



## DE DETAILED ANALYSIS

2024-04-23 Der Talk vom 23. April

Programme: Markus Lanz | 2024-04-23 | Analysed on: 2026-03-12 19:37

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### OVERALL SCORE

**5.5/10**

*Considerable bias*

0 = balanced, 10 = strongly one-sided/manipulative

## POLITICAL SPECTRUM

Classification according to Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) 2024

The Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES 2024) is an academic survey of 609 political scientists in 31 countries. Each party is rated on a scale from 0 (far left) to 10 (far right).

Party	Linke	Greens	SPD	BSW	CDU/CSU	FDP	Freie W.	AfD
CHES	1.23	2.28	3.41	3.78	6.23	6.54	6.77	9.10
Spectrum	Left	Left	Left	Left	Right	Right	Right	Right

The overall tendency is displayed on a 0–10 scale (0 = strongly favouring left, 5 = balanced, 10 = strongly favouring right). The calculation is based on the difference in the average favouring of left vs. right parties (grouping according to CHES 2024).

### TENDENCY (L – R)

**5.1 / 10**

*Balanced*

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

← Left

Right →

Source: Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2024 — [chesdata.eu](https://chesdata.eu) | [Jolly et al., Electoral Studies, 2022](#) | Thresholds: [Pew Research Center](#)

This section serves for political classification and does not feed into the overall score.

## PROGRAMME INFO AND THEMATIC FRAMEWORK

### Programme data

- Date: 23.04.2024
- Host: Markus Lanz
- Guests:



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Actors	Function	Party/Affiliation	Political spectrum
Klara Geywitz	Federal Minister of Construction	SPD	Centre-left
Boris Palmer	Mayor of Tübingen	independent (formerly Greens)	Centre to centre-right, pragmatic-liberal
Kerstin Münstermann	Journalist (Rheinische Post / Berlin correspondent)	Press	Journalistic-analytical, tends to be critical of the government
Rieke Havertz	Journalist (ZEIT / US correspondent)	Press	Journalistic-analytical, US expertise

### Main topic

The programme covers three thematic complexes: espionage affairs involving the AfD (China/Russia), the Trump criminal trial in New York, and the housing construction crisis in Germany and the conflicts within the traffic-light coalition (FDP 12-point paper, skilled labour shortage, bureaucracy).



## CHAPTER 1 — DETAILED ANALYSIS OF THE 15 CRITERIA

### Hard facts — 9 techniques that are countable and scientifically robust

#### 1. EXPERT SELECTION

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##### Expert 1: Klara Geywitz (SPD Minister of Construction)

###### Timestamp

throughout — Statement: Defends government policy, refers to housing benefit reform, social housing, amendment to the Building Code. — Classification: The only government representative, represents the SPD position. — Missing countervoice: No FDP representative, no Greens representative, no opposition representative.

##### Expert 2: Boris Palmer (Mayor of Tübingen)

###### Timestamp

throughout — Statement: Criticises bureaucracy, skilled labour shortage, retirement at 63, citizen's income. — Classification: Pragmatic-liberal, represents a municipal and business-oriented perspective. Agrees with 10 out of 12 FDP points. — Missing countervoice: No trade union representative, no social welfare association, no nature conservation representative as a counterweight.

##### Expert 3: Kerstin Münstermann (journalist)

###### Timestamp

throughout — Statement: Analyses coalition dynamics, AfD espionage affair. — Classification: Journalistic-analytical, tends to be critical of the government. — Missing countervoice: No alternative journalistic perspective (e.g. economically liberal or left-wing).

##### Expert 4: Rieke Havertz (journalist)

###### Timestamp

08:00-17:00 — Statement: Explains Trump trial, US justice system. — Classification: Factual-informative, US expertise. — Missing countervoice: No conservative US perspective that takes Trump's arguments seriously.

Missing expert groups: Housing market researchers, construction industry representatives, trade unionists, tenants' association, nature conservation association, FDP politicians, AfD politicians, Greens politicians, CDU politicians.

*Summary: The guest selection is structurally unbalanced. An SPD minister faces an economically liberal-arguing mayor, supplemented by two female journalists. Countervoices from trade unions, social welfare associations, nature conservation and the unrepresented parties are systematically absent. The constellation creates a*



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*consensus corridor between "government defends itself" and "pragmatic critic demands more market and less bureaucracy".*



## 2. SOURCE SELECTION

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Claims without primary source = penalty points (rumour check)

**Source 1:** Timestamp: 33:00 — Source: "IFW, the Kiel Institute for the World Economy" — Classification: Economically liberal research institute. — Missing counter-source: DIW Berlin (more employee-oriented) or Hans Böckler Foundation.

**Source 2:** Timestamp: 34:00 — Source: "London economist Christian Dustmann" — Classification: Renowned migration economist, study on income inequality taking housing costs into account. — Missing counter-source: No counter-source, but the study is used correctly and relevantly.

**Source 3:** Timestamp: 34:00 — Source: "Colleagues at the FAZ" on vacancy rates — Classification: Reputable source, economically liberal. — Missing counter-source: Tenants' association data or Pestel Institute studies that place greater emphasis on the perspective of those affected.

