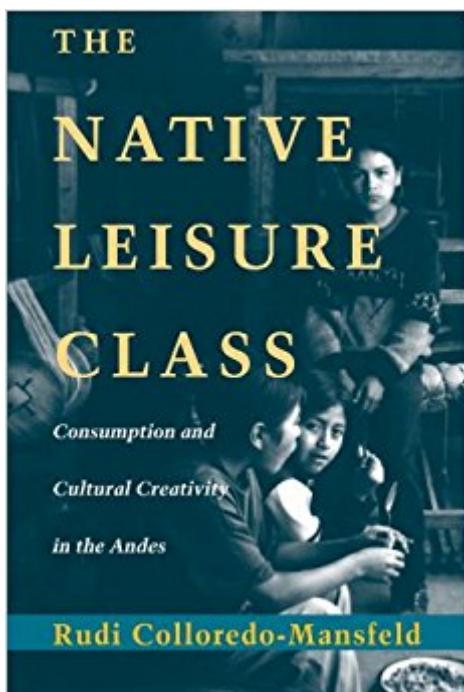


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The Native Leisure Class: Consumption And Cultural Creativity In The Andes



Synopsis

In the Andean city of Otavalo, Ecuador, a cultural renaissance is now taking place against a backdrop of fading farming traditions, transnational migration, and an influx of new consumer goods. Recently, Otavalenos have transformed their textile trade into a prosperous tourist industry, exporting colorful weavings around the world. Tracing the connections among newly invented craft traditions, social networks, and consumption patterns, Rudi Colloredo-Mansfeld highlights the way ethnic identities and class cultures materialize in a sensual world that includes luxurious woven belts, powerful stereos, and garlic roasted cuyes (guinea pigs). Yet this case reaches beyond the Andes. He shows how local and global interactions intensify the cultural expression of the world's emerging "native middle classes," at times leaving behind those unable to afford the new trappings of indigenous identity. Colloredo-Mansfeld also comments on his experiences working as an artist in Otavalo. His drawings, along with numerous photographs, animate this engaging study in economic anthropology.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In this book, anthropologist Rudi Colloredo-Mansfeld provides an ethnography of a small weaving village outside of Otavalo, Ecuador in the South American Andean mountains. The Otavalo Indians have become famous internationally for marketing their textiles (such as thick, wool sweaters) and playing traditional pan-pipe Andean music. Colloredo-Mansfeld examines how economic success has influenced the Indians' craft traditions, social networks, and consumption patterns. As the Indians have become wealthy, class and ethnic divisions have emerged in local communities. He

expertly explores how the Indians have negotiated these local and global interactions. One of the most fascinating aspects of this book is the pen and ink drawings which accompany the text. He describes how while living in Otavalo conducting the research for this book his act of drawing led to "a more complex relationship among observed, observer, and those observing the observer" (p. 50). It reversed power relations and opened up intimate opportunities for him to become a more active member of the community, which has resulted in a more complex and nuanced study of the community.

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