



DE DETAILED ANALYSIS

2024-09-03 Der Talk vom 3. September

Programme: Markus Lanz | 2024-09-03 | Analysed on: 2026-03-12 17:46

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OVERALL SCORE

5.8/10

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 shown 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)

4.1 / 10

Balanced

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: 03.09.2024
- Moderator: Markus Lanz
- Guests:



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Actors	Function	Party/Affiliation	Political spectrum
Karin Prien	Deputy CDU Federal Chair, Minister of Education Schleswig-Holstein	CDU	Centre-right / liberal- conservative
Kerstin Münstermann	Political journalist (Rheinische Post)	Press	Centre / journalistic- analytical
Jan van Aken	Incoming Left Party chair, former UN biological weapons inspector, book author	Die Linke	Left
Sebastian Krumbiegel	Musician (Die Prinzen), civil rights activist, book author	Non-partisan / civil society left	Left-liberal / anti-fascist

Main topic

The political consequences of the 2024 state elections in Saxony and Thuringia, in particular the question of government formation in light of the strengthening of the AfD and BSW as well as the CDU's incompatibility resolutions vis-à-vis the Left Party and the AfD.



CHAPTER 1 — DETAILED ANALYSIS OF THE 15 CRITERIA

Hard facts — 9 techniques that are countable and scientifically robust

1. EXPERT SELECTION									8/10	
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Expert 1: Karin Prien (CDU)

Timestamp

entire programme — Statement: Represents the CDU dilemma, but is primarily pushed onto the defensive — Classification: The only representative of the centre-right spectrum, must hold her own against three interlocutors who all stand to her left — Missing countervoice: A second conservative guest (e.g. an East German CDU politician, CSU representative) would have established balance.

Expert 2: Jan van Aken (Linke)

Timestamp

entire programme — Statement: "All together against fascism" — Classification: Represents decidedly left-wing positions (against weapons deliveries, against deportations, against medium-range missiles, for open borders). Is positioned as a peace expert and moral authority. — Missing countervoice: No security policy expert who professionally represents the NATO position or the necessity of deterrence.

Expert 3: Sebastian Krumbiegel (musician)

Timestamp

various — Statement: "You have no idea what is really rolling towards us" — Classification: Brings in an emotional East German perspective and anti-fascist stance. Not a political expert, but a moral voice. — Missing countervoice: An East German citizen/local politician who describes everyday problems beyond the anti-fascism narrative.

Expert 4: Kerstin Münstermann (journalist)

Timestamp

various — Statement: Analytical classification, but with recognisable sympathy for pragmatic solutions — Classification: Journalist who primarily questions the CDU perspective and identifies the BSW problem. — Missing countervoice: An East German journalist or political scientist would have set different priorities.

Missing expert groups: Security policy expert, constitutional lawyer, migration researcher, economist, AfD representative or protest researcher, BSW representative, East German local politician.



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Summary: The guest selection creates a structural imbalance of 3:1 (left/liberal vs. conservative). Karin Prien stands alone against three interlocutors who largely agree on the core issues (anti-fascism, migration, foreign policy). The absence of a BSW representative, a security expert and an AfD voter researcher considerably narrows the discursive space.



2. SOURCE SELECTION

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Claims without primary source = penalty points (rumour check)

Source 1: Timestamp: 08:00 — Source: Spiegel interview Prien 2020 — Classification: Lanz confronts Prien with her own statements. Journalistically legitimate, but applied one-sidedly. — Missing counter-source: No confrontation of van Aken with earlier Left Party positions.

Source 2: Timestamp: Insert — Source: Friedrich Merz (press conference) — Classification: Clip shows Merz in an evasive position. — Missing counter-source: No clip in which Merz represents clear positions.

Source 3: Timestamp: Insert — Source: Markus Söder (interview) — Classification: Söder as a pragmatic counterpoint. — Missing counter-source: No CDU hardliner defending the incompatibility resolution.

Source 4: Timestamp: Insert — Source: Sarah Wagenknecht (speech/statement) — Classification: Wagenknecht's foreign policy demands. — Missing counter-source: No BSW state politician with a more pragmatic position.

Summary: The source selection is one-sided. Inserts and quotes are selected in such a way as to support the narrative of CDU inconsistency and BSW blockade. Alternative sources (e.g. CDU defenders of the resolution, BSW pragmatists, constitutional lawyers) are absent.



