

Alden, Chris/Chichava, Sérgio/Alves, Ana Cristina (eds), *Mozambique and Brazil: Forging New Partnerships or Developing Dependency?* Fanele, 2017, Auckland Park, 266pp.

Following the volume on China and Mozambique, reviewed in Vol 37, No 2 of the *Strategic Review for Southern Africa*, Professor Alden led an experienced team of multidisciplinary scholars to critically investigate the relationship between Mozambique and a leading emerging power, Brazil. This new book addresses the question of whether the two nations are shaping new partnerships beyond their existing language, historical, cultural and social ties or whether they are creating a new dependency nurtured by Brazilian assistance programs in the areas of agriculture and natural resources, technical cooperation, health, cultural and religious interchange.

By analysing the complex dynamics that characterise the relationship between the two countries this volume shows that: while the Brazilian and Mozambican elites speak of a successful relationship, building a new development partnership within the spirit of South-South Cooperation (SSC) has been controversial and heavily criticised by civil society organisations (CSOs) in the recipient country, mainly because of the negative impact of projects and programs on local communities. As indicated below, the ProSavana project, along the Nacala Corridor, in northern Mozambique, is a particular case in point.

The volume consists of 13 individual chapters, well-written and in a very simple language. Each chapter tries to establish a better understanding of how Brazil implements its South-South economic diplomacy while at the same time defending its economic interests on the continent, with particular focus on Mozambique. Although the chapters complement and build on each other, each chapter can be read individually, depending on the interest of the reader, without compromising their overall understanding of the matter being discussed.

The volume opens with a powerful introduction, setting the scene with a succinct explanation of the historical relationship between Brazil and Africa and with Mozambique in particular. Chapter one reflects on the changes in Brazilian foreign policy when Lula gained power, turning to Africa as a strategic continent for the implementation of the Brazilian long aspired concept of SSC. More specifically, the chapter analyses the trajectory of the relations between Brazil and Mozambique from 1975 when Mozambique achieved its independence from colonial rule. It explores the ups and downs of this bilateral relationship to the point of Mozambique becoming one of Brazil's major partners on the continent. Chapter two compares the relationship between the two countries within the broader framework of Brazilian foreign policy with the rest of Portuguese-speaking African Countries (PALOP). It finds little difference since Brazil grounds

its relations with each and every PALOP country in the axis of SSC and co-operative action. Based upon a much closer analysis of the relations between Brazil and Mozambique, chapter three dismisses the arguments that Brazilian assistance to Mozambique is free from commercial interests. The chapter shows that the logic of SSC in Brazil's relations with Mozambique is more rhetoric than reality since Brazilian assistance to Mozambique is always accompanied by caveats. In that respect, Brazilian assistance is not much different from that of traditional donors working within the logic of North-South Cooperation (NSC).

Brazil has mainly invested in extracting natural resources and agricultural modernisation in Mozambique. This is why chapter four analyses the role of Brazil in the extractive sector as a turning point from dependence to development and cooperation. Chapters five and six look at Brazil's involvement in agriculture. Chapter five specifically analyses one of the most important Brazilian projects in the country, co-funded by Japan, namely ProSavana. Based on fieldwork conducted in the areas along the Nacala Corridor, the chapter concludes that this project goes against the basic principles of SSC for three reasons. Firstly, it is driven by private investors; secondly, it does not follow the demand-driven approach; finally, it follows a top-down approach and only became participatory after pressure and criticism from CSOs and local communities. Analysing another Brazilian programme, co-funded by the United States (US) government, namely ProAlimentos, chapter six illustrates how this tripartite cooperation has been characterised by tension caused by different approaches from the two partners, namely the SSC and NSC.

Returning to the ProSavana project, chapter seven seeks to understand why the project was obstructive and concludes, while referring to a similar project in Brazil, namely Proceder, that the promised investment benefits never reached the small farmers in the area and the project negatively impact the surrounding environment. The chapter also illustrates how divided the CSOs and local communities were; some pushing for a total ban of the project while others were willing to let the project continue, once the disputed issues were resolved. By compiling and analysing newspapers reports, taking the example of the Tete-Nacala Corridor, chapter nine shows how the Brazilian press romanticises Brazilian investment and cooperation in Africa, either because of uninformed speculation or because of an industry funded discourse.

The eighth and tenth chapters focus on the management and the cultural and social challenges of sharing and transferring technology, knowledge and know-how between the 'mother' Brazilian companies and their subsidiaries in Mozambique, in the areas of audio-visual and health. Chapter eight looks at the mechanisms and challenges facing the transfer of knowledge at Cine Group while chapter

ten analyses the challenges encountered during the installation of an antiretroviral laboratory in Mozambique.

Chapter eleven draws attention to the extractive industry, illustrating the social, economic and cultural impact of the operations of the Brazilian company Vale in coal mining in the central region of Mozambique. The decision of Brazilian technicians to resettle the peasants affected by mining without consulting the Mozambican counterparts illustrates the inequality that characterises the relationship between the two countries. The horizontal relationship that should be an advantage of SSC is missing in this project.

The volume closes with an analysis of the historical cultural and religious relationship between the two countries. Chapter twelve examines how theatre productions, in addition to culturally connecting the two peoples, is used to help the poor to face social problems in both countries. Chapter thirteen analyses the impact of Pentecostal churches on the social and cultural life of Mozambicans. And by focusing on women the chapter shows that, while Brazilian churches have been praised for changing people's lives, they have at the same time destabilised the cultural order by creating tension between the churchgoers and their relatives.

The volume's conclusion reflects on the future relationship between the two countries, based on the observation of current trends in Brazilian dynamism and the political and economic challenges that Mozambique is facing. The conclusion also highlights the view, present in all chapters, that the relations between the two countries have been unequal.

This is a book that is worth reading, from the first to the last page or, if preferred, by individual chapter. Readers who have read the volume about the relations between China and Mozambique will easily understand this because Alden and his team maintain the same line of thinking and address similar issues, namely agriculture, the extractive industry, technology transfer etc.

By explaining in depth, based on empirical knowledge, the concept of SSC and its principles, this book becomes highly important for academics and for those working in the area of diplomacy or international relations.

What is most striking in Alden's writing is the balanced reporting of the facts. This book uncovers the good and bad side of the relations between the two countries. Furthermore, the fact that the different chapters use a variety of research methods and techniques, including interviews and ethnographic participation-observation, increases the validity of the content and the relevance of the book.

This volume is an excellent contribution, not only to understand Mozambique but also the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) group. The book masterfully analyses the relationship between Mozambique and one of the BRICS countries. Regretfully, especially for the readers most concerned, the

Mozambicans, it is not available in Portuguese. This is even more surprising since most of the authors who contributed to the volume are Brazilians. Maybe Alden and his team could redress this!

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