

Women, Labor, and Capital Accumulation in Asia - “The issues relating to women’s work are qualitatively different from those of male workers”

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One of the enduring myths about capitalism that continues to be perpetuated in mainstream economic textbooks and other pedagogic strategies is that labor supply is somehow exogenous to the economic system. The supply of labor is typically assumed, especially in standard growth theories, to be determined by the rate of population growth, which in turn is also seen as “outside” the economic system rather than in interplay with it.

The reality is, of course, very different: the supply of labor has been very much a result of economic processes, not something extraneous to it. Throughout its history, capitalism has proved adept at causing patterns of labor supply to change in accordance with demand. Migration—whether of slaves, indentured labor, or free workers—has been instrumental in this regard. The use of child labor similarly has been sanctioned and encouraged or disapproved and suppressed in varying economic conditions. But nowhere has this particular capacity of capitalism to generate its own labor been more evident than in the case of female labor.

Women have been part of the working class since the beginning of capitalism, even when they have not been widely acknowledged as workers in their own right. Even when they are not paid workers, their often unacknowledged and unpaid contribution to social reproduction, as well as to many economic activities, has always been absolutely essential for the functioning of the system. All women are usually workers, whether or not they are defined or recognized as such. In all societies, and particularly in developing countries, there remain essential but usually unpaid activities (such as

cooking, cleaning, and other housework, provisioning of basic household needs, child care, care of the sick and the elderly, as well as community-based activities), which are largely seen as the responsibility of women. This pattern of unpaid work tends to exist even when women are engaged in outside work for an income, whether as wage workers or self-employed workers. Women from poor families who are engaged in outside work usually cannot afford to hire others to perform these tasks, so most often these are passed on to young girls and elderly women within the household, or become a “double burden” of work for such women. These processes are also integral to capitalism: the production of both use values and exchange values by women is essential for the accumulation process, and, if anything, this reliance has become more marked in recent years.

Despite this, it took a long time for women’s struggles to be accepted as an integral part of working-class struggles for a better society. For more than a century, trade unions and other worker organizations tended to be male preserves, based on the “male breadwinner” model of the household, in which the husband/father worked outside to earn money, and the wife/mother did not earn outside income and handled the domestic work. It has taken prolonged struggle and determined mobilization to generate greater social recognition of the role of women as wage workers in different forms, and to bring out the crucial economic significance of unpaid household and community-based work. In the early struggles of workers in Europe after the Industrial Revolution, shorter working hours was a major demand. The shift to factory work (in which large numbers of women and children also participated, at much lower wages than men) was generally unregulated and involved very long working hours, which ranged from ten to as much as sixteen hours per day. Women and children in England were granted the ten-hour day in 1847. In France, workers won the twelve-hour day after the February revolution of 1848. It took until the early or middle part of the twentieth century for workers in most industrial countries to be granted the legal right for a limitation of the working day to eight hours with the provision of overtime for additional hours of work. Of course, this still left out the significant time spent by women in unpaid work, usually within their households.

However, in most developing countries, where a large part of the workforce is not covered by labor protection and regulation, even the condition of regulating the time spent in paid work is still far from being achieved for most workers. The problem of long hours of work is also usually associated with relatively low pay, which affects the health of workers and the possibility of living a minimally satisfying life. For women workers, the problem of long working hours is compounded by the significant amount of unpaid labor they are required to perform.

This means that the issues relating to women’s work are qualitatively different from those of male workers. Just increasing paid employment does not always mean an improvement in the conditions for women workers, since it can lead to a double burden upon women whose household obligations still have to be fulfilled. So there has to be a focus on the quality, the recognition, and the remuneration of women’s work in developing countries, as well as the conditions facilitating it, such as alternative arrangements for household work and child care. All of these are critically affected by social relationships as well as by economic policies and processes, which determine whether increased labor market activity by women is associated with genuine improvements in their economic circumstances.

There is some historical evidence that with material progress in a society, the socioeconomic conditions of women tend to improve. But this is not automatic; it also reflects the outcome of women’s struggles for equality and justice. The growing significance of paid work by women is one aspect of that. In recent times, the ability of women’s movements to fight for greater rights and empowerment has been conditioned by the broader economic processes that have determined the explicit participation of women in the labor market. There has been progress as well as reversal, and it is evident that early gains in some societies cannot be taken for granted.