**Source 4:** Timestamp: 28:00 — Source: Palmer's anecdote about a baker whose employees quit because of citizen's income — Classification: Anecdotal evidence, not verifiable. — Missing counter-source: IAB studies on citizen's income showing that the majority of recipients are not capable of working or are not available to the labour market.

*Summary: The source selection is one-sidedly economically liberal (IFW, FAZ). Employee-oriented sources (DGB, Hans Böckler Foundation, IAB) are absent. Anecdotal evidence (triathlete, baker) is treated as representative without being supported by data.*



<b>3. TIME DISTRIBUTION</b>									<b>5/10</b>
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Estimated speaking time (based on text shares):

- Klara Geywitz (SPD): (22%) — predominantly in a defensive position
- Boris Palmer: (26%) — predominantly in an attacking/shaping position
- Kerstin Münstermann: (15%) — analytical, coalition/AfD
- Rieke Havertz: (17%) — Trump block, USA
- Markus Lanz: (20%) — questions, interjections, own positioning

*Summary: Palmer receives the most speaking time and can present his positions in detail and largely undisturbed. Geywitz also has a lot of speaking time, but spends it predominantly on the defensive. The time distribution is not dramatically unequal, but the qualitative use of time (attack vs. defence) creates an asymmetry in favour of Palmer's position.*



#### 4. OMISSION (Selective Omission)

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**Omission 1:** Context: In the discussion about retirement at 63, the information that the majority of users of this regulation come from physically demanding occupations (construction, care, trades) and that the average life expectancy in these occupations is significantly lower is completely absent. — Relevant at: 26:00-30:00 — Effect: Retirement at 63 is portrayed exclusively as a luxury problem for healthy triathletes, not as a social policy necessity for worn-out workers.

**Omission 2:** Context: In the citizen's income discussion, information about the actual level of citizen's income (563 euros for single persons) and the question of whether this level actually represents a work incentive problem or whether low wages are the real problem is absent. — Relevant at: 28:00 — Effect: Palmer's anecdote about a baker whose employees quit because "citizen's income is just as good" remains unchallenged and uncontextualised.

**Omission 3:** Context: In the housing construction discussion, the role of the privatisation of public housing stock (e.g. sale of GSW in Berlin, LEG in NRW) as a key cause of the decline in social housing is absent. — Relevant at: 35:00-38:00 — Effect: The causal analysis remains superficial; the political responsibility for the privatisation wave of the 2000s is not addressed.

**Omission 4:** Context: In the AfD espionage affair, the contextualisation that the influence of foreign intelligence services has also been documented in other parties and institutions (e.g. Schröder/Gazprom, Wirecard/Marsalek is only briefly mentioned) is absent. — Relevant at: 03:00-07:00 — Effect: The espionage problem is framed one-sidedly as an AfD problem.

*Summary: Essential contextual information is systematically omitted, particularly on the topics of retirement at 63, citizen's income and the causes of the housing construction crisis. The omissions consistently favour an economically liberal reading and weaken the social policy counter-position.*

#### Missing voices

- AfD representative (e.g. parliamentary group spokesperson for domestic policy): Could have contextualised the espionage allegations from the party's perspective and authentically represented the presumption of innocence.
- FDP representative (e.g. construction/economic policy politician): Could have substantiated the 12-point paper and defended it against Geywitz's dismissal.
- Trade union representative (e.g. DGB or IG BAU): Could have brought in the employee perspective on retirement at 63, citizen's income and construction worker conditions.
- Tenants' association representative: Could have presented the perspective of those affected by the housing crisis systematically and not merely anecdotally.
- Nature conservation association (e.g. NABU/BUND): Could have explained the rationale of species protection law and argued against the one-sided portrayal as bureaucratic absurdity.
- Housing market researcher (e.g. DIW, IW Cologne, Pestel Institute): Could have provided empirically grounded information on demand, vacancies and price trends.



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- Representative of the construction industry (e.g. German Construction Industry Federation): Could have brought in the entrepreneurial perspective on construction costs, skilled labour shortages and investment barriers.
- Greens representative (e.g. construction policy spokesperson): Could have presented the coalition perspective of the Greens and the conflict of objectives between nature conservation and construction from a Greens perspective.



## 5. MANIPULATION OF FIGURES

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Complete figures include: absolute value, share (%) and trend

**Finding 1:** Timestamp: 28:00 — Figure: Palmer: "9 billion euros is what this fun costs us. 250,000 skilled workers who are simply gone every year." — Missing context: These figures are neither verified nor contextualised. The 9 billion refers to the total costs of the penalty-free pension after 45 years of contributions, but it is not mentioned that these people have paid contributions for 45 years and have acquired a legal entitlement. The 250,000 is a gross figure; how many of them would actually continue working is unclear. — Effect: The figures act as outrage amplifiers and remain unexamined.

**Finding 2:** Timestamp: 33:00 — Figure: Lanz: "An apartment in a German city today costs almost three times as much as in the year 2000." — Missing context: Refers to purchase prices (IFW Kiel). Income development over the same period is not compared. The interest rate trend (2000 vs. 2024) is also absent, which would put financing costs in perspective. — Effect: The figure creates maximum drama without contextualisation.

**Finding 3:** Timestamp: 37:00 — Figure: Palmer: "100 versus 1,500" (vacant apartments vs. waiting list) — Missing context: Refers only to the municipal housing company in Tübingen, not to the entire housing market. How many apartments in total in Tübingen become available each year (including private ones) is not mentioned. — Effect: The figure suggests a 15-year waiting time, which is not accurate as a blanket statement.

