



Andean Entrepreneurs: Otavalo Merchants and Musicians in the Global Arena (Joe R. and Teresa Lozano Long Series in Latin American and Latino Art and Culture)

Lynn A. Meisch

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Native to a high valley in the Andes of Ecuador, the Otavalos are an indigenous people whose handcrafted textiles and traditional music are now sold in countries around the globe. Known as weavers and merchants since pre-Inca times, Otavalos today live and work in over thirty countries on six continents, while hosting more than 145,000 tourists annually at their Saturday market.

In this ethnography of the globalization process, Lynn A. Meisch looks at how participation in the global economy has affected Otavalo identity and culture since the 1970s. Drawing on nearly thirty years of fieldwork, she covers many areas of Otavalo life, including the development of weaving and music as business enterprises, the increase in tourism to Otavalo, the diaspora of Otavalo merchants and musicians around the world, changing social relations at home, the growth of indigenous political power, and current debates within the Otavalo community over preserving cultural identity in the face of globalization and transnational migration. Refuting the belief that contact with the wider world inevitably destroys indigenous societies, Meisch demonstrates that Otavalos are preserving many features of their culture while adopting and adapting modern technologies and practices they find useful.



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