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The Expansion of the Agribusiness in the Context of Land Grabbing and South-South Relations

Christoph Huber¹

ABSTRACT

Since the non-governmental organization GRAIN called attention to a global land grab in the year 2008, the rise in global land deals and the internationalization of land tenancy have also caused intensive scientific interest. However, most of the land grabbing literature focused on negative social consequences for the local population. In this paper I will examine the opposite side by focusing on the investors. In the center of interest is the expansion of agribusiness, which is considered to be the main factor for land grabbing. In the context of the current land rush it is remarkable that actors of the 'Global South' play an increasingly important role. This is also the case in the sector of the agribusiness, where big agribusiness enterprises emerged, which have access to large-scale land areas and are eager to increase their land control, not only nationally but also in foreign countries. An illustrative example is Brazil where the agribusiness gained significant importance (especially in the Brazilian *cerrado*) over the last decades. Through this development big Brazilian companies appeared which are now increasingly contributing to the current land rush, often with support of the government.

The aim of this paper is to give a general overview about the importance of actors of the Global South in the context of the current land rush. Drawing from the Brazilian case, I will depict the evolution of the agribusiness sector in Brazil and the new trans- and international relations arising on the basis of the expansion of the agribusiness model.

KEYWORDS:

Agribusiness, Brazil, global land grab, South-South relations, Mozambique

1 Introduction

In 2010 *The Economist* reported on the 'miracle of the *cerrado*'² by hailing the territorial expansion of agricultural production in the remote Brazilian Savanna (the 'cerrado') and the accompanying growth in grain production. According to the article, the astonishing

¹ **Christoph Huber** studied Geography at the University of Innsbruck and the New University of Lisbon. He also absolved a year at the University Santa Cruz do Brazil to study Regional Development. Actually he is doing is PhD in Geography on *New Land for Agribusiness* in Innsbruck. The author appreciates the financial support received from the "Doktoratsstipendium aus der Nachwuchsförderung" of the University of Innsbruck. This paper was presented at the conference *Afrika – Zugänge und Einordnungen*, November 17–18, 2016, at the Johannes Kepler University in Linz. Contact: csak4489@student.uibk.ac.at.

² *The Economist*: The miracle of the cerrado, in: *The Economist*, 26. 08. 2010, from: <http://www.economist.com/node/16886442>, retrieved on 25. 07. 2017.

development in the formerly ‘poverty-stricken part of Brazil’s backlands’³, which became one of the world’s great breadbaskets, could be a role model for other regions in the world. Against the background of an expected steadily growing global population and changing diets in many parts of the world (especially as a result of increased protein-based nutrition in emerging economies), the *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations* (FAO) estimates that the food production has to be raised by some 70% by 2050 (from the starting period 2005/07) to meet the world’s food demand.⁴ In the view of *The Economist* report the cerrado is an example of showing how an increase in the world’s food production can be achieved, and the article raises the question if the ‘miracle of the cerrado’ can be exported, especially to Africa, and can thus contribute to the challenge of ‘feeding the world in 2050’.⁵

The discourse about ‘bringing the miracle of the cerrado to Africa’ will be submitted to a performance test through the ProSAVANA project in Mozambique. ProSAVANA is a trilateral project between Mozambique, Brazil, and Japan and has the explicit intention to replicate the Nippo-Brazilian *Cooperation Programme for Agricultural Development of the Cerrado* (PRODECER). PRODECER was initiated in the 1970s and contributed considerably to the expansion of the agribusiness production on the basis of soybean in the Brazilian cerrado. ProSAVANA is an illustrative case of how the interests of the expansion of Brazilian agribusiness and Brazilian geopolitical strategies often go hand in hand. Brazil seeks to share its experience in modernized agriculture in a savanna biome by exporting its agricultural model to the savanna of Mozambique. However, the Brazilian intentions in so-called South-South relations (relations between states of the ‘Global South’) are not only philanthropic but are also instrumental in securing investment opportunities for Brazilian companies and in bringing Brazil into a strong position in a new multipolar global order.⁶ In spite of their self-portrayal of win-win strategies, projects arising from South-South relations are also subject to social resistance. The discourse about ‘bringing the miracle of the cerrado to Africa’ does not only exclude various negative social and ecological aspects of developments in the cerrado: When the Minister of Agriculture of Mozambique, José Pacheco, mentioned on a visit to Brazil in 2011 that there are about 6 million hectares of land available for Brazilians to invest in, civil society organizations linked ProSAVANA to the global phenomenon of land grabbing.⁷

