Arguing that demographic thought begins not with quantification but in attempts to control the qualities of people, *Human Empire* traces two transformations spanning the early modern period. First was the emergence of population as an object of governance through a series of engagements in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England, Ireland, and colonial North America, influenced by humanist policy, reason of state and natural philosophy, and culminating in the creation of political arithmetic. Second was the debate during the long eighteenth century over the locus and limits of demographic agency, as church, civil society, and private projects sought to mobilize and manipulate different marginalized and racialized groups – and as American colonists offered their own visions of imperial demography. This innovative, engaging study examines the emergence of population as an object of knowledge and governance and connects the history of demographic ideas with their early modern intellectual, political, and colonial contexts.

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HUMAN EMPIRE

Mobility and Demographic Thought in the British Atlantic World, 1500–1800

TED MCCORMICK
Concordia University, Montréal
For my daughters, Vivian and Audrey
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I began thinking about this book before my last one was published and before I started my job as Assistant Professor at Concordia, in 2008. In the course of working on this study of demographic thinking, I married, became a father to two children and lost my own father – demographic events that are, as all demographic events are, more than statistics. Like its author, the book has grown and changed beyond recognition in the years since its inception. Some of those thanked here may wonder why their names appear; others may have given up waiting. Still, it could not have been done without them.

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