3. TIME DISTRIBUTION						6/10			
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Estimated speaking time (based on text shares):

- Karin Prien (CDU): (25%)
- Jan van Aken (Linke): (28%)
- Sebastian Krumbiegel: (14%)
- Kerstin Münstermann: (11%)
- Markus Lanz: (22%)

Summary: Van Aken receives the most speaking time and can present his positions most extensively. Prien also has a lot of speaking time, but spends it predominantly on the defensive. Münstermann as a journalist gets comparatively little time. The combination of van Aken + Krumbiegel (42%) versus Prien alone (25%) reinforces the structural imbalance.



4. OMISSION (Selective Omission)

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Omission 1: Context: AfD voter motivation — Relevant in: entire programme — Effect: The AfD is consistently framed as "fascist", but the concrete reasons why over 30% of Thuringians voted for it (experience of transformation, deindustrialisation, democratic deficits, East-West wealth gap, representation gap) are only touched on marginally (van Aken: minimum wage in Sonneberg). The reduction to "fascism" prevents analytical engagement.

Omission 2: Context: BSW programme — Relevant in: BSW discussion — Effect: The BSW is defined exclusively through Sarah Wagenknecht and her foreign policy demands. The BSW's state-level political positions (education, economy, social affairs) are not mentioned. No BSW representative can present their own position.

Omission 3: Context: AfD blocking minority in Thuringia — Relevant in: government formation discussion — Effect: The AfD has a blocking minority in Thuringia (over one third of seats), meaning it can block constitutional amendments and certain elections. This central constitutional law problem is not mentioned anywhere in the programme.

Omission 4: Context: Coalition government responsibility — Relevant in: causal analysis — Effect: The federal government (SPD, Greens, FDP) and its policies are barely addressed as a contributing cause of the election result. The marginalisation of the coalition parties in the East is mentioned as a fact, but not analysed.

Omission 5: Context: Russian medium-range missiles — Relevant in: medium-range missile discussion — Effect: Van Aken presents the US deployment as one-sided escalation. Lanz introduces the context of Russian rearmament, van Aken relativises this. The fact that Russia had, according to Western assessment, already violated the INF Treaty before the US withdrawal is dismissed by van Aken as "unsubstantiated", without Lanz following up or involving an expert.

Summary: Central contextual information (blocking minority, coalition government responsibility, differentiated AfD voter motivation, BSW state-level programme) is systematically omitted, which narrows the discursive space and favours certain narratives.

Missing voices

- AfD voter/political scientist: Could have explained the motivations of the 30%+ AfD voters in a differentiated way (protest, conviction, East-West divide)
- BSW representative (e.g. Katja Wolf or Sabine Zimmermann): Could have presented the independent BSW position from a state perspective instead of only through Wagenknecht inserts
- SPD representative from Saxony/Thuringia: Could have brought in the perspective of marginalised social democracy in the East
- Constitutional lawyer: Could have legally classified options for government formation (minority government, toleration, blocking minority)



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- Local politician/district administrator from East Germany: Could have described concrete everyday problems (infrastructure, shortage of doctors, public transport) as electoral motivation
- Economist/East Germany researcher: Could have substantiated structural causes (low wages, transformation, wealth inequality East-West)
- Security policy expert (e.g. DGAP, SWP): Could have professionally contextualised the medium-range missile debate
- Migration researcher: Could have underpinned the migration debate with data and differentiation



5. NUMBERS MANIPULATION

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

Finding 1: Timestamp: various — Figure: "over 30%" for AfD in Thuringia — Missing context: The exact figure (32.8%) is never mentioned, nor is voter turnout or the absolute number of votes. — Effect: Minor, as rounding is common practice.

Finding 2: Timestamp: Prien — Figure: "they still have 10% together in Thuringia" (coalition parties) — Missing context: Correct order of magnitude, but without differentiation (SPD 6.1%, Greens 3.2%, FDP 1.1%). — Effect: Dramatisation, but essentially correct.

Finding 3: Timestamp: van Aken — Figure: "44% of people live on the minimum wage" (Sonneberg) — Missing context: Source unclear, figure not verifiable in the programme. Lanz does not follow up. — Effect: Supports van Aken's narrative of social causes.

Summary: Numbers manipulation in the strict sense barely occurs. The figures used are essentially correct, if occasionally without full context.



