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**The International Political Opportunity Structure of Social
Movements in the Contestation of ProSavana**

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Abstract

The present thesis analyses the contestation of ProSavana, an international development project initiated by Japan, Brazil, and Mozambique, which was officially terminated in 2020, after intensive international social movement activity. Drawing on existing case-studies and internal documents, as well as publications by proponents and opponents of ProSavana, its contestation is contextualized as an example of the international contestation of development. Specifically, it tries to explain movement outcomes, by investigating the POS of opposition to ProSavana, with an emphasis on the international dimension. Contradicting previous research, international allies played a crucial role, but could only leverage their influence due to democratic institutions and electoral changes in Japan. The success of opposition to ProSavana cannot be attributed to movement activities alone. Another overlooked factor for the success of social movements opposing ProSavana (such as UNAC and La Vía Campesina) are discontinued Foreign Policies in Brazil. The thesis applies an expanded version of Political Opportunity Structures (POS) to account for the international dimension of the contestation. Drawing on the present case as an example, the thesis contributes to the theoretical literature on International Political Opportunity Structures (IPOS), which is a known gap in the literature on social movements. It argues that two existing contributions towards the development of (IPOS) are limited in their usefulness, due to their neglect of the foundational role of social movements for the concept of POS.

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1 Introduction

1.1 What is ProSavana?

ProSAVANA was a development project that was initiated by Japan, Brazil, and Mozambique and officially ran from 2009 to 2020. Its official purpose was to promote sustainable development through technology transfer and the promotion of Foreign Direct Investment, inspired by the Japanese and Brazilian project PRODECER that led to the agricultural expansion in the Brazilian Cerrado. The project was met with a process of contestation through a network of Social Movement Organizations in Mozambique, Brazil, and Japan, including the Transnational Social Movement Organization (TSMO) La Via Campesina.

1.2 Motivation for the case

There are several reasons for choosing the case of opposition to ProSavana as an object of study. The ProSavana program is the biggest initiative between Japan and Brazil in the last 20 years (Kuss, 2016). It has been described as „the biggest landgrab in Africa” (Wise, 2014) and one of the most ambitious large-scale agricultural development projects in Africa (Okada, 2015).

The Japanese JICA was the main actor engaging in the project, delivering most of the funds, and initiating the project. Japan is known for being persistent in the execution of development projects and has a reputation of ‘never giving up’. (Funada-Classen, 2019, p.29). That social movements opposing ProSavana achieved their goal of halting ProSavana has been called a “huge victory for Mozambican peasant movements” (Farmlandgrab, 2020). This success is even more significant in the light of Japanese agency behind the project.

The international architecture of the ProSavana, and the involvement of civil society groups from the three main countries involved (Japan, Brazil, and Mozambique), as well as the connections to the development paradigm promoted by international organisations, make the case a highly complex and international

phenomenon. The international nature of the contestation opens-up the possibility of applying the concept of Political Opportunity Structures to a context that is different from the national context to which it is usually applied. Moreover, the international nature of ProSavana and its contestation was important for the outcomes and dynamics of social movement activity, as will become clear later.

In the context of research on social movements, to which this thesis contributes, there are several other factors making the subject worthy of research. On the one hand, it is an example of internationalization of social movements. The relevance of international connections for social movements has received increasing attention in the past years (Borras, Edelman, and Kay, 2008, p.179). There is a broad trend among existing social movements to internationalize (Bringel, 2015), while Transnational Agrarian Movements only emerged in the 1980s, in the context of a dominance of economic liberalization and cuts in public-spending (Edelman and Borras, 2016, p.29). Some authors have criticized the lack of studies on TSMOs, and on internal dynamics of TSMOs (Borras, Edelman, and Kay, 2008 p.179).

Since most of the actors involved in ProSavana, as well as ProSavana's target region are located in the Global South, the case also concerns geographic areas that have traditionally been neglected in the study of social movements, which often focuses on the European or U.S. American context, although this too is changing (Klandermans and Roggeband, 2017).

African countries have recently experienced an exponential increase in protest events, with 90% of protests since 1997 taking place between 2010 and 2021 (Sanches, 2022, p.1). In the context of African protests, some authors point out a lack of research on connections between local and global movements and identities (Sanches 2022, p. 229), which is consistent with the overall lack of research on interactions between various levels of activity (Borras, Edelman, and Kay, 2008). Despite a growing literature on the African uprisings, most case-studies focus on urban protests, while rural uprisings have received little attention (Sanches, 2022, p.230).

Borras notes that “while TAMs have become one of the most vibrant civil society groups during the past two decades, there are surprisingly few critical scholarly studies about them, compared to other transnational civil society groups” (Borras, 2010, p.774). Likewise, “peasants” in general have been perceived as an anachronistic part of society and have been seen as bound to disappear (Martínez-Torres and Rosset, 2010). Contrary to this impression, the opposition to ProSavana and the engagement of La Vía Campesina (LVC) signify the capacity of peasants to politically organise and act as an influential political force. LVC has been described as “the most important transnational social movement” (Martínez-Torres and Rosset, 2010, p.150) and has managed to unify peasants around a shared political program, and a common identity (Patel, 2009).

This is remarkable given the large constituency of LVC, and makes LVC stand out among TSMOs, which often struggle to unify the diverging political ambitions of all international members (Martínez-Torres and Rosset, 2010).

To summarize, this thesis addresses several gaps in the existing literature on social movements; it addresses social movements in the Global South which are often neglected, it focuses on a transnational *agrarian* movement, and it addresses interactions between different levels (local, national, global) of movement activity.

1.3 Research Question

While the contestation of ProSavana has been described and analysed in several papers, the present thesis tries to contribute to the literature in two ways. First, to shed light on the role played by different dimensions of Political Opportunity Structures for the contestation of ProSavana, with a particular focus on movement success. Why did opposition to ProSavana succeed in their goal of stopping ProSavana? Which dimensions of Political Opportunities were important? While one of the studies under review (Bussotti and Nhaueleque, 2022) uses a similar concept, the study is less explicit in its theory, and reaches different conclusions.

And secondly, to derive conceptual insights on the application of the concept of Political Opportunity Structures to an international context. For this purpose, two existing proposals for the advancement of Political Opportunity Structures towards a concept of International Political Opportunity Structures are presented. The approach taken in this thesis differs from these proposals and uses the dimensions of Political Opportunity Structures developed by Tarrow (Tarrow, 1998), as well as an additional dimension of Political Opportunity Structures. This analysis generates a number of insights for the theoretical development of the concept of Political Opportunity Structures in an international context and illustrates some of the problems and possibilities of applying the concept to an international case. The present case study is then used as a reference point for a response to existing proposals regarding the development of an IPOS.

To give a more complete picture of the contestation of ProSavana, the thesis provides a classification of the conflicting models of development used by proponents and opponents of ProSavana, which provides a contextualization ProSavana as an example of contestation of development. This is achieved through a Qualitative Document Analysis of one of the key documents produced by opponents of ProSavana, and a

description of the ‘mainstream approach’ to development supported by International Government Organizations (IGOs), which is consistent with the official goals of ProSavana and the activities carried out within the framework and context of ProSavana.

2 Literature

2.1 Internationalization of Social Movements

Bringel writes, that one novelty in internationalism is the emergence of territorialized social movements as international actors (Bringel, 2015). These are often organizations of peasants and indigenous people, which has “perplexed” many contemporary scholars who associate these groups with “backwardness” (Bringel, 2015, p. 128). Examples include MST, the organization of Brazilian Landless Workers, which was also involved in the contestation of ProSavana. Borras, Edelman and Kay note that there is a silence on Transnational Agrarian Movements (TAMs) in the literature on social movements, despite their “impressive” appearance on the global political stage (Borras, Edelman, and Kay, 2008, p.179). Recently, La Vía Campesina has achieved a long-standing political goal with the signing of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants (UNDROP).

