

en la postura del intelectual que cuestiona, como sus antecesores, las obligaciones políticas del escritor.

Breve historia de nuestro neoliberalismo evidencia la trayectoria de Lemus del periodismo a la academia, de México a Estados Unidos y la consolidación de su pensamiento en el disputado campo intelectual. Revela la asimilación de la teoría crítica (extranjera) pero también la herencia y la cercanía con escritores nacionales, a pesar de sus diferencias. Ofrece la perspectiva apasionada de un crítico comprometido *ferozmente* con la cultura mexicana.

Gaëlle Le Calvez
University of Texas at Austin

Referencias

- Foucault, Michel. 2007. *Nacimiento de la biopolítica: curso en el Collège de France (1978–1979)*. Trad. de Horacio Pons. Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica.
- Harvey, David. 2005. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rancière, Jacques. 2012. *El desacuerdo: política y filosofía*. Trad. de Horacio Pons. Buenos Aires: Nueva Visión.

Christy Thornton. *Revolution in Development: Mexico and the Governance of the Global Economy*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2021. 301 pp.

Christy Thornton's *Revolution in Development* is a copiously researched chronicle of the active role postrevolutionary Mexican officials played in shaping the international institutions set up to govern the global economy throughout the Cold War period. As her title suggests, the argument is squarely focused on the emergence of development as an instrument for the global industrialization of production and thereby a mechanism for uplifting "backward" nations. She shows how the hard-won principles of economic sovereignty and the redistribution of private property enshrined in the Constitution of 1917 informed Mexican demands for equal representation in multilateral institutions and the redistribution of wealth from the North to the South. This Mexican-led "revolution in development" brought about significant concessions designed to protect

debtor nations from the predatory practices of credit-lending states, chief among them the United States. Thornton concludes that as agents in a collective belief that the productive powers of capitalism could be harnessed for the purposes of global equity, Mexican negotiators persistently galvanized nations in Latin America and throughout the Global South in pursuit of rules and regulations that they believed could overcome the contradictions of capitalism (199). This faith in development proved fatal for Mexico, as is well known, given the copious scholarship on the collapse of its economic “miracle,” devastating peso devaluations, and debt restructuring that opened the door to the profoundly destabilizing North American Free Trade Agreement.

The eight chapters cover the period from the end of the revolution through Mexico’s neoliberal transition in the 1980s, with each focused around a particular struggle over a multilateral organization, reform, or charter. Early chapters center demands for the sovereign equality of states and equal representation within multilateral organizations during the 1910s and 1920s. Middle chapters trace the struggle over access to credit in the 1930s and 1940s resulting in the creation of the global financial institutions we know today. Final chapters track the paradoxes that flowed from development schemes rooted in dependency on international capital, as Mexico’s geographical proximity to and economic entanglement with the United States motivated its articulation of a somewhat hypocritical “third way” during the Cold War.

In *Revolution and Development*, Thornton narrates the story of the post-war political and economic hegemony of the United States enacted through institutions like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank from the “outside in” by privileging the standpoint of Mexican agents and interests. She calls for more studies of the global financial system that depart from the efforts of nations in the Third World to integrate, reform, or even remake these institutions. In this way, she not only makes an important contribution to the historiography on postrevolutionary Mexico but also pens a powerful critique of global capitalism and historical arguments that often presume that US hegemony sprang fully formed from the ashes of World War II. Instead, she shows that nations like Mexico, through their persistent contestation of free-trade dogma, *taught* the United States how to rule through the extension of credit and eventually the imposition of austerity.

This is, of course, not a story of unqualified victory. For along the way, painful lessons are learned. The most poignant arrive in chapters 7 and 8, where Thornton demonstrates how Mexico’s desire to

safeguard its access to foreign capital to fuel and then shore up its flagging stabilizing development resulted in its betrayal of the insurgent demands of non-aligned states within the burgeoning ethos of Third Worldism. Setting Mexico up as an arbiter of a third way between the capitalist West and the Soviet block, Mexican president Luis Echeverría routinely leveraged his violent repression of political dissidents to curry favor with US negotiators, chief among them, Henry Kissinger.

While Echeverría prevailed in passing the Charter of Economic Duties and Rights of States, a proposal that called for the structural readjustment of industrialized countries to abet the development of debtor nations, his victory was ultimately pyrrhic. The United States refused to sign on to a significantly watered down version of the charter. But it was not the federal authorities representing the United States in these negotiations who balked; rather, it was a coalition of American businessmen working with conservative members of Congress who scuttled the agreement. Kissinger rued the loss of influence over Mexico, a country he viewed as a bulwark against socialist insurgency. Thus, despite Mexico's geopolitical value and its "position as a profitable outlet for US surplus capital," Thornton shows that the interests of *private* capital triumphed over both the political and economic calculations of the state. "Capital's victory," she writes, "was illustrative of a larger reconfiguration happening with the US state, one that would become more apparent with the election of Ronald Reagan" (189).

Ultimately, Thornton shows that, by the late 1970s, US planners had learned how to co-opt Mexico's revolutionary demands, enabling them to dispatch with even the pretense of cooperation so as to ensure the "free functioning of US trade and finance" (199). Thus, in addition to lending her considerable talents as a historian to the critique of international development, Thornton also concludes that the Mexican case offers a cautionary tale for efforts to mobilize South-South cooperation in the reform of financial institutions today. Thornton's economic history from "below" reveals the active, rather than passive, role that debtor nations played in the construction of the post-war hegemony of the United States and Global North. But she also reveals that Mexico's revolution in development redirected the radical demands of insurgents for the social and economic rights formalized through the Constitution of 1917 into a scheme for national progress defined exclusively as capitalist progress. Thornton makes evident that Mexico's state-directed development was far from the "closed system" scholars often describe. But she also reveals that the "opening" of its economy in the 1990s was as much

a capitulation to the IMF and World Bank as it was the historical outcome of Mexico's misguided faith that a properly regulated international system of credit could bring about not only development but also equality between rich and poor, strong and weak nation states.

Mary K. Coffey
Dartmouth College