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## Juki Girls, Good Girls: Gender and Cultural Politics in Sri Lanka's Global Garment Industry

*Caitrin Lynch*

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**Caitrin Lynch : Juki Girls, Good Girls: Gender and Cultural Politics in Sri Lanka's Global Garment Industry** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Juki Girls, Good Girls: Gender and Cultural Politics in Sri Lanka's Global Garment Industry:

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When a government program brought garment factories to rural Sri Lanka, women workers found themselves caught between the pressures of a globalizing economy and societal expectations that villages are sanctuaries of tradition. These women learned quickly to resist the characterization of "Juki girls"—female garment workers already established in the urban sector—as vulgar and deracinated, instead asserting that they were "good girls" who could embody the nation's highest ideals of femininity. Caitrin Lynch shows how contemporary Sri Lankan women navigate a complex web of political, cultural, and socioeconomic forces. Drawing on extensive ethnographic research conducted inside export-oriented garment factories and a close examination of national policies intended to ease the way for globalization, Lynch details precisely how gender, nationalism, and globalization influence everyday life in Sri Lanka. This book includes autobiographical essays by garment workers about their efforts to attain the benefits of being seen as "good" while simultaneously expanding the definition of what sort of behavior constitutes appropriate conduct. These village garment workers struggled to reconcile the role thrust upon them as symbols of national progress with the negative public perception of factory workers. Lynch provides the context needed to appreciate the paradoxes that globalization creates while painting a sympathetic portrait of the individuals whose life stories appear in this book.

"This is an extraordinary book that is almost unique among studies of third-world factory workers in looking beyond the shop floor to explore the meaning of women's labor for nation-building and nationalism. With rich and vivid ethnographic detail, Caitrin Lynch documents the intersections of the gendered status of workers and citizens. *Juki Girls, Good Girls* shows a whole nation pondering the question of whether using women's labor for economic development is compatible with expecting women to socially reproduce the values of the nation; a whole nation asking what kind of citizens women should be."—Jane Collins, University of Wisconsin—Madison

Accessibly written and cogently argued, *Juki Girls, Good Girls* is an important addition to the ethnographic literature on gendered labor in the global economy. Weaving together images and rhetoric of nationalist politics and popular culture as well as the words and daily lives of workers, parents, neighbors, and factory managers, Caitrin Lynch offers a nuanced portrait of Sri Lankan women toiling on the global assembly line. In Sri Lanka women's participation in factory wage labor is viewed both as an important avenue to nationalist modernity and development and as a potential vehicle of moral and cultural decay. Lynch's engaging analysis highlights the women's complex and contested agency as they confront and respond to these circumstances not of their own making. *Juki Girls, Good Girls* explores the volatile intersections and gendered dynamics of globalization, development, and nationalism in ways that will resonate far beyond the Sri Lankan setting."—Mary Beth Mills, Colby College

From the Back Cover "This is an extraordinary book that is almost unique among studies of third-world factory workers in looking beyond the shop floor to explore the meaning of women's labor for nation-building and nationalism. With rich and vivid ethnographic detail, Caitrin Lynch documents the intersections of the gendered status of workers and citizens. *Juki Girls, Good Girls* shows a whole nation pondering the question of whether using women's labor for economic development is compatible with expecting women to socially reproduce the values of the nation; a whole nation asking what kind of citizen women should be."—Jane Collins, University of Wisconsin—Madison

About the Author Caitrin Lynch is Associate Professor of Anthropology at Olin College. She is the author of *Juki Girls, Good Girls: Gender and Cultural Politics in Sri Lanka's Global Garment Industry* and *Retirement on the Line: Age, Work, and Value in an American Factory*.