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Guerrilla Auditors: The Politics Of Transparency In Neoliberal Paraguay



Synopsis

Guerrilla Auditors is an ethnographic account of the rise of information, transparency, and good governance in the post-“Cold War era, and the effects of these concepts on Paraguay’s transition to democracy. Kregg Hetherington shows that the ideal of transparent information, meant to depoliticize bureaucratic procedures, has become a battleground for a new kind of politics centered on legal interpretation and the manipulation of official documents. In late-twentieth-century Paraguay, peasant land politics moved unexpectedly from the roads and fields into the documentary recesses of state bureaucracy. When peasants, bureaucrats, and development experts encountered one another in state archives, conflicts ensued about how bureaucracy ought to function, what documents are for, and who gets to narrate the past and the future of the nation. Hetherington argues that Paraguay’s neoliberal democracy is predicated, at least in part, on an exclusionary distinction between model citizens and peasants. Despite this, peasant activists have found ways to circumvent their exclusion and in so doing question the conceptual foundations of international development orthodoxy.

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Customer Reviews

I just received this book, and, although I didn't get a chance to finish it I find it very interesting for several reasons. First, I think it's interesting to read a book about Paraguay, which is a country in Latin America that doesn't usually get a lot of scientific literature written about it. Although there are some macro-trends which you can assign to Latin America as a whole, I like reading the personal stories and experiences in a country so little known as Paraguay. Secondly, although, as previously mentioned, I didn't finish the book yet, I really like the concept of how bureaucracies can manipulate reality through the modification of documents. Also, it was very interesting, till now, to read about the excessive availability of misdocumentation in institutions and how the interpretation of these documents can be used to manipulate the way institutions react. How these documents, although they exist, do not really contain information, but are rather a basis on which to project a given interpretation of what they should be saying. When I finish reading it I'll post an update. The only down side to this book is that I'm from Paraguay, and it's very difficult to get a copy of it. I had to scavenge a bunch of places, and I was finally able to get one off my uncle. But the content of the book, once you get your hands on one is great. Hence the four stars.

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