Preface and acknowledgments

How can we improve leadership in the public sector, and what is the role of political and administrative leaders in shaping the future of the public sector? This is a central theme in American and European public administration and was the central theme of the conference which is the foundation of this volume – The Third Transatlantic Dialogue (TAD3) held at the University of Delaware, Newark, DE on 30 May–1 June 2007 and jointly organized by an American (American Society for Public Administration) and European (European Group of Public Administration) network on public administration. More than 100 scholars presented and discussed 90 papers on ‘Leading the Future of the Public Sector.’ The papers included in this volume were nominated by the chairs of the six workshops. (Each workshop had a co-chair from the USA and one from outside the USA and included the following well-known researchers: Jim Svara, Eckhard Schröter, Meredith Newman, Annie Hondeghem, Richard Callahan, Sylvia Horton, Kathy Denhardt, Peter Leisink, Maria Aristigueta, Per Lægreid, Guy Adams and Judy Johnston. Plenary speakers included Geert Bouckaert, Christopher Hood, Robert Denhardt, and Patricia Ingraham.) The selected papers include those which made both theoretical and empirical contributions, were judged by the editors to be readable, well-researched and meaningful for a broad audience, and related to the central theme/issues of the book. With one exception (Newman et al., Chapter 13), the selected papers have not been published elsewhere. They have been further supplemented by a limited number of invited papers from some of the conference plenary speakers (Ingraham and Denhardt for the Foreword) and presenters (Svara and Holzer).

This edited anthology builds upon the topic and themes of the conference and provides the reader with an array of works truly international in scope, based on excellent scholarship and research, and able to serve as a text or supplement to higher level undergraduate and graduate courses in public administration, political science and leadership.

The chapters in this book address public sector leadership issues in a wide array of nations. Two-thirds of the chapters are authored or co-authored by scholars outside the USA. Several of the chapters are explicitly comparative, including a study of mental health leadership training topics in eight nations, central banking in Europe, and efficiency studies
in Britain, Denmark and Norway. The chapters address leadership issues in Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Ireland, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Norway, Sweden, Scotland, the UK and the USA.

While the chapters were not necessarily written as decision-forcing case studies, many of them will be available to be used in such a way. Given the scholarly foundation of the conference, each chapter does have a substantial bibliography for the scholar or student who wishes to engage further with the topic. The range of research methods is broad, from Holzer and Illiash’s historical analysis of Russian bureaucracy to Vanmullem and Hondeghem’s statistical analysis of a survey of Belgian public workers. Most chapters offer single or comparative case studies.

We would like to thank the organizers of TAD3 and the many individuals who participated in the selection process that led to this volume. We especially thank TAD3 co-chairs Maria Aristigueta and Annie Hondeghem for providing several superb ideas on moving from the conference to this book. While we thank all the contributors to this work for their willingness to include their papers in this volume and their responsiveness to our many requests, we especially thank those participants who completed work from their remarks or who wrote new chapters to include in this volume: Bob Denhardt for the Foreword, and Pat Ingraham, Jim Svara and Marc Holzer for their chapters. We also thank Diana Simmons, for helping to create a completed book manuscript from a collection of works by many authors from a large number of countries, and Dorry Ross, who provided us with excellent advice on the Introduction and Conclusion. The editors greatly appreciate the professional and responsive support provided throughout this process by the Elgar editorial office including Alan Sturmer, Suzanne Mursell, Barbara Slater, and Heather Perkins. We thank these individuals and those behind the scenes.

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