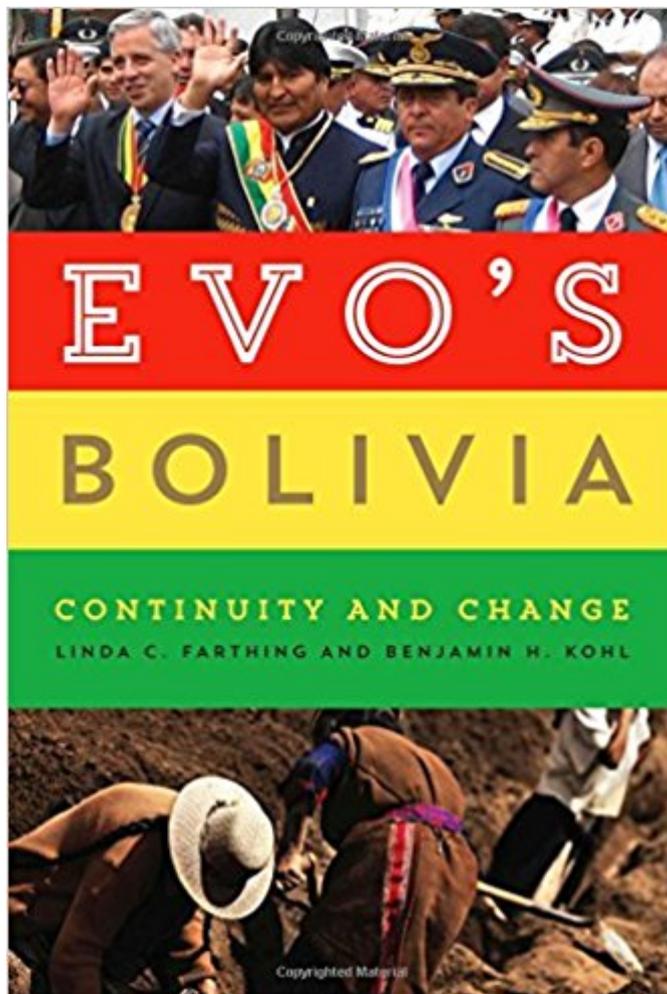


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# Evo's Bolivia: Continuity And Change



## 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.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"In *Evo's Bolivia*, Farthing and Kohl engage in a probing analysis of these

pressing issues that are critical to the survival of our planet. The result is a successful, thoughtful, and compelling book that is written in a fluid and accessible style. The narrative is interspersed with interviews the authors conducted across Bolivia. As a result, the book achieves an admirable balance of providing an excellent entry point for those with little background in Bolivia as well as key insights for scholars and activists with a long history in the country. "Upside Down World 2014-07-18)"Evo's Bolivia should be read as the definitive history of what has arguably been the most significant decade in the history of that country, and in that of the Andean region." (The Americas 2015-07-01)"Evo's Bolivia is, in many regards, the chronicle of the post-neoliberal transition period that I had hoped for. Farthing and Kohl present an incisive analysis of the contentious political moment of Morales's election and the years immediately after." (American Association of Geographers Review of Books)"What is unique about Evo's Bolivia is its breadth and accessibility. The text is inter-spersed with anecdotes and direct extracts from interviews; these combined voices provide a vivid and engaging window onto the process of change as it unfolds. The book makes Bolivia legible to the uninformed reader and would be excellent material for undergraduate teaching." (Journal of Latin American Studies 2015-02-01)"In their insightful evaluation of the continuity and change within Evo's Bolivia from 2009 to 2014, two well-established country experts, Linda Farthing and the late Benjamin Kohl, have done precisely that. Thus it would be a mistake to dismiss this comprehensive, extensively researched and readable book as anything but excellent scholarship by two solidarity activists who are unafraid to be critical as well as thoughtful and balanced in their assessments of the positives and negatives of Bolivia's first indigenous and social movements-dominated administration." (Latin American Perspectives 2015-01-01)"Linda Farthing and Benjamin Kohl's Evo's Bolivia is magnificent. This eloquent and incisive book is testament not just to Kohl's lifetime of writing and thinking about a country currently undergoing profound social transformation but also to his compassion and commitment as an engaged scholar." (Greg Grandin, Director, Graduate Studies in History, New York University, and finalist for a Pulitzer Prize in History)"This book is a sympathetic and quite personal commentary on Bolivia's process of change. Combining their own in-depth knowledge with extended commentaries from Bolivians who have lived this process, Farthing and Kohl explore the challenges of building something radically new in a political economy hemmed in by its own past. Their account is subtle, human, and wonderfully accessible. It is a joy to read. Students will love this book. I loved it too." (Anthony Bebbington, Director, Graduate School of Geography, Clark University)

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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.

This one of the few works in English to present a fair and balanced assessment of the transformations and contradictions of the Bolivian process! I highly recommend this fine and well documented study complemented by incisive testimonies from a variety of key Bolivian actors.

Evo's Bolivia is an extremely accessible book that I thoroughly enjoyed reading and would highly recommend to anyone with an interest in Bolivia. An avid reader can read it in one extended sitting (I read it for the second time while flying from Toronto to La Paz). I also read it in conjunction with Jeffrey Webber's *From Rebellion to Reform in Bolivia* and found the Farthing and Kohl work to be more nuanced and balanced in its assessment of Morales and the MAS. The authors point to an Aymara concept - *ch'ixi* - the idea that like a gray fabric woven from white and black threads something can be "white and not white and black and not black" at the same time. Using this metaphor throughout, the authors highlight the complex challenges that Bolivian society present to the Morales administration. While the authors are generally sympathetic to Morales and MAS, they are not uncritical. The book also usefully contextualizes historical developments in Bolivia with other countries in South America.

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!.

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.

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