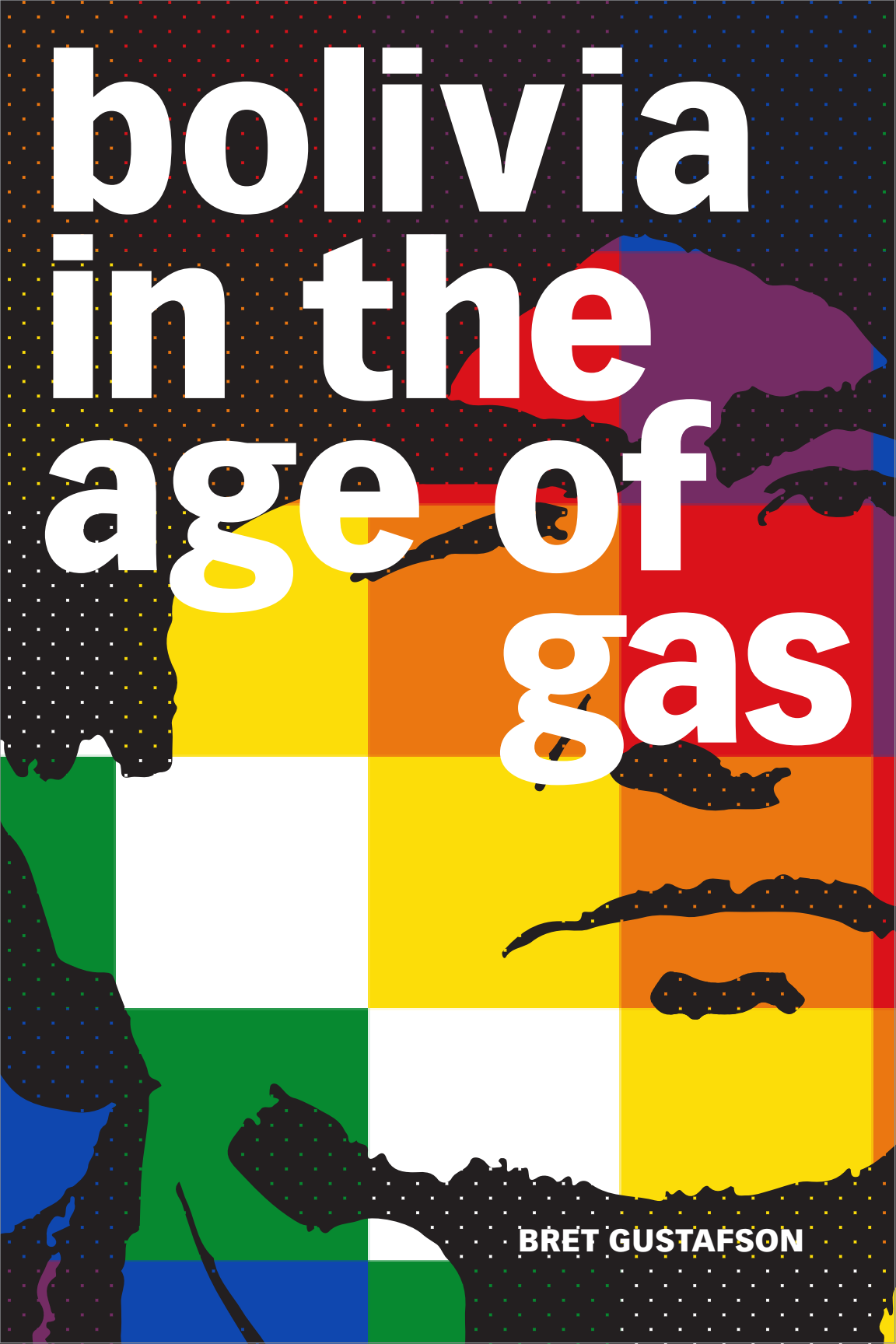
bolivia in the age of gas



BRET GUSTAFSON

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When there is oil, capital comes.
—Sergio Almaraz Paz, 1958

It is perhaps the oldest illusion of all to imagine that external contradictions are eradicated simply by seizing control from above.
—René Zavaleta, 1972

The most effective thing against power relations is rebellion, ridicule, disobedience.
—María Galindo, 2019

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

ADN	Acción Democrática Nacionalista (Nationalist Democratic Action)
APG	Asamblea del Pueblo Guaraní (Guarani People's Assembly)
ASOFAMD	Asociación de Familiares de Detenidos, Desaparecidos y Mártires por la Liberación Nacional de Bolivia
BP	British Petroleum
CAF	Corporación Andina de Fomento (Andean Development Bank)
CEDLA	Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo Laboral y Agrario (Center for Studies of Labor and Agrarian Development)
CEJIS	Centro de Estudios Jurídicos e Investigación Social (Center for Legal Studies and Social Research)
CIDH	Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos (Inter-American Court of Human Rights or IAHCR)
CIPCA	Centro de Investigación y Promoción del Campesinado (Center for Research and Promotion of Farmers)
CNPZ	Comisión Nestor Paz Zamora (Nestor Paz Zamora Commission)
COB	Central Obrera Boliviana (Bolivian Workers' Central)
COBODESE	Consejo Boliviano de Defensa y Seguridad del Estado (Bolivian Council of State Security and Defense)
CODEPANAL	Comité de Defensa del Patrimonio Nacional (Committee for the Defense of National Patrimony)
COICA	Coordinadora de las Organizaciones Indígenas de la Cuenca Amazónica (Coordinator of Indigenous Peoples of the Amazonian Basin)
COMIBOL	Corporación Minera de Bolivia (Mining Corporation of Bolivia)
CONAMAQ	Consejo Nacional de Ayllus y Markas del Qullasuyu (National Council of Ayllus and Markas of Qullasuyu)
COTAS	Cooperativa de Telecomunicaciones Santa Cruz (Santa Cruz Telephone Cooperative)

CRE	Cooperativa Rural de Electrificación (Rural Electric Cooperative)
DS	Decreto Supremo (Supreme Decree)
EGTK	Ejército Guerrillero Túpac Katari (Tupac Katari Guerrilla Army)
ELN	Ejército de Liberación Nacional de Bolivia (National Liberation Army of Bolivia)
ESMAP	Energy Sector Management Assistance Program
EXPOCRUZ	Feria Exposición de Santa Cruz (Santa Cruz International Trade Fair)
FARC	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia)
FEGACAM	Federación de Ganaderos de Camiri (Federation of Cattlemen of Camiri)
FEGASACRUZ	Federación de Ganaderos de Santa Cruz (Federation of Cattlemen of Santa Cruz)
FOBOMADE	Foro Boliviano sobre Medio Ambiente y Desarrollo (Bolivian Forum on the Environment and Development)
FSB	Falange Socialista Boliviana (Bolivian Socialist Falange)
GDP	gross domestic product
IID	Interamerican Institute for Democracy
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INRA	Instituto Nacional de Reforma Agraria (National Institute of Agrarian Reform)
IOC	international oil company
LNG	liquid natural gas
LPG	liquid propane gas
MAS	Movimiento al Socialismo (Movement toward Socialism)
MIR	Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (Movement of the Revolutionary Left)
MNR	Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (National Revolutionary Movement)
MRTA	Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru (Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement)
NFR	Nueva Fuerza Republicana (New Republican Force)
NGO	nongovernmental organization
NOC	national oil companies
OAS	Organization of American States
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
Pemex	Petróleos Mexicanos (Mexican Petroleum Company)
Petrobras	Petróleo Brasileiro (Brazilian Petroleum Company)

PNUD	Proyecto de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo (United Nations Development Project, or UNDP)
PODEMOS	Poder Democrático y Social (Social Democratic Power)
RADEPA	Razón de la Patria (Reason of the Fatherland)
RJC	Resistencia Juvenil Cochala (Cochabamba Youth Resistance)
TCO	*tierra comunitaria de orígen* (originary communitarian land)
TIPNIS	Territorio Indígena y Parque Nacional Isiboro Secure (Isiboro Secure National Park and Indigenous Territory)
TRADEPA	Transformación Democrática Patriótica (Patriotic Democratic Transformation)
UJC	Unión Juvenil Cruceñista (Cruceño Youth Union)
UN	United Nations
UNASUR	Unión de Naciones Suramericanas (Union of South American Nations)
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USGS	United States Geological Survey
USMILGRP	US Military Group
UTARC	Unidad tactica de Resolución de Crisis (Tactical Unit for Crisis Resolution)
YPF	Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales (Fiscal Oilfields, the Argentine national oil company)
YPFB	Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales de Bolivia (Bolivian State Petroleum Corporation)

NOTE ON LABELS AND LANGUAGE

I SOMETIMES ADOPT THE TONE AND REGISTER OF THOSE WHOM I AM REPresenting, for expressive purposes, whether I share their interpretation or choice of wording or not. The reader should be open to shifts in register as well as nuance, subtlety, and irony.

