



EN DETAILED ANALYSIS

2024-08-27 Der Talk vom 27. August

Programme: Markus Lanz | 2024-08-27 | Analysed on: 2026-03-12 17:51

Version 2.1-detail | Konverter 3.3 (2026-05-14) | Masstab: §26 MStV

OVERALL SCORE

7.2/10

Serious deviation from the impartiality requirement. High degree of deviation

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 left-favouring, 5 = balanced, 10 = strongly right-favouring). The calculation is based on the difference in the average favouring of left vs. right parties (grouping according to CHES 2024).

TENDENCY (L – R)

6.1 / 10

Right-favouring

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

← Left

Right →

Source: Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2024 — 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: 27.08.2024
- Presenter: Markus Lanz
- Guests:



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Actors	Function	Party/Affiliation	Political spectrum
Jens Spahn	Member of the Bundestag, CDU executive board, former Federal Minister of Health	CDU	Centre-right / conservative
Daniel Thym	International law scholar, University of Konstanz	Independent academic	Liberal-conservative (migration law)
Anne Hähmig	Editor-in-chief Zeit Online, East Germany expert	Journalist (Die Zeit)	Liberal / left-liberal
Ahmad Mansour	Psychologist, extremism researcher, bestselling author	Independent expert	Liberal-conservative (criticism of Islamism)

Main topic

The political, legal and social consequences of the Islamist terrorist attack in Solingen (23.08.2024), with a focus on asylum policy, irregular migration, deportations, Islamism prevention and the functionality of the European asylum system.



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: Jens Spahn (CDU)

Timestamp

Throughout — Statement: Demands border closures, suspension of EU law, safe third countries — Classification: Opposition politician with a clear party-political agenda who uses the programme as a platform for CDU demands — Missing countervoice: No representative of the governing parties who could contextualise or refute the criticism.

Expert 2: Daniel Thym (international law scholar)

Timestamp

Various — Statement: Explains the legal framework, confirms dysfunctionality, but also urges differentiation — Classification: Serious academic who, however, is used primarily in the programme dynamic as a confirmer of the thesis "the system does not work" — Missing countervoice: A constitutional lawyer who emphasises the protective function of asylum law is absent.

Expert 3: Ahmad Mansour (psychologist/extremism researcher)

Timestamp

Various — Statement: Warns of Islamism, social media, lack of integration — Classification: Recognised expert whose perspective, however, is strongly focused on deficits; his position in the migration policy spectrum is rather conservative — Missing countervoice: An Islamic studies scholar or representative of liberal Muslim organisations who would reflect the diversity within Islam.

Expert 4: Anne Hähni (Zeit Online)

Timestamp

Various — Statement: Attempts to differentiate, but is frequently interrupted or passed over — Classification: The only voice that occasionally sets counter-accents (integration successes, CDU co-responsibility), but receives significantly less airtime — Missing countervoice: No missing countervoice to her, but she herself is the only approximately balancing voice.

Missing expert groups: Government representatives, local politicians, human rights advocates, integration researchers, representatives of Muslim communities, security authority practitioners.



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Summary: The guest selection creates a massive imbalance: three out of four guests (Spahn, Mansour, Thym in his programme role) essentially confirm the narrative "the system is broken, drastic measures are needed". Only Hähni occasionally sets counter-accents, but is marginalised. A representative of the government is entirely absent.



2. SOURCE SELECTION

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Claims without primary source = penalty points (rumour check)

Source 1: Timestamp: approx. 05:00 — Source: Saskia Esken on Caren Miosga — Classification: Used as a negative example of the government's position — Missing counter-source: Other, more differentiated statements by government representatives (e.g. Faeser's security package, Scholz's deportation offensive) are not cited.

Source 2: Timestamp: approx. 18:00 — Source: Peter Scholl-Latour quote about Calcutta — Classification: A decades-old, polemical quote is used by Spahn as a quasi-analytical description — Missing counter-source: No contextualisation that this quote is considered simplistic and misleading in migration research.

Source 3: Timestamp: approx. 40:00 — Source: Zeit investigation into the Dresden case (Abdullah Ha) — Classification: Well-researched journalistic source that, however, exclusively illustrates state failure — Missing counter-source: Success stories of de-radicalisation or successful deportations are not drawn upon as counter-examples.

Summary: The source selection is one-sided: negative examples (Esken quote, Dresden case, Scholl-Latour) dominate. Positive counter-examples or differentiating sources are systematically absent.