6. GUILT BY ASSOCIATION

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Association 1: Timestamp: 01:00 — Quote (Lanz about van Aken): "And we want to ask him exactly what the name Sarah Wagenknecht triggers in him." — Technique: Implicit association of van Aken/Linke with Wagenknecht, even though van Aken is running against Wagenknecht. — Effect: Minor, as van Aken clearly distances himself.

Association 2: Timestamp: various — Quote (Lanz): "Ms Wagenknecht was in the SED. I'm just saying it again for the record." — Technique: SED association is introduced into the BSW discussion. — Effect: Delegitimisation of the BSW through historical burden, though also relativised by Prien herself.

Association 3: Timestamp: Krumbiegel — Quote: "both Höcke and Wagenknecht are somehow Putin's friends" — Technique: Equation of AfD and BSW through Putin proximity. — Effect: Lanz leaves this equation uncommented, even though it is analytically questionable.

Summary: Guilt by association is used moderately, primarily through the SED past and Putin proximity. The technique is directed against both BSW and the Left, but is not systematically deployed against individual guests.



7. TIMING

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Finding 1: Position: First 30 minutes — Content: CDU dilemma and incompatibility resolution — Timing effect: The topic is worked through so long and intensively that the CDU position appears untenable before other topics (causal analysis, solutions) are even addressed.

Finding 2: Position: Last 15 minutes — Content: Migration debate — Timing effect: The migration topic is only introduced late and can no longer be explored in depth. Van Aken's position (against deportations, against "illegal migration" as a term) remains as the final impression; Prien's counter-arguments are cut short by time pressure.

Finding 3: Position: End of programme — Content: Lanz's closing words "New political conditions in Germany and possibly ungovernability in Thuringia" — Timing effect: The catastrophe framing from the beginning is repeated at the end and set as the conclusion.

Summary: The programme structure favours the narrative of CDU inconsistency (beginning) and leaves the migration debate (end) unresolved. The catastrophe framing frames the entire programme.



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: various — Reaction: Lanz responds to Prien's differentiation between AfD and Left incompatibility with irony and insistence ("So one No is a different No from the other No") — Comparable without outrage: Van Aken's position "I am against deportations" is commented with "Yes, but that is absurd", but not pursued with the same insistence. — Asymmetry: Prien's attempt at differentiation is framed as a contradiction, van Aken's radical position is accepted as an opinion.

Finding 2: Timestamp: migration debate — Reaction: Van Aken's statement "All people in need have the right to come here. That is in the Basic Law" is corrected by Lanz ("That is not in the Basic Law"), but not treated with outrage. — Comparable: Prien's statement about the incompatibility resolution is questioned with significantly more emotional intensity. — Asymmetry: Factual errors from the left are corrected matter-of-factly, political positions from the right are questioned emotionally.

Finding 3: Timestamp: various — Reaction: Krumbiegel's statement "You have no idea what is really rolling towards us" is received with empathy. — Comparable without outrage: Prien's reference to real integration problems in schools is treated with scepticism. — Asymmetry: Emotional appeals from the left are valued as authentic, factual references from the right are questioned.

Summary: The outrage threshold is asymmetric. CDU positions are treated with more scepticism and insistence than left-wing positions. Factual errors from the left are corrected matter-of-factly, political inconsistencies of the CDU are emotionally charged.



9. COMPLETENESS

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The programme takes place immediately after a state election described as a "watershed moment", in which the AfD achieved over 30% in Thuringia and the BSW entered both state parliaments as a new force. The democratic centre (coalition parties) was marginalised, the CDU faces the dilemma of having to form governments without breaking its incompatibility resolutions. At the same time, the BSW under Sarah Wagenknecht links federal political topics (weapons deliveries to Ukraine, medium-range missiles) with conditions for coalitions at state level. The programme thus touches on core questions of German democracy: governability, dealing with extremism, migration policy and foreign/security policy.

Share of perspectives covered

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

[A] CDU perspective: Dilemma between incompatibility resolutions and governmental responsibility

[B] AfD perspective: Why over 30% of Thuringians voted for this party (voter motivation)

[C] BSW perspective: Independent presentation of positions and conditions

[D] Left Party perspective: Role of Ramelow, future of the party, willingness to cooperate

[E] SPD/Greens perspective: Marginalisation of the coalition parties in the East, causal analysis

[F] East German citizens' perspective: Everyday problems, transformation experiences, being left behind

[G] Economic/social perspective: Low wages, infrastructure, deindustrialisation as electoral motivation

[H] Foreign/security policy perspective: Medium-range missiles, Ukraine, differentiated expert view

[I] Constitutional law perspective: Government formation, minority government, parliamentary options

[J] Migration policy perspective: Differentiated presentation between humanitarian protection, labour migration and integration problems

[A] CDU perspective — ADDRESSED

Timestamp: 02:30—entire programme — Quote: "The dilemma consists in the fact that the CDU is now the only party from the centre spectrum" — Assessment: Extensively represented by Karin Prien, core topic of the programme.