Global Processes Affecting Women

While imperialism remains a defining feature of the world economy, its contours have been changing. The dominance of finance capital, the emergence of new trade links, and the expansion of global production chains based on splitting up the production process across different locations, have all dramatically changed productive structures and labor markets across the world. Both financial and productive sectors have become more concentrated, causing a relative decline in small enterprises that are typically more employment-intensive. Except for a brief spurt in public spending immediately after the global financial crisis in 2008, governments have been less willing or able to use macroeconomic policies to maintain or expand employment. Trade openness has destroyed some livelihoods while creating some new opportunities for income generation and employment, albeit to a lesser extent. These changes have been reflected in transformations in labor markets in different countries. Thus open unemployment rates have increased, and formal or organized sector employment has declined as a proportion of the work force across the world. At the same time, reduced public spending on “social sectors” has tended to burden the unpaid labor of women within households with more of the tasks of social reproduction.

Because of the decline in formal employment, workers have crowded into informal sector activities, perpetuating a vicious circle of poverty leading to low employment generation leading to poverty. Global production chains are growing in significance as a result of technological changes, making production and workforces in different countries more interdependent. There has also been a global increase in unpaid labor within households—predominantly (but not exclusively) performed by women, as governments renege on basic social responsibilities for the provision of public goods and services, and more of the care economy is located in the unpaid sector.

These changes have been particularly marked in developing Asia, which has become both the most “globalized” and the most economically dynamic region of the world. And women in Asia have taken the brunt of the changes, with rapid shifts into (and out of) paid work, greater roles in providing outside income for households, increased rates of migration for work, and greater involvement in unpaid labor. Women have moved—voluntarily or forcibly—in search of work within and across countries and regions, more than ever before. Their livelihoods in rural areas, predominantly in agriculture, have been affected by the agrarian crisis that is now widespread in most developing countries. Across societies in the region, massive increases in the availability of different consumer goods, due to trade liberalization, have accompanied declines in access to basic public goods and services. The expansion of global production chains that rely on the labor of women, especially at the bottom end, has transformed patterns of paid work. In addition, there is a significant globalization of services, which involves both local shifts in workforces and migration of women in the “care” sectors of economies. At the same time, technological changes have made communication and the transmission of cultural forms more extensive and rapid than could have even been imagined in the past. All these changes have had very substantial and complex effects upon the position of women and their ability to control their own lives.

In addition, these economic changes have other adverse social consequences for women. The increasing emphasis on markets and profitability requires luring more consumers into the web of purchase through advertising and attempts to manipulate peoples’ tastes and choices. In this effort, advertising companies have notoriously used women as objects to purvey their products. The dual relationship with women, as objects to be used in selling goods and as a huge potential market for goods, creates a peculiar process whereby women are encouraged and persuaded to participate actively in their own objectification. The huge media attention given to beauty contests, “successful” models, and the like, has fed into the rapidly expanding beauty industry in developing Asia, which includes not only cosmetics and beauty aids, but slimming agents, beauty parlours, weight loss

clinics, and so on. Many of these trends contribute to the most undesirable and retrograde attitudes toward both women and their appearance, which can push women into newer forms of social oppression that are no less demeaning than earlier explicitly patriarchal forms.

The Contribution of Peter Custers

This is the broader political economy context in which Peter Custers's impressive and comprehensive work on capital accumulation and women's labor in Asian economies should be located. The book was originally published in 1997, but it has a freshness and contemporary relevance that are remarkable. This is because Custers combines a broadly Marxist theoretical perspective with the insights and innovations of feminist scholars, from the German feminist school to other strands such as ecofeminism and developmental feminism, thereby providing a rich analytical and empirical description of how closely intertwined the labor of women in various forms has been with the evolution and current practices of capitalist accumulation, not just globally but at national and local levels.

Custers provides a wide range of insights, which cannot all be summarized here. But some of the more significant of these deserve to be highlighted and noted, especially because they have been more than confirmed by recent feminist scholarship and current actual experience, and because they are likely to become even more important for those concerned with working women's emancipatory struggles in the future. Four issues in particular are noteworthy: the significance of female labor in the extraction of absolute and relative surplus value; the role of unpaid labor; the ways in which women workers have affected capitalist practices of the management of labor and in turn been affected by it; and the part played by women in forming the reserve army of labor. These are all shown through detailed case studies of women workers in different Asian countries (India, Bangladesh, Japan) as well as in broader discussions tracing the history of capitalism. The theoretical strands that contribute to an understanding of these processes are also identified, though in each of these Custers also makes his own valuable contributions.

