

Preface

In an increasingly globalized world, humans and materials—transported by automobiles, cargo ships and airplanes in a matter of hours—are the most effective vectors of infectious pathogens. Over the course of human history, some of the deadliest disease outbreaks have been traced back to one type or another mobile population or to transport routes. In this context, our own intimate research involvement with several mobile populations in the U.S. such as vacation travelers, long-haul truck drivers, and floating Latin farmworkers as well as thrilling fieldwork with pastoralists (nomads) in southern Ethiopia brought into light the critical role of the complex spectrum of population mobility and infectious disease.

This book is long overdue and is intended to fill a serious gap in the international public health literature. It is the first transdisciplinary volume that provides a comprehensive overview of what happens to the health of people when they migrate from countrysides to cities, from one city to another, or from one country to another, regardless of the voluntary or forced nature of that movement. One of the major strengths of this book lies in its transdisciplinary approach—spanning across anthropological, demographic, economic, epidemiological, geographical, historical, legal, mathematical, political, psychological, sociological perspectives.

In the over two years that it has taken to complete this book, it has overcome several hurdles and gone through numerous phases. This book would never have materialized without the collective support of all individuals and organizations involved. It was a great challenge to locate, commission, and coordinate high-caliber international scholars and practitioners in various facets of public health. However, the quality of their work made the review and revision process highly enjoyable tasks.

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