



EN DETAILED ANALYSIS

2026-02-12 Der Talk vom 12. Februar

Programme: Markus Lanz | 2026-02-12 | Analysed on: 2026-03-12 15:39

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

OVERALL SCORE

6.8/10

Serious deviation from the impartiality requirement. High degree of deviation

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

POLITICAL SPECTRUM

Classification according to Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) 2024

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

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

The overall tendency is displayed on a 0–10 scale (0 = strongly 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)

3.9 / 10

Favouring the left

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← 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: 12.02.2026
- Host: Markus Lanz

Discussion guests

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| Actors | Function | Party/Affiliation | Political spectrum |
|------------------------|---|--|---------------------------------|
| Jana Hänsel | Author, journalist (ZEIT), book author "Es war einmal ein Land" | No party affiliation; centre-left liberal, East German perspective | Centre-left |
| Sepp Müller | Deputy parliamentary group leader CDU in the Bundestag | CDU | Centre-right / conservative |
| Nicola Fuchs-Schündeln | Economist (Goethe University Frankfurt, Yale PhD) | No party affiliation; economics-based | Centre / liberal market economy |
| Kevin Kühnert | Former SPD Secretary General, now Bürgerbewegung Finanzwende | SPD-affiliated / Finanzwende | Centre-left to left |

Main topic

The alienation of East Germany from democracy — causes, extent and the question of whether and why a growing part of the East German population is turning away from democratic institutions and established parties.



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: Jana Hänsel — Timestamp: throughout, first address — Statement: "The end of democracy in East Germany will come. Perhaps it is already here." — Classification: Journalist and author with a clear thesis that provides the programme's framing. Is positioned as a key witness. — Missing countervoice: An East German author or academic who rejects the thesis "farewell to democracy" (e.g. Steffen Mau, Ilko-Sascha Kowalczuk, Petra Köpping).

Expert 2: Kevin Kühnert — Timestamp: throughout — Statement: Analyses AfD voters as driven by culture war, sees libertarian agenda behind right-wing mobilisation — Classification: Former SPD Secretary General, now at Finanzwende; brings a decidedly left-wing perspective on wealth distribution. Is framed as an analytical observer, even though he was politically involved in a party. — Missing countervoice: An economically liberal expert or FDP representative who approaches the tax discussion from a different perspective.

Expert 3: Nicola Fuchs-Schündeln — Timestamp: approx. 15:00, 45:00, 55:00 — Statement: "Reunification is a great success story" / "Anti-migration rhetoric always only helps right-wing parties" — Classification: Economist with a nuanced position, who is however frequently outvoted in the programme's dynamics. Her political science statement on migration rhetoric goes beyond her area of expertise. — Missing countervoice: A migration researcher or demographer who contextualises the figures.

Expert 4: Sepp Müller — Timestamp: throughout — Statement: Defends East German perspective, rejects inheritance tax, describes experiences of alienation — Classification: The only guest representing a conservative East German perspective; is however frequently interrupted and must defend himself against accusations (proximity to AfD, incorrect facts). — Missing countervoice: Müller is the only conservative voice against three centre-left positions.

Missing expert groups: AfD politicians, local politicians, migration researchers, East German entrepreneurs, constitutional lawyers (for the inheritance tax debate), demographers, political scientists with a focus on populism research.

Summary: The guest selection is heavily weighted towards the centre-left. Three of four guests (Hänsel, Kühnert, Fuchs-Schündeln) essentially share the basic analysis that the AfD is a problem and that migration rhetoric is counterproductive. Müller as the only conservative East German is in a structural 1-against-3 situation and is also repeatedly challenged by the host.



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2. SOURCE SELECTION

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Claims without primary source = penalty points (rumour check)

Source 1: Timestamp: 00:00 — Source: Jana Hänsel's book "Es war einmal ein Land" — Classification: The book provides the entire programme framework. It is a journalistic analysis with a clear thesis, not a scientific study. — Missing counter-source: Scientific studies on East German satisfaction with democracy (e.g. Sachsen-Monitor, Thüringen-Monitor), which show more differentiated results.

Source 2: Timestamp: approx. 12:00 — Source: Hänsel cites interviews with East German members of the Bundestag (Detlef Müller, Mario Csaja) — Classification: Anecdotal evidence from election losers, who by their nature have a particular perspective. — Missing counter-source: Interviews with AfD election winners or neutral electoral researchers.

Source 3: Timestamp: end — Source: Pastor Justus Geilhofe, "Christian influencer" — Classification: Is used by Lanz as a provider of closing remarks; his thesis about "complaining" is deployed as a provocative conclusion. — Missing counter-source: East German voices explaining why their criticism is not "complaining".

