

Acknowledgements

As editor, I am thankful to each author who contributed to this book, especially to Alessandro Colombo who was the first to push me to create a book and has always supported me: ‘Grazie!’ Furthermore, I am especially thankful to Paola Coletti, Alwin Gerritsen and Sarah Giest for having acted as kind of ‘hidden co-editors’, respectively for Parts I, II and III: ‘grazie’, ‘bedankt’ and ‘thank you’. Many authors have also contributed as reviewers of chapters and, specifically, Paul Benneworth, Dan Greenwood, Tassilo Herrschel, Stéphane Moyson, Mario Paris, Serafín Pazos-Vidal and Dominic Stead have spent much time revising all the chapters. I would like to thank also colleagues who took part in the discussions on materials presented in this book, although they do not appear as contributors: Hannah Durrant, Carola Fricke, Luciana Dornelles Hosannah, Janez Nared, Marja Nissinen, Muriel Sacco, Ties Vanthillo, Georgiana Varna and, especially, Wolfgang Petzold from the European Committee of the Regions and Cities, who has inspired many reflections developed in this book.

Among my colleagues who helped me during the GREATPI project, I am especially thankful to Sara Rizzo, who does not appear in this book, but our discussions were fundamental to developing the key ideas presented in this book, especially the cognitive–evolutionary approach to knowledge for policymaking. During the preparation of this book, I had to change three university departments, and I am thankful to the directors and colleagues who have hosted me: Bas van Heur, David Aubin and, especially, Michele Cincera, who gave me the time needed to finalise the writing and editing of the book. In the list of inspiring colleagues I would like also to mention John Bachtler, Marth Bicket, Marcelline Bonneau, Eric Corijn, Marcin Dabrowski, Kevin De Bondt, Ugo Fratesi, Alessandro Meschinelli, Giulia Pastorella, Simone Reinhart, Fanny Sbaraglia and André Spithoven.

The first inspiration for this book came when I heard stories about my grandfather, Francesco Dotti, who died when I was just a kid. In the 1930s, he was a young university assistant of agriculture sent by the University of Bologna to teach local farmers about the most advanced techniques in agriculture he was studying in the university. While writing this book, my

father explained to me that, in fact, this story is not true, and I slightly overstated the position of my grandfather. In fact, he had an ‘itinerant chair’ (in Italian, *cattedra ambulante*), but from the agrarian consortium of Ravenna (not the University of Bologna); thus, he was working in a completely different framework from what I thought. He became an academic later. Despite being a wrong ‘family myth’, the image of the itinerant chair was particularly inspiring when deciding to work on topics discussed in this book and, in general, on the idea of applying academic research to real-life issues. According to Gianni Rodari’s ‘grammar of creativity’, this was a ‘creative mistake’ leading to a more exciting story.

Last but not the least, the most significant help came from my family, especially my wife Maria who loves books, and gave birth to our second child on the days when I was finalising this book.