

Acknowledgments

I benefited from the encouragement and company of a wonderful team at the KPM Center for Public Management of the University of Bern while conducting the research for this book. During my time at Bern, I received generous funding from the Swiss National Science Foundation. Particular thanks go to David Kaufmann, Christian Rosser, and Eva Thomann, who accompanied me in my early steps as a social scientist and set examples of what a passion for the social sciences really means. Fritz Sager deserves special praise with regard to my research on blame games and my scientific trajectory in general. Enabler, teacher, encourager, and ironic ‘refrainer’ are just a few of the roles he flexibly adopted whenever necessary. In doing so, he was at least as judicious and ‘context-sensitive’ as the savvy politicians in the cases of this book. He was a wonderful PhD supervisor, and I thank him for supporting me along the way. Special thanks also go to R. Kent Weaver, my second PhD supervisor. Writing a book about blame games to be read by the pioneering scholar in the field was a motivating treat and a constant source of encouragement. Needless to say, his work, and that of Christopher Hood, constitutes the most important theoretical foundation for my work. Many thanks also go to Craig Parsons for a very inspiring discussion about the consensual foundations of contemporary political science. Chris Ansell supported and encouraged me during the review process. I also want to thank Derek Beach, Andy Bennett, and Benoît Rihoux, who provided me with precious advice on my work during my time as a PhD student. I would also like to thank Janine Gehrig Lux for her excellent proofreading. Many thanks also go to the series editors, Mike Howlett, M. Ramesh, and Xun Wu, and Joe Ng, Gemma Smith, and James Baker from Cambridge University Press for their excellent support during the revision and publication process. I am also grateful to the four anonymous reviewers for their extremely

helpful feedback. My greatest thanks go to Livia: for her relentless interest in this project, for the ingenuity with which she accompanied and fostered its evolution, and for simply everything. Finally, I want to thank my parents, Gabriele and Robert, who, with their love, support, and generosity, made this all possible. This book is dedicated to them.