Summary: The source selection is one-sided. A single book provides the framework, anecdotal interviews support the thesis, and a provocative quote closes the programme. Scientific sources on satisfaction with democracy, electoral research or migration statistics are absent.



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

- Jana Hänsel: (25%)
- Kevin Kühnert: (28%)
- Sepp Müller: (21%)
- Nicola Fuchs-Schündeln: (14%)
- Markus Lanz: (12%)

Summary: Kühnert and Hänsel dominate the programme with a combined share of over 50% of speaking time. Müller as the only conservative voice receives significantly less space, and Fuchs-Schündeln as a scientist gets the least opportunity to speak. The time distribution reinforces the content imbalance: the centre-left perspective has structurally more space than the conservative or the scientifically neutral one.



4. OMISSION (Selective Omission)

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Omission 1: Context: The AfD's programme is described as "very radical" (Hänsel), but never concretely presented. — Relevant at: approx. 12:00 — Effect: The audience cannot form its own judgement because the contents of the programme are not mentioned. The assessment "radical" remains unexamined.

Omission 2: Context: The role of the Treuhand in the deindustrialisation of East Germany is not mentioned. — Relevant at: approx. 15:00–20:00 (discussion about economic transformation) — Effect: A central factor in East German alienation — the privatisation perceived as a West German takeover — is completely absent, even though it is essential for understanding the depth of the disappointment.

Omission 3: Context: The rising voter turnout in the East is mentioned by Müller as a positive sign of democracy, but not discussed further. — Relevant at: approx. 22:00 — Effect: A strong counter-argument to the thesis "farewell to democracy" is not taken up. If more people go to vote, this can also be read as democratisation.

Omission 4: Context: The role of the media in alienation is briefly mentioned by Hänsel ("also the media"), but not explored further. — Relevant at: approx. 08:00 — Effect: A self-reflection by the media — including ZDF — on their share of responsibility for the alienation does not take place, even though the topic is directly addressed.

Omission 5: Context: The concrete successes of East German economic policy (chip industry Dresden, optics Jena) are mentioned by Fuchs-Schündeln, but immediately relativised by Hänsel and not explored further. — Relevant at: approx. 16:00–18:00 — Effect: The success narrative is systematically kept small in favour of the crisis narrative.

Summary: Central contextual information — Treuhand, rising voter turnout, AfD programme in detail, media responsibility, East German success stories — is either completely omitted or only touched upon and immediately relativised. The omission serves to maintain the crisis framing.

Missing voices

- AfD politician: Could have presented the party's own programme and faced criticism, instead of others distortedly representing the AfD's position.
- AfD voter (citizen): Could have authentically explained what the motivation is — a conscious choice or protest — instead of journalists and politicians speculating about it.
- East German mayor or district administrator: Could have described the municipal reality — refugee accommodation, infrastructure, shortage of skilled workers — first-hand.
- East German entrepreneur: Could have spoken concretely about inheritance tax, succession problems and economic reality, instead of Müller arguing anecdotally and Kühnert theoretically.
- Migration researcher: Could have contextualised the contradictory figures (Hänsel: "8-10%", Müller: "600 to 1,200") and presented the actual burden situation in a fact-based manner.



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- Conservative democratic theorist: Could have explained that institutional criticism and dissatisfaction with the status quo do not automatically mean "farewell to democracy".
- Young East German (under 30): Could have brought in the perspective of the generation that did not experience the GDR but lives with its consequences.
- Satisfied East German: Could have served as a counterweight to the persistent crisis narrative and shown that there is also positive identification with reunification.



5. MANIPULATION OF FIGURES

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

Finding 1: Timestamp: approx. 26:00 — Figure: Hänsel: "The East has a blanket proportion of foreigners of approximately 8 to 10 percent" — Missing context: Müller counters with the concrete example "village of 600 inhabitants, 1,200 refugees". Both figures stand side by side unexamined. — Effect: Hänsel uses average values that conceal local extreme situations; Müller uses individual cases that distort the average. No moderation provides context.

Finding 2: Timestamp: approx. 15:00 — Figure: Fuchs-Schündeln: "Income in the East at 85 percent nominally, in real terms at over 90 percent" — Missing context: Hänsel counters: "East German economic output has actually stagnated for about 20 years at approximately 80 percent." Both are speaking about different indicators (income vs. economic output) without this being made transparent. — Effect: Confusion among the audience; the figures appear to contradict each other, but do not necessarily do so.