On the other hand, Veit, citing several examples of international rule “which have hardly brought about transnational claim-making, but rather a wide array of localized reactions” doubts that “transnationalization of social movement activity is the only, or even the most widespread and significant reaction to globalization.” (Veit, 2011, p.28). Following up on this, he points out a risk of overstating the novelty of transnational activism resulting from a lack of historization.

Smith (Smith, 2005) shows that the growth of Transnational Social Movement Organizations (TSMOs), which includes TAMs, slowed down after rapid growth between 1970 and early 1990s. This observation is attributed to changes in UN regulations, which allowed national and subnational organizations to receive the status of consultants, thereby reducing incentives for national SMOs to join TSMOs (Smith, 2005, p.233).

Nonetheless, the novelty of TAMs is evidenced by the creation of LVC, which has connected peasant movements across the globe. Previously, there was no organization that linked peasants across the globe, and the international actors representing peasants were NGOs. Crucially, LVC does not *represent* peasants, but has

a peasant *identity*, expressed in the leadership of its structures by peasants. (Martínez-Torres and Rosset, 2010, p. 158).

In this context, the distinction between NGOs and Social Movements helps to understand the situation. NGOs usually have a large staff, little to no members, and receive extensive funds from third parties, while their decisions are made by a board of trustees. Their goals are often defined in technical terms that are measurable. NGOs also do not have the capability to mobilize effectively. Social Movement Organizations (SMOs) usually have few employees, large membership base, often do not receive funds, and pursue political goals. Contrary to NGOs, they are able to mobilize which enables them to hold rallies or fill congresses and halls. (ibid., 2010, p. 159)

Therefore, the argument regarding the overestimation of international connections does not account for agrarian movements and reinforces the observation that agrarian movements are often overlooked. While transnational activism, as argued by Veit (Veit, 2011), does have historical precedents, as in the case of abolitionism, transnational *agrarian* movements are indeed a novelty. Taking his criticism into account, the present thesis also provides the context in which these movements emerged. As will become clear in the later chapters, these movements are indeed a novelty since peasants have previously not been active on a global scale.

2.2 Existing Literature on ProSavana

There is a wealth of sources for this particular case, which include reports and analysis by NGOs (FASE, 2016), interviews with actors of state-agencies, activists, and farmers (Funada-Classen, 2019, 2013) disclosed contracts between public and private actors, external investigations into the case commissioned by state agencies (JICA, 2017), as well as communication between various actors.

Additionally, the context of the creation of ProSavana can be traced back to earlier publications and policies which detail the development model and envisaged agrarian policies. Among these is, “The New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition”, established in 2011 by the G8 which “can be said to share a common directionality” with ProSavana according to one of the proponents (Hosono, 2012, p.44).

Apart from the primary sources, a number of cases-studies focusing on ProSavana have been published. Most academic studies have been critical of the project itself, and a lot of research has been conducted by authors who are either ‘allies’ (Funada-Classen, 2013, 2016, 2019; Monjane and Bruna, 2019) of the social movements contesting it, or by researchers or institutions linked to the project itself (Ekman and Macamo,

2014; Hosono, 2012). In other words, most studies ‘take sides’ and there are few studies which acknowledge both, the possibly detrimental impact and controversial nature of aspects of ProSavana on the one hand, as well as possibly positive effects or motivations of the project on the other hand.

The distinction between different categories of studies is illustrated by the observation that some scholars such as Monjane, were “involved” and “worked with” both UNAC and LVC (IRGAC, 2021), while subsequent researchers were denied “a sizeable amount of interviews” by Brazilian civil servants due to their experience with “academic activists” (da Silva, 2016, p. 45). This points towards conflicting views between researchers and interviewees. Likewise, scholars supportive of ProSavana have framed the criticisms of ProSavana as a result of a failure of communication, and misconceptions, thereby following the communication strategy of ProSavana (see chapter 5.5)

Therefore, the grouping of authors in this way is helpful not only for grasping the existing literature, but also helps to illustrate key points of contention and disagreement between proponents and opponents of ProSavana.

The existing case-studies can be divided into three categories. Firstly, research papers by scholars who are either directly involved in the social movement resistance, or sympathetic to their cause. Secondly, articles who are in favour of ProSavana, and linked to their proponents or their narratives. Lastly, articles that are more balanced. The third group is the smallest, consisting of only three contributions, by da Silva (2016), Cabral (2015), and Shankland, Gonçalves, and Favareto (2016).

The research conducted by Funada-Classen is the most comprehensive to-date and was indispensable for the research process resulting in this thesis and falls into the first category. In a detailed study on ProSavana’s communication strategy, she analysed a collection of 34 internal documents which were leaked in 2016 (Funada-Classen, 2016). According to her, these papers “revealed that the claims made by the civil societies were grounded. The governments and JICA had a lot to hide, but it seems that due to the good conscience of some people, this activity did not go on.” (Funada-Classen, 2016, p. 7).

Another paper by Funada-Classen, “The Rise and Fall of ProSavana”, is a chronological analysis of ProSavana (Funada-Classen, 2019). It draws on documents but also interviews with individuals from JICA, peasants in Mozambique and other individuals from both sides. It is strongly focused on the plans for ProSavana. Lastly, she published an analysis on the Discourse and Background of ProSavana, using Japanese sources (Funada-Classen, 2013).

One of her articles (Funada-Classen, 2016) ends with the phrase “a luta continua”, which is a slogan used by the campaign against ProSavana. This clearly shows that she “takes sides” and suggests a possible bias.

Nonetheless, her research is important not only due to the extensiveness of her research, but also due to the fact that she analysed Japanese sources and made them available in English.

Her articles are detailed and make extensive use of interviews, internal documents, and statements made by proponents of ProSavana. Theoretical considerations are largely absent from her writing and her arguments are tightly linked to evidence, to an extent that her work mostly consists of simply documenting what has been planned or said by proponents of ProSavana, thereby documenting contradictions and changes.

However, in some instances her sources would allow more charitable interpretations than the ones she arrives at, as will become clear later.

Also in the first category, there are several studies conducted by scholars of social movements and development studies (Bussotti and Nhaueleque, 2022; Nogueira and Ollinaho, 2013; Clements and Fernandes, 2013). While these studies are not explicitly linked to the social movement resistance, they are nonetheless overwhelmingly sympathetic to the cause of the social movements opposing ProSavana.

One of the studies (Bussotti and Nhaueleque, 2022) uses Political Opportunity Structures as a theoretical framework to analyse the protests. However, it does not give a detailed explication of the relevant dimensions of Political Opportunity Structures and does not explicate theoretical implications of its findings. Their conclusion is that the crucial aspect “was the political empowerment of local organisations, and even more the international alliances they established” (ibid., p.123). According to their analysis, the success of the movements can be explained “through a strategic alliance between Mozambican associations and the international network that they were able to establish, especially in relation to Japan” (ibid., p.122). However, this analysis discounts other important dimensions of POS, despite their usage of POS as an explanatory framework.

In the second category is Natalia Fingermann, who was heavily criticized by Funada-Classen for calling the idea that ProSavana is based on PRODECER a ‘myth’ (Funada-Classen, 2013 b). In this case, the evidence is on the side of Funada-Classen, since the comparison between ProSavana and PRODECER was repeatedly made in the initial phase by proponents of ProSavana, as will become clear later (see chapter 5.3).

Furthermore, she mentions ‘rumours’ of land-grabbing – although there are documented cases of peasants who report being forced to leave land that they have been using since the 1980s. (Funada-Classen, 2019).