ProSAVANA is an emblematic case for the increasing importance of South-South relations in the context of the spatial expansion of production systems of agribusiness. Since the expansion of agribusiness is seen as the number one driver of land grabbing, the role of actors of the Global South has to be subjected to greater scrutiny. In this paper I will first try to contextualize the importance of South-South relations in the current land rush. Then, drawing from the Brazilian case, I will depict how new interrelations with countries in South America and Africa are emerging through the expansion of Brazilian agribusiness.

³ The Economist, The miracle.

⁴ FAO: How to feed the world 2050. Global agriculture towards 2050, High-Level Expert Forum, Rom, 12.–13. October 2009, from: <http://www.fao.org/wsfs/forum2050/wsfs-background-documents/issues-briefs/en/>, retrieved on 25. 07. 2017.

⁵ The Economist, The miracle.

⁶ Pádraig Carmody: The rise of the BRICS in Africa, London 2013, p. 109.

⁷ Patrícia Campos Mello: Moçambique oferece terra à soja brasileira, in: *Folha de São Paulo*, 14. 08. 2011.

2 Framing the global land grab debate

In 2008 the NGO *GRAIN* called attention to a rapid rise in global land deals, terming that phenomenon as ‘*global land grab*’⁸. This rise in land deals was mainly recognized in the aftermaths of global food crisis in 2007/2008 and the global financial crisis in 2008. The general explanation for that development is that the current land rush was triggered by an increase in food prices in 2007/2008, which was mainly caused by an emerging global biofuel market and speculations on food commodities.⁹ States that rely on food imports felt insecure due the dependency on global food prices and thus were looking for opportunities to gain control over land in other countries. An additional general assumption is that the global financial crisis amplified the interest in agricultural land. The mistrust in highly risky derivatives led to a realignment to ‘real things’ on the finance markets with long-term profit expectations. Investment in land or agricultural production chains in particular are seen as secure investments because of a medium and long-term rise expected in global food, feed, and biofuel demand.¹⁰

Land grabbing defined as a spatial practice where investors (states, finance institutes, or private companies) invest in land for different purposes (food security, speculation, agriculture, forestry, mining etc.) also drew scientific interest. In literature on agrarian political economy land grabs are characterized as a structured process of the global capitalist system. According to these scholars land grabbing is an expression of (or reaction to) the multiple crises of global capitalism: food crises, energy crises, financial crises, over-accumulation, or the general shortage of resources.¹¹ Additional to that structural analysis, various case studies in Africa, South East Asia, South America, and East Europe were conducted. In these case studies land grabbing does not only refer to agricultural land but also to forests, mining, or ‘green grabs’. The latter describes land acquisitions in the name of environment or climate protection (e. g. carbon offset), which sometimes also result in negative effects for local communities. Recent studies concentrate on the influence of finance on land grabbing by referring to the concept of ‘financialization’¹². In this context the role of so-called flex crops, which can be processed for different purposes (e. g. for food, feed, or biofuels), is also discussed.¹³

The term ‘land grabbing’ should primarily indicate that these land deals generally are not the result of a fair land transfer and often lead to negative impacts on the local population. For this reason civil organizations and activists intentionally use a negatively connoted term. Likewise, scientific research on land grabbing raised concerns about fairness and inequality and focused mainly on negative social dimensions such as displacement. However, recent criticism of existing land grabbing literature articulates that the increase in land transactions

⁸ GRAIN (Ed.): SEIZED! The 2008 land grab for food and financial security, GRAIN-Briefing, Barcelona 2008, from: <https://www.grain.org/article/entries/93-seized-the-2008-landgrab-for-food-and-financial-security>, retrieved on 25. 05. 2017.