Finding 3: Timestamp: approx. 58:00 — Figure: Kühnert: "300 and 400 billion every year that are inherited. The state gets 13-14 billion of that" — Missing context: The figure suggests massive undertaxation without explaining that allowances, valuation rules and business asset relief account for the difference. — Effect: Creates the impression of systematic injustice without naming the reasons for the difference.

Summary: Figures are selectively used by various sides without the host providing any contextualisation. The lack of real-time fact-checking is a moderate problem, but is exacerbated by the asymmetry of follow-up questions (Müller is challenged more strongly than Hänsel or Kühnert).



6. GUILT BY ASSOCIATION

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Association 1: Timestamp: approx. 28:00 — Quote: Hänsel to Müller: "You are singing the AfD's song, Mr Müller." — Technique: Direct equation of Müller's migration criticism with AfD positions. — Effect: Delegitimises any conservative migration criticism as close to the AfD; Müller must defend himself instead of arguing on substance. Lanz does not intervene.

Association 2: Timestamp: approx. 42:00 — Quote: Kühnert: "a mad alarmism that extremists can afford, but not democratic forces" — Technique: Implicit warning to Müller and the CDU that alarmist migration rhetoric places them in proximity to extremists. — Effect: Narrows the discursive space; anyone who speaks too clearly about migration problems is linguistically associated with extremism.

Association 3: Timestamp: approx. 35:00 — Quote: Kühnert about AfD voters: "this disruptive, this destructive potential is attributed to them" — Technique: AfD voters are associated with a will to destroy. — Effect: Millions of voters are framed as destructive without this attribution being questioned.

Summary: Guilt by association is used in this programme primarily against Sepp Müller and the CDU. Any raising of migration problems is reflexively associated with the AfD. Lanz consistently allows this technique without intervening as a moderator.



7. TIMING

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Finding 1: Position: 00:00–05:00 — Content: Programme opening with Hänsel's book thesis as the framework — Timing effect: The primacy effect ensures that the first thesis ("the East is saying farewell to democracy") shapes the entire discourse. Counter-arguments come only later and must fight against the already established premise.

Finding 2: Position: end of the programme — Content: Lanz quotes Pastor Geilhofe: "we should finally stop this complaining" — Timing effect: The recency effect ensures that the last image of the programme frames East German dissatisfaction as "complaining". Hänsel briefly objects, but Lanz closes the programme immediately afterwards.

Finding 3: Position: approx. 50:00–65:00 — Content: Inheritance tax debate with Kühnert's lengthy elaborations — Timing effect: Kühnert receives extensive space in the final third of the programme for his wealth distribution argument, without Müller being able to respond equally, because the programme is coming to an end.

Summary: The programme structure favours the crisis narrative through primacy and recency effects. The thesis "farewell to democracy" stands at the beginning, "stop complaining" at the end. In between, the centre-left perspective receives more space in the strategically important positions.



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. 28:00 — Reaction: Hänsel reacts with outrage to Müller's migration criticism: "You are singing the AfD's song" / "The East has no migration problem" — Comparable without outrage: Kühnert's statement that the radical right is "sponsored and driven by people who primarily represent economic interests" (a statement close to an unsubstantiated conspiracy theory) is not questioned. — Asymmetry: Migration criticism triggers immediate outrage; unsubstantiated claims about the financing of the right go unchallenged.

Finding 2: Timestamp: approx. 35:00 — Reaction: Kühnert speaks about "hundreds of black-clad neo-Nazis" at CSDs — Comparable without outrage: The Islamist murder in Dresden brought up by Lanz himself is mentioned, but not treated with comparable outrage; Lanz asks rather analytically "how do you look at that?" — Asymmetry: Right-wing extremist violence is treated with emotional outrage, Islamist violence rather analytically and distantly.

Finding 3: Timestamp: approx. 55:00 — Reaction: Müller mentions the "left-wing extremist attack in Berlin", but is immediately passed over: Lanz: "What does one want, I think, you mean the systemic is interesting." — Comparable without outrage: Right-wing extremism and AfD radicalisation are discussed extensively and with outrage. — Asymmetry: Left-wing extremism is treated as a footnote, right-wing extremism as a central topic.

Summary: The programme shows a clear asymmetry in the emotional reaction to different forms of extremism and political positions. Migration criticism and right-wing extremism trigger outrage, while Islamist terror, left-wing extremism and unsubstantiated claims about right-wing financing remain without comparable emotional reaction.



| 9. COMPLETENESS | | | | | | | 7/10 | | |
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The programme takes place in the context of a federal election in which the AfD won almost all East German constituencies. The discussion moves in the tension between the economic history of transformation, cultural alienation and the question of political representation. The dominant narrative of the programme is: the East has legitimate reasons for dissatisfaction, the causes lie deep in the post-reunification history, and the AfD benefits from systemic failure of established politics. In doing so, the AfD is consistently treated as a problem, never as a legitimate political actor with its own positions — its voters are framed as driven, not as autonomous decision-makers.