This framing of reports on landgrabs is also shared by Ekman and Macamo (2014). Another author in this

category is Akio Hosono, who describes ProSavana positively as an example of Triangular Cooperation (Hosono, 2012), was previously director of the JICA Research Institute, JICA being the main institution behind ProSavana.

In the third category, Cabral (2015) conducted extensive interviews with Brazilian employees of institutions involved in ProSavana (ABC and EMBRAPA), describing different agricultural-policy discourses in Brazil. This is one of the few studies that explicitly describes voices critical of ProSavana as a particular “framing of reality” (Cabral, 2015, p. 19). Research by Shankland, Gonçalves and Favareto (2016) sheds light on the cooperation between Brazilian and Mozambican civil society actors and is also one of the few studies that substantially diverges from the social movement perspective on ProSavana, without supporting ProSavana or repeating official narratives. Lastly, da Silva (2019) studied the cooperation and transfer aspect of ProSavana. While this study is more favourable to ProSavana than other studies, critical voices are cited, and on the contentious issue of connections between Prodecer and ProSavana, the similarities between both are emphasized, thereby contradicting official positions and arguments by proponents like Fingermann.

2.3 Political Opportunity Structures

The concept of Political Opportunity Structures (POS) is widely used in the study of Social Movements and is considered “a staple in social movement inquiry” (McAdam, 1996). It has become so dominant, that some scholars criticise little room is left for other explanations (Goodwin and Jasper, 2004). It has been widely used by sociologists and political scientists to research conditions for social movements emergence, their outcomes, as well as motivations and goals of participants (Rohlinger and Gentile, 2017, p.10).

As a firmly established approach in contemporary research on social movements, it is an appropriate and useful framework for the scope of the present thesis, providing an established theoretical and empirical debate to which this thesis seeks to contribute. While a number of criticisms to the concept have been raised, it is still considered useful – with adaptations (Giugni, 2011, p. 281). Therefore, the concept of Political Opportunity Structures applied here, takes into account existing criticisms, and is in line with gaps in the literature and recommendations for future directions by scholars of social movements. The shortcomings of the concept are treated as an opportunity for its theoretical advancement. Lastly, Political Opportunity Structures are treated as a conceptual tool to shed light on an empirical case, without embracing or discussing the validity of empirical claims made by the theoretical strands associated with it.

The concept of Political Opportunity Structures is commonly traced back to Peter Eisinger (1973), who proposed it in the context of a study on the conditions for “political protest activities directed toward urban

institutions, agencies, and officials in American cities.” (Eisinger, 1973, p.9). The following paragraph summarizes the concept as introduced by Eisinger.

The concept was forwarded in response to previous research linking specific variables in the political environment to distinctive patterns of local politics (Eisinger 1973, p.11).

These variables included factors such as centralization of local power, reformed municipal institutions, or representation in institutions. According to Eisinger, specific environmental factors had so far been treated as independent variables, without theoretical explication. In response, the concept of Political Opportunity Structures emphasizes the relatedness of these variables that have so far been treated independently. In other words, the concept of Political Opportunity Structures refers to the *context* (Eisinger, 1973, p.11) in which political activities takes place and assumes that several variables together are forming this context (Eisinger, 1973, p.11).

One aspect of his research that has been influential is his distinction between “open” and “closed” access. He posits, that the relationship between openness and protest activity is not linear, but instead “curvilinear” – most protest occurs not in settings with a high-degree of openness, but in those settings that have a mix of open and closed factors (Eisinger, 1973, p.15). This assertion is frequently referred to in recent scholarship (Van der Heijden, 2006; Giugni, 2011; Tarrow, 1998) and can be seen as an example of the type of findings that result from an analysis of Political Opportunity Structures.

Following Tarrow, Political Opportunity Structures can be defined as “consistent - but not necessarily formal or permanent — dimensions of the political environment that provide incentives for collective action by affecting people's expectations for success or failure.” (Tarrow, 1998, p. 76).

He argues that,

“[C]ontention is more closely related to opportunities for — and limited by constraints upon — collective action than by the persistent social or economic factors that people experience.

Contention increases when people gain the external resources to escape their compliance and find opportunities in which to use them. It also increases when they are threatened with costs they cannot bear or which outrage their sense of justice. When institutional access opens, rifts appear within elites, allies become available, and state capacity for repression declines, challengers find opportunities to advance their claims. When combined with high levels of perceived costs for inaction, opportunities produce episodes of contentious politics.” (Tarrow, 1998, p.71)

To summarize, POS are seen as the political context, that facilitates collective action.

The dimensions of POS explicated later, are seen as *changes* that facilitate movement activity (ibid., p.81), or as “windows of opportunity” (ibid., p.78).

While there are a number of studies using quantitative methods (see Tarrow, 1996) and a lot of research involves longer-term changes (ibid., p.45) the approach taken here focuses only on one specific case. It is important to note, that the approach in which Political Opportunity Structures are analysed is not aimed at establishing correlations between variables, but in finding causality in studying processes (McAdam and Tarrow, 2011, p.4).

2.4 Criticisms and Adaptation

Ironically, one of the main goals of Eisinger – that several variables are treated as one concept – is precisely what was criticized and led to problems in subsequent research. A frequently quoted critique by Gamson and Meyer says that the concept has become like a “sponge” (Gamson and Meyer, 1996). McAdam (1996) pointed out some problems with the current approach, saying that, “[t]o the extent that the concept is defined or used in very different ways, it threatens to be of little use to anyone” and attributes the differences in its usage to three sources (McAdam, 1996, p.25).

First, the conceptualization of Political Opportunity Structures. In this respect, his main concern is the *political* dimension which he argues should be the focus, as opposed to other conditions that are facilitating movement activity but are not genuinely political (ibid., p.25). Secondly, the specific dimensions of Political Opportunity Structures. According to McAdam, the dimensions that have been posited as composing Political Opportunity Structures differ among authors, for this reason he proposes a set of dimensions that he sees as “highly consensual” (ibid., p.26). Lastly, the specification of the relevant dependent variable. For example, one variable focused on in research is the *emergence* of social movements, while Eisinger sought to explain differences in *protest intensity*. The overall direction of this argument is thus the goal of facilitating a coherent application.” (ibid., p.29).

While a specification of dimensions might still lead to divergences, this specification is nonetheless a prerequisite for the comparison of results between different studies. Therefore, subsequent theorizing has attempted to disjoin and specify these variables again.

One potential question that has not been emphasized in the literature so far, is whether these variables do constitute a whole that is more than the sum of its parts. After all, Eisinger assumed that there was a benefit in treating all variables together because he assumed that these variables are *related* to one another and together form a context. The implicit assumption is, that the concept of political opportunity structures is more than the mere sum of the variables that constitute it.

One of the strongest criticisms raised against Political Opportunity Structures is that it is “tautological, trivial, inadequate, or just plain wrong” and that it “does not provide what it frequently and often implicitly promises: a causally adequate universal theory or "model" of social movements” (Goodwin and Jasper, 1999, p.28). Despite the possibility that the empirical claims emphasizing the importance of Political Opportunity Structure are wrong, this criticism does not imply that the concept of Political Opportunity Structures is flawed. While a lack of conceptual clarity was also criticized by Goodwin and Jasper, scholars like McAdam have also pointed these out, and the resulting recommendations are integrated in the present approach.

Since Political Opportunity Structures refer to several variables at once, or a *context* (Eisinger, 1973, p.11), and scholars have invoked the concept to explain different variables like movement activities and outcomes, often by carrying out large-scale studies on specific movements, the resulting research often blends theoretical concepts with empirical claims about specific movements or movements in general. While general patterns or law-like claims have been derived from this research, these empirical claims are different from the concepts that are used. It is one thing to conceptualize a variable, and another thing to claim that a specific relationship between variables holds across cases. Therefore, the thesis draws upon the concepts of Political Opportunity Structures, without embracing empirical claims made by proponents of the Political Opportunity Structures approach or treating POS as a universal model. Rather, dimensions of POS are used as a conceptual framework to analyse the case, in order to derive empirical knowledge that can be used to inform the empirical and theoretical aspects of the broader theoretical approach. It is important to note, that the approach in which Political Opportunity Structures are analysed is not aimed at establishing correlations between variables, but in finding causality in studying processes (McAdam and Tarrow, 2011, p.4), which is the approach taken here.