*Summary: Several figures are presented without sufficient context and serve primarily to dramatise. Neither Lanz nor the journalists contextualise or critically question the figures.*



## 6. GUILT BY ASSOCIATION

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**Association 1:** Timestamp: 00:15 — Quote: "The agents at the AfD" — Technique: The entire AfD is associated with espionage activity through the wording, not just individual persons. — Effect: Generalisation of individual suspicion to the entire party.

**Association 2:** Timestamp: 04:30 — Quote: Münstermann: "In their environment one finds that foreign powers are obviously at work." — Technique: "Obviously" suggests proven fact, "foreign powers" creates a threat scenario. — Effect: The AfD is framed as an instrument of foreign powers before evidence is available.

**Association 3:** Timestamp: 05:30 — Quote: Münstermann: "Russia wasn't so bad yet. But China, that is now a new power again." — Technique: Accumulation of threats (first Russia, now also China) creates the impression of systematic infiltration. — Effect: The AfD appears as a magnet for foreign influence.

*Summary: The AfD is framed as a security risk through cumulative associations (Russia, China, agents, foreign powers). The presumption of innocence is verbally mentioned, but factually undermined by the overall portrayal. Without an AfD representative, this portrayal remains unchallenged.*



## 7. TIMING

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**Finding 1:** Position: 00:00-02:00 — Content: Opening with "agents at the AfD", "sabotage plans of the FDP", housing crisis as a catastrophe — Timing effect: The primacy effect sets the entire programme under a crisis and failure narrative. Viewers are put into a state of alarm from the very beginning.

**Finding 2:** Position: 26:00-32:00 — Content: Palmer monologue on retirement at 63, citizen's income, skilled labour shortage — Timing effect: This block comes directly after the coalition discussion and exploits the built-up frustration about the traffic-light coalition. Palmer's economically liberal criticism appears as the logical consequence of the coalition failure portrayed beforehand.

**Finding 3:** Position: 42:00-end — Content: Nightjar story as closing punchline — Timing effect: The recency effect ensures that viewers leave the programme with the image of absurd bureaucracy. The story is entertaining and memorable, but it reduces the complex topic of species protection to an absurdity.

*Summary: The timing of the programme is structured so that crisis framing comes at the beginning and bureaucratic absurdity at the end. Geywitz's constructive solution approaches (amendment to the Building Code, land swap) are placed in the middle, where they receive less attention.*



## 8. SELECTIVE OUTRAGE

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*Outrage = bias. Selective outrage reinforces the finding. Score = degree of outrage (0–5) + selectivity (0–5)*

**Finding 1:** Timestamp: 28:00 — Reaction: Palmer is outraged about retirement at 63 ("9 billion euros is what this fun costs us"), Lanz supports with triathlon anecdote. — Comparable without outrage: The privatisation of public housing stock (billions in losses for the public sector) is not treated with comparable outrage. Tax avoidance by real estate companies (share deals etc.) is also not addressed. — Asymmetry: Outrage is directed against social benefits for employees, not against structural privileges.

**Finding 2:** Timestamp: 42:00-end — Reaction: Great outrage about species protection bureaucracy (nightjar). — Comparable without outrage: The fact that Germany has suffered massive species loss in recent decades and that species protection also serves to protect ecosystem services is not mentioned. — Asymmetry: Nature conservation is portrayed as absurd without the ecological crisis serving as context.

*Summary: The outrage in the programme is directed selectively against social benefits and nature conservation bureaucracy, while structural causes of the housing crisis (privatisation, speculation, tax privileges) do not trigger a comparable emotional reaction.*



9. COMPLETENESS							7/10		
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The programme is thematically broad and links foreign policy threats (espionage, Trump trial) with domestic structural problems (housing construction, coalition dispute, bureaucracy). The implicit worldview is: Germany is under pressure — from outside through influence agents and geopolitical shifts, from within through a quarrelsome government, a housing crisis and a rigid bureaucracy. The programme suggests pressure to act and need for reform, with the perspective predominantly formulated from the centre of the political spectrum. The AfD is framed primarily as a security risk, the FDP as a disruptive factor in the coalition, the SPD as a defender of the status quo.

#### Share of perspectives covered

*Inverted: Original value measures coverage (higher = better). Displayed as deviation (higher = larger gaps).*

**[A] AfD perspective:** Own representation of the espionage allegations, presumption of innocence, counter-arguments

**[B] FDP perspective:** Justification of the 12-point paper from the party's perspective

**[C] Greens perspective:** Role in the coalition, own housing construction policy, nature conservation trade-off

**[D] CDU/CSU perspective:** Opposition criticism of housing construction policy, own proposed solutions

**[E] Tenants' associations/social welfare associations:** Perspective of those affected by the housing crisis

**[F] Real estate industry/construction industry:** Entrepreneurial view on construction costs, regulation, investment barriers

**[G] Nature conservation associations:** Justification of strict species protection regulations

**[H] Trade union perspective:** Employee interests regarding pension, citizen's income, skilled labour shortage

**[I] Academic housing market research:** Empirical data on demand, vacancies, price trends

**[J] Municipal umbrella associations (Association of German Cities, Association of Rural Districts):**

Systematic municipal perspective beyond a single mayor

**[A] AfD perspective: INDICATED**

Timestamp: 03:45 — Quote: "He denies it to this day." / "Of course these are only suspicions for now." —

Assessment: The presumption of innocence is briefly mentioned, but no AfD representative is invited; the perspective is conveyed exclusively through journalists and immediately relativised.