Share of perspectives covered

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

- [A] Perspective of AfD voters themselves — why they consciously vote AfD, what they concretely want
- [B] Perspective of an AfD politician or representative — presentation of the party's own programme
- [C] Perspective of East German entrepreneurs/SMEs — concrete economic experiences
- [D] Perspective of local politics — mayors, district administrators on the ground
- [E] Perspective of security authorities — domestic intelligence, police on extremism
- [F] Perspective of East German citizens who are satisfied — success stories of reunification
- [G] Perspective of migration policy — concrete figures, integration successes and problems
- [H] Perspective of conservative democratic criticism — legitimate criticism of institutions without reference to the AfD
- [I] Perspective of the young East German generation — Millennials/Gen Z who think differently from their parents
- [J] Perspective of historical reappraisal — Treuhand, deindustrialisation, concrete losses

[A] OMITTED

Timestamp: — — Quote: — — Assessment: AfD voters are consistently treated as objects of analysis, they never speak for themselves nor is their perspective authentically conveyed; Hänsel explicitly says "we actually don't know what kind of contract the voters have entered into with this party."

[B] OMITTED

Timestamp: — — Quote: — — Assessment: No AfD representative is invited; the AfD programme is described exclusively by opponents and framed as "very radical" (Hänsel) or as "simple answers to difficult questions" (Müller).

[C] INDICATED

Timestamp: approx. 52:00 — Quote: Müller about an electrical master craftsman at the savings bank: "Mr Müller, it's the weekend, I want to go out with my children, the account is empty" — Assessment: Only introduced as an anecdote by Müller, not treated systematically.

[D] INDICATED

Timestamp: approx. 30:00 — Quote: Lanz: "We had all the district administrators sitting here, describing exactly that to you" — Assessment: Reference to earlier programmes, but no local politicians present in this programme.

[E] OMITTED

Timestamp: — — Quote: — — Assessment: No security perspective, even though extremism, neo-Nazi marches and Islamist terror are discussed.

[F] OMITTED



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Timestamp: — — Quote: — — Assessment: Fuchs-Schündeln mentions the "success story" macroeconomically, but no concrete East German voices articulating satisfaction; Hänsel immediately and vehemently contradicts the success narrative.

[G] INDICATED

Timestamp: approx. 25:00–35:00 — Quote: Hänsel: "The East has no migration problem" vs. Müller: "village of 600 inhabitants, 1,200 refugees" — Assessment: Discussed controversially, but without migration researchers or integration experts; figures remain unexamined.

[H] INDICATED

Timestamp: approx. 08:00 — Quote: Hänsel: "an extreme frustration with the institutions, the parties, also with the media" — Assessment: Cited as a finding, but not elaborated as a legitimate democratic position; institutional criticism is primarily framed as a precursor to voting AfD.

[I] OMITTED

Timestamp: — — Quote: — — Assessment: The young East German generation does not appear, even though demographic questions are centrally discussed.

[J] ADDRESSED

Timestamp: approx. 06:00, 15:00, 20:00 — Quote: Hänsel: "it begins with the introduction of Hartz IV"; Fuchs-Schündeln: "the time in between was of course incredibly hard"; Müller on structural breaks — Assessment: Historical reappraisal is a core topic of the programme and is illuminated by several guests.

Completeness score: 3/10

Reasoning: Of ten relevant perspectives, only one is fully addressed (historical reappraisal) and three are indicated. The two most central perspectives — that of AfD voters themselves and that of an AfD representative — are completely absent, even though the entire programme revolves around the question of why people vote AfD. It is spoken exclusively *about* these people, never *with* them. Also absent are satisfied East Germans, young East Germans and security experts.



Soft facts — 6 qualitative techniques

10. FRAMING (setting the frame)

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Finding 1: Timestamp: 00:00–01:30 — Quote: Lanz: "Es war einmal ein Land, why the East is saying farewell to democracy" — Manipulation: The book title is adopted as the programme's framework, thereby setting the thesis "the East is saying farewell to democracy" as a premise, not as a hypothesis to be examined. — Why problematic: The entire programme operates within this framework. Anyone who does not share the premise (like Müller or Fuchs-Schündeln) must defend themselves against it, instead of being able to offer an alternative interpretation on equal terms.