3. TIME DISTRIBUTION							7/10		
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Estimated speaking time (based on text shares in the transcript):

- Jens Spahn: (35%)
- Ahmad Mansour: (20%)
- Daniel Thym: (15%)
- Anne Hähmig: (10%)
- Markus Lanz: (20%)

Summary: Spahn dominates the programme with an estimated 35% of speaking time. Hähmig, the only voice that occasionally sets counter-accents, receives the smallest share at approx. 10%. The time distribution massively amplifies the substantive imbalance: the CDU position receives more than three times as much airtime as the only approximately balancing voice.



4. OMISSION (Selective Omission)

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Omission 1: Context: The CDU governed for 16 years (2005–2021) and bears considerable co-responsibility for the state of the asylum system, the resourcing of authorities and integration policy. — Relevant at: Throughout, particularly in relation to Spahn's criticism of the coalition — Effect: Spahn can position himself as a critic of a system that his own party substantially shaped, without this responsibility being systematically addressed. Hähnig mentions it briefly once (approx. 22:00: "which, with all due respect, in 2015, 2016 under Chancellor Angela Merkel first gave the impression that migration policy could proceed in a relatively unregulated manner"), but Lanz does not pursue it.

Omission 2: Context: The number of asylum applications in 2024 is significantly declining compared to 2023. — Relevant at: approx. 06:00–08:00, when Spahn speaks of uncontrolled migration — Effect: The impression of a constantly intensifying crisis is maintained, even though the figures show a different trend.

Omission 3: Context: Integration successes — labour market integration of Syrian refugees, skilled worker recruitment, voluntary engagement — Relevant at: Throughout — Effect: Migration is portrayed exclusively as a problem and threat, never as an opportunity or success story. Hähnig's brief interjection (approx. 42:00: "German migration and integration history is also a success story") is not pursued.

Omission 4: Context: The CDU's role in blocking the common European asylum system over the years (e.g. rejection of distribution mechanisms) — Relevant at: approx. 10:00–14:00, when Spahn criticises the EU system — Effect: The CDU appears as a party offering solutions, not as a co-contributor to the problems.

Summary: Contextual information that would relativise the CDU narrative is systematically omitted: the CDU's co-responsibility, declining asylum figures, integration successes and the CDU's blocking role at the European level. This creates a one-sided picture.

Missing voices

- Representative of the federal government (SPD, Greens or FDP): Could have defended the government's perspective and explained measures already taken — instead, the coalition is presented only as a target of criticism.
- Refugee or representative of a migrant organisation: Could have brought in the lived reality of refugees, integration experiences and the fear of blanket suspicion.
- Local politician (mayor, district administrator): Could have described concrete practical experiences of accommodation and integration — both overload and successes.
- Representative of a human rights organisation (Pro Asyl, UNHCR, Amnesty): Could have addressed rule-of-law limits, protection needs and the dangers of populist quick fixes.
- Integration researcher: Could have spoken evidence-based about the successes and failures of integration, rather than anecdotal individual cases.
- Representative of a liberal Muslim organisation: Could have brought in the intra-Muslim perspective on radicalisation and the community's own threat from Islamism.



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- Victim representative or pastoral carer: Could have made the human dimension of the attack visible beyond its political instrumentalisation.
- Security expert (BKA, domestic intelligence, police union): Could have spoken concretely about powers, resource shortages and operational challenges.



5. MANIPULATION OF FIGURES

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

Finding 1: Timestamp: approx. 07:00 — Figure (Spahn): "We are seeing three gang rapes per day." — Missing context: No source cited, no contextualisation of whether this represents a change, no reference to overall crime statistics, no differentiation by perpetrator groups. — Effect: Creates a picture of massive, migration-related crime without any contextualisation.

Finding 2: Timestamp: approx. 17:00 — Figure (Hähmig/Thym): "232,000 people required to leave the country, of whom 40,000 without tolerated stay status, of whom 5,000 were deported in the first quarter." — Missing context: The figures are correctly contextualised (deportations do not solve the problem), but the context of why most have tolerated stay status is missing (obstacles to deportation, illness, missing documents, etc.). — Effect: Suggests that 232,000 people remain in the country "just like that", even though most have legal grounds for their stay.

Finding 3: Timestamp: approx. 18:00 — Figure (Spahn): "By now, five percent of the world's Syrians live in Germany. One percent of the world's Afghans now live in Germany." — Missing context: No contextualisation in comparison to Syria's neighbouring countries (Turkey: approx. 3.5 million, Lebanon: approx. 1.5 million), which have taken in many times more. — Effect: Germany appears disproportionately burdened, even though Syria's neighbouring countries have taken in far more.

Summary: Figures are presented selectively and without sufficient context. Spahn's figures are not challenged by Lanz. Contextualisation by Hähmig and Thym is present at individual points, but not sufficient to correct the overall picture.



