



## DE DETAILED ANALYSIS

2024-12-04 Der Talk vom 4. Dezember

Programme: Markus Lanz | 2024-12-04 | Analysed on: 2026-03-11 23:30

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

### OVERALL SCORE

**5.5/10**

*Considerable imbalance*

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

## POLITICAL SPECTRUM

Classification according to Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) 2024

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

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

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

### TENDENCY (L – R)

**4.0 / 10**

*Balanced*

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

← Left

Right →

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

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

## PROGRAMME INFORMATION AND THEMATIC FRAMEWORK

### Programme data

- Date: 04.12.2024
- Moderator: Markus Lanz
- Guests:



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Actors	Function	Party/Affiliation	Political spectrum
Christian Dürr	FDP parliamentary group leader in the Bundestag	FDP	Centre-right / liberal
Henrike Roßbach	Journalist, Süddeutsche Zeitung	Quality press, tendentially centre-left liberal	Centre / centre-left liberal
Rüdiger Bachmann	Professor of economics, University of Notre Dame (USA)	Liberal economist, non-partisan	Centre-right / economic liberal
Kristin Helberg	Journalist/Middle East expert, Syria correspondent	Non-partisan, Middle East expertise	Centre-left / human rights-oriented

### Main topic

The programme covers two topics: (1) the end of the traffic light coalition, in particular the role of the FDP, the so-called "D-Day paper" and the credibility of the FDP's account, and (2) the Islamist offensive on Aleppo in Syria and its geopolitical background.



## 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:** Rüdiger Bachmann — Timestamp: throughout, approx. 08:00–50:00 — Statement: "In the end, all that remains of your liberalism... is nonsense. You legalised cannabis." — Classification: Bachmann is an economic liberal economist who describes himself as a "liberal economist". He criticises the FDP from an economic liberal position — i.e. from the right/liberal side. This is a specific critical perspective that portrays the FDP as not liberal enough. — Missing countervoice: A Keynesian or trade-union-aligned economist who would have criticised the FDP's proposals as socially unbalanced is absent. Equally absent is an economist who would have defended the FDP's position on the debt brake.

**Expert 2:** Henrike Roßbach — Timestamp: throughout — Statement: "There are two different narratives about the course of events over the past five weeks up to this 6th of November." — Classification: Roßbach, as an SZ journalist, is a reputable source who strives for balance. She does in fact present both narratives. However, the SZ is positioned rather centre-left liberal in the political spectrum. — Missing countervoice: A journalist from a more conservative or economic-liberal publication (FAZ, Welt, Wirtschaftswoche) would have brought a different perspective.

**Expert 3:** Kristin Helberg — Timestamp: approx. 55:00–75:00 — Statement: Comprehensive Syria analysis — Classification: Helberg is a recognised Syria expert with many years of experience. Her analysis is professionally grounded and nuanced. — Missing countervoice: For the Syria segment, the expert selection is appropriate; a security policy expert could have supplemented the European dimension.

Missing expert groups: SPD or Greens politicians, constitutional lawyers, trade union representatives, conservative journalist, migration researcher.

*Summary: The expert selection creates a constellation in which the FDP is criticised from three sides (Lanz, Roßbach, Bachmann), without any guest fundamentally supporting the FDP's position. Bachmann's criticism "from the right" is intellectually valuable, but the absence of any support for Dürr creates a 3-against-1 dynamic.*



## 2. SOURCE SELECTION

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Claims without primary source = penalty points (rumour check)

**Source 1:** Timestamp: approx. 14:00 — Source: "Research by colleagues from the Süddeutsche" — Classification: Roßbach refers to SZ research suggesting that the break had been planned weeks in advance. — Missing counter-source: Research from other media that might support the FDP's account or shed light on the role of the SPD/Greens is not mentioned.

**Source 2:** Timestamp: approx. 22:00 — Source: Dürr refers to "research by journalists that SPD and Greens already met in summer" — Classification: Lanz does not engage with this: "That is not the topic." — Missing counter-source: The source is actively suppressed, even though it would be relevant to the overall assessment.

**Source 3:** Timestamp: approx. 01:00 — Source: Roßbach quote from the Süddeutsche Zeitung — Classification: Used as a moral framework for the programme. — Missing counter-source: Commentaries from other media with a possibly different assessment are not drawn upon.