2.4.1 Considerations for contemporary research

In his review article on the usefulness of the concept of POS, Giugni (Giugni, 2011, p.281) points out three features of the contemporary world, that require an adaptation of POS:

1. The spatially and functionally multi-layered political opportunity structure:
Present social movements engage with a number of (international) institutions that can be described as 'nested', including state actors but also international and supranational organisations. Moreover, the context of mobilization has also expanded from the national to the international level.
2. The differences between social movements and the authorities they seek to influence is becoming less and less clear. State actors and civil society actors often work together and the distinction between authorities and movements is becoming 'fuzzy', especially in non-democratic contexts (ibid.).
3. "structural constraints and social action should not be considered as necessarily opposed to each other." (ibid., p.281). This refers to the fact that movement activity influences structural features in the same way, that structural features influence movement activity. In other words: political opportunity structures are often treated as 'independent' variable, with social movement activity being the 'dependent' variable that is to be explained. Therefore, Giugni suggests an increasing focus on the ways in which movements shape POS. Moreover, he recommends a relaxation of the dichotomy between social movements and POS that is commonly used, since social movements and POS are influencing each other.

2.5 Dimensions of Political Opportunity Structures

2.5.1 Increasing Access

Tarrow states that access to political participation, or the possession of full political rights, makes it more likely for challengers to mobilize, since it increases their chances of success. However, as previously mentioned, the relationship between access and protest is assumed to not be linear, but "curvilinear" – the highest number of protests occurs in settings with a mix of closed and open venues for participation (Eisinger, 1973). This was first described by Eisinger but is also frequently cited by contemporary scholars such as Tarrow (Tarrow, 1998, p.77).

2.5.2 Shifting Alignments

According to Tarrow, instability of political alliances, or electoral stability (in democratic countries) can increase perception of insecurity among supporters and lead weaker political groups to exercise their power or induce elites to compete for support from outsiders. In undemocratic countries any sign of instability can lead to contention and due to persistent subordination, any “windows of opportunities” may encourage protests (ibid., p.78).

2.5.3 Divided Elites

Division within elites provides can be beneficial to challengers for two reasons.

First, rifts among elites may provide incentives for groups with few resources to take the risk of collective action. Divisions among elites signal weakness and may be seen as a chance to organize.

Secondly, elites that have lost power may be inclined to take the role of protecting the interests of challengers. Moreover, a lack of support from other elite groups may lead elites to defect (ibid., p.79)

The mechanisms of these are not laid out in detail by Tarrow, but elite cohesion and division can nonetheless be seen as a potentially important factor for social movement activity.

2.5.4 Influential Allies

According to Tarrow, influential allies may act on behalf of movements or protesters in courts, in negotiations, and provide a safeguard against repression (ibid., p. 79). These are especially important in repressive and non-democratic countries and can provide resources for protesters and movements. Citing Gamson (Gamson, 1990), Tarrow states that there is a strong correlation between influential allies and movement success.

2.5.5 Repression and Facilitation

The definition that Tarrow uses for repression is that developed by Tilly (1978), which states that “[R]epression is any action by another group which raises the contender's cost of collective action. An action which lowers the group's cost of collective action is a form of facilitation.” (Tilly, 1978, p.100) He also notes that some forms of repression may induce more protests, while representative states can reduce contention by incorporating it. (Tarrow, 1996, p. 80).

Admittedly, this definition is rather broad, and negative connotations of repression – such as violence – are not included in the definition. Nonetheless, this definition is helpful for describing how states engage with protests or movements, and the distinction between facilitation and repression is sufficiently clear to describe differences that affect social movements.

Importantly, these factors are described as opportunities resulting from changes and are distinct from aspects of the Political Opportunity Structure that are more structural.

2.5.6 International dimension, multilevel governance

One of the shortcomings of the concept that has been identified is the focus on individual states. Despite this acknowledgement in the literature, existing Literature on International Political Opportunity Structures is scarce. A search with Google Scholar using the term “International Political Opportunity Structure” delivered few relevant results: only three articles (Van der Heijden, 2006; Konieczny, 2013, 2014) use it in their title, while only Van der Heijden’s article is an explicitly theoretical contribution. This is surprising given the importance of internationalization, and the acknowledged shortcomings of a state-centric approach. (Giugni, 2011). Moreover, recent articles using the concept in an international context, equally point out the need to take international factors into consideration and develop the Political Opportunity Structures approach for an international context (for example Shawki, 2010).

An article by Van der Heijden (2006) tries to map out an “International Political Opportunity Structure” (IPOS) and contribute to the literature by operationalizing IPOS. To adapt the concept of POS to the international context and develop a concept of IPOS, he argues that three issues need to be considered. First, while POS refer to states, there is no international government. Secondly, globalization has shifted some political decision making to the international level. Therefore, multilevel governance is often the case, and the IPOS is a composite of a number of IGOs. Nonetheless, national states are responsible for implementing international political decisions and still relevant.

Lastly, International Political Opportunity Structures may be different for each social movement, with different International Government Organisations (IGOs) being relevant (Van der Heijden, 2006, p.32)

Taking these considerations into account, he describes the Political Opportunity Structure for a number of IGOs: the World Trade Organization, The World Bank, the European Union, and the United Nations. The dimensions of POS he uses are not identical but comparable to Tarrow’s approach described in the previous section. The dimensions are: the formal institutional structure (closed or open), informal elite

strategies (inclusive or exclusive), configuration of power (united or divided elites), and political output structure (strong or weak output). The attributes of institutions in each of these dimensions are not binaries but degrees – for example, very united elites, or united elites (ibid., p.33).

While Van der Heijden acknowledges, that the IPOS may be different for different kinds of social movement (such as environmental movements, or human rights movements), and that different IGOs are relevant for different movements, this approach still relies on a conceptualization of the Political Opportunity Structure per institution. He develops IPOS from the vantage points of institutions – and not from the vantage points of social movements.

A second proposal for the development of the concept of Political Opportunity Structures to an international dimension comes from Oliver and Rothman (Oliver and Rothman, 1999) who propose that

“Local political opportunity structures are embedded in national political opportunity structures, which are in turn embedded in international political opportunity structures. These nested structures create the possibility for very complex patterns of relationships among actors.” (ibid., p.43)

While the article does not explicate theoretically *how* these structures are nested, a detailed criticism of this idea will be delivered in the theoretical considerations chapter. Implications and possible problems will be discussed in the conclusion section of the paper

2.5.7 Adjustments of Political Opportunity Structure for the case of ProSavana

2.5.8 State-centrism

As has been noted before, the concept of Political Opportunity Structures was developed with domestic protests in mind and focuses on the political environment within specific states. The approach taken here focuses on the process of contestation regarding ProSavana, taking the opposition to ProSavana as the vantage point. Therefore, actors, institutions, and structures are included if they are relevant to ProSavana and its contestation, across states and levels of governance. In the case of electoral changes, all three main countries involved in the project are analysed. Likewise, international allies are taken into account regardless of their nationality.