Women Workers and the Extraction of Absolute and Relative Surplus Value

One of the important insights emerging from Custers's work is how the gender division of work—what he calls the “sectoral sexual division of labor”—is flexible, changing over time according to the need to preserve male power over women and to ensure the greater economic exploitation of women to suit the needs of capital. In a striking example from Bangladesh, he shows how the traditional division of labor between women and men in agriculture has changed because of modernization, while two contrasting cases of women involved in textile and garment production in West Bengal show how the social construction of the sexual division of labor can alter the location, the returns, and the mobility involved in women's work. The use of the male monopoly over instruments of production to relegate women to lower productivity tasks is exemplified in his discussion (based on the famous work of Maria Mies) of crop production in rural Andhra Pradesh in India.

The point is that these segmented labor markets then have major effects in depressing women's wages and allowing for even greater extraction of surplus value from their work. Custers identifies many strategies for increasing the working hours and reducing the wages of women, which contribute to increases in both absolute and relative surplus value. Piece-rate work is a particularly significant weapon in this regard, particularly because it also combines other advantages such as reducing the need for supervision. This use of patriarchal social relations becomes fundamental to

the accumulation process itself, which actually requires the continuing impoverishment of certain sections for its success.

This discussion is particularly significant given recent macro processes in Asia that have affected women's involvement in paid work. There have been very rapid shifts in the labor market in the space of less than one generation, as Asian women have been first drawn into paid employment, especially in export sectors, and then ejected from it. The phase of the disproportionately high use of women in export-oriented manufacturing in several rapidly growing Asian economies in the 1980s and early part of the '90s was followed by a period of subsequent ejection of older women and some younger counterparts into more fragile and insecure forms of employment, or self-employment, or even back to unpaid housework. Ghosh and Seguno have shown how gender wage inequality has stimulated growth in developing Asia, with Asian economies that disadvantaged women the fastest growing from 1975 to 1990. [1] Low female wages have spurred investment and exports by lowering unit labor costs, providing the foreign exchange to purchase capital and intermediate goods that raise productivity and growth rates.

This trend towards feminization of employment in Asian countries resulted from employers' needs for cheaper and more "flexible" sources of labor, which meant more casualization of labor, a shift to part-time work or piece-rate contracts, and insistence on greater freedom of hiring and firing. All these aspects of what is now described as "labor market flexibility" became necessary once external competitiveness became the significant goal of domestic policy makers and defined the contours within which domestic and foreign employers in these economies operated. Women workers were preferred by employers in export activities primarily because of the inferior conditions of work and pay that they were usually willing to accept. [2] They had lower reservation wages than their male counterparts, were more willing to accept longer hours and unpleasant and often unhealthy or hazardous factory conditions, typically did not unionize or engage in other forms of collective bargaining to improve conditions, and did not ask for permanent contracts. They were thus easier to hire and fire at will, or according to external demand conditions. Life-cycle changes such as marriage and childbirth could be used as proximate causes to terminate their employment and engage a younger and fresher set of female workers. Greater flexibility was thus afforded to employers to offer less-secure contracts. Further, in certain sectors of the newer "sunrise" industries of the late twentieth century such as computer hardware and consumer electronics, the nature of the assembly line work—repetitive and detailed, with an emphasis on manual dexterity and fineness of elaboration—was felt to be especially suited to women. The high "burnout" associated with some of these activities meant that employers preferred to hire workers who could be periodically replaced, which was easier when the employed group consisted of young, mostly unmarried, women who could move on to other phases of their life cycle.

That the feminization of labor in export-oriented industries was dependent upon the relative inferiority of remuneration and working conditions was evident also because it turned out to be a rather short-lived phenomenon. Already by the mid-1990s—the height of the export boom—women's share of manufacturing employment had peaked in most economies of the region, and in some countries it subsequently declined in absolute numbers. [3] Some of this reflected the fact that such export-oriented employment through relocative foreign investment simply moved to cheaper locations: from Malaysia to Indonesia and Vietnam; from Thailand to Cambodia and Myanmar and so on. But even in the newer locations, the recent problems of various export sectors such as the garments industry worldwide have meant that jobs (especially for women workers) were created and then lost within the space of a few years.

As women became an established part of the paid workforce, and even the dominant part in certain sectors (as indeed they did become in the textiles, readymade garments, and consumer electronics sectors of East Asia), it became more difficult to exercise the traditional type of gender

discrimination at work. Besides an upward pressure on their wages, which caused gender wage gaps to come down to some extent, there were other pressures for legislation to improve their overall conditions of work. But these strategies designed to improve the conditions of women workers tended to reduce their relative attractiveness for those employers who had earlier relied precisely on the inferior conditions of women's work and their greater flexibility in terms of hiring and firing to keep their costs low and enhance their export profitability. The rise in wages also had the same effect. As their relative effective remuneration improved (in terms of the total package of wages and work and contract conditions), their attractiveness to employers decreased.

