

descriptive account of recent developments in the platform economy like Babajob, UrbanClap, etc - India's versions of Airtasker and the like.

In short, this book represents a welcome attempt to locate the inequalities of social access to new technology within India's chaotic economic history. The overall detail on government-level data and the chapters on India's post-independence economic development are especially recommended to students interested in the political economy of South Asia.

### References

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### Matt Withers

#### **Sri Lanka's Remittance Economy: A Multiscalar Analysis of Migration-Underdevelopment**

Routledge, London and New York, 2019, 178pp., \$230, hardback.

#### **Reviewed by Christine Brickenstein**

Matt Withers's first book, *Sri Lanka's Remittance Economy: A Multiscalar Analysis of Migration-Underdevelopment*, constitutes a thoroughly researched analysis of Sri Lanka's remittance dependent economy. Withers, a temporary labour migration expert with a background in Political Economy, competently utilises a mix of qualitative research and historical structural analysis to explore how remittance dependency ultimately reinforces underdevelopment and creates long-term unsustainable outcomes.

Sri Lanka constitutes an interesting and relevant case study for the author's hypotheses as the country has a longstanding history of uneven development and foreign dependency dating back to colonial and pre-colonial times.

The book begins with an overview of the theoretical framework of the historic nexus of migration and economic development, employing a historical-structural approach at different scales of analysis to explain uneven development. Chapter two then applies this approach to the Sri Lankan context to describe the importance of temporary labour migration not only as a livelihood strategy of an individual basis but also as a means to ensure economic stability on a macro level.

What follows in chapters 3, 4, and 5 is a discussion of the fieldwork findings undertaken by the author. Understanding the aspirations of migrants where foreign employment has become a survival strategy, in combination with an increasing deregulation of foreign employment, leads the author to question where participation in temporary migration can be located along the continuum of free choice and forced migration. Structural inequalities are then analysed through the medium of *place*, referring to geography, demography and cultural structures in explaining imbalances of recruitment practices, resulting in variations in migration outcomes across different communities.

The last chapter of fieldwork findings is dedicated to applying the concept of *status* to migrant agency. While migration presents individuals with opportunities to reclaim status through purchases of status-enhancing goods, as well as the participation in what many communities perceive as prestigious programs, it creates a paradox of migrant agency that is most dominantly characterised by vulnerability, exploitation, gendered working realities and the hardship and uncertainties faced upon return from foreign employment.

The book culminates with two chapters outlining the migration-induced underdevelopment of Sri Lanka's economy, skilfully drawing out the uneven 'wins' of temporary labour migration.

What's new? Withers' skilfully argued and sensitively presented analysis successfully challenges the widely recognised 'triple-win' impacts of temporary labour migration. He shows that the benefits are skewed towards migrant-receiving countries, and that wins for migrants and migrant-sending countries remain empirically unsubstantial, in fact

creating path dependency where repeat migration is needed to ensure economic survival.

This analysis is timely in a context where remittances have exceeded official development assistance and, in some instances, direct foreign investments. As such, this is a book that deserves to be widely read and is suitable not only for migration scholars, honours students but also policy makers involved in the management and creation of temporary labour migration programs. It fills a gap in current debate where risks and adverse consequences of temporary labour migration tend to be overlooked.

**Tom Slee**

**What's Yours Is Mine: Against the Sharing Economy**

OR Books, New York, 2017, 212pp., \$34, paperback.

**Reviewed by Thomas Klikauer**

One of the prides and joys of the sharing economy is a company called Uber that offers inexpensive transportation similar to the standard taxi service. But Uber's aggressive expansion into virtually every major city of the globe is not welcomed everywhere with open arms. In 2016, the British GMB union (General, Municipal, Boilermakers and Allied Trade Union) accused Uber of misleading its drivers. In a long-awaited judgment, an employment tribunal agreed with two drivers for the ride-hailing app that Uber drivers were not self-employed and should receive the 'national living wage', annual leave, and other benefits.

In *What's Yours Is Mine – Against The Sharing Economy*, Tom Slee examines the sharing economy's great Uber-con. He starts his nine chapters by defining the sharing economy as a wave of new businesses that use the internet to match customers with service providers for real-world exchanges such as short-term apartment rentals, car rides, or household tasks' (p. 9), with Uber and Airbnb being the most prominent examples. He then goes on to consider the view that the sharing economy – or, better, the companies that are its centrepiece – offers people to 'take control of their lives by becoming 'micro-entrepreneurs [while applying their] egalitarian vision built on peer-to-peer exchanges rather than hierarchical organisations' (p. 10). Beyond these fluffy pronouncements, he points out