2.5.9 Foreign Policy Pressures

Lastly, an additional dimension of POS is introduced, in order to account for the international political context. Some authors have mentioned that foreign pressures can be relevant for movement outcomes. For example, the cold-war impacted the success of the civil-rights movement, since racism in the U.S. was used by Soviet Russia for propaganda in African countries. This incentivized the U.S. government to implement reforms that reduced racial inequality, in order to invalidate the narrative that the U.S. is a racist state. (McAdam, 1996, p.34). Another example to illustrate this is the partial lifting of sanctions imposed on Iran by the U.S., in order to enable the use of Twitter during protests (Mehta, 2015, p. 809), a social media platform that is considered crucial for many recent protest events. Nonetheless, this dimension is not included or theorized in the articles reviewed during the research process. To develop the analysis, a working hypothesis is applied here:

Social Movements can be affected by states insofar as their success or failure is beneficial to their foreign policy goals.

This hypothesis is used here as a tentative description of what can be called “Foreign Policy Pressures”. The advantage of this approach is the introduction of a genuinely *international* dimension, that goes beyond a simple transfer of the concepts of POS to a different context. It can be argued that this dimension also played a role in previous social movement activities that have been analysed using state-centric POS approach, but this only underlines the relevance of going beyond a state-centric approach.

3 Methodology

3.1 Literature Review

The literature that was used to analyse the contestation of ProSavana consists of 26 studies retrieved through Google Scholar, using the keyword “ProSavana”. Articles were selected according to relevance, but almost all articles that were specifically written on ProSavana were included in the research. The excluded articles are very technical and focused on agricultural research or forestry. Also excluded are the extensive studies done by Japan on ProSavana, which were commissioned in retrospect (JICA, 2017) due to their length and possible bias.

These case-studies are supplemented with documents leaked to the public. These include contracts and minutes of meetings between Japanese, Brazilian, and Mozambican agencies, and consultancies hired (List of used resources).¹ It has to be noted that it was not possible to fully review all these documents due to their size. Selection of sources was thus based on a case-by-case basis, reviewing documents referred to in the selected literature, based on their relevance for the analysis of Political Opportunity Structures and movement activity. Excluded from the analysis is therefore also the communication-strategy paper released by Japan, which is sometimes referred to, but was too large to be included in the present analysis.

Additionally, several media reports were used to illustrate perceptions of ProSavana in the media. Websites like farmlandgrab.org have been used due to their coverage of ProSavana and its contestation. Lastly, some press releases published by relevant institutions were used, also selected on criteria of relevance for the Political Opportunity Structure analysis as well as relevance to the general understanding of the case.

Several resources were not accessible for the research process.

This includes most Japanese and Portuguese sources, apart from those that were comprehensible with limited knowledge of Portuguese, and those sections that are included in the analysis of Japanese sources, especially by Funada-Classen. Also inaccessible is the official website of ProSavana, which is offline, as well as a number of links that were defunct, often to websites of companies. Nonetheless, the reviewed material is fairly comprehensive and the literature under review provides more information than required to carry out the analysis and contribute to the literature. In most cases, the challenge was to reduce and select relevant information.

3.2 Qualitative Document Analysis

The application of Qualitative Content Analysis follows the structure suggested by Mayring (1991) for Qualitative Content Analysis. Mayring proposes three types of Qualitative Content Analysis: Summative, Explicative, and Structuring (Mayring, 1991, p. 211). This analysis applies the summative technique. The goal of this technique is to reduce the text and is considered suitable in cases that aim at analysing the meaning of

¹ A full list of leaked documents is available at <https://www.farmlandgrab.org/26158>

the text itself. This can be contrasted with an explicative analysis which involves adding material and is used to make the source material more comprehensible. The formal analysis is guided by an explication of the formal attributes of sources emphasized in Historical Analysis as suggested by Schors (2020).

3.2.1 Steps of the Analysis

Before the analysis, the general steps according to Mayring for any Qualitative Content Analysis were applied (Mayring, 1991).

These include:

- Choice of the Source (in this case based on the historical relevance as described above)
- Analysis of the Context of its inception (also explicated above, in line with historical analysis)
- Formal characteristics of the material (also explicated above, in line with historical analysis)
- Direction of Analysis

Regarding the direction of Analysis, Mayring suggests several categories:

- The text itself
- The author
- The object of the text
- The target audience
- The subject of the text with its socio-cultural background (Mayring, 1991)
-

In line with the purpose of this analysis – the classification of the development approach – the direction of the analysis is the text itself. Before the text was analysed, the guiding questions was explicated, and theoretical positions was used to form preliminary categories². The guiding question is, how the development approach expressed in the document can be classified. The theoretical position used for the formation of

² A full list of categories is found in the Appendix

categories was the classification of different approaches to development as proposed by Urs Geiser (Geiser, 2014).

3.2.1.1 Formal Characteristics of the Source

The document to be analysed is the Open Letter that was published in response to the leaked Master Plan. The Open Letter was signed by 23 national organizations and social movements, as well as 43 international organizations and social movements, and 72 individuals.

A previous critique of ProSavana in the same year was published by UNAC, the largest peasant movement in Mozambique. The letter was published in Maputo, 23rd of May 2013. It is available on the website of Grain³. This serves as a verification of the source, since Grain is one of the main organs for the opponents of ProSavana and also one of the signatories.

The Open Letter is addressed to the heads of states of Japan, Brazil, and Mozambique.

It was published shortly after a preliminary version of the Master Plan was leaked to the public, which was described as a “wake-up call” to civil society in Mozambique (Monjane and Bruna, 2021).

The Master Plan is an internal document that serves as a blueprint for the project of ProSavana.

Resulting from discussions among social movement organizations, the letter was “for a long time seen as the main document against the project” (FASE, 2016). In September 2013, a similar letter was sent by Japanese Civil Society Organizations.⁴

3.2.1.2 Categories

Taking the characterization of the relational-radical approach as a reference, categories were developed for each of the elements of the relational-radical approach, as defined by Geiser (2014)

A full list of the categories is supplied in the appendix.

3.2.1.3 Units of Analysis

⁴ <https://cadtm.org/japanese-civil-society-statement>

The source material was divided into paragraphs as units of analysis. In some cases, the paragraphs were further divided if one paragraph contained more than one statement. The appendix includes a list of all paraphrases that were assigned to the categories that were developed inductively.

3.3 Limitations

While there are a number of studies on POS using quantitative methods (Tarrow, 1996) and a lot of research involves longer-term changes (*ibid.*, p.45), the approach taken here focuses only on one specific case. While there are potential problems with single-case study in terms of their comparability (Tarrow, 1996), the specification of the dimensions and variables under study helps to make the case more comparable.

There are several limitations to the study. On the one hand, the QDA cannot give a full picture of the opponent's perception of ProSavana, since it does not generate sociopsychological findings that would shed light on the individual perceptions of individuals engaged in the contestation of ProSavana.

It nonetheless constitutes an account of the official position taken by the movement opposing ProSavana, which generates insights into the development approach taken by opponents of ProSavana.

While the official position might diverge from internal discussions and individual perceptions, the research is enhanced by studies already conducted on ProSavana, which also includes interviews and extensive descriptions of the process of mobilization.

Another methodological challenge is posed by the nature of the existing literature.

As mentioned earlier, a lot of the research that has been done is either critical or supportive of ProSavana. Therefore, it is not possible to rule-out the possibility of incorporating biased results from the reliance on secondary literature that was controversial.

As a case-study the present thesis provides an illustration and contextualization of the process of contestation of ProSavana, including implications for theoretical advancements. A more complete picture would require a more comprehensive analysis, which includes more specific analyses of the actors and networks involved. Due to the limited space, it was not possible to thoroughly analyse the role of specific relationships, decision processes, or individual perception, or the interactions with institutional structures which would provide results with higher degrees of confidence and allow for more specific results regarding the relevance of political opportunity structures and internationalization for social movement activity and outcomes. Likewise, a more detailed operationalization of the specific dimensions of Political Opportunity Structures

would enhance the comparability of the case with other cases of social movements, that have been analysed using POS, while also facilitating further comparative research using the present case.