Subsequently, manufacturing in Asia tended to occupy a much less-significant position in the total employment of women, and it also relied less on female employment at the margin. It is increasingly evident that export-oriented production does not always result in formal feminization of the workforce, which is essentially dependent upon the relative inferiority of female wages and work conditions and the use of patriarchal relations to establish control over women workers and keep wages down. If mechanization and newer techniques require the use of more skilled labor, or if the gap between male and female wages is not sufficiently large, export activities do not need to rely more on women's labor. In conditions in which both male and female workers have been forced by adverse conditions in the labor market to accept adverse low-paid and insecure work contracts, as occurred not only in post-crisis East Asia but in other countries of the region, there has been less overt preference for young women workers than was previously observed.

The nature of such work has also changed in recent years. It was already based mostly on short-term contracts rather than permanent employment for women; now there is much greater reliance on them as workers in very small units or home-based production, at the bottom of a complex subcontracting chain. This shift became even more marked in the post-crisis adjustment phase. In Southeast Asia, women have made up a significant proportion of the informal manufacturing industry workforce, in garment workshops, shoe factories, and craft industries. Many women also carry out informal, temporary activities in farming or in the building industry. Home-based workers, working for themselves or on subcontracts, make products ranging from clothing and footwear to artificial flowers, carpets, electronics, and teleservices.

The increasing use of outsourcing is not confined to export firms. However, because of the flexibility offered by subcontracting, it is clearly of even greater advantage in the intensely competitive export sectors and therefore tends to be even more widely used there. Much of this cross-border outsourcing activity is based in Asia, though as Custers notes, the movement can be across geographical locations, even returning to the North when collapses in employment (as in Europe recently) force women to take up such home-based informal work once again. Such subcontracted producers vary in size and manufacturing capacity, from medium-sized factories to pure middlemen collecting the output of home-based workers. The crucial role of women workers in such international production activity based in Asia is now increasingly recognized, whether as wage labor in small factories and workshops run by subcontracting firms, or as homeworkers dealing with middlemen in a complex production chain. A substantial proportion of such subcontracting extends down to home-based work, which provides substantial opportunity for self-exploitation, especially when payment is on a piece-rate basis; also such work is typically left unprotected by labor laws and social welfare programmes. However, even such home-based work may be in crisis, as the textile and garment exports from developing countries face increasing difficulties in world markets and the pressure of competition forces exporters to seek further methods of cost-cutting. The extreme volatility of demand for labor that characterizes factory-based, export-oriented production has also become a feature of home-based work for export production.

The Role of Unpaid Labor

Custers's work is significant because he emphasizes that theory has to be concerned with both the paid and the unpaid forms of exploitation used to gather profits under modern capitalism. As Elson has noted, the unpaid and repetitive services that women perform regularly within households often render it invisible in economic terms, despite its critical nature for both social and economic reproduction. [4] Obviously, this has been a significant feature of capitalist accumulation throughout history. But it also has particularly strong contemporary resonance because of changing macroeconomic policies that have affected the relative allocation of paid and unpaid work.

Thus a crucial feature of work processes across the globe has been the increase in unpaid labor within households—predominantly (but not exclusively) performed by women, as governments renege on basic social responsibilities for the provision of public goods and services, and more of the care economy becomes the province of the unpaid sector. The peculiar combination of increased unemployment and increased requirement of unpaid labor is thus an attribute of labor markets globally. Macroeconomic policies of national governments that have systematically reduced employment opportunities for both men and women, and allowed agriculture in the South to become a precarious and unviable occupation, have also reduced the quality of and access to public goods and services and thrown open many parts of everyday life to market processes that increase inequality. In general, these economic policies have been in the interests of large corporate capital. The rich, and especially large corporations, have benefited from competitive offers of substantial and growing tax benefits, while the common people have been told that there is no money in the state coffers for basic public goods and services. Food security has been threatened in poor countries; other economic rights have been denied; social sectors such as health and education have been underfunded; and workers' protection has been reduced. The increasing emphasis on markets has implied the commoditization of many aspects of life that were earlier seen as either naturally provided by states and communities, or simply not subject to market transaction and property relations. For example, the inability or refusal of several governments to provide safe drinking water has led to the explosive growth of a bottled water industry. A whole range of previously publicly provided services and utilities like power distribution and telecommunications have been privatized. Even the growing recognition accorded to intellectual property rights marks the entry of markets into ever-newer spheres.

