a set of comparable (or parallel) aspects and a set of different aspects. The most numerous set was that of identical aspects, with both sides seeing their opponents as power hungry, stupid, intolerant, morally snobbish, manipulative, hypocritical, selfish, hateful and greedy, although the two sides differ in the qualitative hues of these attributes (for example, aggressive intolerance vs. god-like ownership of the truth) and in the quantity (liberals were twice as likely to term conservatives as unintelligent). Comparable features are connected to different philosophical-theological backgrounds and varying emphases on divine or human authority when defining good and bad (moral and immoral, right and wrong, beautiful and ugly). The set of different attributes included some specific characteristics with a somewhat marginal occurrence (for example, accusations of misogyny and of misunderstanding Christianity, undemocratic behavior).

Having determined the nature of the conflict in detail, we can perhaps conclude by considering the issue of the possibility of mutual reconciliation and understanding between conservatives and liberals. Although our research reveals a very low incidence of the attribute of inspiration and consequent attempts at fostering dialogue, the process of naming and clarifying the features and intrinsic characteristics which these two groups attribute to each

[8] References to clerico-fascism are specific to Slovakia due to the history of the wartime Slovak Republic. Led by the Catholic priest Jozef Tiso, the Slovak Republic was allied with Nazi Germany. After the war, Tiso was convicted of treason and executed, but his legacy in modern Slovakia is disputed; liberals unambiguously consider him to be a war criminal, but some elements of the conservative spectrum have attempted to justify (to some extent) his acts. Tiso is mainly criticized for his acquiescence to the deportation of Slovak Jews to Nazi concentration camps where around 70,000 of them were murdered.

other could serve as a basis for asking new questions and seeking new answers by other methods. If we want to find a way out of the current impasse, it is crucial that we identify the causes and reasons for why the misunderstanding arose in the first place. Attribution theory is a highly suitable tool for this purpose and can make a valuable contribution to such an in-depth analysis.

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