Additionally, there are several weaknesses regarding the information that was incorporated. For example, more comprehensive information on elite rifts in Japan, or more detailed analysis of the role of repression in Mozambique would have improved the quality of the research but was difficult to incorporate, due to a lack of available research and limited space.

4 Background

4.1 What is ProSavana according to Proponents?

To introduce the case at hand, the following paragraphs will give a brief description of what ProSavana is, according to its proponents. According to Hosono (Hosono, 2012), ProSavana is,

“[A]n agricultural development assistance program targeting synergistic effects from both promoting agricultural investment by the private sector and raising the incomes of the small-scale farmers. The program also aims to generate synergies from the development of agriculture and investment in infrastructure, keeping in mind a concrete proposal at the national level of the principles of ‘responsible agricultural investment’ led by Japan.” (Hosono, 2012, p.43)

She describes it as an example of Triangular Cooperation, drawing on the example of the development of the Brazilian Cerrado. The region in Mozambique was chosen as suitable, due to its similarity to the Brazilian Cerrado (Hosono, 2012, p.54). It was initiated by Japan and first proposed during a Japanese visit to Brazil, officially beginning in 2009 with the signing of a memorandum of understanding by Japan, Brazil, and Mozambique. The official title for the project was “The Triangular Cooperation Program for Agricultural Development of the African Tropical Savannah in Mozambique” but it is generally referred to as ProSAVANA (Ekman and Macamo, 2014). In the present thesis, the preferred spelling is “ProSavana”.

According to Fingermaun, ProSavana has the goal of developing new agricultural models by “integrating large-scale foreign investments with small- and medium-scale local farmers” (Fingermaun, 2015, p.10).

Hosono (2012) emphasizes synergistic effects between private investments and support for specific farmers. It is officially composed of three components: ProSavana-PI, ProSavana-PD and ProSavana-PEM.

The first component, ProSavana PI has the goal of “Identify[ing] suitable agricultural technologies for sustainably developing agricultural production in the region, with the objective of strengthening local research capacities and disseminating technologies to producers”. (Ekman and Macamo, 2014, p.8)

ProSavana-PI is the technical cooperation branch of the project, for which Brazil was responsible, with the Brazilian Agricultural Research Cooperation (EMBRAPA) tasked with its implementation (Nogueira and Ollinaho, 2013). This included envisaged activities such as research on soil, fertilizers, and the building of laboratories, as well as agricultural training.

The second component, ProSavana PD has the goal of developing an overall strategy for the development of the region. This resulted in the so-called “Master Plan”, one of the most important documents for the understanding of ProSavana. It was carried out by Oriental Consulting (a Japanese consultancy), and FGV-Projetos⁵, as well as Mozambican institutions (Clements and Fernandes, 2013).

Apart from the Master Plan, ProSavana-PD also envisaged comprehensive data collection and analysis, so called “Quick Impact Projects”, as well as the publication of a guidebook for potential investors, including information on legal issues and recommendations for governments regarding processing of investments (Ekman and Macamo, 2014, p.9)

The third component, ProSavana-PEM, “seeks to strengthen the quality of agricultural extension services by promoting trainings and activities with technicians of the public and private sector with the support of the Brazilian institutions.” (Fingermann, 2016, p.11). The idea behind this was the setting up of ‘model areas’ for agricultural development.

According to information in 2015, the budget for ProSavana-PD and ProSavana-PI together was roughly 21.2 million USD, with almost 13.6 million USD from Japan (JICA), almost 6.2 million USD from Brazil (ABC and EMBRAPA), and roughly 1.4 million from Mozambique (Fingermann, 2015, p.7). This illustrates the share of financial contributions given by each side, with Japan as the biggest donor by far.

⁵ FGV-Projetos is described as the “consultancy arm of a well known Brazilian business-school”, the subcontracting of which is considered “a new practice in Brazilian cooperation“ (Chichava et al., 2013, p.104).

4.2 Investment and Business interests in ProSavana

A number of scholars point out the relevance of investment and business-interests in the inception of ProSavana (Funada-Classen, 2019; Clements and Fernandes, 2013). While proponents do not emphasize these in their official publications (Hosono, 2012; Fingermann, 2015).

Nonetheless, it is important to mention the role of investment and business for ProSavana.

Prior to the period of its implementation, FGV-Projetos held a number of presentations for companies seeking investment opportunities (Funada-Classen, 2019, p.10). For this purpose, the Nacala Fund was planned as an initiative to raise US\$2 billion within ten years and has been presented by FGV as a “low risk and high return” investment that appears in the Master Plan. Nonetheless, officials in Brazil claimed that it does not have any formal connection with ProSavana (Nogueira and Ollinaho, 2013).

An “information memorandum” by FGV-Projetos on the Nacala Corridor Fund which is “strictly NOT for distribution” describes it as a pioneering investment “into the entire agricultural value chain” it further says that “The FUND’s agro-industrial companies will apply modern machinery and farming methods, including the introduction of improved crop varieties, adequate irrigation systems, integrated logistics systems and others”, expecting a return of 5% p.A. (FGV-Projetos, 2012).

In addition to ProSavana, a number of other initiatives in the Nacala Corridor exist: Vale has build a coal mine in Moatize, and also invested in the railway, which links it to the port of Nacala. Moreover, Vale also paid for an agro-climatic zoning to determine the suitable crops in the region, on the request of the Brazilian government, and carried out by FGV-Projetos (Nogueira, Ollinaho 2013, p.8).

Likewise, agribusiness companies expressed their interest. The president of the Matto Grosso Cotton Producers Association⁶ said that “Mozambique is the Mato Grosso in the middle of Africa, with free land without environmental impediments and cheaper freight to China” (Clements and Fernandes, 2013, p.52).

FGV-Projetos was not only responsible for the investment-side, but it was also the author of the Master Plan. Cleber Guarany, who was head of the Nacala Corridor Fund initiative, is also responsible for the ProSavana Master Plan (Funada-Classen, 2019, p.13).

⁶ Mato Grosso is a state in Brazil in the Cerrado, where PRODECER was carried out.

The area of ProSavana is frequently described as the “Nacala Corridor” in official publications (Hosono, 2012). Importantly, this designation refers to an economical corridor. The concept of “African Agricultural Growth Corridors” while being promoted by the UN, was presented at UN and G8 meetings by Yara, a fertilizer company. African Agricultural Growth Corridor projects, in turn, are part of the “New Vision” initiative, that is led by 28 companies, which together represent “the whole supply chain, from seeds, chemical inputs, production, processing, transport and trade, to supermarkets” (Paul and Steinbrecher, 2013).

The connection between ProSavana and this international narrative is most visible in Hosono’s article, who was previously president of JICA, citing the G8 meeting in L’Aquila as origin of ProSavana (Hosono, 2012, p. 43). The development narrative that is applied here, can be referred to as the “mainstream model” of development, a concept that will be explained later on.

This connection between business interests and development projects is relevant to the contestation of ProSavana and characterizes ProSavana as a clear-cut case of what La Vía Campesina calls their “enemies”.

4.3 Mozambican Land Law and recent events

Recently, there have been several developments in Mozambique that shaped the opposition to ProSavana. Vale has established a coal mine in Moatize, which resulted in the displacement of about 50.000 people (Clements and Fernandes, p.55). The protests against Vale carried out by a network of those affected by Vale and LVC, are described as “crucial for structuring their solid resistance against [...]ProSavana” (FASE, 2016, p.14). Thus, the activities of a Brazilian company influenced the social movement organizations by setting a precedent for land-grabbing through foreign companies.