6. GUILT BY ASSOCIATION

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Association 1: Timestamp: approx. 05:00 — Quote (Lanz): "Ms Hennig, a statement like the one from Saskia Esken..." — Technique: Lanz uses an Esken quote perceived as naive to discredit the entire SPD/coalition position. — Effect: The government's position is associated with a single, unfortunate statement rather than with the totality of government measures.

Association 2: Timestamp: approx. 07:00 — Quote (Spahn): "Ms Esken, I think that simply explains why the SPD in Saxony, in Thuringia is on its way to below 5%." — Technique: A single statement is used to explain the entire loss of trust in the SPD. — Effect: Simplification and discrediting of the entire government's work via a single statement.

Association 3: Timestamp: approx. 15:00 — Quote (Spahn): "primarily from one cultural sphere" — Technique: Implicit association of an entire cultural region (Arab/Muslim) with security risks. — Effect: Generalisation that is not contextualised.

Summary: Guilt by association is deployed primarily against the coalition government (via the Esken quote) and against migrants from the "Arab-Muslim cultural sphere". Lanz does not moderate these associations critically.



7. TIMING

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Finding 1: Position: 00:00–20:00 — Content: The first half of the programme is dominated almost exclusively by Spahn's CDU positions (border closure, suspending EU law, coalition criticism). — Timing effect: The primacy effect ensures that the CDU perspective sets the frame for the entire programme. Differentiating voices (Hähmig, partly Thym) come only later and must contend with an already established narrative.

Finding 2: Position: approx. 50:00 (close) — Content: Lanz closes with the question about the claim-of-responsibility video and surveillance — Timing effect: The recency effect reinforces the security/threat narrative. The programme does not end with a differentiating assessment, but with an open threat question.

Finding 3: Position: approx. 22:00 — Content: Hähmig's most important counter-accent (CDU co-responsibility, the zeitgeist has long since changed) comes in the middle of the programme — Timing effect: Is overshadowed by Spahn's subsequent rebuttal and Lanz's change of topic.

Summary: The programme structure follows a classic pattern: the CDU narrative is established at the beginning (primacy), differentiating voices come in the middle and are overshadowed, the threat narrative is reinforced at the end (recency).



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: approx. 05:00–07:00 — Reaction: Lanz and Spahn react with clear outrage to Esken's statement "not too much can be learned from this attack" — Comparable without outrage: Spahn's own statement "I have thought long about this sentence" (approx. 30:00, regarding the sentence about the democratic centre) is not challenged, even though it represents an equally problematic simplification. — Asymmetry: Outrage is directed exclusively against the coalition/SPD, never against CDU positions.

Finding 2: Timestamp: approx. 12:00 — Reaction: Spahn expresses outrage about the payment card that has "not been implemented for nine months" — Comparable without outrage: The fact that the CDU failed to build functioning deportation mechanisms over 16 years does not trigger comparable outrage. — Asymmetry: Action deficits of the coalition are scandalised, while historical failures of the CDU are normalised.

Summary: The outrage dynamic of the programme is clearly asymmetric: failures of the coalition government are scandalised, while the CDU's co-responsibility for the state of the system is barely addressed and never treated with comparable outrage.



9. COMPLETENESS

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The programme takes place at a highly charged political moment: a few days after the fatal knife attack in Solingen and a few days before the state elections in Saxony and Thuringia, at which AfD and BSW are expecting high results. Public discourse is characterised by demands for tightening asylum policy, border closures and a fundamental debate about the European asylum system. At the same time, there is a risk that differentiated perspectives — such as the successes of integration, the rights of refugees, the structural causes of radicalisation beyond migration, or the CDU's co-responsibility for the existing situation — will be lost in the emotional debate.

Share of perspectives covered

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

[A] Perspective of the security authorities (police, domestic intelligence): resource shortages, powers, overload

[B] Perspective of refugees/migrants themselves: living conditions, integration experiences, fears

[C] Perspective of municipalities: overload, but also integration achievements on the ground

[D] Perspective of the coalition government (SPD/Greens/FDP): defence of its own policy, measures already taken

[E] Perspective of the victims and those affected by Solingen: grief, demands, experiences

[F] Perspective of liberal Muslims and Muslim communities: distancing, their own threat from Islamism

[G] Perspective of integration research: successes and failures, evidence-based findings

[H] Perspective of other European countries: how do other EU states deal with the problem?