The use of "American" to refer to people of the United States, rather than to all peoples of the Americas, is under question. However, in a book that is in part about US imperialism, avoiding "American" is difficult. At times I use the term for ease of reference. "North American" unduly interpellates Canadians. "People of the United States" is cumbersome. Bolivians refer to the people in question as *americanos* (or *gringos*), so I use "Americans" and "gringos."

The word *indio* (Indian) has colonial and derogatory origins but its usage has widened in Bolivia. I use it as both supporters and detractors of Evo Morales, and Morales himself, have used it, with self-conscious awareness that it can express bold defiance and racist disregard. I follow the Native American Journalist Association guidelines and capitalize "Indigenous." I do not capitalize indigeneity, which I use to refer to a paradigm. For Bolivians who do not see themselves as Indigenous, "non-Indigenous" is problematic. "Mestizo" is not widely used. I sometimes use *criollo*. When racializing practices are at stake, I use *whitish* to refer to those who claim social distance in racial or racist terms. Bolivian writers sometimes use *blancoide* (white-oid or whitish), a usage that I take to validate my choice. I also use regional identity labels when relevant.

I often include Spanish words and phrases to maintain the feeling of language whose affective or ideological weight is hard to translate. For example, *pueblo*, quite simply, is not just "people." For readers who do not speak Spanish, I appreciate your patience.

Finally, I refer to natural gas as "gas," not to be confused with "gasoline."

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.

introduction

gaseous state

"THE FACT IS DEFINED, IT APPEARS, BY OUR GEOLOGICAL NATURE. THE PROBlem that presents itself is what to do with so much gas." In November 1967, Sergio Almaraz spoke these words to an audience at the University of San Simón, in Cochabamba, Bolivia (1967a, 260). Almaraz was one of the prominent socialist thinkers then demanding the nationalization of Gulf Oil, the US company that was exporting oil to the United States from its concessions in eastern Bolivia. Gulf had also found gas and hoped to export it too. Almaraz and other critical intellectuals saw that as theft. The contract to export was for oil. The gas, he argued, belonged to Bolivia. If Gulf exported the gas, Gulf would reap most of the surplus profit, just as it was doing with oil. There would be little left for the people of Bolivia. Two years later, in 1969, Almaraz and others had turned public sentiment against Gulf. A military government backed by a coalition of nationalists, students, workers, and radical intellectuals expropriated the company. In the words of a retired oil worker I spoke to decades later: "That was the true nationalization! We sent the gringos packing with nothing but their ponchos over their shoulders." Though the pendulum of politics shifted back to the right—again returning more money and power to the foreign oil companies—by the early twenty-first century, once again, Bolivians were in the streets demanding the nationalization of the country's gas reserves. Fossil fuels, and the excesses they create, were again at the epicenter of Bolivian politics. And again, the question posed by Almaraz was still relevant: "What to do with so much gas?"

By retracing historical processes and examining contemporary struggles over time, territory, and excesses of various sorts, this book explores how the struggle over gas radically transformed Bolivia but also reproduced historical structures and power relationships. It is a story riven with contradictions: apparent wealth alongside poverty, social progress alongside corruption and violence, talk of Mother Nature and the embrace of fossil fuels, discourses of decoloniality amid breaches of Indigenous rights and rising violence against women, revolutionary visions of anti-imperialism financed by the circuits of global fossil capital. To try to make sense of political novelty and historical *longue durée* requires revisiting the past and engaging the contemporary moment through the lens of oil and gas. These geological things encapsulate the contradictions since fossil fuels are central both to Bolivia's long history of revolutionary thought and to the global expansion of imperial capitalism. Therein, I suggest, lies the political challenge for the coming generations, as it does for all of us: rethinking radical and progressive change that can move beyond the social and ecological violence inherent in the material things we know as fossil fuels and the excesses they intensify—war, pollution, patriarchy, racial capitalism, and global warming.

In Bolivia, the contemporary age of gas is also shaped by the radical political shift that happened in 2005. After a series of upheavals, recounted in part herein, that year saw the election of Evo Morales, the country's first Indigenous president. It was historic for a country with an apartheid-like history of inequality between the lighter-skinned elites and the country's largely Indigenous majority. Evo Morales led a party called the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS, Movement toward Socialism). Turning back over a decade of neoliberal privatizations and free-market reforms, in 2006 Morales decreed the "nationalization" of the gas industry once again. Nationalization usually means the government seizes or expropriates the assets of foreign firms. Yet Morales's decree was really just a rewrite of the contracts—a modest rearrangement of the relationship between the landed capital of the state (Bolivia) and the extractive capital of the foreign companies. Simply put, it meant that the foreign companies would receive less of the superprofits that gas activities generate. More rents, taxes, and royalties would stay in Bolivia. It made good economic sense. It was a historic shift away from the past, given that historical colonizers and modern capitalists had been bleeding Bolivia dry for centuries. Morales, and the Bolivians who reelected him three times, invariably referred to the bounty generated by the gas, and its control by Bolivians rather than foreigners, as a revolutionary victory and a gift of the Pachamama, or Mother Earth.

In the 1960s, a revolutionary vision of economic and political democracy motivated the demand for nationalization of gas. Four decades later, a similar vision, along with new words like *decolonization* and *plurinationalism*, congealed in a popular nationalist refrain, "the gas is ours." It was a complex political scenario. US power had waned but US interventionism, long centered on minerals and fossil fuels, continued. The progressive turn in Latin America, known as the Pink Tide, had provoked a reactionary backlash from the right wing and new strategies of intervention and destabilization coming from the United States. Despite the fact that there was very little "socialism" in Morales's actual policies, many in the US circles of power saw Morales's challenge to US hegemony as a threat. In Bolivia, Morales's rise to power also upset the traditional party system, dominated by whitish elites. There was an intensely racist right-wing backlash against his election in Bolivia. Gas was at the center of both tensions, since Morales promised to disrupt the dominance of the US-centric fossil fuel complex and the power of regional economic elites and redistribute wealth more widely.

The complexities are many and are not easily encapsulated in a single narrative. Global warming, absent from political discourse in the 1960s, was increasingly making itself felt in Bolivia. Yet here was a government that spoke frequently of Mother Earth now defending gas drilling. Indigenous rights, nonexistent in the 1960s, were a key part of Morales's platform. But these rights came into direct collision with the MAS prerogative to extract gas (as well as oil and minerals). Despite a long-standing belief that sovereignty might be achieved through state control of gas and its surplus, dependence on gas exports reaffirmed the country's global position as a provider of cheap labor and cheap nature, a relationship of coloniality and dependency (Coronil 1997; Menchaca 2016). And while Morales spoke against the ravages of capitalism, the natural gas industry, whether state-owned or privately controlled, was an infrastructural apparatus financed by and for global capital, or, more precisely, after Andreas Malm (2016), "fossil capital." Evo Morales became an embodied icon of these contradictions through some fourteen years of volatile and conflictive politics, contradictions only partly resolved by the widely shared belief that "the gas is ours" (figure I.1).

