Beyond the Line: An Analysis of the Causes and Consequences of Unauthorized Migration from Mexico to the United States

by Dr. Ragini Shah

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This book project seeks to engage in a comprehensive examination of unauthorized migration from Mexico to the United States by analyzing both the factors causing this migration and its consequences to communities of origin. The analysis of both the causes and consequences of Mexico-U.S. migration is drawn from individual narratives based on close to 70 in-depth interviews of former migrants, family members of migrants and community leaders in migrant-sending communities from the Mexican states of Tlaxcala, Oaxaca and Tabasco. Through examples from each of the three regions studied, the book demonstrates the complexity of causation - which involves gaps in infrastructure and services and social relationships - and the mixed impact of migration on communities of origin when long-term economic effects and social costs are taken into account. This picture is at once more complex than that posited by dominant theories of causation or impacts and suggests a different set of interventions than those currently pursued by the U.S. and Mexican governments with respect to migrants and their families.

Ragini Shah is a Clinical Professor of Law and Director of Clinical Programs at Suffolk University Law School. Professor Shah joined Suffolk in 2007, founding Suffolk's first Immigration Clinic. Her scholarship examines the effectiveness of enforcement in the immigration context focusing on rights for undocumented youth, and the connections between international trade and migration. In 2012, she was granted a Fulbright award to deepen her research into these connections and from 2012-2013 conducted over 70 interviews with former migrants and their families in Mexico.