**[B] FDP perspective: INDICATED**

Timestamp: 18:30ff — Quote: Münstermann summarises the 12 points, Palmer supports them substantively. —

Assessment: No FDP representative present; the FDP position is dismissed as irrelevant by Geywitz and partially defended by Palmer, but not authentically represented.

**[C] Greens perspective: OMITTED**

Timestamp: — — Quote: — — Assessment: The Greens are only mentioned in passing as a coalition partner; their own housing construction policy or nature conservation position is not presented.

**[D] CDU/CSU perspective: INDICATED**

Timestamp: 21:00 — Quote: "The Union itself has a seven-point plan and five of these seven points coincide with the twelve points of the FDP." — Assessment: Only mentioned as a footnote, no Union representative present, no substantive engagement.

**[E] Tenants' associations/social welfare associations: OMITTED**

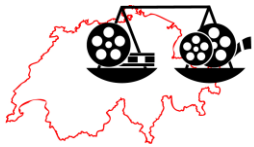
Timestamp: — — Quote: — — Assessment: Despite the focus on the housing crisis, no representative of the tenants' association, the Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband or similar is invited. The perspective of those affected is conveyed only anecdotally through Palmer.

**[F] Real estate industry/construction industry: INDICATED**

Timestamp: 38:00ff — Quote: Geywitz mentions Viehbrockhaus, Palmer talks about construction costs. —

Assessment: No industry representative present; the perspective is only brought in indirectly and fragmentarily.

**[G] Nature conservation associations: OMITTED**



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Timestamp: — — Quote: — — Assessment: Species protection is portrayed exclusively as an absurd bureaucratic obstacle (nightjar story). No conservationist is given the floor to explain the rationale of species protection law.

**[H] Trade union perspective: OMITTED**

Timestamp: — — Quote: — — Assessment: On the topics of retirement at 63, citizen's income and skilled labour shortage, the employee perspective is completely absent. Trade union arguments (health burden, working life, wage level) are not brought in.

**[I] Academic housing market research: INDICATED**

Timestamp: 33:00 — Quote: Lanz cites IFW Kiel, Christian Dustmann. — Assessment: Lanz introduces individual study findings, but no housing market researcher is present who could provide systematic contextualisation.

**[J] Municipal umbrella associations: INDICATED**

Timestamp: 40:00 — Quote: "The president of the Association of German Cities, Markus Lewe, rightly said we are no longer at alert level red, we are at alert level purple." — Assessment: Only introduced as a quote, no systematic municipal perspective.

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**Completeness score: 3/10**

Justification: Of ten relevant perspectives, only three are addressed to any degree (FDP, CDU, science); seven are entirely absent or mentioned only in passing. Particularly serious is the absence of those affected (tenants, social welfare associations), employee representatives (trade unions), nature conservation representatives and an authentic FDP or AfD representative. The guest selection creates a structural imbalance: an SPD minister defends the government, a pragmatic mayor criticises bureaucracy, two female journalists moderate analytically — but the counterweights are missing.



## Soft facts — 6 qualitative techniques

### 10. FRAMING (setting the frame)

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**Finding 1:** Timestamp: 00:15 — Quote: "The agents at the AfD or the sabotage plans of the FDP?" — Manipulation: Double negative framing in the opening. The AfD is framed with "agents" (guilt is anticipated, although these are suspicions), the FDP with "sabotage plans" (a legitimate party paper is framed as a destructive act). — Why problematic: Both framings set a negative evaluation before any substantive discussion. "Agents" implies proven guilt, "sabotage plans" delegitimises political positioning.

**Finding 2:** Timestamp: 00:45 — Quote: "While experts are predicting domino effects, fearing that the housing crisis will drag the entire economy into the abyss, torpedo educational opportunities, endanger social cohesion, she says, I believe we have passed the lowest point." — Manipulation: Contrast framing. The minister is positioned as naively optimistic against a chorus of anonymous "experts" predicting apocalyptic outcomes. — Why problematic: The juxtaposition of "experts vs. minister" suggests that the minister is at odds with the expert consensus, without the experts being named or their statements contextualised.

**Finding 3:** Timestamp: 01:30 — Quote: "If firefighters, if nurses, if police officers are supposed to work in expensive cities, but on the other hand we can no longer offer them housing [...] then a city will eventually fall apart." — Manipulation: Emotional framing through enumeration of sympathetic professions. — Why problematic: Rhetorically effective, but one-sided. A catastrophe scenario is constructed that puts the minister under pressure to justify herself before she has even had a chance to speak.

*Summary: The programme is opened from the outset in a crisis and failure frame. The AfD is framed as a security risk, the FDP as a saboteur, the Minister of Construction as out of touch with reality. This framing runs through the entire programme and leaves little room for nuanced consideration.*



## 11. CHOICE OF WORDS AND TERMS

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**Finding 1:** Timestamp: 00:15 — Quote: "Sabotage plans of the FDP" — Manipulation: The word "sabotage" implies deliberate destruction. A position paper of a coalition partner is thereby framed as a hostile act. — Why problematic: Delegitimises intra-coalition opinion formation and suggests the FDP is acting against the common good.