[I] Perspective of human rights organisations / refugee assistance: rule-of-law limits, those in need of protection

[J] Perspective of the East German population ahead of the elections: mood, fears, expectations

[A] Security authorities — INDICATED

Timestamp: approx. 50:00 — Quote: "How can it be that someone sends such a claim-of-responsibility video from here to the Middle East and we don't notice anything." — Assessment: Only raised as a closing question, no representative of the security authorities present, no systematic analysis of powers and resources.

[B] Perspective of refugees — OMITTED

Timestamp: None — Quote: None — Assessment: Not a single refugee or representative of a migrant organisation is given a voice; refugees are treated exclusively as objects of the debate, never as subjects with their own voice.

[C] Perspective of municipalities — INDICATED

Timestamp: approx. 15:00 — Quote (Spahn): "We are already beyond the limit of what is manageable in schools, in nurseries, in cities." — Assessment: Only as an assertion by a CDU politician, no municipal representative present, no differentiated portrayal.

[D] Perspective of the coalition government — OMITTED

Timestamp: Various — Quote (Spahn): "When the Chancellor says he is angry, I find that almost cynical." — Assessment: The coalition government is represented exclusively through criticism by the guests; no representative of the governing parties is invited to defend their own position.

[E] Perspective of the victims — OMITTED

Timestamp: No direct treatment — Assessment: The victims of Solingen are not acknowledged as individuals; the attack serves primarily as a hook for the migration policy debate.

[F] Liberal Muslims / Muslim communities — INDICATED

Timestamp: approx. 38:00 — Quote (Mansour): "But it is possible to develop a different image of God, even within Islam." — Assessment: Ahmad Mansour speaks as an individual about Islam, but no representatives of Muslim communities or liberal Islamic organisations are invited.

[G] Integration research — INDICATED

Timestamp: approx. 42:00 — Quote (Hähmig): "German migration and integration history is also a success story." — Assessment: Only a brief interjection by Hähmig, no systematic presentation of research findings, no integration researcher invited.

[H] European abroad — INDICATED



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Timestamp: approx. 28:00 — Quote (Thym): "Georgia Meloni managed, through cooperation with Tunisia, to reduce the number of arrivals by more than 50%." — Assessment: Only mentioned in passing (Italy/Tunisia, Turkey agreement), no systematic analysis of European approaches to solutions.

[I] Human rights organisations / refugee assistance — OMITTED

Timestamp: None — Assessment: No voice from the field of human rights, UNHCR, Pro Asyl or comparable organisations; rule-of-law concerns are only raised very tentatively by the international law scholar Thym.

[J] East German population ahead of the elections — INDICATED

Timestamp: approx. 03:00 — Quote (Lanz): "What a tricky political situation could we already have next Monday, if perhaps the CDU in Thuringia becomes only the third-strongest force?" — Assessment: Only mentioned in the introduction, then not systematically picked up again; Anne Hähnig as an East Germany expert is barely questioned on this topic.



Soft facts — 6 qualitative techniques

10. FRAMING (setting the frame)

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Finding 1: Timestamp: 00:00–01:30 — Quote (Lanz): "One in which we want to ask one of the most influential men in the CDU why German politics is now suddenly and conspicuously loudly asking itself all the questions it somehow failed to ask after Dresden, after Brokstedt, after Mannheim, after Bad Oeynhausen." — Manipulation: The framing of the entire programme is set in the introduction as a failure of (coalition) politics. The enumeration of past attacks suggests an escalation spiral linked exclusively to migration policy. — Why problematic: Alternative framings (failure of security authorities, radicalisation as an independent phenomenon, successes of integration) are excluded from the outset.

Finding 2: Timestamp: 01:30–02:00 — Quote (Lanz): "And what exactly is meant when politicians are now again demanding the firmness of the rule of law. What firmness do you actually mean by that?" — Manipulation: The question is rhetorically framed so that "firmness" appears obviously insufficient — the framing implies that previous measures have failed and more firmness is needed. — Why problematic: It is not asked whether "firmness" is even the right approach or whether other strategies (prevention, integration, de-radicalisation) would be more effective.

Finding 3: Timestamp: 02:30–03:00 — Quote (Lanz about Thym): "who says that so many deportations fail has not only to do with migrants who outwit the German authorities, but above all with German authorities that don't even try." — Manipulation: Thym is already framed in the introduction such that his main contribution confirms the dysfunctionality of the system — not the rule-of-law reasons for existing regulations. — Why problematic: The expert is pre-fitted into a narrative that marginalises his more differentiated positions.

Summary: The programme is framed from the very first second as a reckoning with the coalition government's migration policy. Alternative frames — such as prevention, integration successes or the CDU's co-responsibility — are systematically excluded.



