ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOKS

Routledge Handbook of Anthropology and Global Health provides an overview of the nplex relationship between anthropology and global health. The book brings together a erse group of scholars who consider the intersection of anthropological concerns with health disease as understood and intervened upon by the field of global health.

book is structured around five sections: (1) social, cultural, and political determinants of lth; (2) knowledge production in anthropology and global health; (3) persistent invisibilities in al health; (4) reimagining a critical global health; and (5) new horizons in anthropology and al health. Within these five themes a range of topics is explored, including:

- are diseases
- medical pluralism
- universal global health protocols
- HIV
- ealth security
- ndigenous communities
- (non)communicable diseases
- decolonising global health

Routledge Handbook of Anthropology and Global Health is an essential resource for er-level students and researchers in anthropology, global health, sociology, international elopment, health studies, and politics.

si B. Masvawure is an Assistant Professor (anthropology and global health) in the partment of Integrative and Global Studies, The Global School, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, ssachusetts. She has a PhD in Anthropology and is a feminist scholar, and global health earcher who studies gender, sex and health (primarily HIV) in southern Africa.

n E. Foley is a Professor in the Department of Sustainability and Social Justice at Clark versity, Worcester, Massachusetts with a PhD in Anthropology. She studies sexual and productive health and rights, urban health disparities, and development interventions in cophone West Africa.

HROPOLOGY

BN 978-1-032-25637-5
781032 256375
rma business

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
www.routledge.com

Routledge titles are available as eBook editions in a range of digital formats

CERTIFIED CARBON NEUTRAL® publication
CarbonNeutral.com

The Routledge Handbook of Anthropology and Global Health
Edited by Tsitsi B. Masvawure and Ellen E. Foley
ROUTLEDGE

ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOKS

The Routledge Handbook of Anthropology and Global Health

Edited by Tsitsi B. Masvawure and Ellen E. Foley

ROUTLEDGE ANTHROPOLOGY HANDBOOKS

THE ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOK OF ANTHROPOLOGY AND REPRODUCTION
Edited by Sallie Han and Cecília Tomori

THE ROUTLEDGE COMPANION TO CONTEMPORARY ANTHROPOLOGY
Edited by Simon Coleman, Susan B. Hyatt and Ann Kingsolver

THE ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOK OF ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE CITY
Edited by Setha Low

THE ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOK OF MEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGY
Edited by Lenore Manderson, Elizabeth Cartwright and Anita Hardon

THE ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOK OF THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF LABOR
Edited by Sharryn Kasmir and Lesley Gill

THE ROUTLEDGE COMPANION TO MEDIA ANTHROPOLOGY
Edited by Elisabetta Costa, Patricia G. Lange, Nell Haynes and Jolynna Sinanan

THE ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOK OF SOCIAL STUDIES OF OUTER SPACE
Edited by Juan Francisco Salazar, Alice Gorman, and Paola Castaño

THE ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOK OF AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND FUTURES
Edited by Bronwyn Carlson, Sandy O'Sullivan, Tristan Kennedy & Madi Day

THE ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOK OF ANTHROPOLOGY AND GLOBAL HEALTH
Edited by Tsitsi B. Masvawure and Ellen E. Foley

https://www.routledge.com/Routledge-Anthropology-Handbooks/book-series/RANTHBK

THE ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOK OF ANTHROPOLOGY AND GLOBAL HEALTH

Edited by Tsitsi B. Masvawure and Ellen E. Foley

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

Designed cover image: altmodern, Getty Images

First published 2024
by Routledge
605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10158

and by Routledge
4 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

ISBN: 9781032256375 (hbk)
ISBN: 9781032256405 (pbk)
ISBN: 9781003284345 (ebk)

DOI: 10.4324/9781003284345

Typeset in Sabon
by Deanta Global Publishing Services, Chennai, India

11

INDIGENOUS MIDWIFERY REVISITED IN COVID-19 TIMES

The making of global maternal health and some anthropological lessons from southern Mexico

Paola M. Sesia and Lina R. Berrio Palomo

Introduction

Mexico has the largest Indigenous population in Latin America[1] and is one of the twelve most eco-diverse countries on the planet (Boege 2008; Rzedowski 1998). This biocultural heritage is linked to the many Indigenous peoples who inhabit the continent and is associated with a remarkably rich, diverse, and enduring ethnomedical tradition. Indigenous midwifery is part of this heritage; midwives have attended pregnant and birthing women in many regions of Mexico for centuries. In the early 1970s, only 37% of the 2.3 million births registered each year were delivered in institutional health facilities and/or by biomedical personnel; traditional midwives[2] and/or family members at home handled the rest (Zolla 1983; Sepúlveda 1993. In places where most people were (and still are) Indigenous, such as the southern states of Oaxaca and Chiapas, biomedical deliveries accounted for less than 10% of total births (Idem).

Fifty years later, the situation has changed drastically. Official data indicate that over 95% of births occur in institutional health-care facilities (SSA 2022). In recent years, traditional – Indigenous and non-Indigenous – midwives attended a very small fraction (between 1% and 2% in 2019) of births nationwide (SSA 2019). Today, most women, including women from Indigenous regions, give birth in hospitals; three-fourths of them are public and (almost) free of charge.

The shift from ethno-obstetrics to bio-obstetrics (Davis-Floyd 2001) occurred rapidly, accelerating at the turn of the millennium. This shift has not only contributed to the reduction of maternal mortality, but has also engendered an epidemic of unnecessary and potentially iatrogenic C-sections, standing today at approximately 46% of total deliveries.[3] It has also generated other significant negative effects, such as the routine overmedicalization of normal births, the loss of women-centred birth care, and the common occurrence of disrespect and abuse against women in labor; all of them are facets of the pervasive phenomenon of 'obstetric violence', which is a systematic and structural problem of most hospital deliveries in Mexico (Sesia 2020) as well as in the rest of Latin America (Quattrocchi and Magnone 2020).

DOI: 10.4324/9781003284345-15