**Finding 2:** Timestamp: 00:15 — Quote: "Agents at the AfD" — Manipulation: "Agents" instead of "suspects" or "alleged spies". — Why problematic: Prejudgement. At the time of the broadcast, these are suspicions and investigations, not proven espionage activity.

**Finding 3:** Timestamp: 01:50 — Quote: "the story of the nightjar very bizarre" — Manipulation: Through "bizarre", a serious topic (species protection vs. infrastructure) is pre-framed as ridiculous. — Why problematic: Strips the species protection argument of its seriousness before it is even discussed.

**Finding 4:** Timestamp: 20:00 — Quote: Münstermann: "broken relationship" (about the traffic-light coalition) — Manipulation: Relationship metaphor personalises and emotionalises political differences. — Why problematic: Diverts from substantive differences and creates a narrative of personal failure.

*Summary: The choice of words is evaluative and prejudging in several places. In particular, the opening sets strong negative markers with "agents" and "sabotage plans" that narrow the framework for discussion.*



## 12. MODERATION BEHAVIOUR

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*Lanz is known for provocative follow-up questions — please analyse asymmetric challenging.*

**Finding 1:** Timestamp: 22:00 — Quote (Lanz): "Ms Gaiwitz, it's just a feeling, but could it be that you don't take the FDP seriously at all?" — Analysis: Lanz confronts Geywitz with her attitude towards the FDP paper. The question is provocative but justified. However, a comparably hard follow-up question to Palmer is absent when he blanket-claims that "ten out of twelve" FDP points are correct — without Lanz asking about the problematic aspects.

**Finding 2:** Timestamp: 33:00-34:00 — Quote (Lanz): "You say it will get cheaper. The impression arises that actually everything isn't so bad at all." — Analysis: Lanz imputes a trivialisation to Geywitz that she did not express in that way. She had differentiated between purchase and rental prices. Lanz simplifies her statement to make it attackable. Geywitz corrects: "No, I didn't say that."

**Finding 3:** Timestamp: 30:00 — Quote (Lanz): "I recently saw someone in an interview who said, when asked why they were retiring at 63 [...] they wanted a bit more time for triathlon preparation." — Analysis: Lanz introduces an anecdote that supports Palmer's position and undermines Geywitz's defence of retirement at 63. He does not introduce a counter-anecdote (e.g. a construction worker with a bad back).

**Finding 4:** Timestamp: 26:00-32:00 — Analysis: Throughout the entire pension/citizen's income/skilled labour shortage block, Lanz acts as a co-arguer for Palmer against Geywitz. He does not ask Palmer a single critical follow-up question, while he interrupts Geywitz several times and questions her arguments.

**Finding 5:** Timestamp: 36:00 — Quote (Lanz): "And I have a problem with it when we act as if everything is fine. Nothing is fine." — Analysis: Lanz openly positions himself as a critic of the government's position. This is problematic as a moderator, because he thereby dictates the direction of the conversation instead of moderating it.

*Summary: Lanz moderates asymmetrically. Geywitz is confronted significantly more harshly and more frequently than Palmer. Palmer receives support through Lanz's own interjections and anecdotes. The moderation reinforces the economically liberal-pragmatic position and weakens the social policy counter-position.*



### 13. QUESTION ASYMMETRY

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**Asymmetry 1:** To Geywitz, 22:00: "Could it be that you don't take the FDP seriously at all?" [hard, provocative] — To Palmer, 26:00: "Could you describe the situation in your city." [soft, inviting, open stage]

**Asymmetry 2:** To Geywitz, 33:00: "The impression arises that actually everything isn't so bad at all." [insinuating] — To Palmer, 28:00: "Do you have the people for it?" [factual, constructive]

**Asymmetry 3:** To Geywitz, 31:00: "What is your answer, Ms Geywitz, to the skilled labour shortage?" [demanding, after Palmer's criticism] — To Palmer: No comparable demand for concrete solutions beyond "more money" and "less bureaucracy".

**Asymmetry 4:** To Geywitz, 35:00: "Can we agree on the formula that we perhaps have an even bigger problem?" [pressing, repetitive] — To Palmer: No follow-up question as to whether his demand for 100 billion in special funds is realistic or financially viable.

*Summary: The question asymmetry is clear. Geywitz is confronted with insinuating, pressing and provocative questions, while Palmer receives inviting, open questions that allow him to freely develop his narratives. Lanz does not ask Palmer a single genuinely critical question.*



#### 14. FALSE BALANCE

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**Finding 1:** On the topic of retirement at 63, Palmer's anecdotal evidence (triathlete, world travellers) is placed on an equal footing with Geywitz's reference to overall statistics. Empirical research shows that the majority of users of the penalty-free pension after 45 years of contributions come from physically demanding occupations — this perspective is completely absent. Instead, the impression is created that retirement at 63 is primarily a luxury privilege.

**Finding 2:** On the topic of citizen's income, Palmer's baker anecdote is treated as equivalent to the overall data situation. IAB research shows that the majority of citizen's income recipients are not available to the labour market (illness, care, children). This contextualisation is absent.