Finding 2: Timestamp: 01:30–02:00 — Quote: Lanz about Hänsel: "Not sensationalist, not garish, not loud, but quiet, full of nuance. And precisely for that reason so compelling." — Manipulation: Advance ennoblement of the author and her thesis by the host. Her perspective is framed as particularly credible before she has said a word. — Why problematic: Creates an expectation in the audience that Hänsel's analysis is the "correct" one.

Finding 3: Timestamp: 02:30 — Quote: Lanz: "If she therefore says, the East Germans' farewell to democracy does not begin with Corona, does not begin with migration, it begins with Gerhard Schröder. Then one must ask why and listen very carefully." — Manipulation: "Then one must listen very carefully" is a host's instruction to the audience to take the thesis seriously. — Why problematic: The host positions himself as an advocate of a particular interpretation, instead of neutrally opening up various explanatory approaches.

Finding 4: Timestamp: 03:00–03:30 — Quote: Lanz about Fuchs-Schündeln: "who perhaps also for that reason allows herself a not very popular view of the East, when she says, this narrative of the supposedly economically left-behind East is simply not true" — Manipulation: The counter-position (East as a success story) is framed as "not very popular", i.e. as an outsider position. — Why problematic: Suggests to the audience that the majority opinion is different, and marginalises the scientific perspective in advance.

Summary: The programme is set from the outset in a framework that takes the thesis "the East is saying farewell to democracy" as its starting point. Alternative interpretations (economic success story, rising voter turnout as a sign of democracy) are positioned as counter-arguments, not as equally valid perspectives. The framing is consistently deficit-oriented and pathologising towards East Germany.



11. CHOICE OF WORDS AND TERMS

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Finding 1: Timestamp: 00:30 — Quote: "why the East is saying farewell to democracy" — Manipulation: "Saying farewell" suggests a conscious, active process of detaching from democracy as a whole. — Why problematic: Equates voting AfD with rejection of democracy; ignores the fact that elections themselves are a democratic act.

Finding 2: Timestamp: approx. 10:00 — Quote: Hänsel: "something is ending here. Something is over here." — Manipulation: Apocalyptic language that is not questioned by the host. — Why problematic: Creates a sense of irreversibility and hopelessness that runs counter to differentiated analysis.

Finding 3: Timestamp: approx. 35:00 — Quote: Kühnert: "this disruptive, this destructive potential" (about AfD voter motivation) — Manipulation: Voters are framed as having a will to destroy. — Why problematic: Delegitimises the electoral decision of millions of people as a destructive act.

Finding 4: Timestamp: approx. 28:00 — Quote: Hänsel to Müller: "You are singing the AfD's song, Mr Müller." — Manipulation: Guilt-by-association formulation (explored further under criterion 8), but also linguistically a delegitimation of his argument. — Why problematic: Any raising of migration problems is linguistically placed in proximity to the AfD.

Finding 5: Timestamp: approx. 42:00 — Quote: Kühnert: "a mad alarmism that extremists can afford, but not democratic forces" — Manipulation: Implicit equation of alarmism with extremism; anyone who speaks alarmistically about migration is linguistically placed in proximity to extremists. — Why problematic: Narrows the discursive space for legitimate concerns.

Summary: The language of the programme is consistently characterised by a pathologisation of East German electoral decisions. Voting AfD is linguistically associated with rejection of democracy, a will to destroy and irrationality. Terms such as "over", "at an end", "destructive" create an apocalyptic narrative that makes differentiated analysis more difficult.



12. MODERATION BEHAVIOUR

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Finding 1: Timestamp: 00:30–03:30 — Quote (Lanz): About Hänsel: "Not sensationalist, not garish, not loud, but quiet, full of nuance. And precisely for that reason so compelling." / About Müller: "who rejects everything that is currently fashionable. Inheritance tax, wealth tax, billionaire tax." — Analysis: Hänsel is introduced with appreciation and respect, Müller with a slightly ironic framing of his positions as "against the trend". The introduction of Kühnert is neutral and benevolent, that of Fuchs-Schündeln respectful and academic. Asymmetry in favour of Hänsel and at the expense of Müller.

Finding 2: Timestamp: approx. 22:00 — Quote (Lanz): "If democracy is at an end, you will have a problem at the latest in September at the election in Saxony-Anhalt?" — Analysis: Lanz adopts Hänsel's thesis as the premise of his question to Müller. He does not ask "Is democracy at an end?", but presupposes it and asks about the consequences. Müller must defend himself against a premise he does not share.

Finding 3: Timestamp: approx. 28:00 — Quote (Lanz): Lets Hänsel's accusation "You are singing the AfD's song" stand without comment, does not intervene as moderator. — Analysis: A serious accusation against a democratic politician is not contextualised or rejected. Lanz allows the discrediting to take effect.