The Mozambican Land Law which was established in 1997 under participation of UNAC and the FAO played an important role for the contestation of ProSavana. It grants customary rights to land, which are considered equal in strength to state-granted land claims (Knight, 2010 p.106). Importantly, customary rights are not defined, in order to be as inclusive as possible, and land rights do not require any form of documentation or registration to be valid (Knight, 2010 p. 102). According to the constitution, all land is owned by the state and cannot be sold. The only way to use land is by obtaining land use rights (DUATs) which can also not be sold. Moreover, according to the constitution, any acquisition of DUATs requires consultation of local communities (Monjane, 2021).

The process of developing the Land Law has been described as “one of the most participatory land-law making processes in African history to date” (Knight 2010, p. 106).

While the law itself is strong, its implementation has been criticized. Awareness for these rights and knowledge how to defend them is low, and disputes are often not settled due to a lack of staff in the judiciary (McAuslan, 2013, p.80)

The Land Law was part of the contestation of ProSavana and served as a reference point for its opponents. ProSavana was criticized for the violation of the Land Law. This critique led to the establishment of a consultation process, which -although strongly criticized by social movements – aimed at establishing consent prior to implementation, in accordance with the land law (Bussotti and Nhaueleque, 2022, p.121)

However, since 2017 a revision of the Land Law is under way, and a draft of the law from 2022 includes the possibility for DUAT's to be transferred. This would be a step towards commodification of land since it would allow DUAT's to be traded on markets, thereby facilitating higher land-ownership concentration (Monjane, 2021).

4.4 Main Actors

4.4.1 Japan

According to several authors, one major motivation for Japan to pursue ProSavana is the export of agricultural goods from Mozambique to Japan (Feldhoff, 2014; FASE, 2016; Kuss, 2016; Ikegami 2015). Among all industrialized countries, Japan has the lowest ratio of food self-sufficiency, and a majority of food is imported (Feldhoff, 2014, p.79). However, the claim that Japan pursued ProSavana for the purpose of exporting food is not backed up by direct evidence in the studies claiming this connection (Feldhoff, 2014; Kuss, 2016; Ikegami 2015) although export of surplus agricultural goods is mentioned in the initial memorandum of understanding (Ekman and Macamo, 2014, p.7).

This export-focus can also be seen in the context of the concept of food security, which sees overall productivity for global markets as a means to end hunger and lower food-prices.

More substantial evidence points towards Japanese business interests in Mozambique, signified by the signing of the trade agreement TICAD V, which emphasizes protection of investors (Ikegami, 2015, p.3), and the investment of Japanese companies in coal mines, and their involvement in the exploration of gas fields (Ikegami, 2015, p.8), all of which are part of the Nacala Corridor.

In the context of ProSavana, the principal agent behind the project was the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Japan was the main donor for investments, carried out evaluations of the projects progress, and initiated the project.

4.4.2 Brazil

Mozambique and Brazil share a common language, cultural ties, and have both been Portuguese colonies. However, Brazil tried to distance itself from its links to Africa, partly due to continued racist exclusion of people of African descent, and its own complicity in the history of slavery (Clements, Fernandes 2013). Brazilian slave trade was “notorious” in the 1850s when slave-trade was already abolished by the British Empire (Parron, 2016), and only in 1888 the “largest slave-regime in the Americas” was ended (Kananoja and Vos, 2013). After first contacts in the 1950s, it was only under Lula’s presidency that Brazil substantially intensified relations with Mozambique, and Brazilian engagement acquired a “new dimension” (Clements, Fernandes 2013). Mozambique became the main focus of Brazilian investment in Africa. Most of Brazil’s Development Aid takes place in the form of technical cooperation, portraying Brazil as a role model. The increase in technical cooperation with third countries can be attributed on the one hand to economic growth, and on the other hand to soft-power considerations (Suyama, Waisbich, and Leite, 2016, p.33). Brazil’s international identity involves being part of the „Global South” – in this framing the principle of “Solidarity” distinguishes South-South cooperation from North-South cooperation. Brazilian South-South Cooperation is officially based on the principles of solidarity, demand-driven action, and non-interference in internal affairs (Fingermann, 2015, p.4). Technical cooperation is seen by Brazil as part of its South-South narrative, and in line with aforementioned principles. These efforts are seen as supporting Brazils international ambitions and influence, such as in its bid to the UN Security Council. (Suyama, Waisbich, and Leite, 2016).

As mentioned earlier, one relevant process in recent Brazilian history was the PRODECER project. This project aimed at the transformation of the Brazilian Cerrado. The Cerrado is one of the largest biomes in Brazil, and defined by its ecological characteristics; a steppe with sparse forests and. Hailed by some as a success story, it also involved forced resettlements, deforestation – with at least 50 percent of vegetation cut (Clements and Fernandes, 2013, p.13), and has led to high levels of pesticide and fertilizer pollution. It also turned Brazil into one of the largest exporters of agricultural goods (Clements and Fernandes, 2013, p.58). While the downsides are clear, it did achieve the goals implied in the development model on which it is based: productivity in the Brazilian agricultural sector increased dramatically. Importantly, the success in achieving the stated goals of the project, in line with the development model applied, do not contradict the

observations of its detrimental impact. From the perspective of the “mainstream” development model it was a success (Hosono, 2012), while it directly contradicts the development model that LVC and UNAC subscribe to (Clements and Fernandes 2013, p.62).

For the context of ProSavana, the specific actors involved were FGV-Projetos, ABC, and EMBRAPA. ABC is the Brazilian International Cooperation Agency, and EMBRAPA is the state-led agricultural research institute which played an important role in the period of state-led development within Brazil.

The technical cooperation was to be implemented by EMBRAPA, the Brazilian state-owned agricultural research institute, as will be explained later

4.4.3 UNAC

UNAC is the national union of peasants in Mozambique and was established in 1987. It is the largest social movement in Mozambique with about 100.000 members in 2016 and recognized as representing peasants. Therefore, it is a strategic partner of the Ministry of Agriculture in Mozambique (Monjane and Bruna, 2020, p.82). It was founded with the goal of defending peasant interests, and politically organizing peasants.

The emergence of UNAC is linked to the economic situation in Mozambique in the 1980s.

After Mozambican bankruptcy in the mid 1980s⁷, Mozambique became member of the World Bank and the IMF. In 1987 Mozambique received funds from the World Bank on the condition of implementing the Structural Adjustment Program. This led to the implementation of the „standard macro-economic stabilization package“,⁸ which included an increase of interest rates, reduction of public spending, and liberalization of prices, which had previously been regulated by state authorities (Nhampossa, 2011, p.194).

However, attempts at privatizing land ownership, also initiated in this period, were unsuccessful.

These reforms necessitated changes to the constitution.

In the same year, a conference of cooperative movements was held, convened by the General Union of Cooperatives of Maputo, the biggest cooperative movement in the country. This union consisted of roughly 95% women. In this context, the goal of establishing a peasant union was articulated. An interim commission

⁷ Which can be attributed to the decline of the socialist block, the civil war, but also international economic crisis resulting from the oil-crisis (Nhampossa, p.192)

⁸ Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) were implemented by many African and Latin American countries during the 1980s, in order to receive loans from the World Bank. SAPs usually included reductions in public spending, higher interest rates, privatization, and market liberalization.

was tasked with the creation of that union which led to the establishment of UNAC in 1993 (Nhampossa, 2011, p. 195). Unlike many other unions in Mozambique, UNAC was not created during the revolutionary period and is not linked to the ruling party, FRELIMO. It therefore has more autonomy than other unions, which are still controlled by FRELIMO (Nhampossa, 2011, p 195). Nonetheless, it was founded by unions composed of the associations and cooperatives that were set up by the government during the revolutionary period, in line with Marxist ideology – often by force (ibid., p.198). Other cooperatives and associations were set up voluntarily, among other reasons to facilitate reciprocity of donations by NGOs (ibid., p.198)

UNAC developed three main objectives:

1. Strengthening of peasant organization
2. Policy Dialogue and participation
3. “[T]o enhance peasants’ capacity to produce or to use land for food sovereignty” (ibid. p.197)

UNAC became member of La Vía Campesina in 1999 and was the first African country to do so, a connection that was established via MST, the landless workers movement of Brazil. (ibid. p.203).