11. CHOICE OF WORDS AND TERMINOLOGY

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Finding 1: Timestamp: approx. 06:00 — Quote (Spahn): "Irregular migration for many, many years. People come to Germany without any control. We don't know who, when, where, why." — Manipulation: The formulation "without any control" is an absolutisation that is factually inaccurate (there are border controls, registrations, BAMF procedures). — Why problematic: Lanz allows this absolutisation to stand unchallenged and does not address it.

Finding 2: Timestamp: approx. 07:00 — Quote (Spahn): "We are seeing three gang rapes per day." — Manipulation: A figure without context that implies these are attributable exclusively to migration. — Why problematic: No follow-up question about source, context or comparative figures by Lanz.

Finding 3: Timestamp: approx. 14:00 — Quote (Spahn): "Kafkaesque over-legalised" — Manipulation: The legalisation of the asylum system is associated with Kafka, i.e. with absurdity and meaninglessness. — Why problematic: Rule-of-law procedures are thereby implicitly delegitimised as absurd, without anyone defending the value of these procedures.

Finding 4: Timestamp: approx. 30:00 — Quote (Spahn): "The democratic centre ends irregular migration or irregular migration ends the democratic centre." — Manipulation: A rhetorically sharpened either-or sentence that implies an existential threat and creates pressure to act. — Why problematic: Lanz does not comment on this sentence critically, but allows it to stand as a quasi-analytical statement.

Summary: The language of the programme is throughout characterised by crisis vocabulary ("tipping point", "state of emergency", "dysfunctional", "Kafkaesque", "loss of control"). Terms that would enable differentiation are largely absent. Lanz himself partly adopts this vocabulary.



12. MODERATION BEHAVIOUR

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Lanz is known for provocative follow-up questions — the asymmetric challenging is particularly striking here.

Finding 1: Timestamp: approx. 04:00 — Quote (Lanz): "Today there was a major meeting between Olaf Scholz and Friedrich Merz. What have you heard from Friedrich Merz beyond the official statements?" — Analysis: Lanz opens the programme by positioning Spahn as an insider source for CDU strategy. The question is inviting, not confrontational. Comparison: No government representative is asked what Scholz's perspective on the meeting was.

Finding 2: Timestamp: approx. 05:00 — Quote (Lanz): "Ms Hennig, a statement like the one from Saskia Esken, that not too much can be learned, I think, from this attack. What does it trigger in you when you hear something like that?" — Analysis: Lanz uses an Esken quote as a template for outrage. The question "What does it trigger in you?" is emotionally charged and implies that the statement must be outrageous. Esken herself is not present to contextualise her statement.

Finding 3: Timestamp: approx. 08:00–12:00 — Analysis: Lanz allows Spahn to present his positions uninterrupted for several minutes (border closure, suspending EU law, state of emergency), without critical follow-up questions. Comparison: When Hähnig attempts to address CDU co-responsibility (approx. 22:00), she is interrupted by Spahn and Lanz does not moderate in favour of her speaking time.

Finding 4: Timestamp: approx. 22:00 — Quote (Hähnig): "which, with all due respect, in 2015, 2016 under Chancellor Angela Merkel first gave the impression that migration policy could proceed in a relatively unregulated manner" — Analysis: Hähnig raises the most important counter-accusation of the programme. Lanz does not pick up on this point and does not pursue it, but instead changes the subject: "I'd like to return once more to Solingen."

Finding 5: Timestamp: approx. 30:00 — Quote (Spahn): "The democratic centre ends irregular migration or irregular migration ends the democratic centre." — Analysis: Lanz allows this dramatic sentence to stand without comment. No follow-up question such as: "Isn't that an exaggeration?" or "Are there not other democracies that deal with migration without the centre collapsing?"

Summary: Lanz acts asymmetrically: Spahn receives soft, inviting questions and a great deal of uninterrupted speaking time. Hähnig's counter-accusations are not pursued. The coalition government is attacked via quotes (Esken, Scholz) without a representative being able to respond. Lanz himself partly adopts the CDU narrative.



13. QUESTION ASYMMETRY

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Asymmetry 1: To Spahn, approx. 04:00: "What have you heard from Friedrich Merz beyond the official statements?" [soft, inviting, conferring insider status] — To Hähnig, approx. 05:00: "What does it trigger in you when you hear something like that?" [emotionally charged, directed at outrage over an SPD statement]

Asymmetry 2: To Spahn, approx. 30:00: "Would you do that if you could be Chancellor? Would you close the borders now?" [inviting, enables self-presentation as a decisive doer] — To Thym, throughout: "Is that legally possible?" [Thym is reduced to the role of legal fact-checker who examines Spahn's proposals, rather than contributing his own perspectives]

Asymmetry 3: To Mansour, approx. 35:00: "What is so attractive about this ideology?" [open, inviting question that acknowledges Mansour's expertise] — To Hähnig, approx. 42:00: Hähnig has to claim space herself with "That's too sweeping for me, to be honest" — Lanz does not ask her a comparably open question.