*Summary: The source selection is one-sided. Almost exclusively sources are drawn upon that support the FDP-critical narrative. Dürr's reference to sources that implicate other coalition partners is actively blocked. For the Syria segment, the source work (Helberg's expertise) is appropriate.*



3. TIME DISTRIBUTION									5/10
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Estimated speaking time (based on transcript analysis):

- Christian Dürr: (29%)
- Markus Lanz: (27%)
- Rüdiger Bachmann: (16%)
- Henrike Roßbach: (11%)
- Kristin Helberg: (17%)

Analysis of distribution in the FDP segment ():

- Dürr: (40%) — a considerable portion of which spent on the defensive
- Lanz: (33%) — unusually high moderator share
- Bachmann: (18%)
- Roßbach: (9%)

*Summary: Although Dürr receives the most speaking time, a large part of it is used to defend against repeated accusations rather than to present his position. Lanz's own speaking share of approx. 27% is unusually high for a moderator and shows that he himself acts as a participant, not merely as a questioner. Bachmann receives proportionally substantial uninterrupted speaking time for his FDP criticism.*



#### 4. OMISSION (Selective Omission)

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**Omission 1:** Context: The role of the SPD in the end of the coalition — Relevant at: throughout — Effect: Dürr mentions several times that SPD and Greens had already met in summer to discuss a possible end to the coalition (approx. 22:00). Lanz does not engage with this and says: "That is not the topic." This systematically blanks out the question of whether the other coalition partners also prepared for the end. This creates the impression that only the FDP had planned the end.

**Omission 2:** Context: The three prepared speeches by the Federal Chancellor — Relevant at: approx. 22:00 — Dürr quote: "The Federal Chancellor had three prepared speeches." — Effect: Lanz interrupts with "Yes, Mr Lanz" and does not pursue this further. The fact that the Chancellor was apparently also prepared for various scenarios is not explored. This is relevant information for the overall assessment.

**Omission 3:** Context: The blocking of fiscal drag relief by coalition partners — Relevant at: approx. 08:00 — Dürr quote: "The abolition, the reduction of fiscal drag, i.e. tax relief. That was blocked." — Effect: Lanz does not engage with this, even though it would be a concrete example of the reform backlog complained of by the FDP. The substantive dimension of the coalition dispute is neglected in favour of the procedural question (How was the end planned?).

**Omission 4:** Context: Northvolt scandal (620 million euros battery factory) — Relevant at: approx. 06:00 — Dürr quote: "Keyword: 620 million euros at a battery factory, where the Economics Minister at least informed us differently beforehand." — Effect: Lanz immediately interrupts: "Where are you going with this?" and blocks the topic. Whether the Northvolt issue is relevant would be debatable, but the active blocking of a counter-argument is conspicuous.

*Summary: Information that supports the FDP's position or could shed light on the responsibility of other coalition partners is systematically suppressed. The programme focuses almost exclusively on the question "Did the FDP lie?" and largely blanks out the substantive dimension of the coalition dispute.*

#### Missing voices

- SPD representative: Could have presented the Chancellor's perspective on the coalition evening, the debt brake demand and the dismissal of Lindner first-hand.
- Greens representative: Could have brought in the climate policy dimension of the Lindner paper, Habeck's role and the Greens' view of the end of the coalition.
- CDU/CSU representative: As the strongest opposition party and likely election winner, could have brought in the perspective of the incoming government.
- Constitutional lawyer: Could have provided the constitutional classification of the process (vote of confidence, dismissal of a minister, new election procedure).
- Trade union representative or social scientist: Could have brought in the employee perspective on the FDP's economic proposals and the social consequences.



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- Syrian representative of the diaspora: Could have authentically conveyed the perspective of Syrians living in Germany.
- Security policy expert or NATO expert: Could have contextualised the security policy implications of the Syria escalation for Europe.
- Migration researcher: Could have provided a scientifically grounded assessment of the question of possible refugee movements, rather than merely raising it as a closing question.



## 5. NUMERICAL MANIPULATION

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

**Finding 1:** Timestamp: approx. 45:00 — Quote (Dürr): "20% of the federal budget goes to investment, and under the grand coalition it was 10." — Missing context: This figure is introduced by Dürr and immediately qualified by Roßbach: "That only works because you have outsourced investments in the Bundeswehr and defence." — Effect: Here the programme actually works well: a figure is introduced and immediately contextualised. However, Dürr's counter-argument is not explored further.

**Finding 2:** Timestamp: approx. 42:00 — Quote (Lanz): "130 billion now flows from additional tax funds out of a budget of 480 billion into pensions." — Missing context: The figure is correct, but what is missing is the context that the federal subsidy to the pension system also covers non-insurance benefits (mothers' pension, East-West equalisation, etc.) and is not merely a "subsidy". — Effect: The figure is used as evidence for the need for reform, which is legitimate, but the missing differentiation oversimplifies the debate.

*Summary: Numerical manipulation in the strict sense barely occurs. The figures used are largely correct, if sometimes lacking context. The programme is comparatively clean in this area.*



## 6. GUILT BY ASSOCIATION

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**Association 1:** Timestamp: approx. 01:30 — Quote (Lanz, introduction): "...where, I believe, interestingly, Patrick Deneen also teaches" — Technique: Lanz casually mentions that Patrick Deneen, a conservative critic of liberalism, also teaches at Bachmann's university. This is a subtle association intended to lend additional weight to Bachmann's criticism of the FDP (even at a conservative university, liberals are appalled). — Effect: Minor, but recognisable as an attempt to reinforce the criticism.