[B] AfD perspective / voter motivation — INDICATED, BUT STRUCTURALLY OMITTED

Timestamp: various — Quote: "Why do 30% vote for Mr Höcke?" (Lanz, briefly) — Assessment: The AfD is framed exclusively as a threat/fascism; no AfD representative present, no systematic analysis of voter motives beyond "fear of decline" and "fascism".

[C] BSW perspective — INDICATED, BUT ONE-SIDED

Timestamp: various, Wagenknecht insert — Quote: "We will only participate in a state government that has a clear stance on this issue" — Assessment: BSW is presented exclusively through inserts and third-party descriptions; no BSW representative present. Wagenknecht's position is dismissed as "populist talk" (Krumbiegel).

[D] Left Party perspective — ADDRESSED

Timestamp: entire programme — Quote: "All together against fascism" (van Aken) — Assessment: Extensively represented by Jan van Aken, though primarily framed as a cooperation partner against the AfD, less as an independent political force with a programme.

[E] SPD/Greens perspective — OMITTED

Timestamp: no substantive treatment — Assessment: The marginalisation of the coalition parties is only mentioned as a fact ("still have 10% together"), but neither an SPD nor a Greens representative is present, no causal analysis.

[F] East German citizens' perspective — INDICATED

Timestamp: various (Krumbiegel) — Quote: "You have no idea what is really rolling towards us" — Assessment: Sebastian Krumbiegel brings in personal East German experience, but a systematic citizens' perspective (everyday problems, transformation) is largely absent.

[G] Economic/social perspective — INDICATED



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Timestamp: approx. last 15 min. — Quote: "44% of people live on the minimum wage" (van Aken on Sonneberg) — Assessment: Briefly introduced by van Aken, but not explored in depth; no economist present.

[H] Foreign/security policy perspective — PARTIALLY ADDRESSED

Timestamp: medium-range missile discussion — Quote: "They could, so to speak, massively impair the second-strike capability of Russian nuclear weapons" (van Aken) — Assessment: Van Aken introduces a peace policy perspective, Lanz confronts with counter-arguments; but no security expert or NATO advocate as a guest.

[I] Constitutional law perspective — OMITTED

Timestamp: none — Assessment: No constitutional lawyer present; questions such as minority government, AfD blocking minority, parliamentary mechanisms are not systematically addressed.

[J] Migration policy perspective — PARTIALLY ADDRESSED

Timestamp: last 20 min. — Quote: "All people in need have the right to come here" (van Aken) — Assessment: Controversial discussion between Prien and van Aken, but one-sided between CDU position and Left position; no differentiated middle ground (e.g. migration research, municipal practice).

Completeness score: 4/10

Reasoning: Of ten relevant perspectives, only three (CDU, Left, partially foreign policy) are substantively addressed. AfD voter motivation, the BSW, SPD/Greens, the East German citizens' perspective, economy/social affairs and constitutional law are absent as independent perspectives represented by competent voices. The programme revolves primarily around the CDU dilemma and the anti-fascist consensus, without illuminating the depth of the social rifts.



Soft facts — 6 qualitative techniques

10. FRAMING (setting the frame)

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Finding 1: Timestamp: 00:15 — Quote: "Because ungovernability is looming." — Manipulation: Catastrophe framing already in the opening sentence. Government formation is framed as a looming catastrophe, not as a democratic challenge. — Why problematic: Sets an alarmist framework that shapes the entire programme and makes constructive approaches to solutions more difficult.

Finding 2: Timestamp: 00:30 — Quote: "Friedrich Merz, the alleged anti-Merkel, is not exactly a top seller in the East" — Manipulation: Merz is framed as a failed salesman who "rides in" and "builds up firewalls". The image of the West German cowboy who fails in the East is a narrative framing that delegitimises Merz's position. — Why problematic: Anticipation of an assessment by the moderator before the discussion begins.