Summary: The questions to Spahn and Mansour are consistently inviting and enable extensive presentations. Hähnig has to actively fight for space. Thym is reduced to a checking function for CDU proposals. No guest is confronted with hard follow-up questions about CDU co-responsibility.



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14. FALSE BALANCE

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Finding 1: In this programme, the problem does not lie with false balance (i.e. the artificial equating of a minority position with the scientific mainstream), but with the opposite: a systematic one-sidedness. The programme creates the impression of a broad consensus in favour of drastic measures (border closure, suspending EU law), even though there are considerable counter-arguments in the expert community and in politics that are not represented.

Summary: False balance in the classical sense is not a main problem of this programme. The problem is rather the lack of balance — a systematic over-representation of one political direction without adequate counterweights.



15. AGENDA-SETTING

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Finding 1: Agenda element set: "Border closure as a solution" — Timestamp: approx. 10:00–14:00, approx. 30:00–32:00 — Evidence (Spahn): "We should also suspend EU law at this point and say, at our border it can no longer continue." — Alternative: The agenda could also have been set on authority resourcing, prevention, European cooperation or de-radicalisation.

Finding 2: Agenda element set: "Coalition failure as the main cause" — Timestamp: Throughout — Evidence (Spahn): "When the Chancellor says he is angry, I find that almost cynical. He doesn't need to be angry, he needs to solve problems." — Alternative: The agenda could also have encompassed CDU co-responsibility, the European dimension or the successes of integration policy.

Finding 3: Agenda element set: "Islamism as a primarily migration-related problem" — Timestamp: approx. 35:00–48:00 — Evidence: The discussion about Islamism is conducted almost exclusively in the context of migration — Alternative: Radicalisation as an independent phenomenon (also among those born in Germany), the role of social media independent of migration, structural causes.

Summary: The agenda of the programme is de facto set by Jens Spahn: border closure, coalition failure, suspending EU law. Lanz largely adopts this agenda and structures his questions accordingly. Alternative agendas (prevention, authority resourcing, integration successes, CDU co-responsibility) are marginalised.



CHAPTER 2 — OVERALL EVALUATION

Results

Dominant techniques

- 1. Expert selection / guest composition (Score 8):** The composition of the panel is the most effective manipulation technique in this programme. Through the absence of a government representative and the dominance of guests who confirm the CDU narrative, a sham debate is created in which the basic thesis "the system is broken, the coalition is failing" is never seriously challenged.
- 2. Framing / Agenda-setting (Score 8/8):** The programme is framed from the very first second as a reckoning with migration policy. Lanz adopts Spahn's agenda (border closure, suspending EU law) and structures his questions accordingly. Alternative framings (prevention, integration successes, CDU co-responsibility) are systematically marginalised.
- 3. Moderation behaviour / Question asymmetry (Score 8/8):** Lanz does not act as a neutral moderator, but as an amplifier of the CDU narrative. Spahn receives soft questions and maximum airtime, Hähnig's counter-accents are not pursued, the coalition is attacked via quotes without a representative being able to respond.

Reasoning: The programme displays a clear one-sidedness in favour of the CDU position that runs through all the analysed criteria. The guest selection, framing, moderation and time distribution together create a picture in which the CDU appears as the party of solutions and the coalition as the party of failure. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that individual guests (Hähnig, partly Thym) do set differentiating accents and that the programme is not a pure propaganda format — the one-sidedness arises more through structural decisions (guest selection, time distribution, framing) than through overt manipulation. The combined score of 5.5 reflects this clear, but not extreme, one-sidedness.

CONCLUSION

The programme of approx. 27/28 August 2024 displays a structural one-sidedness that does not meet the requirements of §26 MStV regarding balance and diversity of opinion. The guest composition — a senior CDU politician without a counterpart from the government, an international law scholar in the role of fact-checker for CDU proposals, an extremism researcher with a conservative migration perspective and a journalist as the only, marginalised dissenting voice — creates a sham debate in which the basic thesis "the system is broken, the coalition is failing, the CDU has solutions" is never seriously challenged. The public service mandate of the ZDF requires that the diversity of opinions present in society be adequately reflected; in this programme, at least four to six relevant perspectives are entirely absent (government, refugees, human rights organisations, municipalities, liberal Muslims, integration researchers). The programme is therefore not to be assessed as an isolated outlier, but as an example of a structural problem in the talk show culture of public broadcasting, in which the guest selection predetermines the debate.



