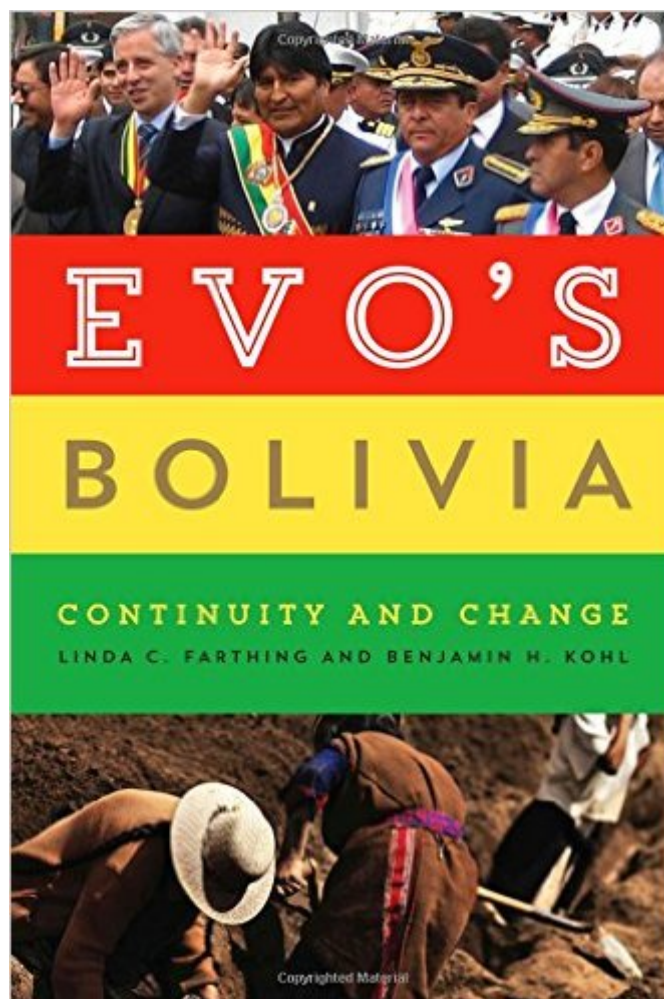


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Evo's Bolivia: Continuity And Change



Synopsis

In this compelling and comprehensive look at the rise of Evo Morales and Bolivia's Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS), Linda Farthing and Benjamin Kohl offer a thoughtful evaluation of the transformations ushered in by the western hemisphere's first contemporary indigenous president. Accessible to all readers, *Evo's Bolivia* not only charts Evo's rise to power but also offers a history of and context for the MAS revolution's place in the rising "pink tide" of the political left. Farthing and Kohl examine the many social movements whose agendas have set the political climate in Bolivia and describe the difficult conditions the administration inherited. They evaluate the results of Evo's policies by examining a variety of measures, including poverty; health care and education reform; natural resources and development; and women's, indigenous, and minority rights. Weighing the positive with the negative, the authors offer a balanced assessment of the results and shortcomings of the first six years of the Morales administration. At the heart of this book are the voices of Bolivians themselves. Farthing and Kohl interviewed women and men in government, in social movements, and on the streets throughout the country, and their diverse backgrounds and experiences offer a multidimensional view of the administration and its progress so far. Ultimately the "process of change" Evo promised is exactly that: an ongoing and complicated process, yet an important example of development in a globalized world.

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Customer Reviews

An essential resource for anyone seeking to understand the Bolivian political and social landscape

under the leadership of its first indigenous president, Evo Morales. Farthing and Kohl successfully take on the nuanced job of neither glorifying nor vilifying the party of the MAS and the tenure of the Morales administration, but rather representing and interpreting its emergence, achievements and shortcomings by way of exhaustive research and through diverse testimonies from Bolivians themselves. Whether you are a tourist, a student of Bolivian politics, culture or political science, this book will serve you both as a narrative (to see the MAS in its social and historical context) and as a reference to turn to when seeking to identify members of Bolivia's many social movements and political dynasties.

Bolivia is a complicated place. It's composed of a wide variety of indigenous, mestizo, and political groups. It doesn't fit easily into categories, such as the good and bad left. And the left within Bolivia is riddled with conflict. It doesn't help that the country is so polarized that it's hard to get a straight account of any of the crucial events. Linda Farthing and Benjamin's Kohl's book is the absolute best guide available for both breadth and depth. It will introduce you to all the main actors and offers a lively, careful, methodical, non-partisan, and thoughtful account of developments. It manages to engage in almost all the relevant academic literature within and outside of Bolivia without getting weighed down in obscure debates. This is not a dry textbook and the authors certainly have their own point of view. Nonetheless, it provides the readers with the tools necessary to begin to make an informed judgement on the controversies engulfing the country. Even for those who already know a great deal about Bolivia, the book has much to offer as a valuable resource and reference.

Linda Farthing and Ben Kohl provide an insightful summary of political, economic, social justice and human rights developments in that country since 2006, and puts these into a broader historical context. While recognizing some of the positive changes that have taken place under the government of coca-grower leader Evo Morales, they argue that the Morales administration has failed to break the logic of neo-liberal governance it inherited. While most recent books on Bolivia tend to be strongly opposed to or in favor of the Morales government, this book provides a much more nuanced account of the dramatic changes that have taken place in Bolivia since Evo Morales's election to the presidency and the ascendance of his political coalition, MAS, to power. Excerpts from thoughtful interviews woven throughout the text provide context and contribute to a very good read.

Evo's Bolivia: Continuity and Change offers a thorough and well-written account of

contemporary Bolivia, and is highly recommended for the academic, activist, and intellectually curious alike. This book provides a truly comprehensive context for understanding the critical interplay of Bolivia's economic, political, and social spheres. The reader is able to experience the multiple layers of transition that are occurring in Bolivia as the book incorporates extensive long-term research coupled with the diverse first-hand accounts of various Bolivians. Kohl and Farthing move beyond simplistic and rigid categorizations of success or failure, and instead focus on the complex nature of a country's aspirations for change and the constraints of its historic trajectory.

Evo's Bolivia is a fantastic source for anyone interested in understanding the Bolivian social movements and present government. It is also a terrific source for understanding how social movements generate, get coopted and then regenerate again vis. left governments, or what the authors call "pink" governments. The authors write in a popular voice, making it accessible to people who don't speak "academeese". Keeping the footnotes at the end and raising the individual voices of participants in the struggles, movements and government throughout to help tell the story and raise a range of political voices and perspectives. These strong features made this book particularly effective. This brief volume gives the reader the overview and perspective to visit Bolivia and understand what they are experiencing. It is also a great introduction to jump into the rich literature on Bolivia at much greater length for students and scholars alike. They manage to say all the most important things in accessible and succinct readable prose. Bravo!

This indispensable book on Bolivia's process of change combines historical and structural analysis with vivid interviews with an array of participants from social movement activists to market vendors to government ministers, including Evo himself. Farthing and Kohl's knowledge of Bolivia is extensive and deep; they are scholars and activists who capture the drama of an unfolding process that challenges 500 years of Andean apartheid and an extraction-based economy. They are remarkably and unusually even handed as they capture the profound hopes and transformations unleashed by popular movements and the enormous challenges faced by Evo's government. I read Evo's Bolivia before going to Bolivia and during my time there, and continue to consult its analyses and invaluable bibliography. This is a book both for those with considerable prior knowledge of Bolivia and for scholars and activists seeking an entry point—a remarkable achievement.

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