**Association 2:** Timestamp: approx. 35:00–40:00 — Quote (Lanz): "He suddenly started talking about how we should dare a little more Musk... dare a little more Milei, Argentina." — Technique: Lanz uses Lindner's Musk/Milei statement to place the FDP in proximity to populism and authoritarianism. The association FDP → Musk → monopolies → authoritarian is reinforced by Bachmann's analysis. — Effect: Considerable. The FDP is associated with figures who are predominantly negatively connoted in the German public. However: Lindner did in fact make this statement, so raising the issue is journalistically legitimate.

*Summary: The guilt-by-association technique is used moderately. The Musk/Milei association is journalistically justifiable, since Lindner himself introduced these names. The Deneen mention is more subtle and less justified. Overall, no serious finding, but a recognisable tendency.*



## 7. TIMING

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**Finding 1:** Position: 00:00–55:00 (approx. 73% of the programme) — Content: FDP questioning on the end of the traffic light coalition — Timing effect: The FDP topic dominates the programme massively. The Syria topic, which Lanz himself frames in the introduction as the actually more important one ("which must not lead us, navel-gazing, to lose sight of what is happening right on our European doorstep"), receives only a fraction. The introduction creates the impression that Syria is the main topic; in reality it is the secondary topic.

**Finding 2:** Position: approx. 70:00–75:00 (end) — Content: Refugee question and closing remarks — Timing effect: The programme ends with the emotionally charged question about refugee movements and Helberg's appeal that the migration debate has "shifted". This is the last information that stays with the viewer (recency effect). Its placement at the end gives this position particular weight.

**Finding 3:** Position: approx. 28:00–30:00 — Content: Lanz's interjection "We have now put you through the wringer" — Timing effect: After intensive questioning, Lanz signals a shift to the substantive debate. By this point, the image of the FDP as lacking credibility has already been established. The subsequent substantive debate takes place under this premise.

*Summary: The timing of the programme creates a discrepancy between the announced and the actual focus. The FDP questioning dominates, even though Syria is announced as the actually more important topic. The placement of the most intense confrontation at the beginning shapes the perception of 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: approx. 05:00–10:00 — Reaction: Lanz shows outrage over the D-Day paper and the alleged lack of credibility of the FDP's account. He insists on the same question six times. — Comparable without outrage: Dürr mentions that the Federal Chancellor had three prepared speeches (approx. 22:00) — Lanz shows no outrage or interest whatsoever. Dürr mentions the Northvolt affair (620 million euros) — Lanz blocks it: "Where are you going with this?" — Asymmetry: The outrage is directed exclusively against the FDP. Comparable accusations against other parties are not pursued with the same intensity.

**Finding 2:** Timestamp: approx. 35:00 — Reaction: Bachmann shows outrage over the Musk/Milei statement: "Are those the two role models that come to a liberal's mind first of all? Have you nothing else to offer?" — Comparable without outrage: The fact that Robert Habeck had himself photographed with Elon Musk in Brandenburg is mentioned by Dürr, but is not classified as problematic by either Lanz or Bachmann. — Asymmetry: The outrage over the Musk association applies only to the FDP, not to other parties.

*Summary: The outrage in the programme is selectively directed at the FDP. Comparable events involving other parties (Chancellor's preparation, Habeck-Musk photo, Northvolt) are either ignored or actively blocked. This creates a distorted picture in which only the FDP has failed morally.*



## 9. COMPLETENESS

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The programme falls in a phase of maximum domestic political agitation following the end of the traffic light coalition on 6 November 2024. The FDP is under massive public pressure over the leaked strategy paper with military language ("D-Day", "open field battle"), which creates the impression of a coalition break planned well in advance. At the same time, the situation in Syria is escalating dramatically, with HTS Islamists having taken Aleppo, raising questions about European security and refugee movements. The programme is caught between the need for domestic political clarification and the necessity of not losing sight of foreign policy developments.

### Share of perspectives covered

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

**[A]** FDP perspective: legitimacy of the coalition exit, reform backlog, economic policy necessity

**[B]** SPD/Chancellor perspective: account of the coalition evening from the Chancellor's point of view, debt brake debate

**[C]** Greens perspective: role of the Greens in the end of the coalition, climate policy dimension of the Lindner paper

**[D]** Perspective of voters/the public: loss of trust in politics, disillusionment with democracy

**[E]** Constitutional law perspective: legitimacy of the process, role of the Federal President, vote of confidence

**[F]** Economic science perspective (broad): assessment of the 18-page proposals, debt brake reform, competitiveness debate

**[G]** Syria — humanitarian perspective: situation of the civilian population, refugee movements, humanitarian aid

**[H]** Syria — geopolitical perspective: role of Russia, Iran, Turkey, Israel, the USA

**[I]** Syria — perspective of the Syrian diaspora in Germany: integration, fears, return debate

**[J]** Perspective of the opposition (CDU/CSU, AfD, BSW, Linke): assessment of the end of the traffic light coalition, election campaign positions

### **[A] FDP perspective — TREATED IN DETAIL**

Timestamp: throughout 00:00–approx. 55:00 — Quote: "What I do not apologise for is that we were prepared for various scenarios." — Assessment: Christian Dürri, as the only politician, is given extensive opportunity to present the FDP's position, but is intensively confronted in doing so.