All of this affects women and girls most directly. When incomes from work in the family go down, women are forced to seek any form of employment that will keep the household going. When there is less access to food, women and girl children tend to eat less. When the health services are inadequate, women (especially mothers) not only suffer the most, but they also have to bear the responsibility of looking after the sick and the old. When schools lack basic facilities or charge higher fees, girl students find it difficult to attend and are relegated to household tasks. When cooking fuel and clean drinking water are hard to come by, women have to somehow provide them for the family. So, such government policies have led to large increases in the unpaid labor of women, and thereby contributed to a worsening quality of life for them. A consideration of the extent of unpaid work by women indicates that a substantial amount of women's time is devoted to unpaid labor, often at the cost of leisure and rest. Such unpaid labor is likely to have been increasing over time, especially in the past decade. Public policies have played a role in causing unpaid labor time of women to rise because of reduced social expenditures that place a larger burden of care on women, privatized or degraded common property resources, inadequate infrastructure facilities that increase time spent on provisioning essential goods for the household, or simply because even well-meaning policies (such as for afforestation) are often gender-blind.

Women Workers and Labor Management Techniques

While some of these previous features of the interplay between women's work and capitalism are now more widely known and discussed, especially in recent socialist-feminist work, a major contribution of Custers's book is found in the insights he provides into how this has affected systems of labor management. In a particularly important chapter, Custers draws a distinction between Fordist (or Taylorist) systems of mass production and what he describes as the Japanese system, or "Toyotism." He notes that the latter possesses two distinctive characteristics: "the quality control circles of male and female laborers intended to mentally subject them to the corporation's rule, and the structure of subcontracting which entails the transfer of production risk to the manufacturers of components and to the workforce employed by them" (317). He illuminates how the involvement of women workers at the bottom of the production system's hierarchy in Japanese mass production generated this tendency that subsequently was used to create segmented categories of workers with differential rights and bargaining power.

Globally, capitalism is increasingly moving towards this system of production because it enables employers to "solve" some of the constraints to smooth production. While the serial production of mass commodities is not abolished in the Japanese-style production system, the internal hierarchical relations within enterprises and the external relations are both profoundly restructured. Custers describes this as the result of the process whereby multinational companies have continued searching for ways to obtain maximum control over factory workers' thinking processes.

The distinctive feature of Toyotism is the combination of internal decentralization with external centralization. Internal decentralization is reflected in the formation of "labor groups" that are rewarded with common incentives for higher production to enable the disciplining device of peer pressure. This reduces the need for detailed supervision or monitoring and ensures much greater "self-discipline." Far from humanizing labor relations, Custers notes that this has the effect of reducing solidarity among workers and further weakening their collective power. It is interesting to note that this method of managerial control has been increasingly copied by companies across the world, and has even spread beyond the sphere of production into finance. Micro-credit, for example, which was actively promoted as a "development panacea" by multilateral organizations and many governments, has relied on creating groups of women who benefit in common from loans (in what are euphemistically called "self-help groups") so that peer pressure for repayment substitutes for the absence of collateral in lending.

Combined with this is external centralization, which also affects workers negatively. A large corporation's relations with small supplier firms are increasingly regulated by the principles of "just-in-time delivery" (kanban in Japanese). These supplier firms, in turn, employ workers with clearly secondary status in terms of workers' rights who are driven by the instability and insecurity of their employers' earnings. Methods of transferring risks to workers are firmly entrenched by the informal nature of most work contracts, the reliance on part-time workers, and the use of piece-rate wages.

Once again, this description is remarkably prescient of current processes, as such methods have gone global in nature. The vertical "disintegration" of the production process into complex geographically disparate but controlled chains is its current expression, as evident from much recent research. [5] Two major sets of changes have dramatically increased the relocation possibilities in international production. Technological changes have allowed for different parts of the production process to be vertically split and locationally separated, and these created different types of requirements for labor involving a few highly skilled professional workers and a vast bulk of semi-skilled workers for whom burnout over time is more widely prevalent than learning by doing. They have also enabled geographical relocation in service activities that were previously locationally rigid.

