FOREWORD

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by Andrew Selee, MPI

Understanding Global Migration by James Hollifield and Neil Foley is both a timely and important book. For too long, comparative migration studies have focused on Europe, North America, Australia, and New Zealand as the paradigmatic cases of migration states, while in fact much of the world's migration has always been to countries in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and the Americas.

This volume looks at how different countries around the world, in every region of the globe, have become migration states, and the result is illuminating. The notion of a single model of migration state, primarily tied to postwar economic globalization and the extension of rights, looks different in other parts of the world. Geographic location, colonial histories, ethnic politics, state capacity, insertion in global markets, and even particular understandings of national interest turn out to shape the way that states define their roles and set their priorities for migration decision-making in ways that defy easy categorization.

This book pulls together a truly exceptional group of scholars from around the world to look at how these differences have unfolded and what they tell us about how state formation and migration policies interact. As a result, this book provides original research on countries in regions of the world that have been understudied, and also puts Western countries, which have been extensively studied, under a different comparative microscope.

One of the great advantages of this book is that the editors took great care from the beginning to ask a set of common questions about state formation and migration policy to all of the contributors. As a result, each of the chapters explores a series of coherent and consistent themes that allow the reader to make comparisons across the different cases studies and to put them in historical perspective. Because of this methodological consistency and careful coordination, the volume often feels more like a single-authored book than it does a collection of separate essays. Yet within a common methodological and theoretical approach, the editors also manage to keep the distinct perspectives and textures that come from pulling together people who are nurtured by scholarly debates and on-the-ground-realities in different parts of the world.

In the end, one of the most important lessons that emerges from this book is that we should not assume that the migration state as it developed in Western democracies is the model for the rest of the world and that other regions will slowly converge to this model. Indeed, the priorities, institutional structures, and policy repertoires that other countries have for making migration decisions often differ notably in their foundations.

This book provides the first systematic attempt to compare the migration state across regions and to explore migration interdependence. As such, it will be a foundational work for future discussions about how policies are made in sharply different contexts around the world.