⁹ Saturnino Borrás/Kay Cristóbal/Sergio Gómez/John Wilkinson: Land grabbing and global capitalist accumulation: key features in Latin America, in: *Canadian Journal of Development*, vol. 33, 2012, no. 4, pp. 402–416, p. 403.

¹⁰ Stefan Ouma: From financialization to operations of capital: Historicizing and disentangling the finance-farmland-nexus, in: *Geoforum*, 2016, no. 72, pp. 82–93, p. 84.

¹¹ Uwe Hoering: Land Grabbing, in: *Peripherie*, vol. 124, 2011, no. 31, pp. 497–500, p. 498.

¹² Stefan Ouma: Situating global finance in the Land Rush Debate: A critical view. in: *Geoforum*, 2014, no. 57, pp. 162–166, p. 163.

¹³ Gustavo de L. T. Oliveira/Mindi Schneider: The politics of flexing soybeans: China, Brazil, and Global Agroindustrial Restructuring, in: *Journal of Peasant Studies*, vol. 43, 2014, no. 1, pp. 167–194, p. 168.

should be analyzed in broader perspective.¹⁴ A more nuanced analysis of current land deals should shed light on differences in such deals. To account for varieties in land deals, further research should uncover hidden processes ‘*beyond land grabbing*’¹⁵ and focus on specific contexts influencing the concrete consequences of land deals. In this regard, one aspect that deserves to be discussed further is the increasing importance of South-South relations in the context of the current land rush.

3 South-South land transfers

The *Land Matrix*-database is the most ambitious initiative for monitoring current large-scale land acquisitions.¹⁶ Although quantitative data about land grabbing is always connected with certain limitations, which have to be considered,¹⁷ the data provided can furnish some very interesting insights into patterns of current land deals. The *Land Matrix*-database records information about place and land of the project, name and origin of the investors, intention of investment, negotiation status (which can be: concluded, intended, failed, or no information), size intended, and size of contract. According to the *Land Matrix*-website, criteria for being registered are that deals must:

‘(1) entail a transfer of rights to use, control, or ownership of the land through sale, lease, or concession, (2) have been initiated since the year 2000, (3) cover an area of 200 hectares or more, (4) imply the potential conversion of land from smallholders production, local community use, or important ecosystem service provision to commercial use’.¹⁸

In the *Land Matrix* 1,320 concluded deals are registered, which comprise more than 48 million hectares of land transacted. Most land deals are documented in Africa, followed by Asia, Eastern Europe, and South America. The fact that countries of the Global South are the main target countries of current land acquisitions may not be surprising; but the new countries emerging on the investor side are remarkable. Although North-South relations are still not of negligible relevance (the United States is the number one investor-country), global relations have become much more complicated. The top ten investor-countries appearing in the *Land Matrix*-database are USA (1.), Malaysia (2.), Singapore (3.), United Kingdom (4.), Brazil (5.), United Arab Emirates (6.), China (7.), India (8.), Canada (9.), and the Netherlands (10.).¹⁹ Much attention has been given to China as new emerging power in Africa. But the focus was also on other countries like India, South Korea, and the Gulf states, especially in the beginning of the land grabbing debate. As mentioned before, these financially strong states rely on food imports and therefore felt insecure after the global food crisis of 2007/2008; hence, they started to seek control over land in other countries to secure their food supply.²⁰

¹⁴ Chuan Liao/Suhyun Jung/Daniel G. Brown/Arun Agrawal: Insufficient research on land grabbing, in: *Science*, vol. 353, 2016, no. 6295, p. 131, p. 131.