Finding 4: Timestamp: approx. 33:00 — Quote (Lanz): "Point made, Mr Müller, point made." — Analysis: Lanz actively interrupts Müller and ends his argument, while Kühnert and Hänsel are regularly allowed to finish speaking and are even encouraged to continue.

Finding 5: Timestamp: approx. 38:00 — Quote (Lanz): Lengthy elaboration about Magdeburg, Dresden, Hamburg, Islamist terror — then question to Kühnert: "How do you look at that, Mr Kühnert?" — Analysis: Lanz himself raises the topic of Islamist terror, but immediately frames it as a question to Kühnert, not to Hänsel, who had previously relativised migration problems. The hard confrontation with the reality of Islamist violence is not directed at the person who is playing down the problem.

Finding 6: Timestamp: end of the programme — Quote (Lanz): Quotes Pastor Geilhofe: "we should finally stop this complaining" — Analysis: Lanz ends the programme with a quote that frames East German dissatisfaction as "complaining". Hänsel objects, but Lanz only slightly relativises and closes the programme. The last word is a delegitimising framing of East German sentiments.

Summary: Lanz moderates asymmetrically. Hänsel and Kühnert are treated as analytical authorities, Müller is repeatedly interrupted, confronted with premises he does not share, and must defend himself against accusations. The moderation reinforces the programme's framing instead of questioning it.



13. QUESTION ASYMMETRY

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Asymmetry 1: To Hänsel, approx. 05:00: "When did you arrive at this realisation?" [soft, inviting, confirmatory — presupposes thesis as "realisation"] — To Müller, approx. 22:00: "If democracy is at an end, you will have a problem at the latest in September?" [hard, confrontational, sets counter-thesis as premise]

Asymmetry 2: To Kühnert, approx. 38:00: "How do you look at that, Mr Kühnert?" [open, inviting] — To Müller, approx. 28:00: Lanz lets Hänsel's "You are singing the AfD's song" stand and does not ask whether that is fair.

Asymmetry 3: To Hänsel, approx. 50:00: "Does he possibly have a point there?" [about Müller's inheritance tax argument — Lanz asks Hänsel as judge over Müller's position] — To Müller: No comparable question as to whether Hänsel or Kühnert have a point.

Asymmetry 4: To Kühnert, approx. 60:00: Lanz lets Kühnert's lengthy elaborations on the inheritance tax stand completely — To Müller, approx. 33:00: "Point made, Mr Müller, point made" [active interruption].

Summary: The questions to Müller are consistently more confrontational, presuppose premises he does not share, and are interrupted more frequently. Hänsel and Kühnert receive open, inviting questions that confirm their analysis. The question asymmetry is one of the most striking features of the programme.



14. FALSE BALANCE

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Finding 1: The programme does not suffer from false balance, but from the opposite: a systematic underrepresentation of conservative and right-wing perspectives. With 3 centre-left guests against 1 conservative guest, the programme is structurally unbalanced. False balance would be if a fringe position were placed on equal footing with the mainstream — here the mainstream (centre-left) is overrepresented.

Summary: False balance is not a problem of this programme. The problem is the opposite: a one-sided weighting in favour of the centre-left spectrum while simultaneously marginalising conservative and right-wing perspectives.



15. AGENDA-SETTING

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9

10

Finding 1: Agenda element set: "The East is saying farewell to democracy" — Timestamp: 00:00 — Evidence: Book title as programme framework — Alternative: "Why do East Germans vote differently?" or "What can democratic parties learn from the East?" would have been more open framings.

Finding 2: Agenda element set: Inheritance tax as a question of justice — Timestamp: approx. 50:00–65:00 — Evidence: Kühnert's extensive presentation of the inheritance tax issue — Alternative: The inheritance tax debate is framed one-sidedly as "the wealthy pay too little"; the counter-position (double taxation, burden on businesses, location question) is only briefly touched upon by Müller and then cut off.

Finding 3: Agenda element set: Migration rhetoric as the problem, not migration itself — Timestamp: approx. 25:00–40:00 — Evidence: Hänsel: "The East has no migration problem"; Fuchs-Schündeln: "Anti-migration rhetoric always only helps right-wing parties" — Alternative: A discussion about concrete integration problems, municipal overload and approaches to solutions would have been more factual.

Summary: The programme sets three clear agenda elements: loss of democracy in the East, inheritance tax as a question of justice, and migration rhetoric as a problem. All three are framed from a centre-left perspective. Alternative framings are raised by Müller, but not treated equally.



