

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book began before I knew it would be a book, before I knew I would be admitted into a PhD program, and before I knew I was conducting what would in hindsight constitute the preliminary fieldwork for my dissertation. It was born in late 2007 with a decision that was equal parts spontaneous and deliberate to move to Ecuador with Daniel Denvir, my partner and co-adventurer then and since. We were drawn by the country's natural landscapes, rebellious uprisings, and by what we understood was the beginning of a momentous political transformation: after decades of social mobilization, the country's first democratically elected leftist president had been inaugurated, and had promised a constituent assembly to rewrite the constitution, an end to the long night of neoliberalism, and sovereignty from US hegemony. Over the three years prior to this decision, Daniel and I had been active in PCASC, a Portland-based Latin American solidarity organization, and had lived and traveled elsewhere in the region where the Left had already come to power. We knew that the Left's electoral ascent was marked by both heady optimism and fraught relationships with the wide array of movements that had long struggled for social justice and popular power. We wanted to see how this process would unfold in Ecuador. Right away, we learned that resource extraction and indigenous rights would form the intertwined sites of contestation between the leftist government and the social movements that were still, at that moment but not for much longer, its allies. I knew that these two issues had long been central to radical politics in the region, but had never before witnessed a Left so internally riven by disagreements over the model of development, the relationship between society and nature, and the territorial self-determination of indigenous nations and peoples. It was an immersive educational experience, and I found myself challenged by political questions I had never thought to pose. It was in this moment that this book was born.

As is already apparent from this brief autobiographical narrative, I am in no sense the sole author of the pages that follow. My arguments and observations were articulated in constant conversation with Daniel and with the many people we met and formed long relationships with in Ecuador. They drew on a prior set of analyses developed in my undergraduate thesis on social

movements and economic policy in Bolivia, written under the guidance of my adviser Casiano Hacker-Cordón at Reed College. I am forever indebted to Casiano's intellectual mentorship. He encouraged me to unsettle the boundaries between academic subfields and disciplines, and between political commitments and scholarly research. His criticism—of my work and of the world—was always equal parts ruthless and generous; I aspire to emulate his example in my relationships with my own students.

From before I even officially matriculated at the University of Pennsylvania, Tulia Falleti was a constant source of support, encouragement, and intellectual rigor. She was a model of a dissertation adviser: with the knowledge that an ethnographic study of conflict over mining in Ecuador represented a triply marginalized topic in the discipline (on methodological, substantive topic, and case selection grounds), she simultaneously pushed me to articulate my ideas in terms intelligible to other scholars, believed that I could do it, and valued my work as a necessary challenge to hegemonic approaches in political science. She read and carefully commented on every chapter of my dissertation more than once. She also taught me how to structure my writing on a demanding but achievable timeline, and how to graciously receive critique while always giving me the space to push back against her own authority. And she inspired my interest in the fundamental territoriality of politics and in the myriad institutional arrangements for linking geographic scale and democratic governance.

The other members of my dissertation committee also went beyond the call of duty. Anne Norton helped me draw out the deeper questions at stake in my work: What is a community, and what practices and identities bind it together or tear it apart? What is the content of sovereignty? How do the seemingly neutral realms of the law and science become politicized? What are the complex subjectivities and temporalities at play in a fight against an extractive sector still in its early stages? Who speaks for the land, the water, and the resources we hold in common? I still wrestle with these questions, and to the extent that this book sketches the outlines of how one might answer them, I am indebted to her. Robert Vitalis taught me to distrust just about everything already written on resource politics and the rentier state, to dispense with pre-packaged concepts, to listen to the actors on the ground, and to trace the history that emerged from my encounters with people, events, and archives. He encouraged me to search out the fissures within the state and to pay close attention to the everyday practices of bureaucracy. And he always brought his expansive insight on oil politics in the Middle East to bear on my research in Ecuador, helping me specify both what was shared across contexts and what

was unique to my fieldwork sites. From Erica Simmons, I learned both how to work against the grain of political science and still participate in and enrich the debates within the field. Her work on social movements and the politics of subsistence broadened my conceptual horizons: disputes over the management or ownership of natural resources are always disputes over the meanings we ascribe to them, and the contested ways that political communities are built through and around extraction, production, and consumption.

In addition to my committee, I want to note the support and intellectual influence of other members of the department, especially Jeffrey Green, Ian Lustick, Julia Lynch, Rudra Sil, and Rogers Smith. And lastly, outside political science, my fieldwork experience, dissertation, and book benefited immeasurably from the courses I took and the mentorship I received from Asif Agha, professor of linguistic anthropology and social theory polymath. It is not an overstatement to say that Asif taught me how language works, how—through the words we speak, write, and read—we reflexively constitute social life, linking, in webs of interaction, a casual conversation to the assembly of macro-political orders. My analysis of *extractivismo* discourse is unthinkable without the lessons I learned in his seminars.