¹⁵ Rasmus Pedersen/Lars Buur: Beyond land grabbing. Old morals and new perspectives on contemporary investments, in: *Geoforum*, 2016, no 72, pp. 77–81, p. 78.

¹⁶ Land Matrix: The Online Public Database on Land Deals, from: <http://www.landmatrix.org/en/>, retrieved on 25. 07. 2017.

¹⁷ Marc Edelmann: Messy hectares: questions about the epistemology of land grabbing data, in: *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, vol. 40, 2013, no. 3, pp. 485–501, p. 494.

¹⁸ Land Matrix: What is a land deal? From: <http://www.landmatrix.org/en/about/>, retrieved on 25. 07. 2017.

¹⁹ Land Matrix: Investor Countries. From: <http://www.landmatrix.org/en/get-the-idea/web-transnation-deals/>, retrieved on 25.07.2017.

²⁰ Annelies Zoomers: Introduction: Rushing for Land: Equitable and sustainable development in Africa, Asia and Latin America, in: *Development*, vol. 54, 2011, no. 1, pp. 12–20, p. 13.

While this motivation of food security has recently declined, the expansion of the agribusiness is considered the number one driver of current land grabbing dynamics at present.²¹ In the context of agribusiness the Global South also plays an increasingly important role. In the last years new companies emerged in the Global South, which have access to large-scale land areas, taking an important position in agribusiness production networks. It is noticeable that those investors from the Global South show a preference for investing in regions of geographical or cultural proximity. An illustrative example is South-East Asia, where 67% of the total number of land deals result from intra-regional deals.²² That region is dominated by the palm oil production, which is highly controlled by Malaysian, Singaporean, and Indonesian enterprises. With 85% the highest percentage of intra-regional investment occurs in South America, where it is above all the soybean production that contributes to South American cross-national relations. Mariano Turzi named this new South American transnational organized soybean production space the ‘*Soybean Republic*’²³. Meant by this is a refashioned agricultural system in which production, processing and distribution are transnationally organized according to agribusiness interests to leveraging cost advantages, raising efficiency, and taking advantage of production-based infrastructural developments.²⁴ In the course of the advance of the agribusiness mode of production land tenancy structures also changed regardless of national borders. For instance, it is reported that the original Argentinean agribusiness group *El Tejar* moved its headquarters to Brazil and became one of the biggest soy producers in Brazil. Furthermore, traditional farming structures are more and more blurred and redefined by complex land access strategies. For example, the Argentinean agribusiness giant *Los Grobo* completely resigned from land ownership but leased 320,000 hectares in Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay in 2010/2011.²⁵ Leased land and other outsourcing strategies are of increased importance for investment purposes. ‘Flexible’ land access is seen as a risk-diversification strategy for financial investments in the agribusiness.

4 The expansion of Brazil’s agribusiness model

Agribusiness is one of the central economic activities in Brazil. Since the 1960s, the Brazilian state has actively pushed the expansion of agricultural production modeled on the idea of the green revolution. The basis for the modernization of the agriculture was mainly built on three pillars: (1) implementation of subsidized credits, (2) establishment of state-owned agricultural research and consultant institutes to develop and distribute agro-technical innovations and (3) special regional programs to incorporate peripheral regions into national economic production systems.²⁶

Although Brazil also takes a leading position in the world’s production of corn, coffee, orange, meat, or sugar cane it was in particular the soybean, which was the main catalyst for

²¹ GRAIN (Ed.): *The global farmland grab in 2016. How big, How bad? (Against the Grain)*, Barcelona 2016, p. 6.

²² Kerstin Nolte/Wytske Chamberlain/ Markus Giger: *International Land Deals for Agriculture. Fresh insights from the Land Matrix: Analytical Report II*, Bern 2016, p. 23.