Though both criticism and praise are heaped on Morales, gas dependence and the fossil capital behind it generated its own political forces and effects. These will continue into the foreseeable future. Gas and mineral extraction shape politics in particular ways—generally distorting political incentives, intensifying inequality, and weakening democratic processes. Changing this

FIGURE I.1 Evo Morales campaign poster, 2005. Combining the multicolored wiphala of plurinationalism, the tricolor of the Bolivian state, and drilling rigs on the horizon, the poster states, "The People, the Constitutive Power. Evo, President." Photo by the author.

requires more than electing an Indigenous president. As René Zavaleta intimates in one of this book's epigraphs, political transformation requires thinking beyond merely capturing the state. In this book I try to do so by offering an account of Bolivia's age of gas across historical time and space, at different scales. My aim is to document the heroic efforts of social movements seeking progressive change and to offer a critique of fossil fueled capital(ism) and the troubled relationship, past and present, between the left and fossil fuel nationalism. Much of what is happening in Bolivia exceeds the terms that are often used to describe it—neoliberalism, populism, socialism, indigeneity. Instead of reducing Bolivia to any singular category, I borrow a phrase

sometimes heard in Bolivia and offer in this book a historical ethnography of Bolivia as a gaseous state (*el estado gasífero*).

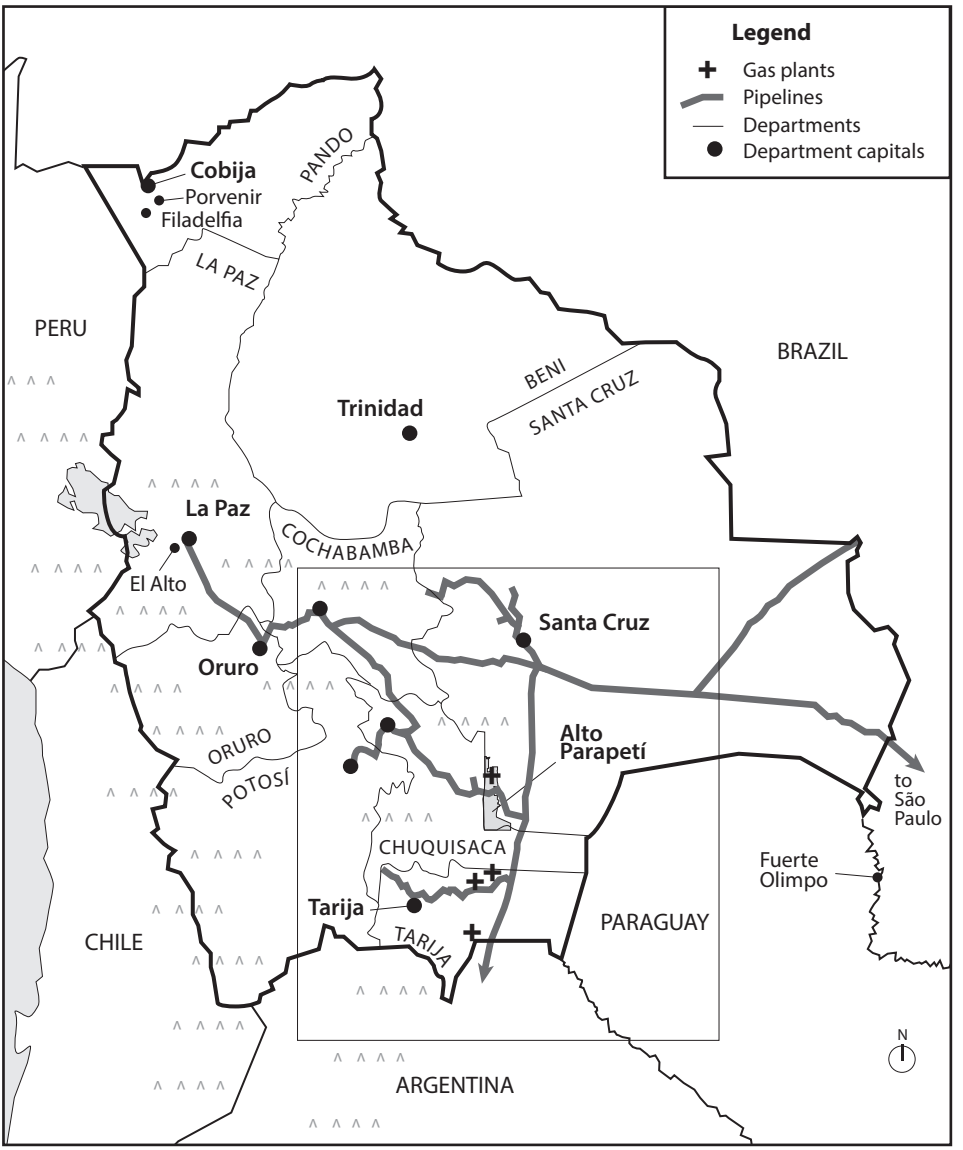
To suggest that Bolivia became, for a time, a gaseous state or, like many Bolivians say, it was gasified (*gasificado*) or gaseous (*gasífero*) is metaphorical, in ways I explore herein. Yet the concept also acknowledges the somewhat deterministic force of fossil fuel economies. The imperatives of gas extraction as a material process generated direct and indirect impacts tied to the production of surplus (in the form of rents, violence, and other kinds of excess) and the reshaping of legal regimes, geopolitical calculations, and political potentiality (Mitchell 2001). I examine what this means through three lenses—time, space, and excess. Temporally, the gas economy demanded (particularly of Evo, but also of social movements) the subsumption of longer histories of struggle and visions of political futures into the contractual temporalities and enticements of fossil capital. Gas came to dominate talk about the present ("look at the wealth gas brings") and the future ("we need to find and extract more gas"). Spatially, the decolonizing struggles of Indigenous peoples and rethinkings of a new political order were also gasified, such that fossil capital exerted a kind of transterritorial sovereignty that privileged certain territorial projects (like that of the regionalists and a particular expression of nationalism) while subsuming other more radical political utopias (like that of Indigenous autonomy). In terms of excess, with a more utopian politics sidelined, Bolivian politics was again reduced to a quarrel over the percentages, the trickle-down of rents that bring some material benefits in spatially and socially uneven ways, even as these generate new forms of violence, also experienced differentially, against people and nature. I return to these three themes, around which I structure the book, later in this introduction.