### **[B] SPD/Chancellor perspective — INDICATED**

Timestamp: approx. 20:00 — Quote: "...or we break the debt brake for the coming year. That was the Federal Chancellor's demand." — Assessment: The Chancellor's perspective is conveyed exclusively through Dürri's account; no SPD representative is present, and no independent contextualisation of the Chancellor's position takes place.

### **[C] Greens perspective — LARGELY OMITTED**

Timestamp: Only in passing, approx. 18:00 — Quote: "...that the Economics Minister spread it widely" — Assessment: The Greens appear only as a minor figure in Dürri's narrative; their view of the end of the coalition, their climate policy objections to the Lindner paper, are not independently addressed.

### **[D] Perspective of voters/the public — INDICATED**

Timestamp: approx. 04:00 — Quote: "...80 percent of people said one should at least question them" — Assessment: Dürri mentions the unpopularity of the traffic light coalition, but a systematic presentation of the overall loss of trust in politics is absent.

### **[E] Constitutional law perspective — OMITTED**

Timestamp: None — Assessment: Neither the vote of confidence, nor the role of the Federal President, nor the constitutional classification of the process are addressed.

### **[F] Economic science perspective — TREATED**

Timestamp: approx. 30:00–45:00 — Bachmann quote: "In the end, all that remains of your liberalism... is nonsense." — Assessment: Bachmann provides a well-founded economic critique of the FDP, but from a specifically economic-liberal perspective; Keynesian or trade-union-aligned positions are absent.

### **[G] Syria — humanitarian perspective — TREATED**

**Präsident:** Schläpfer, David - **Kontakt:** [kontakt@SVFAB.ch](mailto:kontakt@SVFAB.ch) - **Adresse:** SVFAB, Postfach, CH-8021 Zürich 1



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Timestamp: approx. 55:00–75:00 — Helberg quote: "Never have so many people in Syria needed humanitarian aid from outside." — Assessment: Helberg provides a nuanced humanitarian contextualisation.

**[H] Syria — geopolitical perspective — TREATED IN DETAIL**

Timestamp: approx. 55:00–75:00 — Helberg quote: "Putin got away with it in Syria, no one stopped him." — Assessment: The geopolitical connections are presented competently and comprehensively by Helberg.

**[I] Syria — perspective of the Syrian diaspora — INDICATED**

Timestamp: approx. 72:00 — Helberg quote: "People are afraid of being deported." — Assessment: Briefly touched upon but not explored in depth; no representative of the Syrian community is present.

**[J] Perspective of the opposition — OMITTED**

Timestamp: None — Assessment: Neither CDU/CSU nor AfD, BSW or Linke are given a voice or substantively contextualised. The parliamentary opposition's assessment of the end of the traffic light coalition is entirely absent.

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**Completeness score: 4/10**

**Justification:** Of ten relevant perspectives, only three are treated in detail (FDP, economic science, Syria geopolitics), three are indicated (SPD, public, diaspora), and four are entirely absent (Greens, constitutional law, opposition, constitutional classification). The programme is strongly focused on the FDP confrontation without incorporating countervoices from other parties. The Syria segment is balanced in itself, but suffers from the lack of time caused by the dominant domestic politics debate.



## Soft facts — 6 qualitative techniques

### 10. FRAMING (setting the frame)

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**Finding 1:** Timestamp: 00:00–02:30 — Quote (Lanz, introduction of Dürr): "...who was at the forefront, I almost said, when his party planned the exit from the coalition with field battles and torpedoes. How did he experience the defensive reactions, the battle for the interpretive authority, how did he experience all of that, how prominent FDP figures repeatedly used the word fairy tale when critical questions arose, and indeed until it eventually became clear that within their own party there are the real fairy tale tellers who could hold their own against the Brothers Grimm at any time." — Manipulation: Pre-judging framing. Already in the introduction, the FDP is framed as a party of liars ("real fairy tale tellers", "Brothers Grimm"). The formulation "planned with field battles and torpedoes" adopts the language of the strategy paper and presents it as fact, not as an allegation. — Why problematic: The guest is introduced to the audience, before he can say a word, with a framing that already undermines his credibility. This is not a neutral introduction but an indictment.