²³ Mariano Turzi: *The Soybean Republic*, in: *Yale Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 6, Spring/Summer 2009, no. 2, pp. 59–68, p. 59.

²⁴ Turzi, *The Soybean Republic*, p. 61.

²⁵ *The Economist*: *Farming without fields*, in: *The Economist*, 04. 01. 2014, from: <https://www.economist.com/news/business/21592662-argentine-farming-group-heavy-science-and-light-assets-farming-without-fields>, retrieved on 25. 07. 2017.

²⁶ Martin Coy/Martina Neuburger: *Aktuelle Entwicklungstendenzen im ländlichen Raum Brasiliens*, in: *Petermanns Geographische Mitteilung*, vol. 146, 2002, no. 5, pp. 74–83, p. 75.

Brazil's rural development and for the integration of Brazilian peripheral rural areas into global processes. The soybean production started in the 1960s and 1970s in the southern Brazilian states. Over the following decades the soy production gradually expanded to the Brazilian Savanna, the cerrado.²⁷ Besides a steadily increasing global demand for soy (especially because of the increased demand of soy for animal-feed and the rising importance of China as soy importer), the spatial expansion of the agribusiness production to the cerrado was also fostered by measures of the Brazilian state. The main objectives of the former Brazilian military government (1964–1985) by incorporating peripheral areas were threefold.²⁸ Firstly, in the name of national security the colonization of sparsely or unpopulated areas was of geopolitical interest in order to gain control of the national territory. Secondly, the abundant natural resources in peripheral regions should contribute to the national value added. And thirdly, the colonization of new areas was a strategy to solve social conflicts in traditional agricultural areas in the Southern states, where population pressure and land concentration led to land conflicts. The availability of wide land areas and low land prices attracted farmers from southern Brazilian states to the new frontier areas. The migration was facilitated by infrastructural projects with especially highways becoming the core development corridors in peripheral areas. For the expansion of soybean production, the national agricultural research institute *Embrapa* played an important role by developing soybean varieties which are adjusted to the soil and climate in the cerrado. A major factor for the distribution of innovations in the soybean production was the Nippo-Brazilian *Program for Agricultural Development of the Cerrado* (PRODECER), which began in the 1970s. This program supported by Japan had two subsequent phases with PRODECER II and PRODECER III and gave a huge impulse to the advance of soybean production in the cerrado; it is also one of the main reasons for today's Brazil's central role in the global agribusiness.²⁹

The expansion of soybean production heavily changed the way of farming and the regional structures. At first, it was primarily small-scale farmers who settled on the new agricultural frontiers, but the soybean production characterized by high land absorption inevitably resulted in land concentration by capitalized farmers to the exclusion of small-scale farmers. On the one side the Brazilian agribusiness model brought economic growth to peripheral rural areas, but on the other hand the social and environmental costs were high. Deforestation, erosion, pollution (e. g. through the use of pesticides) and one of the most unequal land structures illustrate the seamy side of the coin. Just 1.5% of rural land owners occupy 52.6% of all agricultural lands in Brazil.³⁰ Brazil is also affected by a high number of foreign land owners. Especially deregulations measures in the 1990s facilitated foreign investment in land.³¹ The current land rush further amplifies this development. The foreign land ownership rose considerably from 2.6 million hectares in 1992 to almost 5.6 million hectares in 2008.³²

²⁷ Coy e. a., Erinnerungstendenzen, p. 79.

²⁸ Martin Coy/Michael Klingler: Pionierfronten im brasilianischen Amazonien zwischen alten Problemen und neuen Dynamiken, in: Innsbrucker Geographische Gesellschaft (Hg.): Innsbrucker Jahresbericht 2008–2010, Innsbruck 2011, pp. 109–129, p. 112.

²⁹ Philipp Fearnside: Soybean cultivation as a threat to the environment in Brazil, in: *Environmental Conservation*, vol. 28, 2001, no. 1, pp. 23–38, p. 26.