IN ATTRIBUTING BOLIVIA'S POLITICAL FATE TO GEOLOGY, ALMARAZ WAS ONLY partly right. Hundreds of millions of years ago, the land mass now called South America was sutured to that now called Africa. Three hundred million or so years ago, the continents split and water rushed in to form a massive sea. Over a few more million years, organic matter settled to the sea floor and was covered and compressed by sediment. Over a few million more, the organic material slowly cooked into oil and then cooked some more into gas. Along the way, the waters receded. The oil and gas accumulated far underground, beneath what are now the edges of the Atlantic Ocean, offshore Brazil and offshore west Africa, and farther inland. Fast forward a few million years and continental collisions folded and thrusted geological layers upward, forming

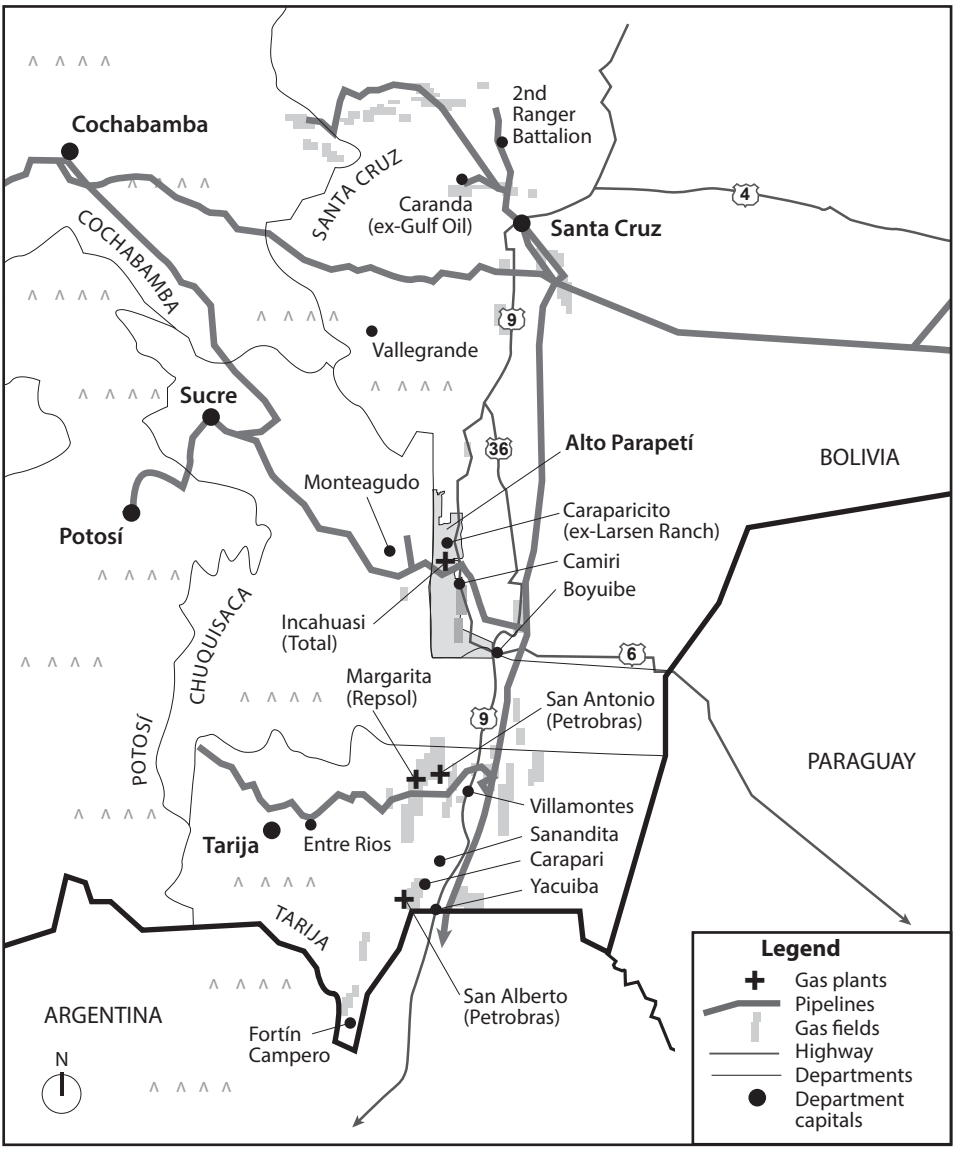
the Andes and bringing these fossil fuels closer to the surface. In Bolivia this Andean fold-and-thrust belt made the aboveground and the underground something like a blanket bunched up at the foot of a bed, wrinkles in geological time that brought the past within reach of the present. In Bolivia the oil- and gasmen speak with glee of the Huamanpampa and the Devonian, labels for these deep geological strata where oil and gas might be found. This geological history set the stage for the political and ecological quandaries of the day.

Geology set the stage, but as Almaraz also noted, it was not until the rise of fossil capital in the early twentieth century that Bolivia became entangled in the dilemma of having too much gas and too much of the noxious, violent politics it brought with it. Most of the gas is in the rugged area of Bolivia between the Andes and the Chaco (map I.1). And much of that disheveled geological blanket makes up the ancestral lands of the Indigenous Guarani people, now living alongside Bolivian neighbors of various origins. Gas there was, and a lot of it. Germans, British, Chilean, Bolivian, and US prospectors first sought oil in the region in the early twentieth century, some of whose history I trace herein. Fast forward many decades, and it was gas, not oil, that was most abundant. In 2000 the United States Geological Survey (USGS) World Petroleum Assessment labeled the area the Santa Cruz–Tarija Basin and ranked the area seventy-fifth on the list of the world's seventy-six priority hydrocarbon regions. Notably, the geologist's-eye view sees neither Indigenous nor national territories and, conspiratorially or not, only highlighted the two political centers that would become the main opposition to Morales: Santa Cruz and Tarija (Klett et al. 1997; Lindquist 1998; Ahlbrandt 2000).

Most of Bolivia's gas comes from a few megafields clustered in the central part of the region: San Alberto, San Antonio, Margarita, and Incahuasi (map I.2). All of them are in Guarani territory. This is a region seen as a remote backwater by those who do not live there. Along with the rest of eastern and southeastern Bolivia, it was long treated as a frontier periphery by an Andes-centric state heavily reliant on mining. For many Bolivians, saying the word *Chaco* brings to mind the Chaco War, and oil. The Chaco is thus central to the national imaginary, even if stories are rarely told from the perspective of those who live there. It is often imagined as a space somewhat disconnected from the true Bolivian nation (Delgado-Peña 1996). In other senses, as a space of war marked by decaying monuments of earlier booms and busts, the Chaco is also often spoken of as a space of relics and ruin, similar to its representations on the Argentine side (Gordillo 2014). Yet of late, as in an earlier age



MAP I.1 Bolivia, with places mentioned in the text. Map by Patty Heyda.



MAP I.2 Detail of southeastern Bolivia and the gas lands. Map by Patty Heyda.

of oil, the gas lands of the Chaco and eastern Bolivia have taken on renewed political importance on the national and global stage, with "Chaco" and "gas" now anchors for imagining once again an elusive national unity. Because I have spent most of my time in Bolivia working in the Chaco and its environs, much of this book is centered there as well.

When Evo Morales decreed the nationalization of gas in 2006, it made good economic sense for a poor country like Bolivia. But it was not as radical as many on the nationalist left wanted. The country did revitalize its government-operated oil and gas company, Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales Bolivianos (YPFB). But the foreign firms were still the dominant players. These included Brazil's Petrobras (a semiprivate firm part-owned by the Brazilian state) and Spain's Repsol. France's Total was not far behind. Others—including British Gas, Shell, Exxon, and, of late, Russia's Gazprom—also came to the table. These companies all invest in shared-risk partnerships, such that any one gas operation may have linkages to various sources of global capital. A range of service companies, from China's Sinopec to Houston's Halliburton and Schlumberger, also work in Bolivia. Despite the rhetoric of indigeneity, decolonization, socialism, and anti-imperialism, Bolivia in the gas age was still pretty much a system of fossil fuel capitalism, albeit capitalism with a much larger government role in redistributing the excess wealth generated.

As gas operations ramped up, the volumes of gas exported out of the Chaco backlands increased. During the course of each day, millions of cubic meters of gas are piped out of the earth, processed to separate liquids, and pumped into thirty-inch underground pipelines. Like arteries, one set of pipelines runs north and east, for over two thousand kilometers, to Brazil.[1] The main line across Brazil takes between 40 and 50 percent of Bolivian production.[2] Bolivian gas generates electricity across Mato Grosso do Sul and in the capitalist industrial heartland at São Paulo and also fuels the Brazilian agro-industrial complex via a fertilizer plant at Tres Lagoas, in the heart of Brazil's soy and sugar cane region (Correa Vera, Serrano, and Añez Rea 2003, 67–68). Petrobras, the Brazilian company extracting gas in Bolivia, can thus be said to control a cheap energy production apparatus for Brazil. Though Brazil's offshore oil and gas—and its growing turn to renewables—now threatens to diminish its demand for Bolivian gas, at the moment Bolivia is an energy colony. Or as a Brazilian law student in a bus crossing Mato Grosso do Sul told me, "Bolivia is like a little thing stuck to our body, an appendix."