*Summary: There is no classic false balance (equal weighting of mainstream and fringe positions), but rather an inverse form: anecdotal evidence is treated as equivalent to or even more strongly than empirical data, which creates a distorted perception.*



## 15. AGENDA-SETTING

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**Finding 1:** Agenda element set: The FDP's 12 points are framed as "sabotage plans" and then substantively rehabilitated by Palmer. — Timestamp: 00:15, then 26:00ff — Evidence: Lanz: "Sabotage plans of the FDP" → Palmer: "Ten of the twelve I personally consider correct." — Alternative: One could have introduced the 12 points neutrally as a position paper and then discussed them controversially, with representatives of both sides.

**Finding 2:** Agenda element set: The housing crisis is framed primarily as a bureaucracy and regulation problem, not as a distribution or speculation problem. — Timestamp: 38:00-end — Evidence: The nightjar story dominates the last programme block. — Alternative: One could also have discussed land speculation, share deals, rent control, the expropriation debate or the role of institutional investors.

**Finding 3:** Agenda element set: The AfD espionage affair is set as the opening topic and creates the frame "threat from outside and within". — Timestamp: 00:15-07:00 — Evidence: "The agents at the AfD" — Alternative: One could have broadened the topic of influence (also lobbying, revolving door effects, Schröder/Gazprom).

*Summary: The agenda-setting of the programme privileges an economically liberal-pragmatic perspective on the housing crisis (bureaucracy, regulation) and marginalises distributive policy perspectives (speculation, privatisation, tenancy law). The AfD is set as a security risk without addressing the broader influence problem.*



## CHAPTER 2 — OVERALL EVALUATION

### Results

#### Dominant techniques

- 1. Expert selection (score 7):** The guest selection creates a structural imbalance. Without trade unionists, social welfare associations, conservationists or FDP representatives, the countervoices to the dominant narratives of the programme are systematically absent. The constellation SPD minister vs. economically liberal mayor creates a false consensus corridor.
- 2. Omission / Selective Omission (score 7):** Essential contextual information is systematically omitted — the social reality of retirement-at-63 users, the actual structure of citizen's income recipients, the privatisation history of social housing. These omissions consistently favour an economically liberal reading.
- 3. Question asymmetry (score 7):** Lanz treats Geywitz and Palmer fundamentally differently. The minister is confronted with insinuating, pressing questions, while the mayor receives open stages and supportive interjections. This asymmetry is particularly effective because it is subtle and appears as "critical journalism" towards the government.
  - Slight tendency (3-4) — on the border of clear one-sidedness

Justification: The programme shows a clear tendency arising from the combination of one-sided guest selection, asymmetric moderation behaviour and systematic omissions. The combined score of 4.5 is in the upper range of "slight tendency" and on the border of "clear one-sidedness". The programme is not propagandistic, but through structural decisions (who sits there, who does not; which questions are asked, which are not; which context is provided, which is not) it creates an economically liberal-pragmatic bias that systematically underrepresents social policy and ecological perspectives. §26 MStV requires that the "significant political, ideological and social forces and groups" are given adequate voice — this is only partially the case in this programme.

#### CONCLUSION

The programme from April 2024 shows a structural imbalance that arises less from individual manipulative statements than from the overall architecture: guest selection, questioning, contextual omissions and timing together create a narrative in which the housing crisis appears primarily as a bureaucracy and regulation problem, while distributive policy causes (privatisation, speculation, low wages) are marginalised. The Federal Minister of Construction is treated asymmetrically more harshly than the mayor, whose economically liberal positions are supported by Lanz's own interjections. Measured against the ZDF's public service mandate (§5 ZDF State Treaty) and the diversity requirement of §26 MStV, the programme is not balanced: essential societal perspectives (trade unions, tenants' associations, nature conservation, affected parties) are completely absent. The programme partially fulfils its information mandate, but falls short of the requirement for diversity of opinion to a degree that is problematic for a public broadcaster talk show.



## CHAPTER 3 — PARTY POLITICAL BIAS

Party	Score (-5..+5)	Concrete evidence
CDU/CSU	+1	21:00 Münstermann mentions 7-point plan favourably as overlap with FDP; no criticism of the Union. The Union implicitly benefits from the traffic-light failure narrative.
SPD	-2	00:45 Geywitz framed as naively optimistic; 22:00 "Don't you take the FDP seriously?"; 33:00 "The impression arises that everything is fine"; 36:00 "Nothing is fine." Geywitz is consistently pushed onto the defensive.
Greens	0	Barely mentioned. 20:30 Münstermann: "With the Greens one is still at the result..." — neutral to slightly negative. No substantive engagement.
FDP	+1	00:15 "Sabotage plans" (negative), but then substantive rehabilitation by Palmer (28:00: "Ten out of twelve I consider correct") and Lanz's supportive follow-up questions. Net slightly positive, because the FDP content is presented as reasonable.
AfD	-3	00:15 "Agents at the AfD"; 03:00-07:00 entire espionage block; no AfD representative; presumption of innocence only verbal; cumulative associations with Russia and China.
BSW	0	Not mentioned.
Linke	0	Not mentioned.
Freie Wähler	0	Not mentioned.