³⁰ Elizabeth Alice Clements/Bernardo Mançano: Land Grabbing, Agribusiness and the Peasantry in Brazil and Mozambique, in: *Journal of Political Economy*, vol. 2, 2013, no. 1, pp. 41–69, p. 43.

³¹ Clemens/ Mançano, Land Grabbing, p. 47.

³² *Ibid.*

The Brazilian cerrado is today the world's biggest production space for soybean. However soybean farming is integrated in highly complex agro-industrial production networks, which are mainly controlled by transnational companies. Giant agrochemical and seed companies like *Monsanto, Syngenta, DuPont, Bayer, BASF*, and *Dow Chemical* as well as trading companies like *ADM, Bunge, Cargill* and *Louis Dreyfus* all set up foreign bases in Brazil. In spite of the dominance of transnational companies big Brazilian agribusiness enterprises also emerged through the expansion of the agribusiness model. The Brazilian agribusiness enterprises are mainly engaged in soybean production networks in the form of organizing grain production. The production processes in the agribusiness considerably differs from classical farming. Farmers are replaced by rural managers, who are specialized in business administration, quite often with an academic master's degree. The new type of farmer does not necessarily live in the countryside but in regional cities from where they control the highly technical production processes.³³ Access to or control over land is a key factor for agribusiness and its expansion strategies, especially since the agribusiness mode of production underlies the logic of capitalist expansion where surplus value and speculation capital flowing in that sector need to be (re-)invested. Although Brazil is seen as a country with still large areas of potentially available agricultural land, due to the high demand for Brazilian agricultural land and rising land costs, Brazilian companies are more frequently looking for possibilities of investments in foreign countries.

4.1 Brazilian agribusiness in South America

Although the increased foreign interest in Brazilian agricultural land in the aftermath of the global food and energy crisis in 2007/2008 induced the Lula da Silva-Administration to introduce measures to reduce foreign land appropriation in Brazil, Brazilian agribusiness companies – often with the support of the Brazilian state – also seek to increase their influence in foreign countries. The Brazilian influence is primarily recognizable in Paraguay, where Brazilians control between 50 and 80 % of the soybean agriculture chain.³⁴ The high land ownership of Brazilians in Paraguay is rooted in a longer historical context. Land concentration in the 1970s in the southern Brazilian states not only resulted in migration to the new frontiers in the Brazilian Midwest but also in migration to Paraguay. The soybean production constitutes the predominant economic activity of the Brazilian emigrants (so-called 'brasiguaios'), who settled mainly close to the border areas. This cross-border soybean complex transformed some parts of the border to '*just one green ocean of soybeans*'³⁵, but Brazilian influence in South American countries also results from much more recent land deals. Besides Paraguay, which is still an important country for Brazilian investments, especially the eastern parts of the Santa Cruz department in Bolivia are increased target regions for Brazilian investment.³⁶ Cases of Brazilian involvement in agricultural land deals in South America are also documented in Uruguay, Peru, Colombia, and Chile.³⁷

4.2 Brazil's agricultural cooperation in Africa

The expansion of Brazilian agribusiness in foreign countries often coincides with Brazil's geopolitical interests. This geopolitical dimension of Brazil's agribusiness is in particularly visible in new relations with African countries.

³³ Gustavo de L. T. Oliveira: The geopolitics of Brazilian soybeans, in: *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, vol. 43, 2016, no. 2, pp. 348–372, p 360.

³⁴ Turzi, *The Soybean Republic*, p. 66.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Turzi, *The Soybean Republic*, p. 61.

³⁷ Borras, e. a., *Land grabbing*, p. 410.

