

BOOK REVIEW

Deborah Barros Leal FARRIAS, *Aid and Technological Cooperation as a Foreign Policy Tool for Emerging Donors: The Case of Brazil*
(Routledge, 2018)

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Aid and Technological Cooperation as a Foreign Policy Tool for Emerging Donors: The Case of Brazil

Deborah Barros Leal FARRIAS

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There is a high concern that development assistance can be seen as national interest from the donor's perspective. The book dwells on the specific case of Brazil and tackles the question of how a country like Brazil seeks power and influence by providing no-strings-attached foreign technical assistance. In the book, there are also some similarities and differences among Southern emerging donors like China, India and South Africa, concerning their take on foreign assistance.

The book, as Farrias puts it, is mainly about foreign policy motivations and development assistance. In the particular case of Brazil, author asks what the foreign policy logic behind the no-strings-attached development assistance is. While answering the question, she gets help from a theoretical perspective, which is a combination of realism and constructivism. According to Farrias, development partnership between developing countries is understudied; and she wants to clear this gap with a specific case study. According to her, most studies deal with money-based cooperation, but from a developing country's perspective, knowledge sharing is common. Hence, technical cooperation is ought to be explored, Farrias claims. According to Farrias, technical cooperation is mostly on non-controversial topics. She advocates that despite the weakness of development assistance, it is one of the most common foreign policy tools for developing countries.

Farrias states that there are four main reasons to perceive development assistance for a policy tool, but in the book, she centers her argument on gaining something in return. Apart from Farrias' main argument, donors give foreign aid because firstly, it has become something they all do. Secondly, for a developing country, foreign assistance stands as the only option for development. Thirdly, technical cooperation comes across as beneficial. As Farrias points out, gaining something in return for foreign aid is not a new phenomenon. She categorizes two types of gain: commercial and diplomatic. While commercial gains are more straightforward, diplomatic gain is harder to be secured and related to soft power. The book assumed that all donors would like to achieve both some commercial and diplomatic gains. Furthermore, in each agreement, the donor only gives priority to one of the gains.

According to Farrias, specific objectives for foreign aid may vary from country to country. While China and India are more prone to tying their development agreements to commercial interest, Brazil is in favor of diplomatic interest. Furthermore, Farrias puts that all three have similarities. They all focus on regional development projects and are present in Africa. They have no conditionalities. They all based their technical cooperation on indigenous research via their public institutions. Of course, as Farrias further puts it, they have no strength to enforce conditions, maybe apart from China's, "One China" condition. However, in the end, Farrias thinks that, although there is an agreement between Brazil, China, India and South Africa on what foreign aid is, this does not mean they see donorship in an identical fashion.

As mentioned above, author's main question is why a country would give technical know-how to another country, no-strings-attached. Farrias summarizes her point by reinterpreting realist, structuralist, liberal and constructivist theories' projection on foreign aid objectives. According to her, all theories are partially explanatory. A combination of realist and constructivist approaches is needed to fully understand why Brazil gives non-tied technical assistance. Farrias thinks that power should be combined with the ideational perspective of Brazil. Her research comes up with the idea that realism is compatible with constructivism; and social constructions like ideas and values are key in the foreign policy decision-making process. Farrias is more prone to conceptualizing Brazilian case with middle power diplomacy and niche diplomacy terms in which she shows a resemblance between Brazil and Norway. To conclude, she says that the research they have conducted is focused on provisions of Brazilian foreign aid. According to her, it requires further study to make it better. Farrias believes that one should look at whether Brazil, China, India and South Africa constitute a different category from South-South Cooperation (SSC); and she thinks that further research should be done to answer the question of whether emerging donors create a two-tier structure within SSC.

I think the book has a good grasp on foreign aid literature. Both from a historical and theoretical perspective, the book is well developed. I agree with Farrias that emerging donors are understudied, and their objectives have to be analyzed in order to understand foreign policy-making of middle powers. Theoretical review in the book is very helpful for the readers to understand how different theories elaborate foreign aid provisions. Farrias makes a convincing argument that constructivism fills the gap that other theories left while exploring objectives of technical assistance. As Farrias also suggests, neo-classical realism, taking some ideational issues into account, is to be likened to constructivism from a significant point of view. Neo-classical realism takes perceptions and misperceptions into account while considering foreign policy-making of states. Not only materialistic concerns like power and economic position of a country is applicable, but also memory of elites, or perception of political leaders also matter in understanding foreign technical cooperation objectives of states. This is not solely about emerging donors because exploring the tendency of traditional donors' ideational status of a state matters.

As usual, certain issues could have been addressed better in the book. For instance, Brazil is categorized as a Southern developing country; and Russia belongs to the Northern tier. Hence, apart from a two-tiered structure in the South, it turns out that there is a difference among the BRICS. However, this type of categorization would complicate the literature. Southern literature is very messy as it is, so I don't believe categorizing Russia as a traditional donor, and taking it aside from other BRICS would help clarify today's international political economy. Russia is mostly similar to the Southern emerging

donors when it comes to the philosophy of foreign aid and its challenges to liberal international order. Putting Brazil into the class of new donors while classifying Russia as traditional is not coherent. Furthermore, the concept of niche diplomacy is not well defined. Brazil might be following a niche diplomacy in its international relations but what this has to do with foreign policy-making of Brazil is not very clear. All the niche diplomacy talking aside, the author too argues that foreign aid is a foreign policy tool, which is historical enough to say it is traditional.

Overall, Farrias' *Aid and Technological Cooperation as a Foreign Policy Tool for Emerging Donors: The Case of Brazil* is a thought-provoking contribution to the scholarship. It is especially a must-read for those who study political economy of foreign aid and who work on or are willing to write on foreign aid as a foreign policy tool.