

## PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THIS IS A BOOK ABOUT THE PAST AND PRESENT OF BOLIVIA'S AGE OF NATURAL gas. Some might date this era to the gas boom that started in the late 1990s, a period that makes up much of this story. However, I start the story of gas in the early twentieth century, with the first oil explorations and their sequiturs. Natural gas politics intensified during the 1960s and 1970s, with the first gas export pipeline. The gas age exploded in the 1990s and the 2000s, taking on intensity with the political upheaval marked by the election of Evo Morales, the first Indigenous president, and a turn toward popular left nationalism. New policies of state spending and redistribution, along with radical shifts in the politics of race, territory, and indigeneity, unfolded during a period of relative economic improvement. These changes did not happen without intense social conflict, events that make up a fair amount of the writing herein. Much has been said about Bolivia and Evo Morales, both celebratory and critical. Rather than focus on Morales and familiar categories like neoliberalism, indigeneity, decoloniality, or plurinationalism, I have tried to write through the lens of natural gas to consider relationships of dependency, power, and excess that transcend particular leaders or political categories. Categories like fossil fuels, fossil capital, and fossil empire and the traps they lay litter this text. Gas preceded Evo Morales, and with the disputed elections and subsequent coup of 2019, gas will be flowing—albeit amid a new kind of politics—now that he is gone.

This book is shaped by my own experience in Bolivia. Some understanding of that may be useful for interpreting the material that follows. During the 1990s, when I lived and worked in Bolivia over several years, I heard many stories about oil. I lived mostly in Camiri, once Bolivia's "oil capital." There the national hydrocarbon company, Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales de Bolivia (YPFB, Bolivian State Petroleum Corporation), by then in decline, under-

lay virtually everything. From trellises built with old drilling pipe to drill-bit doorstops, oil's history was pervasive. I also worked with Indigenous Guarani organizations in the rural areas. My Guarani hosts remembered gringos who had come through looking for the stinky rock, *itane* (oil). Looking back, I think now that a 1993 encounter I had with a group of Russian “ornithologists” in Entre Ríos, Tarija, might have had something to do with undercover prospecting for gas. One of them had oddly muscular biceps for an ornithologist. My diary notes “that must have been the KGB guy.” Or so I fancy. (For the record, by 2018, Russia's Gazprom, during Morales's presidency, was looking to operate in that part of the country.) At any rate, my interests then were in Guarani language and education. Oil seemed to be little more than historical background. The gas boom was yet to come.

In 2001 or so, while finishing a dissertation on Guarani language politics, I was reintroduced to the world of Latin American oil and gas by Ted MacDonald at Harvard University. I took him up on his offer to join a project working with the Coordinadora de las Organizaciones Indígenas de la Cuenca Amazónica (COICA, Coordinator of Indigenous Peoples of the Amazonian Basin). The program brought oil companies, governments, and Indigenous leaders into World Bank–sponsored “dialogues” on the then-expanding industry. The work took us to Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru, and Colombia. It broadened my understanding of (and dread at) the power of the state and multinational oil companies and their backers among the US banks and financiers. (As I understand it, we were later invited to leave the project because the bank and oil participants saw us as too biased toward Indigenous rights.) I thank Ted for starting me down the dirty road of fossil fuel politics.

Though I still work with the Guarani on language and education issues, I started researching gas politics as pipelines created deep divisions within the Guarani movement and conflicts intensified after Morales's election. At this writing, the natural gas industry has largely overrun Guarani country. Although this book is not wholly about the Guarani, this book owes much to them. My Guarani colleagues are intellectual interlocutors as well as participants, victims, and survivors of the processes and events narrated herein. I thank them for their endless generosity. My politics, whether explicitly stated or intimated by the reader, should not be taken to represent Guarani positions, which are heterogeneous and hotly debated. To protect them from repercussions, I leave most of my Guarani friends unnamed. For the record, the Bolivian state also owes much to the Guarani, given that succes-

sive regimes, right and left, have for more than a century sacrificed Guarani territory, bodies, and autonomy for the sake of fossil fuel extraction.