Organizational changes have been associated with concentration of ownership and control, as well as with greater dispersion and more layers of outsourcing and subcontracting of particular activities and parts of the production process. Therefore we now have the emergence of international suppliers of goods and services that rely less on direct production within a specific location and more on subcontracting a greater part of their production and distribution activities. This has led to the emergence and market domination of “manufacturers without factories,” as multinational firms such as Nike and Adidas effectively rely on a complex system of outsourced and subcontracted production based on centrally determined design and quality control. More recent outsourcing in services, ranging from publishing to back-office work, also combines some amount of flexibility (which implies greater control over workers) with centralized control. In all of these activities, women workers are both essential and dominate the lower end of work processes in terms of pay and lack of control.

Women and the Reserve Army of Labor

Custers correctly identifies the significance of women as a labor reserve for capitalism. In a consideration of Japanese women, he notes that they have always borne the characteristics that Marx described for the major categories of the industrial reserve army: the latent, the stagnant, and the floating. He also notes how the availability of such women workers is conditioned by the broader economic conditions, so that the greater poverty or misery of families sends out greater numbers of women (often younger women) in search of paid work. This is also affected by life-cycle social pressures. He notes that married, middle-aged women employed as part-time workers often most clearly fulfil the general criteria for being part of the labor reserve. They are available as a cheap labor reserve precisely because of their forced absence from the labor market for childbearing and child rearing, but the patriarchal relations underlying this cement their role as insecure, subordinate, and low-paid workers who can be brought into or expelled from jobs whenever employers require it.

One notable tendency in global labor markets is the increase in open unemployment rates across the world. By the beginning of the current century, unemployment rates in most industrial countries were higher than they had been at any time since the Great Depression of the 1930s. But even more significant, and in a break from the past, open unemployment was very high in developing countries. It has continued to grow thereafter, even though the general absence of social security provision or unemployment benefits in the developing world usually means that people undertake some activity, however low paying, and usually in the form of self-employment. It is notable that open unemployment has been growing in the developing countries that are currently seen as the most dynamic in the world economy, such as China, East and Southeast Asian countries, and India, and in many of these economies it has combined with persistently high rates of underemployment.

The decline in formal sector employment, especially in developing countries, has been associated with the proliferation of workers crowded into the informal sector, especially in the low-wage, low-productivity occupations that are characteristic of “refuge sectors” in labor markets. While there are some high-value-added jobs to be found as “informal” self-employment (including, for example, software and some high-end IT-enabled services that allow home-based professional work), these are relatively small in number and certainly too few to make much of a dent in the overall trend, especially in countries where the vast bulk of the labor force is unskilled or relatively less skilled. In turn, this has meant that the cycle of poverty-low employment generation-poverty has been perpetuated and even accentuated because of the diminished willingness or ability of governments to intervene positively in expanding employment generation.

It is worth noting that one important response by Asian women to these changes has been economic migration. Asia has become one of the most significant regions in the world both for the cross-border movement of capital and goods and for the movement of people. The picture of women's migration in Asia today is complex, reflecting the apparent advantages to women of higher incomes and recognition of work, but also the dangers and difficulties of migrating to new and unknown situations with the potential for various kinds of exploitation. It has also been associated with a newer form of production chain: the globalization of the care economy, with women migrating to other (richer) locations where the per capita incomes of households and demographic patterns combine to increase the outsourcing of home-based care work that was previously the unpaid work of women members of those households. [6]

The great value in Custers's book is his succinct description of how so many aspects of gender relations, and the particular forms patriarchy takes, are closely intertwined with processes of capitalist accumulation. His analysis has clear and sharp relevance today for understanding not only the position of women and the possibilities for social emancipation generally, but especially for unravelling the complex nature of contemporary capitalism.

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P.S.

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Footnotes

[1] Jayati Ghosh, *Never Done and Poorly Paid: Women's Work in Globalizing India* (New Delhi: Women Unlimited Press, 2009); Stephanie Seguino, "Accounting for Gender in Asian Economic Growth," *Feminist Economics* 6, no.3 (2000): 27-58.

[2] Lean Lin Lim, "Women at Work in Asia and the Pacific: Recent Trends and Future Challenges," *International Forum on Equality for Women in the World of Work* (Geneva: ILS, 1994).

[3] Ghosh, *Ibid.*

[4] Diane Elson, *Male Bias in the Development Process*, second edition (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995).

[5] Marilyn Carr, Martha Alter Chen, and Jane Tate, "Globalization and Home-Based Workers," *Feminist Economics* 6, no. 3 (2000): 123-42.

[6] Ghosh, *Ibid.*