**Finding 2:** Timestamp: 01:30 — Quote (Lanz, introduction of Bachmann): "...says that what the FDP is putting on is a theatre born of a lack of worldly awareness, siege mentality, unprofessionalism and an absence of a culture of acknowledging mistakes." — Manipulation: Bachmann is introduced as a key witness against the FDP, even though he is presented as a "liberal economist". The framing suggests: even their own people are appalled. — Why problematic: Introducing a guest with his harshest criticism of another guest creates a confrontational dynamic that pre-shapes the entire course of the conversation.

**Finding 3:** Timestamp: 00:30–01:00 — Quote (Lanz, introduction of Roßbach): "...has written one of her best sentences, I think... Politics is a business with an outward-facing surplus of morality and inner deficits of virtue." — Manipulation: Roßbach is introduced as a moral authority whose judgement about the "ugly side of politics" sets the frame for the entire FDP questioning. — Why problematic: The introduction establishes a moral framing (politics = dirty, FDP = particularly dirty) that goes beyond factual analysis.

*Summary: The introductions set a consistently accusatory frame towards the FDP. While critical questioning is legitimate, the pre-judgement in the introductions goes beyond journalistic distance and establishes a narrative before the questioning even begins.*



## 11. CHOICE OF WORDS AND TERMS

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**Finding 1:** Timestamp: 02:30 — Quote (Lanz): "That is why we are looking forward today to a clarifying and very honest conversation." — Manipulation: The formulation "honest conversation" implies that previous statements by the FDP were dishonest. It is a politely packaged insinuation. — Why problematic: Suggestive choice of words that places the guest under general suspicion.

**Finding 2:** Timestamp: 03:30 — Quote (Lanz): "Back then the FDP was standing at the abyss. Have you now taken a step further?" — Manipulation: Classic rhetorical trick — the idiom "standing at the abyss and taking a step further" means having fallen into the abyss. Lanz packages an assessment (FDP has crashed) as an apparently harmless question. — Why problematic: It is not an open question but a statement disguised as a question.

**Finding 3:** Timestamp: 10:00 — Quote (Lanz): "Back there stands the worst-case scenario your liberal party has experienced. The worst in recent years." — Manipulation: "Worst-case scenario" (GAU — Größter Anzunehmender Unfall) is a dramatising choice of words that frames the FDP's situation in catastrophe terminology. — Why problematic: Exaggerating language that makes factual contextualisation more difficult.

**Finding 4:** Timestamp: approx. 12:00 — Quote (Lanz): "We are talking here, so to speak, about the question of whether there has been a blatant political lie." — Manipulation: Lanz sets the term "blatant political lie" as a frame, even though the factual situation is still unclear at this point. — Why problematic: The term "lie" implies intent and is a serious accusation that is disguised as a question.

*Summary: Lanz's choice of words is consistently evaluative and dramatising. Terms such as "worst-case scenario", "fairy tale tellers", "blatant lie" and "standing at the abyss" go beyond neutral moderation and establish a narrative of the FDP as an incredible, failed party.*



## 12. MODERATION BEHAVIOUR

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

**Finding 1:** Timestamp: approx. 05:00–08:00 — Quote (Lanz): "You had never seen this paper before?" / "Did you know it existed?" / "You didn't know that Reimann, Dschirzerei and others had this paper somewhere in their drawers?" — Analysis: Lanz asks the same question in slightly varied form at least six times in a row. Dürr answers clearly each time with "No". Lanz does not accept the answer and continues asking. This is an interrogation technique, not journalistic questioning. By comparison: Roßbach and Bachmann are never questioned in this manner; their statements are accepted as facts.

**Finding 2:** Timestamp: approx. 07:00 — Quote (Lanz): "You said you only know it if you actually use it." / Dürr: "I did not say that." / Lanz: "Yes, you did say that." — Analysis: Lanz puts words in Dürr's mouth that the latter disputes. Lanz insists. This is an aggressive interview technique that puts the guest on the defensive and gives the viewer the impression that the guest is evading, even though he is answering clearly.

**Finding 3:** Timestamp: approx. 10:00 — Quote (Lanz): "Back there stands the worst-case scenario... And we're going to stay there for a while. Now let's leave Northvolt aside. Fine. And let's also leave the wicked Habeck aside for now. Today we're only dealing with you." — Analysis: Lanz explicitly determines that mistakes by others (Habeck, Northvolt) will not be discussed, but exclusively FDP mistakes. This is open topic control that prevents balance. By comparison: No other guest is restricted in this manner.

**Finding 4:** Timestamp: approx. 15:00 — Quote (Lanz): "We'll get to that in a moment." / "We'll talk about that in a moment." — Analysis: Lanz repeatedly promises to address Dürr's points "in a moment", but in several cases does not do so. This is a technique to silence the guest without refusing him an answer.