Finding 3: Timestamp: 01:30 — Quote: "Not with the AfD and not with the Left Party. That is what your CDU says. And that is supposed to sound like a tough, clear statement. But the more closely you look, the clearer it becomes that after this Sunday, nothing is actually clear anymore." — Manipulation: Lanz frames the CDU position as a facade ("is supposed to sound like") that collapses on closer inspection. — Why problematic: The moderator anticipates the assessment that the CDU resolutions are untenable, instead of posing this as an open question.

Finding 4: Timestamp: 01:45 — Quote (about van Aken): "He wants to become the leader of the Left Party. A party that is really only a shadow of its former self." — Manipulation: Sympathy framing through underdog narrative. Van Aken is introduced as a courageous fighter for a weakened party. — Why problematic: Creates sympathy instead of a neutral introduction.

Finding 5: Timestamp: 02:00 — Quote (about Krumbiegel): "And that is why it is no hollow phrase when he says it must always be clear that democrats must talk to each other." — Manipulation: Lanz pre-authenticates Krumbiegel's position as genuine ("no hollow phrase"), while questioning Prien's credibility. — Why problematic: Asymmetric attribution of credibility by the moderator.

Summary: The programme is opened from the outset in a catastrophe and delegitimation frame. The CDU position is framed as a fragile facade, while left-wing and civil society positions are endowed with authenticity and moral authority.



11. CHOICE OF WORDS AND TERMS

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Finding 1: Timestamp: 02:45 — Quote (Prien): "A party classified as definitively far-right extremist has achieved well over 30%." — Classification: Correct use of the constitutional protection term. However, this term is never differentiated throughout the programme — the AfD is consistently equated with "fascism" (van Aken, Krumbiegel), without Lanz differentiating here. — Why problematic: The equation AfD = fascism is a political assessment, not an analytical category. A moderator would need to contextualise this.

Finding 2: Timestamp: various (van Aken, Krumbiegel) — Quote: "All together against fascism" / "making anti-fascism socially acceptable again" / "if we let the AfD near the levers of power, then fascism will govern here in Germany" — Manipulation: The term "fascism" is used inflationarily and without differentiation. Lanz leaves this uncommented. — Why problematic: The equation of a democratically elected party with historical fascism is a political battle cry that a public broadcaster moderator would need to contextualise.

Finding 3: Timestamp: Münstermann on BSW — Quote: "populist talk" (Krumbiegel on Wagenknecht) — Manipulation: Derogatory terminology for a democratically elected party that goes unchallenged. — Why problematic: Delegitimisation of a party position without substantive engagement.

Finding 4: Timestamp: migration debate — Quote (van Aken): "illegal migration" is a "battle cry of the right" — Classification: Van Aken defines a term commonly used in political and legal debate as a right-wing battle cry. Lanz retreats to "irregular migration" without clarifying the legal classification. — Why problematic: Word politics is presented as fact; the moderator adopts the terminological critique instead of classifying it neutrally.

Summary: The programme is characterised by a use of language that adopts left-wing interpretive frameworks (fascism instead of right-wing extremism, battle cry instead of legal term) and delegitimises conservative or migration-critical terms.



12. MODERATION BEHAVIOUR

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Lanz is known for provocative follow-up questions — the asymmetric challenge is particularly pronounced here.

Finding 1: Timestamp: 03:00–10:00 — Quote (Lanz): "What kind of dilemma is that? What does the dilemma consist of?" / "What do you mean all are parties you have nothing to do with?" / "So one No is a different No from the other No" / "So when you say No, you don't always mean the same No?" — Analysis: Lanz repeatedly interrupts Prien, insistently probes and ironically reformulates her position. In comparison, he lets van Aken and Krumbiegel speak considerably longer and asks less confrontational follow-up questions.

Finding 2: Timestamp: approx. 08:00 — Quote (Lanz): "Our equidistance is the root of all evil. [...] Whose sentence is that? [...] Yours." — Analysis: Lanz confronts Prien with her own earlier statements to demonstrate a contradiction with her current position. This is journalistically legitimate, but the technique is applied exclusively to Prien, not to van Aken (e.g. on earlier Left Party positions).

Finding 3: Timestamp: migration debate — Quote (Lanz to van Aken): "How does that fit with your statement that we will never set an upper limit for migration?" — Analysis: Lanz poses a tough question to van Aken here, showing that he does not act exclusively one-sidedly. However, he largely lets van Aken's evasive manoeuvre (Sonneberg example) stand.