Throughout graduate school, I participated in intellectual communities both on and off campus, and made what would be deep and lasting friendships. I survived intimidating seminars, impossible reading loads, comprehensive exams, dissertation proposals, and fieldwork with the companionship of Begüm Adalet, Osman Balkan, Laura Finch, Kathryn Hardy, Ian Hartshorn, Adam Leeds, Shy Oakes, and, from a distance, Isabel Gabel. I would never, ever have written a dissertation without the camaraderie of my writing crew (Adam, Laura, Kathryn, and Shy). These four and many more were also involved in a rotating series of off-campus social theory reading groups, held in the living rooms and finished late in the night on the front porches of West Philly, and which included undergrads, grad students, and unaffiliated scholars. They are the closest thing I have experienced to something like a salon, unencumbered by the sometimes stifling norms of the classroom.

My year and a half of fieldwork was enabled by yet another community of generous individuals and groups. I am grateful for the institutional home FLACSO provided (coordinated by Santiago Basabe), and for the opportunity to present my research and work with graduate students. I appreciate the many conversations I had with Veronica Albuja, Abel Arpi, Juan Auz, Chela Calle, Kléver Calle, David Chavez, Paúl Cisneros, Luis Corral, Pablo Iturralde, Carlos Larrea, Patricio Matute, Nayana Román, and William Sacher—several of whom also invited me into their political and intellectual worlds, resulting in bonds

of friendship and solidarity that I hope this book reflects and honors. I also benefited from the fieldwork companionship of Nicholas Limerick, Taylor Nelms, and Karolien van Teijlingen, as well as that of Elisa Levy and Sander Otten, with whom I experienced the 2012 march and 2011 *consulta*, respectively, and who were generous enough to give me permission to use their photographs of these processes. My life in Ecuador was enriched tremendously by Robin Fink, with whom I shared an apartment and many formative life experiences. And, finally, Marcelo Torres (Lino): dear friend, confidante, and wise beyond his years. Together we explored the many marvelous worlds of Quito and beyond—both more deeply understanding and transforming ourselves in the process.

The chapters that comprise this book went through countless revisions and reframings. My first attempts to think through converting my dissertation to a book occurred during my year as a Visiting Fellow at the Kellogg Institute of Notre Dame. Robert Fishman, Evan Harris, Sandra Ley Gutiérrez, Jamie Loxton, Ann Mische, and Antina von Schnitzler all provided invaluable feedback on the project as it developed. Over the past few years, Santiago Anria, Hannah Appel, Osman Balkan, Alyssa Battistoni, Guzman Castro, Daniel Aldana Cohen, Daniel Denvir, Gabriel Fonseca, Janice Gallagher, Kathryn Hardy, Evan Harris, Adam Leeds, Ian Hartshorn, Jeffrey Isaac, Joshua Simon, Dawn Teele, and Sarah Thomas all read drafts of one or more chapters, and provided rigorous commentary. Of all of these, Adam Leeds read the most drafts. I am deeply indebted to him, not only for his editorial genius, but for our decade-long close friendship, stimulating conversations, and shared intellectual development; it is hard to imagine writing this book without all I have learned from—and with—him. From book prospectus to final manuscript and all the late-night anxious queries in between, George Ciccariello-Maher has been much more than a series editor: a wise mentor and a dear friend, he believed in my work and in its relevance to the vibrant field of radical politics in the Americas. Courtney Berger was an exemplary editor, providing patient and constructive guidance throughout the entire process. And I benefited from the feedback of two anonymous reviewers, whose comments pushed me to broaden the manuscript's analytic scope and zoom out to the dilemmas marking the Pink Tide writ large.

In Providence, I have had the fortune of the friendship and near constant companionship of Sarah Thomas. At Providence College, I have had the unusual luck of an extremely supportive and convivial department. In particular, I would like to thank Chairs Bill Hudson and Joseph Cammarano for doing all in their power to give me time to devote to research and writing, the college's

CAFR grant for funding follow-up fieldwork and archival research, and two indispensable research assistants, Christian Balasco and Taylor Gibson.

I want to acknowledge Alyssa Battistoni and Daniel Aldana Cohen again, for helping me draw the connections between conflict over extraction in Ecuador, and the urgent and intertwined challenges of climate change and socio-economic inequality. Both pushed me to elucidate the planetary stakes of local struggles over oil and mining, and have encouraged me to intervene in debates well beyond the confines of academia.

I now return to where I started these acknowledgments. Daniel Denvir, you are the love of my life, a bedrock of support, and a constant inspiration. I can only aspire to match your discipline and your unwavering commitment to justice. You have accompanied me, whether physically or in spirit, on every single moment of the journey along which this book was conceived, written, rewritten, and submitted.

And, finally: Maro Riofrancos and Joyce Ilson—critical thinkers, nonconformers, and loving parents—you always encouraged me to take risks and question authority in all its forms, read to me and taught me to love reading, and opened my eyes to the joys of travel, the value of curiosity, and the beauty of New York City in its infinite diversity. Thank you.

Earlier versions of portions of Chapters 1 and 2 appeared, in a different form, in *Cultural Studies*, while an earlier version of Chapter 4 appeared in *Perspectives on Politics*. Sections of the Conclusion contain revised text and ideas that were first published in essays in *Dissent*, *n+1*, and *Jacobin* magazines.