Connections between Brazil and Africa date back to the 16th century to the Portuguese colonial era when African slaves were brought to Brazil. But after Brazilian independence in 1822 and the abolition of slavery, Brazil lost its ties with Africa. Considerable political and economic relations existed only with South Africa and Angola. A new institutional basis for (mainly political) relations with former Portuguese colonies in Africa constituted the foundation of the association of the Portuguese-speaking countries (CPLP – *Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa*).³⁸

However, today's Brazil's political and economic relations with Africa are mainly a legacy of the Lula da Silva-Government (2003–2010). For the Lula-Administration the establishment of new South-South relations was a strategy to fulfill Brazil's ambitions to play a greater role in a changing global world order. Traditional partners like the United States, Europe, and Japan remained important partners, but beyond that the Lula administration endeavored a stronger integration with South American countries, intensified new alliances on a global scale (for example with the so-called BRICS-States – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa); and also looked for new cooperation with African countries.³⁹ The concentration on South-South relations in Africa was embedded in a discourse of southern solidarity. On state visits to African countries Lula frequently repeated that Brazil has the biggest African population outside of Africa and because of that cultural proximity Brazil has a moral commitment in engagements in Africa. Brazil's intensified South-South cooperation resulted in important education and health projects as well as in stronger economic ties. During the Lula-Administration Brazilian sales to African countries quintupled.⁴⁰

It is especially in the agricultural sector that Brazil presents itself as an expert and offers to share its know-how with other countries. Former Brazilian domestic agricultural projects, both for small-scale farming and the agribusiness sector, are now role models for Brazil's engagement in Africa. An illustrative example is the Brazilian *More Food Programme*, 'which has been extended from the Brazilian countryside to Mozambique, Ghana, Zimbabwe, and Kenya'⁴¹ with the goal to support family farming. Brazil also fosters large-scale farming through technical support. In that context the Brazilian national agricultural institute *Embrapa* plays a key role. For a better coordination of African affairs *Embrapa Africa* was founded in 2006. The headquarter was strategically situated within the council for Scientific and Industrial research in Accra, where *Embrapa* shares a building with the Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa and the International Food Policy Research Institute.⁴² Face-to-face contacts with other international agricultural institutes pave the way for participating in major agricultural international initiatives in Africa and for creating potential channels through which Brazilian agribusiness can get entrance to African markets. Major international project in Africa in which *Embrapa* is involved are, for example, the 'Agricultural Innovation Marketplace', 'Cotton-4-project' (Mali, Burkina Faso, Benin, and Chad) or the 'ProSAVANA-project'.⁴³

³⁸ Gerhard Seibert: Brasilien in Afrika: Globaler Geltungsanspruch und Rohstoffe, in: *GIGA Focus Afrika*, 2009, no. 8, pp. 1–8, p. 3.

³⁹ Leticia Cesarino: Brazil as an Emerging Donor in Africa's Agricultural Sector: Comparing Two Projects, in: *Agrarian South: Journal of Political Economy*, vol. 4, 2015, no. 3, pp. 371–393, p. 378.

⁴⁰ Seibert, Brasilien, p. 6.

⁴¹ Kojo Amanor/Sérgio Chichave: South-South Cooperation, Agribusiness, and African Agricultural Development: Brazil and China in Ghana and Mozambique, in: *World Development*, 2016, no. 81, pp. 13–23, p. 16.

⁴² Amanor, e. a., South-South Cooperation, p. 16.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 381.