**Finding 5:** Timestamp: approx. 30:00 — Treatment of Bachmann — Analysis: Bachmann is allowed to deliver long, uninterrupted monologues (e.g. his analysis of the FDP strategy, his Milei/Musk criticism). He is never interrupted, never put on the defensive, never confronted with counter-questions. The asymmetric treatment is glaring.

*Summary: The moderation behaviour shows a massive asymmetry. Dürr is questioned in interrogation style, interrupted, words are put in his mouth, and his counter-arguments are actively blocked. Bachmann and Roßbach are treated respectfully and can present their positions undisturbed. This creates a 3-against-1 dynamic that goes beyond critical questioning.*



### 13. QUESTION ASYMMETRY

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**Asymmetry 1:** To Dürr, approx. 05:00: "You had never seen this paper before? Did you know it existed? You didn't know that Reimann...?" [hard, repetitive, interrogation-style] — To Bachmann, approx. 08:00: "Mr Bachmann, how did you experience that?" [open, inviting, respectful]

**Asymmetry 2:** To Dürr, approx. 10:00: "Back there stands the worst-case scenario... Now let's leave Northvolt aside. And let's also leave the wicked Habeck aside." [topic control, restriction] — To Roßbach, approx. 12:00: "Ms Roßbach, may I ask you?" [polite, inviting]

**Asymmetry 3:** To Dürr, approx. 20:00: "Do you understand that what you are saying is not credible?" [direct credibility attack] — To Bachmann, approx. 35:00: "Have I described that incorrectly, Mr Bachmann?" [seeking confirmation, respectful]

**Asymmetry 4:** To Dürr, approx. 45:00: "I simply don't buy that." [direct rejection] — To Helberg, approx. 60:00: "How credible is that?" [open, factual question]

**Asymmetry 5:** To Dürr, approx. 22:00: "Who did he do that for then? I'm interested in the question, who was it done for?" [insistent, suggestive] — To Roßbach, approx. 28:00: "Can you try to explain to me...?" [inviting, on equal terms]

*Summary: The question asymmetry is considerable. Dürr is confronted with closed, suggestive, repetitive and confrontational questions, while Bachmann and Roßbach receive open, inviting questions. Credibility is only directly called into question in Dürr's case. This creates the impression in the viewer that Dürr's statements are fundamentally incredible, while the other guests are telling the truth.*



#### 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 unequal positions), but with the opposite: a systematic imbalance at the expense of the FDP. The programme does not create false equivalence, but a one-sided indictment.

**Finding 2:** In the Syria segment there is a slight false-balance approach when Lanz asks: "Do you expect that we will have a new refugee situation in Europe?" and Helberg responds: "That is the only thing that interests us. Do you know that our entire Middle East policy is based on whether refugees come or not? That is truly a poor reflection." — Here the legitimate question about refugee movements is morally devalued, even though it is highly relevant to German domestic politics.

*Summary: False balance in the classical sense is not a main problem of this programme. The problem is rather the lack of balance — the absence of voices that support the FDP's position or critically examine other parties.*



## 15. AGENDA-SETTING

6/10

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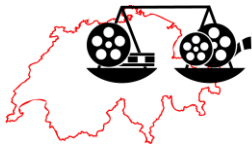
10

**Finding 1:** Agenda element set: "The FDP lied and planned the end of the traffic light coalition well in advance" — Timestamp: 00:00–02:30 (introduction) — Evidence: "...the real fairy tale tellers who could hold their own against the Brothers Grimm at any time" — Alternative: The agenda could also have been: "How did the traffic light coalition end and what responsibility do all parties involved bear?" or "What does the end of the traffic light coalition mean for the necessary economic reforms?"

**Finding 2:** Agenda element set: "The FDP is not serious" (Musk/Milei debate) — Timestamp: approx. 35:00 — Evidence: Lanz introduces the Musk/Milei discussion with: "Two worldviews are clashing here" — Alternative: The debate could also have been: "What economic reforms does Germany need?" — instead it is narrowed down to the question "Is the FDP serious?"

**Finding 3:** Agenda element set: Syria as a "forgotten crisis" — Timestamp: 00:00 and approx. 55:00 — Evidence: "...which must not lead us, navel-gazing, to lose sight of" — Alternative: This agenda-setting is journalistically sensible and appropriate. Drawing attention to the Syria crisis is a legitimate editorial focus.