CHAPTER 3 — PARTY-POLITICAL BIAS

Party	Score (-5..+5)	Concrete evidence
CDU/CSU	+4	04:00 Lanz opens with an inviting insider question to Spahn; 06:00–14:00 Spahn is allowed to present CDU demands for minutes without contradiction; 30:00 "Would you do that if you could be Chancellor?" — inviting self-presentation question; CDU co-responsibility is only briefly mentioned once by Hähmig (22:00), not pursued by Lanz
SPD	-4	05:00 Esken quote as a template for outrage: "What does it trigger in you?"; 07:00 Spahn: "that explains why the SPD is on its way to below 5%" — unchallenged; 07:30 Spahn: "When the Chancellor says he is angry, I find that almost cynical" — unchallenged; no SPD representative invited
Greens	-3	25:00 Spahn: "If it doesn't work with the Greens. They don't even see the problem"; 25:00 "legal advice [...] introduced an additional mandatory legal consultation at the last minute to make things even more difficult" — no Greens representative to respond; 08:00 Spahn: "Right, because Green government" (sarcastically about electric cars)
FDP	-1	No direct mention; implicitly included as part of the coalition in the coalition criticism, but not specifically attacked
AfD	-1	14:00 Spahn: "We can wait until the AfD is at 70 percent" — the AfD is portrayed as a threat, but its substantive positions are not discussed; no differentiated engagement
BSW	0	Not mentioned
Linke	0	Not mentioned
Freie Wähler	0	Not mentioned

Party bias summary

- Most favoured: CDU/CSU, Score +4 — Spahn receives maximum airtime, inviting questions, no hard follow-up questions about co-responsibility; the CDU is positioned as the party of solutions.
- Most disadvantaged: SPD, Score -4 — Represented exclusively via negative quotes (Esken, Scholz), no representative invited, failures are scandalised.
- Conclusion: The programme displays a clear party-political bias in favour of the CDU/CSU. This is particularly problematic because the programme is broadcast a few days before the state elections in Saxony and Thuringia, in which the CDU is in direct competition with the SPD and the Greens. The absence of any government representatives alongside the presence of a senior CDU politician represents a considerable asymmetry that is further reinforced by Lanz's moderation behaviour.



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

Assessment under §26 MStV

Violation 1: Lack of diversity of opinion in the guest selection

Norm: §26 para. 1 MStV in conjunction with §5 para. 1 ZDF State Treaty — Facts: The programme invites a senior CDU politician without a representative of the governing parties (SPD, Greens, FDP) as a counterweight. The government's position is represented exclusively via negative quotes (Esken, Scholz), without a representative having the opportunity to respond. — Evidence: 04:00–32:00: Spahn dominates the programme with CDU demands; no government representative present — Assessment: This constitutes a violation of the requirement of balance, particularly a few days before state elections. §26 para. 1 MStV requires that the "significant political, ideological and social forces and groups" are given adequate voice. The complete absence of the government's perspective alongside the dominance of the opposition's perspective does not fulfil this requirement.

Violation 2: One-sided framing and agenda-setting

Norm: §26 para. 1 MStV, §5 para. 1 ZDF State Treaty (obligation to provide comprehensive information) — Facts: The programme frames the topic of Solingen exclusively as a failure of the coalition's migration policy and as confirmation of CDU demands. Alternative perspectives (integration successes, CDU co-responsibility, rights of refugees, prevention approaches) are systematically marginalised. — Evidence: 00:00–01:30 (introduction), throughout the programme structure — Assessment: The one-sided framing violates the requirement of comprehensive information, which obliges public broadcasting to enable viewers to form their own independent opinions.

Violation 3: Asymmetric moderation behaviour ahead of elections

Norm: §26 para. 1 MStV, principles of election coverage — Facts: A few days before the state elections in Saxony and Thuringia, a senior CDU politician is given a platform for campaign messages (border closure, coalition failure), without representatives of competing parties being given a voice. — Evidence: 30:00 Lanz: "Would you do that if you could be Chancellor?" — a question that stages Spahn as a potential head of government — Assessment: In the proximity of elections, heightened requirements for balance apply. The programme does not meet these heightened requirements.