Another pipeline feeds Argentina's energy demand with 20 to 30 percent of Bolivia's production. These operations are mostly controlled by Repsol and/

or Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales (YPF, Fiscal Oilfields), the remnants of Argentina's national energy company, purchased by Spain's Repsol before its partial renationalization. With the help of Chevron and despite valiant opposition, Argentina hopes to frack its way to gas independence in coming years, along with all the toxicity that will bring. This may also reduce Argentine demand for Bolivian gas. Yet during the age of gas, and for many decades prior, Argentina had long jousted with Brazil, and in turn with the US, for access to Bolivian gas. So, to a lesser extent, Bolivia has also been an energy colony of Argentina.

On a smaller scale, Bolivia's own domestic gas pipeline infrastructure and internal consumption have expanded in recent years, fluctuating between 15 and 25 percent of overall production. Expanding public access to gas was crucial for maintaining support for gas extraction. To that end, YPFB installed new gas lines in thousands upon thousands of kitchens in humble urban households. One of the more frequent political rituals in recent years has been the president or vice president opening the gas valve in a kitchen, as the beneficiary (invariably a woman representing the grateful housewife) looks on. Evo Morales, or his vice president, Álvaro García Linera, would celebrate the moment as one of domestic progress, modernity, and the outcome of a long revolutionary struggle against imperialism (e.g., ABI 2013).

All of that gas flowing out of the country brings in millions of dollars per day in royalties, rents, and taxes. Between 2007 and 2017, what is called the "government take" has been around $22 billion (YPFB 2017). Unlike any time in recent history, Bolivia has consistently led Latin America in measures of economic growth, fiscal stability, and foreign reserves. Plenty flows into the coffers of the gas companies as well. In Bolivia, through a complex set of funds, legal stipulations, metrics, and political calculations, percentages of this new government wealth were redistributed in multiple forms. Some of the money goes directly to department and municipal governments. Other percentages go to the military, the universities, and the national oil and gas company, YPFB. Other percentages serve a rural development fund. Still others are used by the national treasury for expenditure on public works. Others help fund various cash transfer programs, to children, the elderly, and expectant mothers. Regions where the gas is found—Santa Cruz, Tarija, and of late Chuquisaca—receive more money than others. (Though most of the gas wealth comes from underneath Guarani land, the Guarani bear most of the direct impacts and benefit much less than one might expect, having only been offered project-based compensations and some new public institutions

and the jobs they offer.) In some cases, such as that of Tarija, departmental governments have received so much money that they could hardly spend, let alone steal, all of it.

Energy and Empire

Any account of Bolivia and its natural resources must grapple with a longer history of US intervention, a relationship to "empire" and "imperialism" that occupies a central place in Bolivian political discourse. Culturally speaking, I seek to capture the rich Bolivian language of anti-imperialism, with its vocabulary of useful words like *lackey* (*lacayo*) and *country sell-out* (*vendepatria*). An anthropologist would be remiss in not taking these meanings seriously while acknowledging that this can reflect combative militancy but is often merely discursive flourish. In addition, written from the perspective of a North American, and considering that many who read this are also reading from the US, a subtext of this book is a critique of US foreign policy shaped by a long history of fossil-fueled expansionism, intervention, and militarism (Mitchell 2001; Huber 2013). To this end, I use the term *empire* as many Bolivians do, to refer to the United States and its long history of efforts to control the path of Bolivian politics and economics. Empire refers to a specific territorial configuration in which the US seeks to exert influence over the course of state policy. As Greg Grandin argues (2006, 2), Latin America has been a proving ground for American empire, a kind of testing ground for "extraterritorial administration," economic policy experiments, techniques of "soft power" like conditioned development aid, as well as a long history of unilateral use of military force. Without reducing local complexities to external forces, and recognizing that many Bolivians are willing to serve the interests of the United States, I follow Fernando Coronil (1997) to "oscillat[e] between a critical localism and a critical globalism." The point is to consider how the concept of empire is useful to "capture the way that US power is enacted in the Western Hemisphere" (Gill 2004, 233). This is not to suggest that US imperialism is an all-powerful force. Indeed US interventions, carried out frequently with willing Bolivian collaborators, have failed as often as they have succeeded (Lehman 2006). The rise of Evo Morales is a testament to this power of resistance. And his fall in the coup of November 2019 was not (only) the result of US imperialism. Yet when viewed through the lens of the US private fossil fuel industries and their intellectual, military, and

political backers, Latin America remains squarely in the sights of the most base elements of the US imperial urge and its local backers: to assure access and, by extension, some control over the course of oil and gas development in the region.

Even so, in much of the academic and the policy world, dominated as it is by material interests and forms of knowledge production that serve the imperial urge, the reality of empire is denied and its invocation often mocked. This is clearest among the hawkish hard-liners of the US Republican Party, but neither have the Democrats fallen behind. Indeed, in January 2010, when Barack Obama was US president and Hillary Clinton secretary of state, Clinton sent an envoy, María Otero, to the inauguration of Morales's second term. Otero, a Bolivian American with ties to Beltway insiders and Bolivia's wealthy elite, echoed what must have been generalized condescension toward Morales in Washington, DC. Upon her return to Washington, she emailed Clinton to complain of "countless hours of speeches and indigenous rituals," "barbs" aimed at the United States that were "blasts from the past," and the vice president's embrace of a "socialist" future for Bolivia. Otero had made the trip with then secretary of labor Hilda Solis. "I have to say," Otero (2010) wrote, "sending two Latinas to represent the 'empire' was disarming [to the Bolivians]."[3] The putatively humorous juxtaposition of one category deemed marginal but noteworthy for its representation in the heights of power (*Latina*) with another deemed hegemonic but ridiculous (*empire*) projected innocence on the United States while reducing Bolivian defiance to caricature worthy of mockery.

Nonetheless, the effort to situate Morales's position as "past," and the notion of socialism as inviable, betrayed the ongoing urge for control that is central to the imperialist project, whether represented by two Latinas or the US Southern Command. The US quest for hemispheric access to fossil fuel resources, couched in the language of "energy integration" and "open markets," is a core component of energy and empire today. The efforts to bring down the governments of Hugo Chávez and Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela have everything to do with oil (Tinker-Salas 2009; Schiller 2018). US foreign policy toward Mexico, including promoting privatization of Petróleos Mexicanos (Pemex, Mexican Petroleum), was equally centered on US fossil capital interests (Breglia 2013; Menchaca 2016). US support for violent dictatorships in Bolivia during the 1970s had everything to do with oil and gas. US efforts to defeat Evo Morales, both electorally and through political subterfuge, are also connected to—if not wholly determined by—the politics of gas. As an

intention, if not always an achieved reality, the imperial urge is palpable and real, and deeply tied to fossil fuels.

