

***EPA: Economy and Space* theme issue**

Call for paper proposals

“Migration, migrant work(ers) and the gig economy,” an EPA theme issue edited by Mark Graham (University of Oxford), Niels van Doorn (University of Amsterdam), Fabian Ferrari (University of Oxford), and Srujana Katta (University of Oxford)

A new initiative for the journal, *EPA: Economy and Space* will occasionally issue calls for “prospective” theme issues, beginning with an open invitation to submit paper proposals (in the form of a one-page extended abstract, plus one-paragraph bio sketch for each author). Following an initial review, conducted by the guest editors in conjunction with EPA’s coordinating editor, invitations will be extended for full-length paper submissions. Consistent with EPA’s procedures for theme issues, all papers will be subject to peer review.

Paper proposals for the planned theme issue on “Migration, migrant work(ers) and the gig economy” should be submitted to the EPA Journal Administrator at epa@sagepub.co.uk by **September 1, 2020**. The review of proposals will be completed within 4 weeks, at which time invitations to submit full papers will be made by EPA’s coordinating editor for this theme issue, Mark Graham mark.graham@oii.ox.ac.uk, to whom informal inquiries can be made. The deadline for submitting full papers to the journal will be January 31, 2021.

“Migration, migrant work(ers) and the gig economy”

The study of platform-mediated gig work has granted insufficient critical attention to questions of migration and migrant labour.

One set of questions that contributors to the theme issue may address concerns the structural role of migrant labour in sustaining the gig economy. Without a steady influx of migrants, platform companies like Uber, Ola, Helpling, Rappi, and Deliveroo would have trouble maintaining their labour supply in almost any of the cities in which they operate. As is the case for the informal economy, the precise numbers of migrants working in the gig economy remains unclear, due to the lack of comprehensive publicly accessible data on the topic. However, from New York to Santiago to Cape Town to London, it is clear that migrant workers play an outsized role in providing the labour power behind a range of services offered in the gig economy, where the distinction between formal and informal labor is frequently blurred. Even in India and China, countries with huge domestic labour markets, internal migrants play an oversized role in providing key gig economy services such as ride-hailing, domestic work, and food delivery. In this sense, it is evident that migrant labour serves an infrastructural function for these platform companies—one that is as vitally important as the steady influx of investment capital—and its governance at the intersection of labour market regulation and immigration policy forms a critical institutional condition for their business model’s viability.

Another set of questions concerns migrants' lived experiences of work and social reproduction within the gig economy. The relative ease of finding work through platforms enables a valuable lifeline for migrants, who often face significant barriers to formal employment and welfare provision. However, compared to native-born gig workers, migrants often face additional dimensions of precarity as a result of their migrant status. For example, they are often subject to discrimination from consumers and co-workers alike, face accusations of depressing wages, and encounter substantial uncertainty with shifts in policy regimes (e.g. Brexit). Crises like the COVID-19 pandemic render workers with irregular immigration status especially precarious, as their tenuous existence at society's economic and socio-legal margins inhibits their access even to the marginal support afforded by platforms and/or governments. It is clear that—as in other contexts of precarious work—migrants' working lives in the gig economy are forged at the intersections of workplace conditions, labour market and welfare regulation, migration policy, and public attitudes towards migrants.

In order to bring questions around migration and migrant labour to the forefront of debates on the gig economy and platform-mediated work, and to thereby connect these debates to broader concerns pertaining to migrants' position in low-wage labour markets and informal sectors, this theme issue of *EPA: Economy and Space* will bring together new and original scholarship on these topics. The 'gig economy' in this context is understood broadly, to comprise both location-based platform labor and remote cloud/crowdwork platforms. We invite papers and commentaries including, but not limited to:

- The role of migration in local and global platform-mediated labour markets;
- The intersections of migration, welfare, and labour market policies, and their impacts on gig workers and gig economy platforms;
- The opportunities and challenges of platform-mediated gig work for migrants;
- Migrants' overlapping experiences with gig work and other kinds of formal and informal labor arrangements;
- The socially reproductive struggles and strategies of migrant gig workers and their families;
- Labour market segmentation and inequalities in the gig economy due to intersecting factors such as immigration status, gender, race/ethnicity, nationality, education, and age.
- Labour platforms' hiring, management and promotional strategies with respect to migrant workers;
- The impacts of changing migration policy (e.g. Brexit) on migrant gig workers;
- The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on migrant gig workers; and
- Policy approaches to creating and sustaining decent working and living conditions for migrant gig workers.

Summary and timeline

September 1, 2020	Closing date for submission of one-page paper proposals EPA Journal Administrator at epa@sagepub.co.uk
October 1, 2020	Invitations to submit full-length papers
January 31, 2021	Deadline for submitting full-length papers
Summer 2021	Completion of peer review, papers scheduled for
Theme issue editors	Mark Graham (EPA coordinating editor), Niels van Doorn, Fabian Ferrari, and Srujana Katta