Finding 4: Timestamp: various — Quote (Lanz to Krumbiegel): no confrontational follow-up question in the entire programme — Analysis: Krumbiegel is not challenged critically even once throughout the entire programme. His statements are received with empathy ("That is also the question for this man...").

Finding 5: Timestamp: medium-range missiles — Quote (Lanz): "Why don't you say that then? Why don't you say that the Americans withdrew from this treaty in 2019?" — Analysis: Lanz confronts van Aken here with an important omission. This is good journalism. However, he accepts van Aken's relativisation ("I have never seen that substantiated") without further follow-up.

Summary: Lanz acts considerably more confrontationally towards Prien than towards van Aken and Krumbiegel. Prien is confronted with her own quotes, ironically questioned and repeatedly interrupted. Van Aken receives tough questions on migration, but his evasive manoeuvres are pursued less consistently. Krumbiegel is never questioned confrontationally.



13. QUESTION ASYMMETRY

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Asymmetry 1: To Prien, 03:00: "What kind of dilemma is that?" [insistent, repetitive] — To van Aken, various: "How do you see that?" [open, inviting] — Assessment: Prien is cornered, van Aken receives open questions.

Asymmetry 2: To Prien, 08:00: "Did you overreach there? Not you personally, but the CDU?" [suggestive, attribution of blame] — To van Aken, migration debate: "Would you say one must limit immigration?" [factual, open] — Assessment: Prien is confronted with blame, van Aken with a factual question.

Asymmetry 3: To Prien, various: Confrontation with own quotes from 2020 [accountability journalism] — To van Aken: No confrontation with earlier Left Party positions or promises — Assessment: One-sided application of the accountability technique.

Asymmetry 4: To Krumbiegel: Not a single confrontational question in the entire programme — To Prien: At least 8-10 confrontational follow-up questions — Assessment: Extreme asymmetry.

Summary: The question asymmetry is considerable. Prien is systematically questioned more harshly than all other guests. Van Aken receives some tough questions on migration, but his evasive manoeuvres are pursued less consistently. Krumbiegel is never challenged.



14. FALSE BALANCE

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Finding 1: The programme does not suffer from false balance in the classical sense (equal weighting of a minority position with scientific consensus), but from the opposite: a structural imbalance in favour of left-wing positions. The CDU position is represented by a single representative who must argue against three interlocutors who largely agree on the core issues (anti-fascism, migration, foreign policy).

Summary: False balance is not a main problem of this programme. The problem is rather the lack of balance — a structural preponderance of left-wing and left-liberal perspectives.



15. AGENDA-SETTING

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Finding 1: Agenda element set: CDU incompatibility resolution as the main problem — Timestamp: 00:00–30:00 — Evidence: "Not with the AfD and not with the Left Party. That is what your CDU says." — Alternative: The programme could have set the causes of the election result (social situation, transformation experience, democratic deficits) as the main topic.

Finding 2: Agenda element set: Anti-fascism as the overriding goal — Timestamp: various — Evidence: "All together against fascism. So, and Bodo Ramelow said that very clearly." — Alternative: The question of how to combat the causes of the AfD's success (not just the symptoms) could have been set as the agenda.

Finding 3: Agenda element set: Migration as a secondary issue — Timestamp: last 15 min. — Evidence: Only introduced late and cannot be explored in depth — Alternative: Migration as one of the core topics of the election could have been addressed earlier and more extensively.

Summary: The programme's agenda prioritises the CDU dilemma and the anti-fascist consensus, while structural causes of the election result and the migration debate are marginalised. This corresponds to a left-wing/left-liberal prioritisation.



CHAPTER 2 — OVERALL EVALUATION

Results

Dominant techniques

- 1. Expert selection (Score 8):** The guest selection creates a structural imbalance of 3:1 in favour of left-wing/left-liberal positions. Karin Prien must argue alone against three interlocutors who largely agree on the core issues. This is the most effective manipulation technique of the programme, as it is what enables all other asymmetries.
- 2. Framing (Score 7):** The programme is opened from the outset in a catastrophe and delegitimisation frame. The CDU position is framed as a fragile facade, while left-wing positions are endowed with moral authority. The framing of "ungovernability" and "watershed moment" sets the emotional framework for the entire discussion.
- 3. Moderation behaviour / question asymmetry (Score 7/7):** Lanz acts considerably more confrontationally towards Prien than towards all other guests. The combination of insistent follow-up questions, confrontation with own quotes and ironic reformulation creates the impression that the CDU position is untenable, while left-wing positions are presented as morally superior.

