



The Politics of Change in Venezuela: The Failure of Elites (MIT Press) (Volume 2)

Frank Bonilla, Jose Silva Michelena

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The Failure of Elites is unique as an in-depth study of an operative elite in a country undergoing substantial modernizing change while experiencing profound conflict, including armed insurgency and terrorism. The book combines a historical account of elite succession with an analysis of the social characteristics of incumbent elites. In particular, it describes the rise to power of a middle-sector elite, its subsequent fragmentation and loss of impetus toward reform, as well as diminished contact with the Venezuelan people. The author explores in detail the career lines and private lives of the elite, the structure of intralite communications, and the ideologies and behavior of men who hold power. Each of these perspectives builds on distinctive types of data and on novel techniques appropriate to the particular analysis. Bonilla's study includes an examination of the more reticent and inaccessible power wielders--the military, proscribed parties, and the United States Community--as well as an appraisal of elite capacity to meet challenges emerging in the current decade. On a broader basis, the book raises serious questions as to the ability of democratic, reform-minded elites in countries like Venezuela to bring about the profound transformation needed to free such nations from poverty and social inequality.

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