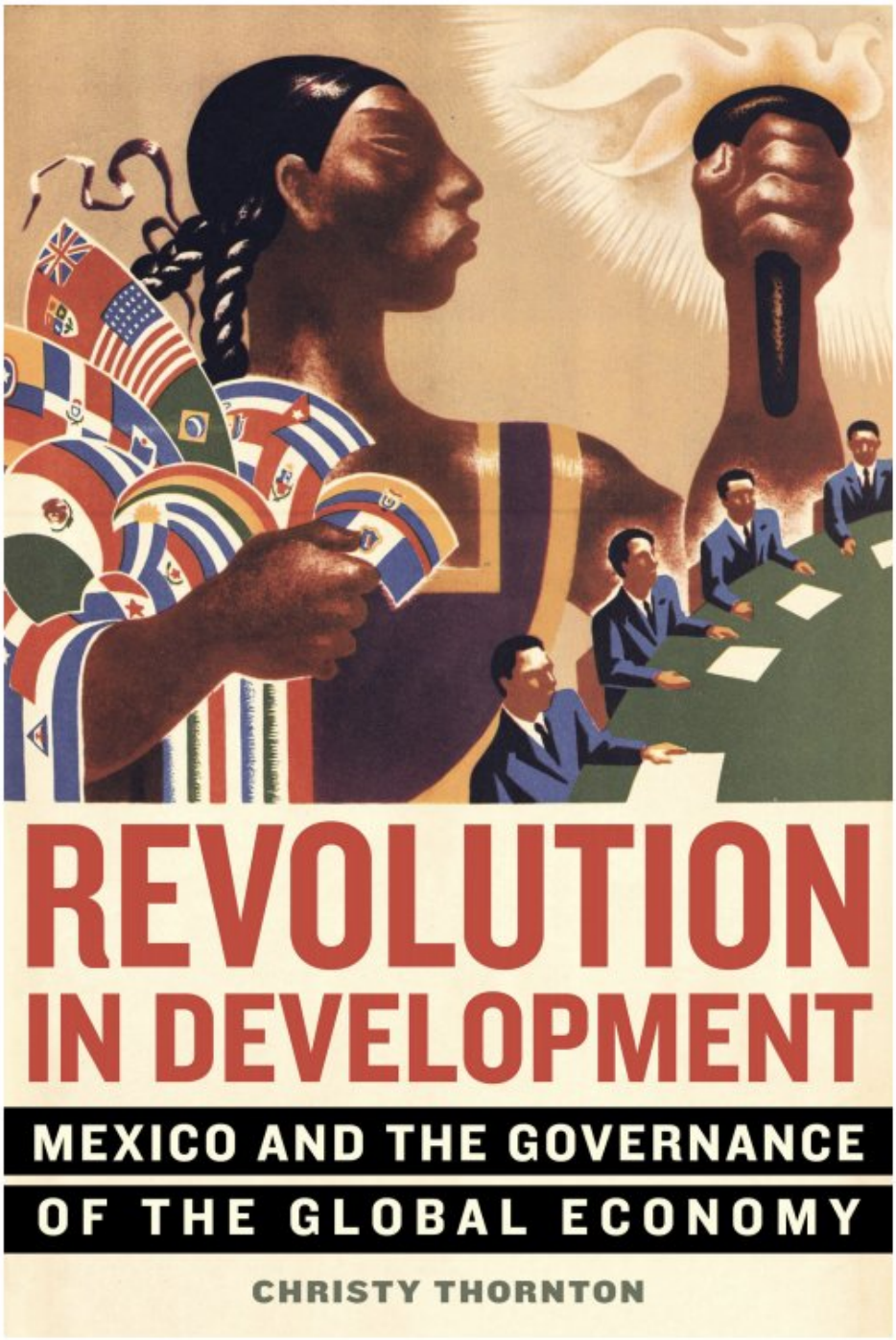
Twitter Thread by Christy Thornton



Christy Thornton
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PUB DAY! My book, Revolution in Development: Mexico and the Governance of the Global Economy, is officially out with @UCpress. Can I tell you a little bit about it? Thread:



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The book argues that 20th century Mexican economists, diplomats, and political figures had a surprising influence on the design and reform of a whole host of multilateral institutions and agreements meant to govern international trade and finance

from the 1920s to the 1980s.

Mexican postrevolutionary state officials argued for representation in international organizations and redistribution through multilateral institutions. From the 1920s to the 1940s, they effectively conceptualized and advocated for the apparatus of international development.

The book shows how, working in collaboration & contention with other Latin American and Third World representatives, Mexican officials demanded reforms to the global economic system that would channel the surplus capital of the Global North to productive use in the Global South.

But then something funny happened on the way to the developmental state: once capital began to flow from multilateral institutions like the World Bank, and Mexico reentered the international financial system, it abandoned its role as a reform champion in the 1950s and 1960s.

Thus, a project to radically reform the international economic system for the benefit of the poorer countries became a project to maintain the new, US-led status quo in international development. But this came to a head during the crisis of the 1970s under Luis Echeverría.

Echeverría tried to use the threat of radical Third World insurgency - including at home within Mexico - to convince Northern officials that his reform project was the only means to forestall something more revolutionary. This culminated in the "Carta Echeverría,"...

...the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States - passed overwhelmingly by the UNGA in 1974, but rejected by the US & Western European countries. Echeverría tried to protect Mexico's access to foreign lending, but force reforms to int'l trade & investment regulations.

We know what happened next: Mexican debt ballooned, Mexico defaulted, and the institutions that Mexicans had championed as necessary for its state developmental project - like the IMF & WB - became key players in dismantling that project and overseeing the neoliberal transition.

This is the central contradiction of Mexico's 'Revolution in Development': the undying dream that with the right rules and regulations, global capitalism could be made to work for rich and poor, North and South. It's the central contradiction in development more broadly, in fact.

So the book is very much not a heroic tale of Global South resistance - even if that's how the officials who led it (and the artist who designed the image on the cover!) wanted to narrate it. It's actually a cautionary tale about development, reform, and South-South cooperation.

If this is interesting to you, I hope you'll read it! You can purchase directly from @ucpress with the code 17M6662 for 30% off. https://t.co/351e1FrR5H

And I'd love to talk to your students, seminars, centers, etc about it! Get in touch here or via my JHU email. And THANK YOU SO MUCH to everyone who played some role along the way. I'm so grateful to my mentors, peers, archivists, and

readers!