*Summary: The programme's agenda-setting narrows the traffic light debate down to the question of FDP credibility and largely blanks out the substantive dimension (economic reforms, debt brake, responsibility of all parties). The Syria agenda-setting, by contrast, is journalistically appropriate and valuable.*



## CHAPTER 2 — OVERALL EVALUATION

### Results

#### Dominant techniques

- 1. Moderation behaviour / question asymmetry (score 7/7):** The most glaring imbalance in the programme lies in the asymmetric treatment of guests. Dürr is questioned in interrogation style, words are put in his mouth, and his counter-arguments are actively blocked. Bachmann and Roßbach are treated respectfully and invitingly. This asymmetry is the central structural problem of the programme.
- 2. Omission / Selective Omission (score 7):** Information that supports the FDP's position or could shed light on the responsibility of other coalition partners is systematically suppressed. Dürr's references to the three Chancellor speeches, the SPD/Greens summer meeting and the Northvolt affair are actively blocked with formulations such as "That is not the topic" or "Where are you going with this?"
- 3. Framing / choice of words (score 6/5):** The introductions and the consistent choice of words establish a narrative of the FDP as an incredible party of liars before the questioning has even begun. Terms such as "fairy tale tellers", "worst-case scenario", "blatant lie" go beyond critical questioning and constitute a pre-judgement.

Justification: The programme shows a clear one-sidedness at the expense of the FDP. This manifests itself in the guest selection (3 against 1), the asymmetric moderation behaviour, the systematic suppression of exculpatory information and the pre-judging framing. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that the FDP questioning is journalistically justifiable — the D-Day paper is a legitimate subject of critical reporting, and Dürr receives considerable speaking time despite the confrontation. The one-sidedness lies not in the subject matter but in the methodology: the absence of any countervoices, the active blocking of counter-arguments and the asymmetric treatment. Under §26 MStV, broadcasters are obliged to ensure balance. An individual programme does not have to be fully balanced in itself (internal pluralism across the overall programme), but the intensity of the one-sidedness in this programme is remarkable.

#### CONCLUSION

The programme from December 2024 shows a clear one-sidedness at the expense of the FDP, which manifests itself in the guest selection (three FDP-critical voices against one FDP representative), the asymmetric moderation behaviour (interrogation technique towards Dürr, respectful treatment of the other guests), the systematic suppression of exculpatory information and the pre-judging framing. While critical questioning of a politician on the D-Day paper is journalistically required and legitimate, the methodology goes beyond critical journalism: the active blocking of counter-arguments ("That is not the topic", "Where are you going with this?"), the repeated putting of words in the guest's mouth and the absence of any voices shedding light on the responsibility of other coalition partners violate the principle of balance pursuant to §26 MStV. The Syria segment is considerably more balanced in itself and professionally grounded, but suffers from the lack of time caused by the dominant FDP questioning. Overall, the programme fulfils the ZDF's public service remit only to a limited extent, since essential perspectives (SPD, Greens, opposition, constitutional law) are entirely absent and the existing debate is conducted in a structurally one-sided manner.



## CHAPTER 3 — PARTY-POLITICAL BIAS

Party	Score (-5..+5)	Concrete evidence
CDU/CSU	0	Not mentioned, neither positively nor negatively.
SPD	+2	The SPD/Chancellor perspective is not independently subjected to critical scrutiny. Dürr's reference to three prepared Chancellor speeches (approx. 22:00: "The Federal Chancellor had three prepared speeches") is blocked. The Chancellor's debt brake demand is conveyed only through Dürr's account, without critical contextualisation.
Greens	+2	Habeck is critically mentioned by Dürr (Northvolt, approx. 06:00: "620 million euros at a battery factory"), Lanz immediately blocks: "Where are you going with this?" The Greens are shielded from any criticism.
FDP	-4	Consistent confrontation: introduction as "fairy tale tellers" (00:00), "worst-case scenario" (10:00), "blatant lie" (12:00), "I simply don't buy that" (45:00), "That's just empty talk" (42:00). Systematic blocking of counter-arguments. 3-against-1 constellation.
AfD	0	Not mentioned.
BSW	0	Not mentioned.
Linke	0	Not mentioned.
Freie Wähler	0	Not mentioned.

### Party bias summary

- Most favoured: SPD and Greens (score +2/+2) — Both parties are shielded from any criticism; Dürr's attempts to point to mistakes by the coalition partners are actively suppressed.
- Most disadvantaged: FDP (score -4) — The entire programme is structured as an indictment against the FDP, with pre-judging framing, asymmetric questioning and systematic suppression of exculpatory information.
- Conclusion: The programme shows a clear bias at the expense of the FDP and in favour of the former coalition partners SPD and Greens. This is particularly noteworthy since the programme takes place in the hot phase before a federal election in which all parties are competing for votes. The one-sided attribution of blame for the end of the coalition to the FDP, without shedding light on the responsibility of the other partners, distorts the overall political picture in favour of the governing parties SPD and Greens.



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

### Assessment under §26 MStV

Violation 1: Requirement of balance (§26 para. 1 MStV in conjunction with §5 ZDF State Treaty)

Norm: §26 para. 1 MStV obliges broadcasters to give expression in their offerings to the diversity of opinions in all essential respects. §5 para. 1 ZDF State Treaty specifies: "The ZDF shall in its offerings [...] provide a comprehensive overview of international, European, national and regional events in all essential areas of life."

