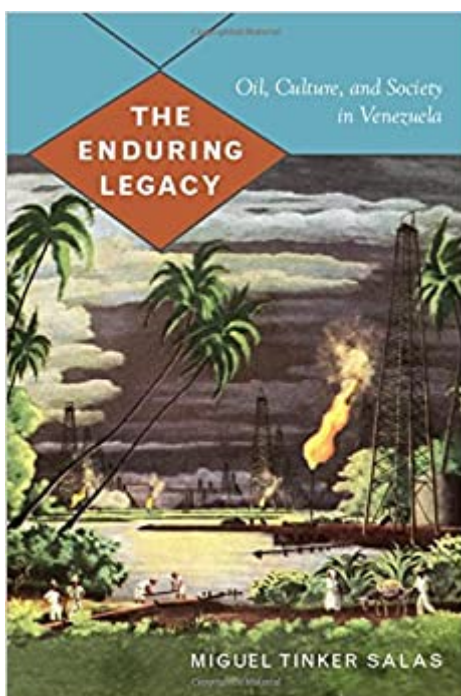


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The Enduring Legacy: Oil, Culture, And Society In Venezuela (American Encounters/Global Interactions)



Synopsis

Oil has played a major role in Venezuela's economy since the first gusher was discovered along Lake Maracaibo in 1922. As Miguel Tinker Salas demonstrates, oil has also transformed the country's social, cultural, and political landscapes. In *The Enduring Legacy*, Tinker Salas traces the history of the oil industry's rise in Venezuela from the beginning of the twentieth century, paying particular attention to the experiences and perceptions of industry employees, both foreign and Venezuelan. He reveals how class ambitions and corporate interests combined to reshape many Venezuelans' ideas of citizenship. Middle-class Venezuelans embraced the oil industry from the start, anticipating that it would transform the country by introducing modern technology, sparking economic development, and breaking the landed elites' stranglehold. Eventually Venezuelan employees of the industry found that their benefits, including relatively high salaries, fueled loyalty to the oil companies. That loyalty sometimes trumped allegiance to the nation-state. North American and British petroleum companies, seeking to maintain their stakes in Venezuela, promoted the idea that their interests were synonymous with national development. They set up oil camps—residential communities to house their workers—that brought Venezuelan employees together with workers from the United States and Britain, and eventually with Chinese, West Indian, and Mexican migrants as well. Through the camps, the companies offered not just housing but also schooling, leisure activities, and acculturation into a structured, corporate way of life. Tinker Salas contends that these practices shaped the heart and soul of generations of Venezuelans whom the industry provided with access to a middle-class lifestyle. His interest in how oil suffused the consciousness of Venezuela is personal: Tinker Salas was born and raised in one of its oil camps.

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Customer Reviews

“Tinker Salas has written a monograph that bridges business and social and cultural history, but he has also written a study in class formation, the Venezuelan middle class, to be specific. The result is not only quite successful but also thoroughly enjoyable. . . . Tinker Salas has written a wonderful book that merits a wide audience, not only among students of Venezuela, but anyone who is interested in learning about the legacies of oil worldwide.” - Myrna Santiago, *Enterprise and Society*

“Few other historical books have been published with the perfect timing of Miguel Tinker Salas’s excellent study of the oil multinationals’ cultural and social legacy in Venezuela. . . . Covering a period of around a hundred years, *The Enduring Legacy* provides a concise, well-supported background to contemporary oil politics and social conflict in Venezuela. . . . *The Enduring Legacy* will undoubtedly become required reading for students of the Venezuelan oil industry. It will appeal not only to scholars and graduate students but also to undergraduates and general readers.” - Marcelo Bucheli, *Business History Review*

“This book is a good general introduction to some cultural aspects of modern Venezuela, and it shows an important research area in the country’s oil history; Tinker Salas certainly makes a significant contribution to this field.” - Marco Cupolo, *Latin American Politics and Society*

“*The Enduring Legacy* is a rare exploration of the complex interconnections between the political, economic, social, and cultural aspects of petroleum dependency. . . . Tinker Salas’s unique history is an important addition to the literature on Venezuela and other oil-dependent economies.” - Tom Angotti, *Canadian Journal of Latin American & Caribbean Studies*

“Tinker Salas’s well-researched book helps us understand the role that oil played in shaping class, race, and gender relations in the twentieth century, particularly in the oil industry.” - Harold A. Trinkunas, *Latin American Research Review*

“[A] magnificent survey of the heavy stain of oil that has splashed and seeped across Venezuelan society during the twentieth century. . . . *The Enduring Legacy* is a sharp piece of writing and research. It complements the existing literature well by providing insight into the human and cultural side of oil operations, and blurring the distinctions between the hegemonic oil companies and exploited Venezuelans.” - Matthew Brown, *Bulletin of Latin American*

Research

“The Enduring Legacy illuminates a national landscape deeply shaped by the oil industry, yet often analyzed as if this industry were an economic enclave isolated from Venezuelan society. Miguel Tinker Salas convincingly argues that from the outset, this industry was a crucible of social transformations within and beyond itself. By examining the transmutation of this industry from a foreign enclave to a national industry, this valuable book offers a sweeping view of one hundred years of Venezuelan history.”

•Fernando Coronil, author of *The Magical State: Nature, Money, and Modernity in Venezuela*

“Miguel Tinker Salas leaves no stone unturned in his examination of the Venezuelan oil industry and in the process demonstrates its all-encompassing influence on the political, social, economic, and cultural life of the nation throughout most of the twentieth century. One of his most important contributions is to show how the foreign-owned oil companies ingeniously modified policies in order to adapt to the requirements of different regimes, including dictatorships, transitional governments, and democratic ones. At the same time, however, he amply documents how the multinationals generated resentment and resistance as a result of their imposition on Venezuelans of attitudes and patterns from the metropolis and their spurning of local traditions. In short, *The Enduring Legacy* is a must read for anyone who wants to go beneath the surface to understand the Venezuelan experience in all its dimensions.”

•Steve Ellner, author of *Rethinking Venezuelan Politics: Class, Conflict, and the Chávez Phenomenon*

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This is a bit of a niche book, but I enjoyed it thoroughly. I grew up in oil camps in Venezuela as described by the author, and the book offered me insights into life there that I had never considered. I wish the author had included more information about the unfenced areas built by Creole, most notably Judibana, where I lived for 10 years (age 4-13), because I think there were a lot more similarities between Judibana and the other fenced oil camps (I also lived in Hollywood, La Salina in Cabimas). Still, if you’re interested in the life of oil ex-pats in Venezuela, but it is a very good read!

I live in Trinidad just across the Gulf of Paria. This book gives me a better understanding of the relationship between our two countries. Venezuela became a basket case since the 1930’s when it became a net importer of food, and tried to prevent emigration of non-caucasian workers.

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