Acknowledgements

A word of thanks goes out to all the people who have supported me and this project over the last four years—in so many different ways that it would be impossible to name them all.

It is equally difficult to honor all the ways in which Klaus Schönbach has helped make this thesis become a reality. As an ASCoR PhD-supervisor, as a German Doktorvater, as an in many ways not-so-German Lehrstuhlinhaber to whom I have been the assistant, and as someone with whom I enjoyed literary discussion over dinner in a town so unlike Amsterdam or Berlin, you have provided incredible encouragement. Thank you, Klaus.

I am indebted to the Amsterdam School of Communications Research and its members for funding the lion’s share of this research and giving an external PhD student great opportunities to participate in conferences and workshops and get valuable feedback for her work. The department for media research of ZDF funded another important part of this project; Dr. Heinz Gerhard and Dr. Ursula Dehm have personally supported it. Dr. Rüdiger Schulz, Dr. Johannes Schneller and Astrid Reiner of the Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach equally deserve recognition for their support of this study. Through their work, Dr. Udo Michael Krüger and his team at the Institut für empirische Medienforschung have provided a valuable framework for the interpretation of the analyses presented here.

My colleagues and friends at Zeppelin University have been great in making work—and life—worthwhile in the strange place called Oberschwaben. Especially my all-time favorite officemate Markus has been a constant reminder to keep on track. Heike, Oliver, Remigius, Ulrich, Alexandra, Marian, Andreas, Kay, Anne, Annemarie, Barbara and Alihan, it has been a real pleasure to work with you, share coffee breaks and make Fischbach, in the words of our beloved president, seem a bit like Friedrichshain. I still would love to finally give Bernd an answer to his question, ‘so how are the values?’ Aleksandra, the literary circle was a genius idea; thank you for all those who inspired wonderful discussions that had nothing to do with values or mass media.
My family and friends far away from Lake Constance have shown extraordinary patience with me for not calling them back, missing their birthday parties and much too often not being in the mood to talk. Anna and Philipp and many more have managed to still make me feel connected to my favorite ‘zitty.’ Thank you all so much.

Finally, Jens, I cannot possibly do justice here to what you have done for and meant to me throughout the entire PhD process. Maybe just this: You were there for me during the inevitable Adrian-moments and it is thanks to you that I even know what that means. And I am sure you do, too.

Merja Mahrt