Overall assessment §26 MStV

The programme displays several violations of the impartiality requirement of §26 para. 1 MStV and the public service mandate of the ZDF State Treaty. The central problem lies in the guest selection, which creates a structural one-sidedness that is reinforced by the moderation behaviour. §26 MStV obliges public broadcasting to reflect the diversity of existing opinions as broadly and completely as possible and to enable viewers to form their own independent opinions. The ZDF State Treaty concretises this through the obligation to provide comprehensive, truthful and objective information. In this programme, one political position (CDU/conservative migration criticism) is systematically favoured, while the government's perspective, the perspective of refugees, of human rights organisations and of integration research are entirely absent. The ZDF Television Council as the responsible supervisory body would be called upon to critically examine the guest selection and moderation behaviour of this programme, particularly given its temporal proximity to the state elections in Saxony and Thuringia.



OVERALL EVALUATION OF THE 15 CRITERIA

Individual scores — All 15 criteria

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

HARD FACTS SCORE (1-8)

7.1/10

Serious deviation from the impartiality requirement. High degree of deviation

SOFT FACTS SCORE (9-14)

7.2/10

Serious deviation from the impartiality requirement. High degree of deviation

OVERALL SCORE

7.2/10

Serious deviation from the impartiality requirement. High degree of deviation

Averaged from hard facts and soft facts



KEY — Meaning of the scores

Individual scores per criterion (0–10)

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

Aggregated deviation index — interpretation ranges

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

Party-political bias (-5 to +5)

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



Legal and methodological classification

No finding of fact	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.
No legal ruling	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 regulators).
No proof of causality	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.
No judgement of intent	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.
Heuristic comparison instrument	The index serves the purpose of comparative pattern recognition across thousands of programmes, not the precise metric measurement of individual items. Threshold values serve as heuristic orientation, not as sharp legal qualification.



APPENDIX: CANTONAL LEGISLATION

Legal basis Germany — ARD, ZDF

Law

Interstate Media Treaty (MStV, 2020)

Relevant articles

- §26 para. 1 MStV: Public broadcasting institutions shall provide in their offerings 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 Federation and the Länder. Their offerings shall serve education, information, advice and entertainment. They shall offer contributions in particular to culture. Entertainment shall correspond to a public broadcasting offering 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

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

Supervisory authority

- 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 programming
- Legal supervision: respective federal state (ZDF: Rhineland-Palatinate)

Complaints procedure

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



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APPENDIX 2: SCIENTIFIC FOUNDATIONS

Literature

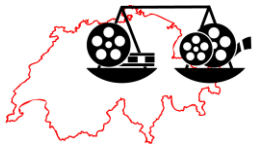
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Unbalanced Reporting is the response to the halving initiative in Switzerland: here the manipulation techniques are explained in detail, starting with the selection of staff and source selection. Subsequently, 15 principles are explained: omission, framing, temporal framing, guilt by association, emotionalisation, context removal and many more, illustrated with many examples. In addition, it becomes apparent where we ourselves apply these techniques — this promotes not only insight but also empathy.

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The interview is not a conversation. It is a stage — and someone else has written the script.

Those who do not know this provide material. Good quotes that are cut incorrectly. Correct statements that end up in the wrong context. Honest answers that are framed as confessions.

This book is not a media criticism book. It is a toolbox — for everyone who has a microphone in front of their face and wants to know what they can do about it. 7 chapters. 7 tools: What an interview really is. The 7 most common traps. The three basic principles of sovereignty — anchoring, reframing, setting boundaries. Preparation in one hour. Body and voice. What to do when things go wrong. And what counts after the interview.

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In A5. Direct. For preparation, for reference, for follow-up and in difficult situations



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You think you see the world. In reality you see the frame that someone has placed around it. Framing is the oldest and most elegant manipulation technique in the world. It does not change the facts — it changes what we make of the facts. How we feel. What we believe. How we decide. And it works — because we all participate. Daily. Unconsciously. You too. This book is not a dry textbook. It is a workbook — playful, direct, full of examples from real life. You learn not only how others frame you. You learn how you yourself frame — and how you can use it consciously and fairly.

Because those who understand framing see the world more clearly. Listen to the news differently. Conduct conversations with greater confidence. And can no longer so easily have a frame imposed on them that someone else has chosen.

With many exercises and concrete examples from politics, media and everyday life — and the occasional smile.

Framing with style. Because the frame changes everything.



The SRG collects 1.56 billion francs per year — compulsorily, from every household. Those who feel unfairly treated can lodge a complaint. There is even a body for this: the IGAC, the Independent Complaints Authority for Radio and Television.

Only: it is not independent. It has no sanctioning powers. And in 99.6% of all cases it decides: nothing.

This analysis lays bare the system — 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 subject to separation of powers, not market-based. The authority that is supposed to protect citizens protects above all 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.