### Party bias summary

- Most favoured: CDU/CSU (score +1) and FDP (score +1) — The CDU passively benefits from the traffic-light failure narrative, the FDP is substantively rehabilitated by Palmer.
- Most disadvantaged: AfD (score -3) — The AfD is framed as a security risk without its own representation, with cumulative associations with foreign intelligence services.
- Conclusion: The SPD is treated with expected criticism as the governing party, but the asymmetry in moderation goes beyond normal criticism of the government. The AfD is most strongly disadvantaged, which is partly understandable given the seriousness of the allegations, but without its own representation undermines the presumption of innocence. The FDP, despite the opening framing "sabotage plans", is treated well substantively, because Palmer represents its positions and Lanz does not question them. Overall, the programme favours economically liberal and conservative positions.



## CHAPTER 4 — LEGAL CLASSIFICATION (§26 MStV / ZDF State Treaty)

### Assessment under §26 MStV

Violation 1: Insufficient diversity of opinion in guest selection

Norm: §26 para. 1 MStV in conjunction with §5 para. 1 ZDF State Treaty — Facts: The programme addresses three controversial topics (AfD espionage, coalition dispute/economic policy, housing crisis) without essential societal groups being represented. Neither trade unions, nor social welfare associations, nor nature conservation organisations, nor the affected parties (AfD, FDP, Greens, CDU) are given a voice. — Evidence: Entire programme; in particular 26:00-32:00 (pension/citizen's income without trade union perspective), 42:00-end (species protection without nature conservation perspective). — Assessment: §26 para. 1 MStV requires that opinion-forming content "reflects the diversity of existing opinions". For an individual programme, this does not necessarily have to be fully achieved, but the systematic absence of entire perspective groups while simultaneously treating topics in depth is problematic. Within the framework of the overall programme (internal pluralism), it would need to be examined whether these perspectives are covered in other timely programmes.

Violation 2: Asymmetric moderation behaviour

Norm: §5 para. 1 ZDF State Treaty (objectivity and impartiality) — Facts: The moderator systematically treats the SPD minister more harshly than the economically liberal-arguing mayor. He acts at times as a co-arguer for one side. — Evidence: 28:00 triathlon anecdote as support for Palmer; 33:00 "The impression arises that everything is fine" (imputation to Geywitz); 36:00 "Nothing is fine" (own positioning). — Assessment: Critical follow-up questions to government representatives are journalistically required. The asymmetry becomes problematic, however, when the moderator systematically supports one side and systematically attacks the other, without a counterweight existing in the guest panel.

Violation 3: Prejudgement in the AfD espionage affair

Norm: §6 para. 1 ZDF State Treaty (respect for human dignity, personal rights) in conjunction with presumption of innocence — Facts: The opening speaks of "agents at the AfD", although these are suspicions. The presumption of innocence is verbally mentioned, but factually undermined by the overall portrayal. — Evidence: 00:15 "Agents at the AfD"; 04:30 "foreign powers are obviously at work". — Assessment: The formulation "agents" instead of "suspects" or "alleged spies" is journalistically sloppy and could be regarded as prejudgement. In a talk show this is less serious than in a news programme, but for public broadcasting it is nonetheless problematic.

### Overall assessment §26 MStV

The programme shows deficits in the implementation of the diversity requirement under §26 MStV and the objectivity requirement under §5 ZDF State Treaty. The guest selection is structurally one-sided, the moderation behaviour asymmetric, and essential perspectives are systematically absent. A clear, justiciable violation of §26 MStV does not exist for an individual programme under prevailing legal opinion, since the diversity requirement in public broadcasting is to be fulfilled as internal pluralism across the overall programme, not in every individual programme. However, the accumulation of deficits (one-sided guest selection + asymmetric moderation + systematic omissions + prejudging choice of words) is capable of damaging trust in the impartiality of public broadcasting. The ZDF Television Council as the responsible supervisory body would be entitled to address the programme within the framework of its programme monitoring and to work towards a more balanced design of future programmes on this thematic complex.



## OVERALL EVALUATION OF THE 15 CRITERIA

### Individual scores — All 15 criteria

No.	Criterion	Score	Classification
1	EXPERT SELECTION	7	●●●●
2	SOURCE SELECTION	5	●●●
3	TIME DISTRIBUTION	5	●●●
4	OMISSION (Selective Omission)	7	●●●●
5	MANIPULATION OF FIGURES	4	●●
6	GUILT BY ASSOCIATION	4	●●
7	TIMING	4	●●
8	SELECTIVE OUTRAGE	6	●●●
9	COMPLETENESS	7	●●●●
10	FRAMING (setting the frame)	6	●●●
11	CHOICE OF WORDS AND TERMS	5	●●●
12	MODERATION BEHAVIOUR	6	●●●
13	QUESTION ASYMMETRY	7	●●●●
14	FALSE BALANCE	3	●●
15	AGENDA-SETTING	6	●●●

