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PROOF

Preface

The Start of a Conversation

This book starts a conversation.

It is a conversation about how countries around the world vary in their migration demographic outcomes. It is a conversation about which countries' profiles are similar and which are exceptional. It is a conversation about what drives immigration regimes and demographic trends across these different countries. And ultimately, it is a conversation that we—as immigration researchers—wanted to have with each other, but found impossible given the current state of the field.

We asked ourselves, “What information would we need in order to pursue such a conversation?” And ultimately, we needed concepts and data that simply did not exist or which existed but had not been adequately collated and compiled. We needed a comprehensive conceptualization of an immigration regime. We needed an enumeration of the different dimensions of an immigration regime. We needed a way to measure these dimensions in a systematic way across space and time. We needed a taxonomy that grouped different regimes according to their similarities.

These are substantial goals. And after initially wrestling with the available concepts and data, we decided more needed to be developed. Accordingly, in this book we offer a number of contributions:

- (1) We construct a new conceptualization of what constitutes an immigration regime and how one might measure its outcomes in a valid and reliable manner across countries and time.
- (2) We build a database measuring these dimensions and their constitutive metrics for fifty countries around the world. After five years of data collection and assembly, this database brings together available data from international institutions and data from independent

reports, national statistics agencies, and newspaper reports, which we standardize to United Nations and OECD measurements.

- (3) Using this first-of-its-kind, standardized, statistical database, we produce a taxonomy of thirty countries' immigration regimes for which we have full data across all dimensions.
- (4) Finally, we undertake an early analysis of this new demographic-data-derived taxonomy that seeks to understand what drives immigration regimes and governance.

By the end of the book, the conversation is far from over. Rather, it can now get started—or resume—with access to greater information. Indeed, with this book, we hope to provide the tools and data that will permit others to carry on this conversation in a more sophisticated manner and with a broader group of people. We make an initial attempt at analysis based on our conceptual development and data collection. However, in scope, this book sets up others to expand the available data according to universal standards and definitions, and to undertake a more extensive analysis that incorporates new variables and other phenomena related to the migration of people around the world.