In combining an ethnography of the Bolivian state with a critique of US imperial history, part of my purpose is to help North American readers understand the problem of "fossil capital" (Malm 2016) and fossil fuel dependence in the United States as well as Bolivia. This is not only because of concerns about climate change but because of the ways that fossil fuel political economies are central to the reproduction of patriarchal and racial capitalism and the militarization of social life. Fossil fuel economies generate multiform toxicities that are arrayed against our own bodies as well as ecological systems. What is clear is that the material thingness of fossil fuels, if not singularly determinant, plays a decisive role in entrapping us in a socially, politically, and ecologically toxic world. In infrastructural, political, and economic terms, we are all in the grip of a fossil empire that shapes, in its own ways, the making of modern politics and modern political subjects. By the same token, although with different measures of responsibility for the damage done, Bolivian gas consumers and car drivers in the US—and everywhere—are subjects of this fossil empire. This sets up a disposition by rulers to open their borders, change their laws, and repress their citizens, whether in the Bolivian gas lands or the Oceti Sakowin territory of North Dakota. Alternatively, rulers can try to convince us that fossil fuel dependence is good and right by telling us that we are in the midst of a revolutionary process (Bolivia) or we are enjoying the freedom that molecules of gas bring (US). At the end we are asked to acquiesce so that capital can grow through the monetization of fossil fuels.[4] Fossil empire relies on the reproduction of fossil colonies, and colonized imaginaries. We are all, in a sense, in that trap. Whether renewable energy might lead us out of it is open for debate, but our current situation of fossil fuel entrapment is clearly dire.

Anthropologies and Energy

The anthropology of energy has also experienced a boom. In earlier generations, scholars pursued general theories of the relationship between energy and social and cultural evolution (e.g., White 1943) or social power (e.g., Adams 1975). Yet most anthropologists tended to take energy for granted, at best, or pursued other theoretical turns. Laura Nader's 1981 essay was an early exception that sought to combine theory, ethnography, and political critique,

in a piece showing how engineers charged with thinking about energy transitions were ill-equipped to do so because of their narrow forms of reasoning tied to technical specialties and existing infrastructures. The argument holds today. Yet anthropology failed to take up Nader's call. Save some exceptions, the poststructural turn and the rise of neoliberalism kept anthropologists engrossed in other things. Only in recent years, amid rising awareness of global warming and the intensification of the latest round of endless oil wars in the Middle East, has new work of various forms taken off.

In broad strokes, anthropologists are again interested in the relationship between social, cultural, and political-economic processes and energy, understood broadly. On a general level, Dominic Boyer offers the phrase "energopower" to refer to a way of thinking about "political power through the twin analytics of electricity and fuel" (2014, 325). Scholars have traced linkages between nation and state formation and oil (Coronil 1997; Apter 2005) and the effects of violence, terror, and resistance on the ground (Reyna 2007; Behrends, Reyna, and Schlee 2011).[5] Others have argued for a cultural or humanistic approach, one that seeks to understand how people's lives, imaginaries, and senses of self, place, and time are shaped by energy and material things like oil (Rogers 2015b; Boyer and Szeman 2016; Pinkus 2016; Wilson, Carlson, and Szeman 2017). The infrastructural turn has prompted work on "things" like pipelines, power plants, grids, and electrical flows (e.g., Gupta 2015; Bakke 2016). Studies of science, technology, and society have also returned our attention to the role of experts imagining new energy futures (e.g., Günel 2019). These approaches are crucial for making visible how human ways of producing and using energy, long taken for granted and now urgently demanding change, are imbricated in both intimate details of our lives and seemingly intractable structures of power.

Thinking about political power, the sociotechnical effects of energy infrastructures, and cultural meaning all resonate with the story I tell here. Yet beyond pursuing an anthropology of energy narrowly focused on gas or its infrastructures, I offer a historical ethnography of the Bolivian state, as shaped through the politics of gas and, to a lesser extent, oil. I take inspiration from political anthropologists interested in how states are made real through their effects (and affects), an approach renewed of late in Latin America (Krupa and Nugent 2015). Coronil's (1997) pathbreaking work on Venezuela's oil industry recenters the politics of value and nature into a Marxian critique of oil and state, drawing our attention to the ways that oil capital exploits nature (as well as labor) and oil—transformed into monetary rents—was deployed to

reproduce imaginaries of the nation and state (see also Schiller 2018). Other work has examined conflicts between corporations and peoples, and resistance to fossil fuels. Susana Sawyer's work (2004) on oil and Indigenous rights in Ecuador draws attention to the ways that neoliberal (capitalist) ideologies were congruent with the interests of the oil industry. Elana Shever (2012) traces contours of oil and neoliberalism in her study of oil labor and reform in Argentina. A parallel approach focuses on the daily life of those living in oil zones—something oscillating between resistance and resignation, such as Michael Cepek's (2018) intimate portrait of Cofán struggles in Ecuador or Lisa Breglia's (2013) exploration of oil and local politics in Mexico. Lesley Gill (2016) offers a historical study of an oil town in Colombia, illustrating how oil, labor, and revolutionary politics created a cauldron that the state and paramilitary forces addressed through years of systematic violence. Martha Menchaca's (2016) examination of oil, labor, and asymmetric dependency between the US and Mexico shares much with my historical approach to Bolivia and the United States as seen through the politics of gas. And David McDermott Hughes (2017) offers a critique of the immorality of gas in Trinidad.

My approach also takes inspiration from critical scholars outside anthropology whose work has examined the intersections between state power, fossil fuel infrastructures, and the dynamics of capital, territoriality, violence, and hegemony (among others, Mitchell 2001; Huber 2013; Malm 2016; Valdivia 2008; Watts 2001, 2004a, 2004b; Zalik 2004). As with political anthropology, albeit with more emphasis on spatiality, this work is concerned with the ways that fossil fuels intersect statecraft, power, culture, and rule, and how people in distinct social positions seek to transform, resist, or promote the imperatives of fossil capital as these intersect with ongoing political and historical processes. If my efforts might be condensed, I pursue a critical historical and ethnographic account with a spatially attuned sociotechnical and materialist approach to gas. This requires an ethnographic sensibility to meaning and its material effects as well as an empirical acknowledgment of the harder geopolitical and economic materialities that fossil capital and its infrastructures entail.

A spate of recent studies of Bolivia composes another set of interlocutors. Bolivia was held up as a quintessential example of the broader turn to the left in Latin America, the so-called Pink Tide. Roughly from 2003 to 2008, as the MAS fended off right-wing and US-backed destabilization efforts, a number of writers, myself included, wrote optimistically of the progressive transformation underway. As did many Bolivians, foreign academics expressed solidar-

ity with the "process of change" while offering critical assessments (among others, Fabricant and Gustafson 2011; Canessa 2012; Farthing and Kohl 2006). As state-led development collided with Indigenous rights, corruption multiplied, violence against women intensified, and judicial institutions came under political pressure, disaffection with Morales and the MAS grew. The 2011 police attack on Indigenous marchers during the Territorio Indígena y Parque Nacional Isiboro Secure's (TIPNIS, Isiboro Secure National Park and Indigenous Territory) struggle over a new highway through the lowland forests was a breaking point for some (McNeish 2013). The realities of natural gas dependence and the imperative to consolidate and centralize power began to reveal their contradictions with decolonial and socialist ideals. At various times, even from the beginning, committed revolutionaries began decamping from the MAS. Andrés Solíz Rada, one of the last of the nationalist leaders of the generation of Sergio Almaraz, was ousted for demanding that Morales stand up to Brazil. Another old anti-imperialist, Enrique Mariaca Bilbao, whom I introduce in chapter 4, left after the government frustrated his efforts to audit gas contracts with foreign companies. Raúl Prada, an early theorist of plurinationalism, left after the watering down of the constitution. Alejandro Almaraz, the son of Sergio Almaraz who plays a major role in chapter 6, was an early MAS militant forced out for being too committed to Indigenous rights. That all of these prominent leftist figures are men is part of the problem, as various radical feminists, to whom I return at various points, were less inclined to board the androcentric train of fossil fuel power in the first place. Many are the most vociferous critics of the MAS government today.