Back on campus in the US, my students energized my research (no pun intended) and pushed me to pay critical attention to our own fossil fuel problems, in particular our university's laughable endorsement of the phrase *clean coal* and its ties to fossil fuel industries. I endorse the students' valiant efforts pursuing divestment and I thank the yearly cohorts of anti-fossil fuel activists who are working for a different future. You can borrow my megaphone anytime. And yes, we will win.

Many colleagues facilitated encounters that deepened my academic orientation to fossil fuels. John-Andrew McNeish and Owen Logan are to thank for organizing conferences (and an edited volume) that were instrumental in the early phases of this work. Stephen Reyna and his colleagues also included me in an early volume on the anthropology of oil, from which I learned a lot. Manuel Ferreira Lima Filho facilitated a visit to Brazil to see that side of the gas matrix. For critical insights, support, inspiration, or, in some cases, words of encouragement that stayed with me over the years, I thank William Acree, Alejandro Almaraz, Penelope Anthias, Carlos Arze Vargas, Carwil Bjork-James, John Bowen, Gavin Bridge, Pamela Calla, Andrew Canessa, Mike Cepek, Claudia Chávez, Geoff Childs, Fernando Coronil, Stephen Cote, Talia Dan-Cohen, Michael Dougherty, Nicole Fabricant, Linda Farthing, Fernando Garcés, María Elena García, Lesley Gill, Shane Greene, Natalia Guzmán Solano, Charles Hale, Matthew Himley, Matt Huber, David McDermott Hughes, Ben Kohl, Brooke Larson, Virginie Laurent, Kathryn Ledebur, Rebecca Lester, José Antonio Lucero, Norah Mengoa, Andrea Murray, Shanti Parikh, Tom Perrault, Tristan Platt, Fernando Prada, Raúl Prada, Hernán Prudén, Carlos Revilla, Thea Riofrancos, Tomás Robles, Suzana Sawyer, Chefali Shandra, Julie Skurski, Ximena Soruco Solugoren, Alipio Váldez, Fernanda Wanderley, Michael Watts, and Ana Zalik. A special thanks goes to Guillermo Delgado-Peña, who gave me a copy of his father's memoir and redirected my thinking on the Chaco War. Guillermo also graciously offered commentary on the Chaco War chapter, where his father plays a part. Ubaldo Padilla helped me out with oral histories in Camiri. For research assistance at various stages, I thank wonderful undergraduates at Washington University: Marly Cardona, Marcos Chacón, Nicole Solawetz, Celina Stein della Croce, Hannah Sugarman, and Mónica Unzueta. Burt Fields and the staff at the University of Missouri Ellis Library facilitated my access to Standard Oil's *The Lamp*. Jean Allman and her colleagues at Washington University's Center for the Humanities graciously offered space

and time to work on this book. My department chair, T. R. Kidder, gave me time to write. John Garganigo never tired of telling me to get it done. Alex McPheeters conjured up endless adventures on Missouri's rivers and trails that offered an escape from the routine of writing. Sally Falk Moore and Kay Warren shaped my approach to political anthropology and I acknowledge their influence herein.

At Duke University Press, for being an unwavering source of patient support, I thank Gisela Fosado. Gisela's sage advice and encouragement were crucial for finishing a manuscript that took way too long to get into her hands. Despite my enthrallment with the political power of footnotes, Gisela convinced me to send the notes to the end of the book. I urge the reader to visit them often. Thanks also to Alejandra Mejía for guiding the book through and Annie Lubinsky and Sheila McMahon, for valiantly working with me on final edits.

Most of the chapters benefited from feedback from various audiences at myriad campuses and conferences. Too numerous to repeat here, these contributions are acknowledged in the chapter notes. I thank two anonymous readers who helped me sharpen the focus and articulate the chapters more tightly as a historical ethnography of the gaseous state.

Finally, I thank my three children, Bridget, Jack, and Thomas; my mother, Judi; my partner, Patty Heyda (who also helped me with the maps); her mother, Ivana; and my dog, Earl, for holding down the house and putting up with my wanderings as well as musings and rantings about Bolivia; fossil fuels; the ills of capital, war, and empire; and our shared planetary future.