



The Para-State: An Ethnography of Colombia's Death Squads

By Aldo Civico

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Since its independence in the nineteenth century, the South American state of Colombia has been shaped by decades of bloody political violence. In *The Para-State*, Aldo Civico draws on interviews with paramilitary death squads and drug lords to provide a cultural interpretation of the country's history of violence and state control. Between 2003 and 2008, Civico gained unprecedented access to some of Colombia's most notorious leaders of the death squads. He also conducted interviews with the victims of paramilitary, with drug kingpins, and with vocal public supporters of the paramilitary groups. Drawing on the work of Deleuze and Guattari, this riveting work demonstrates how the paramilitaries have in essence become a war machine deployed by the Colombian state to control and maintain its territory and political legitimacy.

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Editorial Review

Review

"The ParaState delivers an important if upsetting (both of our emotions and our delusions) account of how organizations that operate inside and allegedly against the state can enjoy impunity thanks to the state. . . . a sobering tale of the lengths to which the elite will go to render the masses supine and submissive."

(Anthropology Review Database 2016-02-21)

"Well-written, in a direct and honest way, the book provides a fine descriptive analysis of the experience of an anthropologist doing fieldwork that demonstrates the relevance of considering the points of view of the paramilitaries in explaining paramilitary violence."

(Criminal Law and Criminal Justice Books 2016-09-01)

From the Inside Flap

"Poignant, powerful, and haunting, this book offers a frontline account of the paramilitary story."—Victoria Sanford, author of *Buried Secrets: Truth and Human Rights in Guatemala*

About the Author

Aldo Civico is Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Rutgers University. Between 2005 and 2008, he facilitated ceasefire talks between the government of Colombia and the guerrillas of the National Liberation Army (ELN).

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