Similarly, observers have shifted to a more critical stance. What may have begun as a "plebeian" uprising (Dunkerley 2007) has arguably become a "passive revolution," a reformist apparatus largely sustained by petty capitalists in alliance with the big capitalists of agro-industry and fossil fuels (Webber 2017).[6] Brent Kaup (2012) argues that a new form of neoliberal capitalism has emerged. Nancy Postero (2017), focusing on the discourse of decolonization, suggests that much of what passes as decolonization is mere performance (see also Anthias 2018). While some have described the new progressive extractivism, with all its warts, as "commodity dependent left populism" (Riofrancos 2018), others have described Bolivia as "redistributive reformism," with the MAS unwilling or unable to radically transform capitalist and imperialist relations (Petras and Lora 2013, 90).[7]

Though these analytical reductions may resonate with some Bolivians, they also risk obscuring other readings of Bolivia, past and present. As an at-

tempt to remedy this, by writing both from within and without, I have drawn inspiration from Bolivian intellectuals and activists whose work has a bearing on past and present interpretations of the politics of gas. This includes the nationalists of the left who produced political and historical critique of Bolivian subordination to foreign economic and political interests. Analyses of the role of these figures, their oeuvre, and the ideological complexity of "resource nationalism" have been done more ably by others (e.g., Tapia 2002; Cote 2016; Young 2016). I engage these figures in a different way, rereading them as historical voices that shed light on heroic resistance to fascism, racism, and authoritarianism, and on the dilemmas and limitations of oil- and gas-centric socialist thought. I found inspiration in their fearless use of biting prose against oligarchs and dictators, clearly surpassing my own capabilities but contributing to much of what I write herein. Facing off against military dictators (Marcelo Quiroga Santa Cruz, among many, many others, would eventually pay with his life), these writers instilled fear in the powerful because of their commitment to the written truth.

My mimicry includes what Mauricio Souza Crespo describes as René Zavaleta's affinity for paradox, juxtaposition, and digression (Souza Crespo 2013a, 18–19). By drawing connections between past and present, making linkages across time and space, juxtaposing historical events, and borrowing categories and redeploying them in new ways, Zavaleta sought to generate insight—or theory—through an accumulation of events, or in Souza Crespo's terms, an "accumulation of senses." Part of this strategy involved historical digressions, something that happens throughout this book. This includes my foray into the Chaco War and American guns, oilmen, and bankers. This also involves a series of parallel histories of struggle, from Che Guevara to the oft-forgotten urban revolutionaries of the Comisión Nestor Paz Zamora (CNPZ, Nestor Paz Zamora Commission) and notes on various heroes and villains who played historical roles. Some of these digressions are in the text; others are relegated to the notes. I encourage the reader to digress with me, and to read the notes alongside the main text. Through this piling up of interconnections, I encourage the reader to feel and see the intersections that add to the accumulation of political senses that I hope some might find useful for confronting the fossil empire of today.

The patriarchal terms of the conversation are clear in the fact that much talk of popular and socialist nationalism (not to mention the patriarchy of the conservative right) was and is dominated by men. I recognize that deploying nationalist male writers to critique an androcentric gaseous state has its

limits. This is part of the analytical point. A key challenge is articulating critical thinking about lines of violence and inequality tied to race and sexuality with their political and economic anchors in systems like the gaseous state. As a remedy, however incomplete, I also offer forays into the underside of extractivism (Gómez-Barris 2017), to expose the gendered and raced toxicities and violences of the gas industry. Rereading the historical "defenders of the gas" critically—and taking up the more raucous and indignant critics of the present—allows for thinking more clearly about alternative politics not wedded to the toxicities of fossil capital. There has always been a heterogeneous constellation of other forms of resistance that finds echoes in the anarchism, the spirit of *desacato* (disobedience), and the anticolonial *janiwa* (No!) of the Indigenous movements. These are finding resonance in the age of gas with anarchist, queer, antiracist, feminist, and ecological currents waging a slow insurgency. Writer-activists like Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, Raúl Prada, and the anarcho-feminist María Galindo, though not always talking about gas, have established a language of critique from the underside, critique that uses parody, satire, and acerbic humor, some of which I try to *recuperar* (recover) herein. Between the heroes of the old left and new figures of desacato, Bolivia offers inspiration in a world where capitalism, guns, and oil have led to rightward neofascist political shifts and intensification of war and human and ecological crises globally. The world has much to learn from Bolivia.

To see how this story unfolds, one needs to take on the state both from its center, and the iconic figures of its leaders, but also from its peripheries (Krupa and Nugent 2015). A fair amount of this book explores state policies and actors, including Evo Morales and others. A fair amount is also written from the perspective of the southeastern Bolivian region of the Chaco, home to the Guarani and the location of most of the country's gas reserves. Just as the Chaco is seen as a periphery in Bolivia, Bolivia is frequently seen as a periphery on the edge of global capital. Yet both are central to understanding how global circuits of fossil capital and empire operate. Following June Nash (1979), who saw, during Bolivia's age of tin, peripheries like Bolivia as a crystallization of a global condition, there are questions here that link all of us. For example, how might we escape the tentacles of fossil fuel capitalism amid deep relationships of dependency, inequality, and ecological crisis? After Ananya Roy, this calls for analyses that are not merely attempts at viewing regional particularities of the Global South and from there extrapolating how these "underdeveloped" areas relate to the developed Global North. This implies, instead, rethinking theory and knowledge production from what Roy

called these distinct "places on the map," such as the rugged Chaco of southeastern Bolivia (2009, 822). I hope to offer a reading that interprets how the politics of gas were experienced on the ground, or on many grounds, from the fascists of Santa Cruz to the anarcho-feminists of La Paz and to my Guarani friends in the Chaco, all mobilized to shape the direction of change.

The Structure of the Book

The book is structured chronologically around three interwoven dimensions of the gaseous state—time, space, and excess. Part 1 offers three historical sketches that provide the frameworks for thinking about the contemporary battles over the past that shape Bolivia's present relationships with gas. Resources have a temporality, which is to say that when transformed through the deployment of capital and the work of human labor, things like gas take on social and cultural meanings that are imbued with multiple and often contradictory senses of time. As Mandana Limbert (2010, 11) argues for Oman, entanglement and dependence on the fossil fuel industry generate multiple and overlapping temporal and political sensibilities, from the contractual time linking industry and state to the time of historical memory, that animate political struggles and aspirations. These are not standardized, despite the shared form of oil and gas extraction worldwide, but collide with local and national histories and cultural forms of imagining the political. The purpose of part 1 is to set up a basis for thinking critically about the historical and contemporary linkages between finance capital, militarism, war, and fossil fuels; the particular role of the US in aiding the expansion of military infrastructures in direct relation to oil and gas infrastructures; and the masculine excess produced by fossil fuel economies, all of which coexist with the dispossession of native peoples and the exercise of multiple forms of violence against feminized bodies and nature.

In chapter 1, through the lens of the Chaco War, I set up a historical framework that involves thinking in the longue durée of the long oil and gas century (1920s to the present) to consider how Bolivia's political quandaries can be understood as shaped in part by efforts to build the infrastructures and establish the political conditions to extract fossil fuels. In chapter 2, I revisit the post–World War II era of authoritarian development to consider how the urge to expand oil and gas infrastructures was central to the US-backed militarization of Bolivia's east. In chapter 3, I return to offer a critical look at the

underside of the oil boom of the 1970s, a time of exuberance, debauchery, and distorted politics that foreshadows the decadence that characterized the late 2010s. The effort is to show how contemporary political struggles are animated by discourses on oil and gas that bring the past into the present in selective ways while collapsing past political struggles and present political imaginaries into a form of consent to ongoing gas activity. Against the backdrop of these multiple temporalities, I focus on the ways that the temporality of political struggle, primarily that of the social movements, as expressed in the recent cycle of resistance (2000–2005), was absorbed by the temporality of gas as a commodity in circuits of global fossil capital. Historians have argued that Bolivians, especially in the Andes, have deep reserves of revolutionary memory and constantly replenished revolutionary horizons that, in certain moments, are central to mass mobilization (Hylton and Thompson 2007; Gutiérrez 2014; Dangl 2019). The point is that gas, as mediated through the crucial figure and voice of Evo Morales, freezes these imaginaries in the present with the idea that the revolution (of sorts) had triumphed. The collapse of historical time and memory into the temporality of gas extraction and sale had a numbing effect on Bolivian politics, contributing to feverish struggles over rents and the gas assemblage, and dislocating and distorting other political projects and visions.