Reasoning: The programme exhibits a clear one-sidedness in favour of left-wing and left-liberal positions. This manifests primarily in the guest selection (3:1), the asymmetric moderation behaviour and the framing. The CDU representative is systematically treated more harshly than the left-wing guests. Central perspectives (AfD voter motivation, BSW's own position, constitutional law, economy/social affairs) are absent. However, Lanz does pose tough questions to van Aken on migration and medium-range missiles, which prevents an even worse assessment. The programme does not fully meet the balance requirement of §26 MStV, as the diversity of opinion is structurally restricted.

CONCLUSION

The programme of 3 September 2024 exhibits a clear structural one-sidedness that arises primarily from the guest selection (3:1 left/left-liberal vs. conservative) and the asymmetric moderation behaviour. Karin Prien as the sole CDU representative is systematically treated more confrontationally than Jan van Aken (Linke) and Sebastian Krumbiegel (civil society left), who largely agree on the core issues of the programme. Central perspectives — in particular the differentiated analysis of AfD voter motivation, the BSW's own position, constitutional law questions of government formation and the socioeconomic causes of the election result — are not represented by competent voices. This stands in tension with the public service mandate of ZDF pursuant to §26 MStV, which requires a comprehensive and balanced presentation of the diversity of opinion. The programme would have gained considerably in balance and analytical depth through the invitation of a BSW representative, a constitutional lawyer or an East German local politician.



CHAPTER 3 — PARTY POLITICAL BIAS

Party	Score (-5..+5)	Concrete evidence
CDU/CSU	-2	03:00 "So one No is a different No from the other No" (Lanz ironises CDU position); 08:00 confrontation with own quotes; 00:30 "Friedrich Merz is not exactly a top seller in the East"; Söder insert as intra-party counterpoint. CDU is portrayed as inconsistent and weak in leadership.
SPD	0	Barely addressed; marginalisation in the East is mentioned as a fact, but not analysed. Neither positively nor negatively treated.
Greens	0	Practically not mentioned; marginalisation in the East is noted in passing.
FDP	0	Mentioned once as "not in"; no further treatment.
AfD	-4	Consistently framed as "fascist"; no differentiated analysis of voter motivation; no representative present; Höcke is referred to as a "Nazi" (Prien: "whom one is allowed to call a Nazi in Germany"); van Aken: "then fascism will govern here in Germany".
BSW	-2	Wagenknecht insert shows maximum demand position; Krumbiegel: "populist talk"; no BSW representative present; position is framed as an obstacle to government formation.
Linke	+3	Van Aken receives the most speaking time and can present positions extensively; Ramelow is portrayed as a reliable, respectable politician; Lanz's introduction of van Aken is sympathetically framed; Krumbiegel supports Left positions; Prien's own quotes are used to make Left cooperation appear reasonable.
Freie Wähler	0	Not mentioned.

Party bias summary

- Most favoured: Die Linke, Score +3 — Van Aken receives the most speaking time, is introduced sympathetically, can present his positions largely unchallenged and is supported by Krumbiegel. Bodo Ramelow is portrayed as a reliable statesman.
- Most disadvantaged: AfD, Score -4 — Consistently framed as "fascist" without differentiated voter analysis; no representative present; no engagement with the substantive reasons for the electoral success.
- Conclusion: The programme exhibits a clear bias in favour of the Left Party and at the expense of the AfD and BSW. The CDU is portrayed as inconsistent, but is at least represented by a competent representative. The coalition parties are ignored. The overall tendency of the programme suggests that CDU-Left cooperation would be the most sensible solution — a position that primarily benefits the Left Party.



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

Assessment pursuant to §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 guest selection creates a structural imbalance of 3:1 (left/left-liberal vs. conservative). Central political actors (BSW, AfD voter research, SPD/Greens, constitutional law) are not represented. — Evidence: Entire programme; van Aken (Linke) + Krumbiegel (left-liberal) + Münstermann (analytically critical of CDU) vs. Prien (CDU) alone — Assessment: The guest selection structurally restricts the diversity of opinion. §26 para. 1 MStV requires that "significant political, ideological and social forces and groups" are given adequate voice. For a programme broadcast immediately after a state election in which AfD (32.8%) and BSW (15.8%) together received almost half of the votes, the absence of both perspectives is a considerable deficit.