In particular the ProSAVANA-project has received much international attention since an alliance of Mozambican and international NGOs articulated concerns that this project could set the pathway for massive land grabs by Brazilian companies. The project-partners (Brazilian, Japanese and the Mozambican government) explicitly see the Brazilian cerrado (or the PRODECER-project in the cerrado, respectively) as a role model region for the ProSAVANA. It is remarkable that both the ProSAVANA advocates as well as the coalition against ProSAVANA refer to the developments in the cerrado in order to enforce their interests.⁴⁴ While in official dialogues the Brazilian, Japanese, and Mozambican governments emphasize that the success story of economic growth in the agricultural sector through the PRODECER project in the Brazilian cerrado could be replicated in Mozambique, the negative social and environmental consequences of implementing monoculture in the cerrado remain untouched. On the other hand, civil organizations in particular underline the struggles of small-scale and landless farmers as well as the negative environmental developments in the cerrado. Mozambican civil organizations (*Uniao Nacional de Camponeses*, UNAC, and the *Associação Rural de Ajuda Mútua*, ORAM) even traveled to the cerrado and produced a short documentary in which a picture contrary to that of the cerrado presented by the official ProSAVANA discourse is depicted. For them the cerrado is obviously not a favorable space whose development should be replicated in Mozambique. As a consequence civil organizations started the initiative ‘Não ao ProSAVANA’ (No to ProSAVANA) with the clear statement that the ProSAVANA-project must be stopped. After a leaked version of the master plan of ProSAVANA in 2013 appeared, civil organizations felt that their views were confirmed according to which ProSAVANA favors especially large-scale agribusiness. However, fears that ProSAVANA could lead to wide land transfers has not yet materialized.⁴⁵ Although a ProSAVANA-project was implemented in 2011, starting with the development of a master plan and with research cooperation between *Embrapa* and the *Agricultural Research Institute of Mozambique* (IIAM), there are not yet any regional changes related to ProSAVANA. In the *Land Matrix*-database ProSAVANA is still listed as an intended project with an intended implementation size of 700,000 hectares. Because of intense resistance, the project came to a halt and the implementation of first model communities, which was planned to begin in 2013, has not yet started. However, the project is planned for a period of 20 years, and it remains unclear how this project will develop over the next years. Especially the Mozambican government is eager to bring the project back on track. Unclear is also the role of private Brazilian companies in this project. Although delegations of the Brazilian agribusiness have already visited the project region of ProSAVANA, there is no clear indication of participation of private Brazilian agribusiness in the project.⁴⁶

5 Conclusion

In the course of the current land rush new interrelations of actors of the Global South emerge. Agribusiness enterprises in the Global South, whose business strategy is tightly linked with land access, play an important role in new international relations. In the case of Brazil it is visible how Brazilian agribusiness companies increase their influence in neighbouring countries in South America. However, the interest of Brazilian agribusiness

⁴⁴ Alex Shankland/Euclides Gonçalves: Imagining Agricultural Development in South-South Cooperation: The Contestation and Transformation of ProSAVANA, in: *World Development*, 2016, no. 81, pp. 35–46, p. 40.

⁴⁵ Timohty A. Wise: What happened to the Biggest Land Grab in Africa? Searching for ProSAVANA in Mozambique, in: Food Tank. The Think Tank for Food, from: <https://foodtank.com/news/2014/12/what-happened-to-the-biggest-land-grab-in-africa-searching-for-prosavana-in/>, retrieved on 31. 03. 2017.

⁴⁶ Oliveira, geopolitics, p. 360.

does not stop in South America but also extends to Africa. Unlike the situation in South America, where the role of private agribusiness is obvious, the involvement of private Brazilian agribusinesses in Africa is usually unclear.⁴⁷ Regarding Brazil's engagements in agricultural projects in Africa, it is mainly the Brazilian state or states institutions (above all *Embrapa*) that take the first steps. If or how these state initiatives pave the way for investments for private Brazilian agribusiness companies remains to be more carefully investigated. This is a special challenge since Brazilian companies in Africa are not usually land owners but more likely engage in some form of technical consulting⁴⁸.

It remains to be seen how Brazil's relations to Africa will develop in the next years. The Lula administration actively pushed relations with African countries, while during the Rousseff administration Brazil took a much more pragmatic approach in relations with African countries. How relations with African countries, after the impeachment of Rousseff, will evolve under the new presidency of Temer remains unclear. However, this is of special interest since the further development of projects such as ProSAVANA is strongly connected to the commitment of the Brazilian state.

6 Literature

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⁴⁷ Oliveira, geopolitics, p. 360

⁴⁸ Ibid.

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