

Preface

This book argues that looking at authority and trust in interrelation can elucidate crucial aspects of culture and society, in the United States and elsewhere. The essays assembled here have emerged from a collaborative research training group (Graduiertenkolleg 2244) entitled “Authority and Trust in American Culture, Society, History, and Politics,” funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) and based at the Heidelberg Center for American Studies (HCA). Since its inception in 2017, this research initiative has brought together scholars and graduate students working in American Studies from a variety of disciplines across the humanities and social sciences (historiography, religious studies/church history, urban geography, political science, international relations, linguistics, and literary and cultural studies).

The essays reflect the vibrant discussion culture among this group of authors, the first cohort of graduate researchers (Kristin Berberich, Florian Böller, Louis Butcher, Elizabeth Corrao-Billeter, David Eisler, Claudia Jetter, Aleksandra Polińska, Maren Schäfer, Aline Schmidt, Tim Sommer, Sebastian Tants, Cosima Werner, Georg Wolff), and the people at the HCA. All of us have profited greatly from the generous input of scholars who visited our lecture series in the past three years to present their latest work and engage in conversation with us (in order of appearance, Juliet Kaarbo, David Alworth, Donald Pease, Peter Schneck, Alan Partington, Andreas Reckwitz, Hans Joas, Jeffrey Alexander, Claire Squires, Heike Paul, Guido Möllering, David Wilson, Omar Lizardo, Amy Hungerford, Kameshwari Pothukuchi, Laura Dassow Walls, Caroline Levine, James English, Sandra Gustafson, Hugh Ryan, Merve Emre, Hartmut Rosa, Michèle Mendelssohn, Gisèle Sapiro, Alexander Starre, Barbara Buchenau, Kai Sina, and Cameron Thies). We are also grateful to the large number of people who helped us bring this collection together: Thanks to Hannes Nagl, Lena Pfeifer, Williams Rothvoss-Buchheimer, and Styles Sass for getting the manuscript into shape; to the editorial team at transcript

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