Violation 2: Asymmetric moderation behaviour

Norm: §26 para. 1 MStV (requirement of balance) — Facts: The moderator systematically treats the CDU representative more confrontationally than the left-wing guests. Prien is confronted with her own quotes, ironically questioned and repeatedly interrupted; van Aken and Krumbiegel receive considerably fewer confrontational follow-up questions. — Evidence: 03:00–10:00 (insistent follow-up questions to Prien); 08:00 (confrontation with Spiegel quote); no comparable confrontation of van Aken — Assessment: The asymmetric moderation behaviour violates the requirement of journalistic fairness derived from §26 MStV. A moderator may provoke, but must do so symmetrically.

Violation 3: Incomplete treatment of topics

Norm: §5 para. 1 ZDF State Treaty (public service mandate) — Facts: Central aspects of the programme topic (AfD blocking minority, constitutional law options for government formation, socioeconomic causes of the election result, coalition government responsibility) are not addressed. — Evidence: Completeness score 4/10 — Assessment: The public service mandate requires comprehensive information for citizens. For a topic of this democratic significance, a completeness score of 4/10 is insufficient.

Overall assessment §26 MStV

The programme exhibits several deficits that stand in tension with §26 MStV and the ZDF State Treaty. The guest selection structurally restricts the diversity of opinion, the moderation behaviour is asymmetric, and central perspectives are absent. §26 para. 1 MStV obliges ZDF to ensure diversity of opinion and balance; the ZDF State Treaty concretises this as a public service mandate requiring comprehensive, truthful and balanced reporting. Individual programmes do not need to be fully balanced in themselves — the requirement of internal pluralism relates to the overall programme. However, for a programme on a topic of this democratic significance, broadcast immediately after an election described as a "watershed moment", a higher standard of balance must be applied. The ZDF Television Council as the responsible supervisory body would be called upon to review the structural guest selection practice of the "Markus Lanz" programme with regard to recurring patterns.



OVERALL EVALUATION OF THE 15 CRITERIA

Individual scores — All 15 criteria

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

HARD FACTS SCORE (1-8)

5.6/10

Considerable bias

SOFT FACTS SCORE (9-14)

6.0/10

Considerable bias

OVERALL SCORE

5.8/10

Considerable bias

Averaged from hard facts and soft facts



KEY — Meaning of 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	Recognisable tendency; relevance of effect low to moderate.
5	Moderate finding with relevance of effect	Relevant bias 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-substantiated bias with marked relevance of effect.
8–9	Serious finding	Pronounced bias; multiple substantiable individual findings in this criterion.
10	Maximum manifestation	Systematic, consistent bias in this criterion.

Aggregated deviation index — Interpretation ranges

0.0 – 2.5	Unremarkable	No material patterns recognisable; programme meets the requirement of factual accuracy.
2.6 – 4.0	Slight bias	Isolated anomalies; statistically visible, but still within the tolerance range.
4.1 – 6.0	Considerable bias	Multiple considerable findings; relevant impairment of diversity of perspectives.
6.1 – 8.0	Serious deviation from the balance 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 disadvantaged in portrayal, speaking time or framing.
-2 to -1	Slightly disadvantaged	Recognisable, but weak disadvantage.
0	Neutral	No discernible preference or disadvantage.
+1 to +2	Slightly favoured	Recognisable, but weak preference.
+3 to +5	Strongly favoured	Party is clearly favoured 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 bias 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 for comparative pattern recognition across thousands of programmes, not for the precise metric measurement of individual contributions. 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 must provide in their offerings a comprehensive overview of international, European, national and regional events in all essential areas of life. In doing so, they shall promote international understanding, European integration and social cohesion in the federal government and the states. Their offerings must serve education, information, advice and entertainment. They must offer contributions in particular to culture. Entertainment must correspond to a public broadcasting offering profile.
- §5 para. 1 ZDF State Treaty: Obligation to objectivity and impartiality in 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:** 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

- 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

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



APPENDIX 2: SCIENTIFIC FOUNDATIONS

Literature

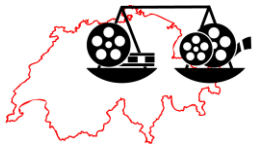
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Only: it is not independent. It has no sanctioning powers. And in 99.6% of all cases it decides: nothing.

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 based on separation of powers, not market-based. The authority that is supposed to protect citizens primarily protects the system it was supposed to control.

Essential reading for all those considering a complaint — and for all those who want to understand why genuine media regulation in Switzerland is still pending.