Facts: The programme addresses the end of the traffic light coalition exclusively from the perspective of FDP responsibility. The perspectives of the SPD, the Greens and the opposition are entirely absent. No representative of these parties is present, and attempts by the FDP guest to point to the responsibility of others are actively suppressed.

Evidence: approx. 06:00 — Dürr: "Keyword: 620 million euros at a battery factory" — Lanz: "Where are you going with this?" / approx. 10:00 — Lanz: "Now let's leave Northvolt aside. And let's also leave the wicked Habeck aside." / approx. 22:00 — Dürr: "SPD and Greens already met in summer" — Lanz: "That is not the topic."

Assessment: The active suppression of relevant counter-information in a programme that presents itself as an enlightening conversation about the end of the coalition is difficult to reconcile with the requirement of balance. While not every individual programme needs to be fully balanced in itself (principle of internal pluralism across the overall programme), the intensity of the one-sidedness — in particular the active blocking of counter-arguments — goes beyond what can be justified by internal pluralism.

Violation 2: Requirement of objectivity (§6 para. 1 ZDF State Treaty)

Norm: §6 para. 1 ZDF State Treaty: "The programmes of the ZDF shall [...] be committed to truth."

Facts: The introduction contains evaluative formulations that are presented as statements of fact: "the real fairy tale tellers who could hold their own against the Brothers Grimm at any time" implies that the FDP leadership lied — an assessment that was not conclusively substantiated at the time of the programme.

Evidence: 00:00–02:30 — Introduction of Dürr.

Assessment: The mixing of opinion and statements of fact in the introduction is problematic, but in the context of a talk show, which is regarded as an opinion format, less serious than in a news programme.

Violation 3: Fairness requirement towards guests

Norm: General right of personality (Art. 2 para. 1 in conjunction with Art. 1 para. 1 GG), journalistic duty of care.

Facts: The repeated putting of words in the guest's mouth (approx. 07:00: "You said you only know it if you actually use it" — Dürr: "I did not say that" — Lanz: "Yes, you did say that") and the interrogation technique (sixfold repetition of the same question despite a clear answer) go beyond critical questioning.

Evidence: approx. 05:00–08:00 — Repeated questioning about the paper; approx. 07:00 — false attribution of a statement.

Assessment: While hard questioning in a talk show is permissible and even desirable, the demonstrable false attribution of a statement constitutes a violation of the journalistic duty of care. Dürr clearly and repeatedly disputes the statement attributed to him; Lanz nevertheless insists.

### Overall assessment §26 MStV

The programme exhibits features that are in tension with the requirement of balance under §26 MStV and the programme principles of the ZDF State Treaty. The central problem does not lie in the critical questioning of an FDP politician — this is journalistically required and legitimate — but in the combination of one-sided guest selection, active blocking of counter-arguments, pre-judging framing and asymmetric moderation behaviour. §26 para. 1 MStV requires that the diversity of opinions be expressed "in all essential respects". In a programme that addresses the end of a three-party coalition but allows only one of the three parties to speak and actively suppresses the responsibility of the other two, this requirement is not fulfilled. The ZDF Television Council, as the competent supervisory body, would be empowered to review the programme within the framework of its programme supervision. A formal legal violation that would necessarily lead to supervisory measures does not necessarily exist in view of the principle of internal pluralism



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(balance across the overall programme), but would have to be affirmed in the event of a systematic repetition of this pattern.



## OVERALL EVALUATION OF THE 15 CRITERIA

### Individual scores — all 15 criteria

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

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

**5.2/10**

*Considerable imbalance*

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

**5.7/10**

*Considerable imbalance*

#### OVERALL SCORE

**5.5/10**

*Considerable imbalance*

*Averaged from hard facts and soft facts*



## KEY — Meaning of scores

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

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

### Aggregated deviation index — interpretation ranges

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

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

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



+3 to +5

**Strongly favoured**

Party is clearly treated better in terms of 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 finding 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 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

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#### Law

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Media State Treaty (MStV, 2020)

#### Relevant articles

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- §26 para. 1 MStV: Public broadcasters shall in their offerings provide 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 service 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 remit with objectivity and impartiality.

#### Core obligations

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- 1. Diversity of opinion (internal pluralism):** All relevant perspectives must be represented in the overall programme
- 2. 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

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- Broadcasting councils of the regional public broadcasters: supervision of ARD broadcasters (BR, WDR, NDR, etc.)
- ZDF Television Council (§19 ZDF State Treaty): supervision of ZDF programme
- Legal supervision: respective federal state (ZDF: Rhineland-Palatinate)

#### Complaints procedure

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



## APPENDIX 2: SCIENTIFIC FOUNDATIONS

### Literature

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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-oriented. 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.