CHAPTER 2 — OVERALL EVALUATION

Results

Dominant techniques

- 1. Framing (Score 8):** The entire programme operates within a predetermined framework that equates AfD electoral successes with loss of democracy. This framework is never seriously questioned, but is permanently reinforced through moderation, guest selection and visual elements.
- 2. Expert selection (Score 8):** The structural 3-against-1 situation at the expense of the conservative perspective is the most serious problem of the programme. Müller must hold his own alone against three discussion partners and a tendentious host, while central perspectives (AfD voters, local politicians, migration researchers) are completely absent.
- 3. Moderation behaviour / question asymmetry (Score 8/8):** Lanz does not act as a neutral moderator, but as a co-discussant with his own position. His questions to Müller are more confrontational, his interruptions more frequent, and he does not protect Müller from guilt-by-association attacks.

Reasoning: The programme shows a clear one-sidedness in favour of a centre-left interpretation of the East German situation. The framing, guest selection, moderation behaviour and source selection consistently work in one direction: AfD electoral successes are interpreted as democratic failure, migration criticism is delegitimised, and the conservative perspective is structurally disadvantaged. At the same time, there are moments of differentiation (Fuchs-Schündeln is allowed to tell the success story, Müller gets to speak, Lanz himself raises the topic of Islamist terror) that prevent a classification as "systematic bias". The combined score of 5.7 reflects a programme that falls clearly below the standard that §26 MStV requires for basic public service provision.

CONCLUSION

The programme "Markus Lanz" on the topic "Why the East is saying farewell to democracy" shows considerable deficits in balance that do not meet the requirements of §26 MStV and the ZDF State Treaty. The guest selection is structurally unbalanced with three centre-left voices against one conservative voice; the central perspective of AfD voters and representatives is completely absent, even though the entire programme revolves around their voting behaviour. The moderation behaviour of Markus Lanz reinforces the imbalance through asymmetric questioning, selective interruptions and the adoption of a book thesis as an unexamined programme premise. The basic public service mandate of ZDF requires that "the diversity of existing opinions" (§26 para. 1 MStV) be reflected — in this programme, millions of AfD voters are spoken about without their perspective being even approximately authentically represented.



CHAPTER 3 — PARTY-POLITICAL BIAS

| Party | Score (-5..+5) | Concrete evidence |
|--------------|----------------|---|
| CDU/CSU | -1 | Müller is invited as a guest and is allowed to speak, but: approx. 28:00 "You are singing the AfD's song" (unchallenged); approx. 33:00 "Point made, Mr Müller" (interruption); approx. 42:00 Kühnert criticises CDU migration rhetoric as counterproductive. Müller's inheritance tax position is attacked from three sides. |
| SPD | +3 | Kühnert receives approx. 28% speaking time, is framed as an analytical observer, not as a former party official; his lobbying activity is only raised late; his elaborations on the inheritance tax remain largely unchallenged; SPD failures during the coalition period are only briefly touched upon. |
| Greens | +1 | approx. 40:00 Kühnert: "the Greens warned much earlier than many others that Putin would not stop" — positive mention without counter-argument; Green government policy (coal phase-out, heating law) is not critically examined. |
| FDP | 0 | Not mentioned. |
| AfD | -4 | Consistently framed as a problem; approx. 12:00 Hänsel: "very radical programme"; approx. 35:00 Kühnert: "disruptive, destructive potential"; approx. 28:00 "AfD's song"; no AfD representative invited; voters portrayed as irrational/driven; programme never concretely presented. |
| BSW | 0 | Not mentioned, even though highly relevant as an East German party. |
| Linke | 0 | approx. 14:00 Hänsel mentions that East Germans "voted left for a very long time" — neutral historical contextualisation; no current assessment. |
| Freie Wähler | 0 | Not mentioned. |

Party bias summary

- Most favoured: SPD, Score +3 — Kevin Kühnert receives the most speaking time, is framed as a neutral analyst, his positions remain largely unchallenged, and SPD shortcomings are only marginally addressed.
- Most disadvantaged: AfD, Score -4 — The AfD is consistently portrayed as threatening democracy, radical and destructive, without a representative being able to present the party's own position. AfD voters are framed as driven, irrational or having a will to destroy.
- Conclusion: The programme shows a clear bias in favour of the SPD and at the expense of the AfD. The CDU is treated ambivalently — Müller is allowed to speak, but is structurally disadvantaged. Noteworthy is the complete absence of the BSW, which as an East German party with positions on Russia, migration and social policy would have been highly relevant.