#### HARD FACTS SCORE (1-8)

**5.4/10**

*Considerable bias*

#### SOFT FACTS SCORE (9-14)

**5.5/10**

*Considerable bias*

#### OVERALL SCORE

**5.5/10**

*Considerable bias*

*Averaged from hard facts and soft facts*



## KEY — Meaning of the scores

### Individual scores per criterion (0–10)

<b>0</b>	<b>No finding</b>	No relevant anomaly identified.
<b>1–2</b>	<b>Weak finding</b>	Slight anomaly without material impairment of balance.
<b>3–4</b>	<b>Slight to moderate finding</b>	Discernible tendency; relevance of effect low to moderate.
<b>5</b>	<b>Moderate finding with relevance of effect</b>	Relevant imbalance that influences the opinion-forming potential of the audience.
<b>6</b>	<b>Considerable finding (threshold)</b>	Scores from 6 onwards are reported as "considerable findings".
<b>7</b>	<b>Considerable finding</b>	Clear, well-evidenced imbalance with clear relevance of effect.
<b>8–9</b>	<b>Serious finding</b>	Pronounced imbalance; several evidenced individual findings in this criterion.
<b>10</b>	<b>Maximum expression</b>	Systematic, pervasive imbalance in this criterion.

### Aggregated deviation index — interpretation ranges

<b>0.0 – 2.5</b>	<b>Unremarkable</b>	No material patterns discernible; programme meets the requirement of factual accuracy.
<b>2.6 – 4.0</b>	<b>Slight bias</b>	Isolated anomalies; statistically visible, but still within the tolerance range.
<b>4.1 – 6.0</b>	<b>Considerable bias</b>	Several considerable findings; relevant impairment of diversity of perspectives.
<b>6.1 – 8.0</b>	<b>Serious deviation from the requirement of balance. High degree of deviation</b>	Pronounced, programme-spanning patterns; high relevance of effect.
<b>8.1 – 10</b>	<b>Fundamental systemic one-sidedness. Very high degree of bias</b>	Maximum expression across almost all criteria; systematically one-sided reporting.

### Party political bias (-5 to +5)

<b>-5 to -3</b>	<b>Strongly disadvantaged</b>	Party is clearly treated worse in portrayal, speaking time or framing.
<b>-2 to -1</b>	<b>Slightly disadvantaged</b>	Discernible, but weak disadvantage.
<b>0</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	No discernible favouring or disadvantaging.
<b>+1 to +2</b>	<b>Slightly favoured</b>	Discernible, but weak favouring.
<b>+3 to +5</b>	<b>Strongly favoured</b>	Party is clearly favoured in portrayal, speaking time or framing.



## Legal and methodological classification

<b>No finding of fact</b>	The results presented do not constitute findings of fact about individual persons, editorial teams or programmes. They are to be understood as the result of a standardised operationalisation, not as a determination of individual responsibility.
<b>No legal ruling</b>	The aggregated deviation index does not replace a legal assessment within the meaning of §26 MStV. The determination of whether a specific programme violates statutory requirements is the exclusive responsibility of the competent authorities (in particular media authorities).
<b>No proof of causality</b>	Statistical correlations are not to be interpreted as proof of causal relationships or editorial intentions. Deviation values may be influenced by topic selection, news situation, political controversy or format logic.
<b>No judgement of intent</b>	The analysis measures observable structural characteristics of programmes. A score of 7 means that a considerable imbalance has been identified — not that the editorial team intended this. The methodology makes no statements about motives or strategic objectives.
<b>Heuristic comparison instrument</b>	The index serves for comparative pattern recognition across thousands of programmes, not for the precise metric measurement of individual items. Threshold values serve as heuristic orientation, not as sharp legal qualification.



## APPENDIX: STATE LEGISLATION

### Legal basis Germany — ARD, ZDF

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#### Law

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Media State Treaty (MStV, 2020)

#### Relevant articles

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- §26 para. 1 MStV: Public broadcasting institutions shall provide in their content a comprehensive overview of international, European, national and regional events in all essential areas of life. They shall thereby promote international understanding, European integration and social cohesion in the federal government and the states. Their content shall serve education, information, advice and entertainment. They shall offer contributions in particular to culture. Entertainment shall correspond to a public broadcasting content profile.
- §5 para. 1 ZDF State Treaty: Obligation to objectivity and impartiality of reporting, consideration of diversity of opinion.
- ARD State Treaty: Public service mandate with objectivity and impartiality.

#### Core obligations

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- 1. Diversity of opinion (internal pluralism):** All relevant perspectives must be represented in the overall programme
- 2. Factual accuracy and balance:** Moderators must treat guests to the same standards
- 3. Contribution to opinion formation:** The audience must receive sufficient information for independent opinion formation

#### Supervisory authority

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- Broadcasting councils of the state broadcasting institutions: Supervision of ARD institutions (BR, WDR, NDR, etc.)
- ZDF Television Council (§19 ZDF State Treaty): Supervision of ZDF programme
- Legal supervision: Respective federal state (ZDF: Rhineland-Palatinate)

#### Complaints procedure

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1. Programme complaint to the responsible broadcasting council or ZDF Television Council
2. Administrative court action



## APPENDIX 2: SCIENTIFIC FOUNDATIONS

### Literature

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This analysis lays the system bare — factually, precisely, without polemic. Procedures, personnel, powers, costs, statistics, legal recourse. And the constitutional law review that shows: the IGAC system meets none of the three fundamental criteria — it is not appropriate, not based on separation of powers, not market-oriented. The authority that is supposed to protect citizens primarily protects the system it was supposed to control.

Essential reading for everyone considering a complaint — and for everyone who wants to understand why genuine media regulation in Switzerland is still outstanding.