The second section of the book considers the theme of space and territory (Watts 2004a, 2004b; Labban 2008; Zalik 2011). When states open their borders to foreign extractive capital, the state cedes some sovereignty and access in exchange for the ability to monetize nature (gas) and generate some return as rents to landed capital, that is, the state as a landlord. The sovereignty that is left over, which is constrained by the urge to monetize gas, is fought over in territorial terms, as the priorities of the gas industry are to produce "governable spaces" (Watts 2004b). This has not spiraled into widespread or systemic "petrolic violence," as Michael Watts describes for the Nigerian case, yet we see an ongoing cartographic reconfiguration as national, regional, and Indigenous territorialities are subjected to new pressures to conform to the infrastructural and discursive needs of the gas industry. At the same time, conflicts between and within these scales and spaces intensify as spatial integration with global fossil capital generates spatial fragmentation internally (Labban 2008). There is thus a constant tension between the intensification of nationalist sentiment, and its aspirations for an imagined unity and shared history, and the intensely regionalized ways that struggles over gas rents and its sequiturs create other intense claims on a share of the excess. The chapters in part

2 consider three scales of spatial dispute: the national, the regional, and that of Indigenous territorialities. Chapter 4 considers the conflictive moment of the Gas War of 2003, and its sequiturs, arguing that despite the popular uprising, the configuration of fossil capital and local power imbalances set up a legal and infrastructural carbon lock-in for the export of gas. Chapter 5 takes on the reemergence of regionalism in Santa Cruz, offering a critical account of the ways that anti-Andean racism, cultural appropriation, and the objectification of women articulated with a political claim for regional autonomy. This would manifest itself again in the coup of November 2019. Chapter 6 examines conflict tied to Guarani demands for territory during a crucial moment in the early years of the MAS government. In each case territorial orders are contested through a combination of legal and extralegal maneuvers, often shaped by violent clashes.

Part 3 explores the gaseous state as a series of interlocking struggles over different forms of excess—excess violence, excess work, and excess money. Drawing on the vision of Bolivian historian and political thinker René Zavaleta, whose Gramscian notions of hegemony and state formation revolved around consideration of politics as a "quarrel over the excess," I trace the politics of gaseous excess. The gaseous state produced phenomena that exceed our capacity to reduce them to familiar analytical terms but invade, disrupt, and inflect the political and economic dynamics of territory and capital discussed in the first two parts of the book. In chapter 7 I argue that excess violence, the making of dead bodies (and the political work that they do), was and is central to the struggle over hegemony. The final two chapters examine the circulation of gaseous excess through struggles over compensation and labor (chapter 8) and battles over what Morales allegedly did with all the excess money (chapter 9). In all cases—violence, labor, money—there is a deep political and moral ambiguity about these excesses, part of the distortionary impact on politics that suggested to some the success of the MAS government, and to others the decadence of what was once a process of revolutionary potential. In sum, the age of gas was a time of hope and paradox, marked by progressive change but deformed by an increasingly grotesque form of politics, the latter intensified by right-wing tactics that would coalesce in the coup of November 2019, discussed in the postscript. In hindsight, Bolivia evidences the "crisis of futurity," described by Coronil, through which putatively leftist states ended up "doing the work of capital," as the commitment to the monetization of nature through gas extraction yielded a pragmatic politics that erased (or extended into the distant future) more radical and utopian political

projects (Coronil 2019, 142). With the right-wing resurgence, the struggle will continue.

A Note on Method

This book is the outcome of hybrid methodological strategies and writing efforts that emerged out of particular historical moments. I have worked largely through "diagnostic events" (Moore 1987, 730). These are moments of political conflict or gasified social encounter. I reconstruct these through interviews, ethnographic observation, and documentation from digital and print media sources. These events provide the anchors for considering broader political and historical processes, as well as conflictive interpretations of the moment, in light of local experience. I seek to document and reflect on these events to ask what they teach us about the underlying dynamics of fossil fuel capitalism and the particularities of the gaseous state. It is important to note that I have not attempted to write an ethnography of the gas industry itself, whether of the corporations, the workers, the infrastructure, the gas molecules, or the inner (and largely inaccessible) political negotiations that shape the workings of the industry at the national level. For that, the reader will have to look elsewhere.

On Global Warming and Critique

In this book I try to offer critical understandings of Bolivia as a gaseous state. I might have followed the path of Hughes (2017), who delivered a scathing critique of the Trinidadian gas industry and Trinidadians' immoral complicity with global warming. Hughes, rightly I think, demands that we acknowledge the existential dilemma we all face and recognize that burning fossil fuels is basically immoral. We are trapped and dependent, which is why we must resist. As I write, my lights and computer are powered by a coal-burning utility here in St. Louis, one that exercises corrupt and outsize influence over an obedient legislature. We resist in ways that might seem laughable in Bolivia—they block highways and topple governments; we tweet and sign petitions. Certainly, there is concern about global warming in Bolivia, but it is coupled with a recognition, rightly so, that most carbon dioxide emissions and global warming have been caused by the US and the overconsuming Global North. And gas, beyond being a source of carbon dioxide with toxic effects on nature

and people, means many things in Bolivia. Structural, historical, and political-economic forces make of Bolivia's current gas dependence something that goes far beyond individual or even collective moral decisions. As you sit in your parked car idling and spewing exhaust, remember where the real problem lies. So, it is not my purpose to criticize Bolivians for embracing natural gas. This is not to absolve Bolivian political leaders or fossil fuels, which are the targets of much critical reflection herein. Rather, it is an attempt to let Bolivians tell the story. My hope is also to point out that moral critique must be accompanied with radical structural change, which entails mass collective action. As Maristella Svampa (2017) writes, the left of the future, if there is to be one, will have to be an ecological left—united in its critique of racism, patriarchy, capitalism, and militarism—all of which are closely linked to the fossil fuel industry as we know it. I hope this book contributes to that conversation.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION: GASEOUS STATE

1 That pipeline is the subject of Hindery 2013.

2 Quantities have fluctuated between 2005 and the present. These are approximations based on 2017 numbers.

3 The Otero family has ties to both the Gonzalo "Goni" Sánchez de Lozada regime (Jaime Aparicio Otero was his ambassador to the US and was again named ambassador after the November 2019 coup) and the Inter-American Development Bank (María Otero's father was a founding trustee).

4 I refer to the statements made by the US Department of Energy in May 2019 that sought to promote liquefied natural gas (LNG) exports and confront the rising tide of climate action by rebranding natural gas as "molecules of freedom."

5 For overviews, see Rogers 2015b and several edited volumes, including McNeish and Logan 2012; Appel, Mason, and Watts 2015. On the prior generations of energy anthropologies, see Nader 2010; Boyer 2014; Günel 2018.

6 Following Bolivian anthropologist Sarela Paz, Jeffrey Webber identifies the coca farmers, El Alto merchant classes, and cooperative miners as key segments of this petty capitalist base of MAS support. In Webber's terms, "the logic of big capital runs alongside the legitimating function of indigenous bourgeois class formation" (2017, 1866).

7 For an overview of the new extractivism, see the special issues of *Latin American Perspectives* from September 2018 and March 2019.

CHAPTER ONE: HEROES OF THE CHACO

1 I draw on J. H. Sawyer 1975; Cote 2016. For semifictional accounts, see Costa du Rels (1932) 1943; Peláez C. 1958.

2 The literature on militarism and capitalism is vast, but one might start with Luxemburg (1913) 2003.