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

Assessment under §26 MStV

Violation 1: Insufficient diversity of opinion in guest selection

Norm: §26 para. 1 MStV in conjunction with §5 para. 1 ZDF State Treaty — Facts: The programme addresses a topic that directly concerns the AfD and its voters, without including an AfD representative or authentic AfD voter voices. The guest selection is structurally unbalanced with 3 centre-left voices against 1 conservative voice. — Evidence: Entire programme; no AfD representative invited despite central focus on AfD electoral successes. — Assessment: §26 para. 1 MStV requires that "the significant political, ideological and social forces and groups" are given adequate opportunity to speak. A party that is the strongest force in East Germany is described exclusively by its opponents. This constitutes a violation of the diversity requirement.

Violation 2: One-sided moderation behaviour

Norm: §5 para. 1 ZDF State Treaty (objectivity and impartiality) — Facts: The host adopts a book thesis as the programme's premise, treats guests asymmetrically (confrontational questions to the conservative guest, inviting ones to centre-left guests) and does not protect the conservative guest from guilt-by-association attacks. — Evidence: approx. 22:00 "If democracy is at an end..."; approx. 28:00 "You are singing the AfD's song" (unchallenged); approx. 33:00 "Point made, Mr Müller" — Assessment: The impartiality obligation of the ZDF State Treaty requires that the host does not adopt his own political position and treats all guests equally. The moderation behaviour in this programme violates this principle.

Violation 3: Incomplete representation of relevant perspectives

Norm: §26 para. 1 MStV (diversity of existing opinions) — Facts: Of ten identified relevant perspectives, only one is fully addressed. Central perspectives (AfD voters, local politics, satisfied East Germans, young generation, security authorities) are completely absent. — Evidence: Completeness score 3/10 — Assessment: The basic public service mandate requires comprehensive information of the public. A programme that omits 70% of relevant perspectives does not fulfil this mandate.

Overall assessment §26 MStV

The programme "Markus Lanz" on the topic of East German democratic alienation shows considerable deficits according to the standards of §26 MStV and the ZDF State Treaty. The diversity requirement of §26 para. 1 MStV is violated by the one-sided guest selection, the asymmetric moderation behaviour and the systematic omission of relevant perspectives. The ZDF State Treaty specifies in §5 para. 1 the obligation to objectivity and impartiality, which is not upheld through the adoption of a book thesis as the programme's premise and the different treatment of guests. It should be noted that individual programmes must be viewed within the framework of the internal pluralism of the ZDF programme — the identified deficits would be less serious if other programmes covered the missing perspectives. Nevertheless, this programme in itself represents a clear one-sidedness that could be submitted to the ZDF Television Council as the competent body for review.



OVERALL EVALUATION OF THE 15 CRITERIA

Individual scores — All 15 criteria

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

HARD FACTS SCORE (1-8)

6.8/10

Serious deviation from the impartiality requirement. High degree of deviation

SOFT FACTS SCORE (9-14)

6.8/10

Serious deviation from the impartiality requirement. High degree of deviation

OVERALL SCORE

6.8/10

Serious deviation from the impartiality requirement. High degree of deviation

Averaged from hard facts and soft facts



KEY — Meaning of the scores

Individual scores per criterion (0–10)

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

Aggregated deviation index — interpretation ranges

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

Party-political bias (-5 to +5)

| | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|--|
| -5 to -3 | Strongly disadvantaged | Party is clearly treated worse in representation, speaking time or framing. |
| -2 to -1 | Slightly disadvantaged | Discernible, but weak disadvantage. |
| 0 | Neutral | No discernible preference or disadvantage. |
| +1 to +2 | Slightly favoured | Discernible, but weak preference. |
| +3 to +5 | Strongly favoured | Party is clearly treated better in representation, 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 can be influenced by topic selection, news situation, political controversy or format logic. |
| No judgement of intent | The analysis measures observable structural characteristics of programmes. A score of 7 means that a considerable imbalance has been identified — not that the editorial team intended this. The methodology makes no statements about motives or strategic objectives. |
| Heuristic comparison instrument | The index serves 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

Media State 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. They shall thereby 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 service offering profile.
- §5 para. 1 ZDF State Treaty: Obligation to objectivity and impartiality of reporting, consideration of diversity of opinion.
- ARD State Treaty: Basic 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. Factual accuracy and balance:** Hosts 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 competent broadcasting council or ZDF Television Council
2. Administrative court action



APPENDIX 2: SCIENTIFIC FOUNDATIONS

Literature

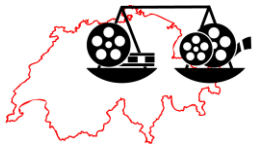
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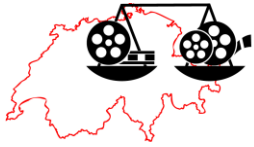
The interview is not a conversation. It is a stage — and someone else has written the script.

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

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



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

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