4.4.4 La Vía Campesina

The historical background of the emergence of La Vía Campesina is the Latin American economical context in the 1980s. (Martínez-Torres and Rosset, 2010). While Latin America was dominated by policies of Import-Substitution-Industrialisation (ISI) in the period after the Second World War, these policies were succeeded by the implementation of policies that are commonly referred to as “neoliberal”, in the 1980s.

ISI was based on the premise that state-intervention was needed to bring about the establishment of domestic industrial sector. The word “substitution” refers to the substitution of domestic industries for imports. For this purpose, many states adopted restrictions on imports, while at the same time heavily subsidising industry and also agriculture. These policies also involved regulated prices for agricultural goods, as opposed to prices determined by markets. Thereby prices were often higher than global market prices.

Agriculture was subsidised in order to increase productivity and lower food-prices for consumers, which was seen as a means to support the industrial sector. And while these policies tried to transfer the surplus from the agricultural sector towards the industrial sector, in order to build a domestic industrial sector, they nonetheless involved state policies supporting farmers through subsidies and technical assistance (Martínez-Torres and Rosset, 2010, p.151).

This approach came to an end during the debt-crises in many countries, which led to the enforcement of market-oriented reforms as a condition for loans from the World Bank. These reforms implied a withdrawal of the state from the agricultural sector and reduced the support that peasants previously received (Martínez-Torres and Rosset, 2010, p.152) Crucially, these economic policies were not adopted in Latin America alone, but also in many African countries. For example, in Mozambique a system of price-regulation existed prior to the reforms adopted in the 80s (Nhampossa, 2011, p. 194) Therefore, many peasants across the globe experienced a similar situation in which state support declined, and prices of agricultural products were determined by global markets – which usually meant lower prices, since states had previously paid for upholding prices that were higher than those of imported goods. In the context of a decline in food prices, this exacerbated the struggles for many farmers. In the words of Martínez-Torres and Rosset, farmers situation went “from bad to worse” (Martínez-Torres and Rosset, 2010, p.152) In this context, several groups in Latin America started to organize themselves and many new organizations were founded that were less connected to the government and parties than earlier organizations.

“Farmer and peasant leaders developed a ‘common frame of meaning’ (Keck and Sikkink 1998, 7)⁹ in which the brutal consequences of this model based on free trade, low prices, and industrial agriculture – greater impoverishment and marginalisation in the countryside – were found to be totally unacceptable. They agreed that an alternative model was desperately needed, and peasants themselves, they felt, must be at the heart of developing the rural and food policies which invariably impact rural communities.” (Martínez-Torres and Rosset, 2010, p.156)

These issues were addressed by a number of organizations, which joined forces to found CLOC in 1992, which laid the foundations for LVC, established in 1993. The leadership of LVC is based on collective decision making and rotating leadership, which was taken over from CLOC. This principle is also found in other organizations such as MST (ibid. p.158). While LVC has several areas of activity, but “perhaps its central goal is to defend peasant life by constructing, proposing and defending this alternative model of food and agriculture (called Peoples’ Food Sovereignty by La Vía Campesina)” (ibid. p.160)

One of the main contributions of LVC was to increase the self-esteem of peasant organizations and to achieve recognition of peasants in international and national contexts (Martínez-Torres and Rosset, 2010,

⁹ Quoted after Martínez-Torres and Rosset, 2010, p.156

p.157). Before LVC, there simply was no peasant organization and peasants were merely “represented” by NGOs.

Among other things, the idea of Food Sovereignty includes the right of peasants to define their way of agriculture, as well as a right to produce and consume culturally appropriate food.

This model can be seen as an alternative to the concept of Food Security, promoted by IGOs like the UN or the G8 (Patel, 2009, p. 664). Food Security focuses on the availability, access, and utilization (referring to the actual nutritional intake) of food, as well as the stability of these factors, but envisages these as global issues which are to be solved through supplies, infrastructure, education, and distribution of foods (World Bank, 2023). Initial definitions from the 1970s simply referred to Food Security as “adequate world food supplies.” (Patel, 2009, p.664).

One other aspect of LVC is its clear opposition to the WTO and the WorldBank, which are considered their “enemies”, with whom they will not negotiate. (Martínez-Torres and Rosset, 2010, p.162)

5 ProSavana and its Contestation

In the following chapter I will provide a general overview of key events for the promotion, contestation, and termination of ProSavana. The most important source in this respect is Funada-Classen, whose work compiles extensive source material, drawing heavily on internal documents and Japanese source. This overview is far from comprehensive and excludes details regarding the alleged misconduct of institutions involved in ProSavana. These include contradictions in internal documents, removal of information in released documents, as well as specific instances of local projects. As will become clear, the contestation of ProSavana is dominated by concerns regarding secrecy, miscommunication, and the nature of the supposed participation of the local community.

5.1 Inception of ProSavana

ProSavana’s inception can be traced back to the G8 meeting in L’Aquila in 2009, during which Brazil and Japan expressed the interest to cooperate in Africa (Hosono, 2012, p.43). Moreover, The New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, established in 2011 by the G8 in Camp David, “can be said to share a common directionality” with ProSavana (Hosono, 2012, p.44). Therefore, ProSavana has to be seen in the context of the approach and initiatives of IGOs, also visible in the support for ProSavana expressed in this context, such as Bill Gates, or Hilary Clinton (Hosono, 2012, p.44).

According to the World Bank study (Morris, Binswanger-Mikhize, and Byerlee, 2009), the main solution for poverty reduction in Africa increased agricultural productivity in Africa, which is often driven by commercial agriculture (ibid., p.23). The study used two cases (Thailand and Brazil) as positive examples that achieved “agricultural development, economic growth, and poverty reduction” (ibid., p.41), with the goal of providing “insights that may be of use in promoting successful agricultural commercialization strategies in Africa” (ibid., p.41). The study does also point out negative aspects of the exemplary cases and the importance of considering these in future policies and technologies (ibid., p.168), as well as the need to ensure distribution of resulting wealth (ibid, p.190).

In April 2009, during a visit in Brazil, JICA proposed to ABC a program to “promote and support the sustainable agricultural development of the savannah in African countries wishing to benefit from this initiative.” (Minutes of Meeting, source to be added)

In September 2009 the Japanese Agency for International Cooperation (JICA), the Brazilian Cooperation Ministry (ABC) and the Mozambican Ministry of Agriculture signed an agreement that launched the project ProSAVANA, on the initiative of Japan (Funada-Classen, 2013).

5.2 Plans for ProSavana

In 2009 JICA carried out a „Preparatory Study on ProSAVANA-JBM“¹⁰ (JICA, 2010) with the goals of:

1. evaluating the potential for applying the agricultural development program that was applied in the Brazilian Cerrado to Mozambique
2. developing a direction for technical cooperation

Technical cooperation was divided into

- 2.1 Soil improvement, crop selection
- 2.2 Experimental studies through setting up development model areas on the village level
- 2.3 Formulation of regional agricultural development plan (Master Plan) (JICA, 2010, p.1-1)

In the final report that came out of the study, JICA states that:

¹⁰ ProSavana JBM was the initial title, but the JBM part, referring to Japan, Brazil, and Mozambique, was removed later on.

“Japan has experience in agricultural development for Cerrado over the past 20 years in Brazil. The Cerrado is now world's leading grain belt. The Government of Japan and Brazil planned the agricultural development support in Africa, and considered the technology transfer of agriculture for Cerrado development to tropical savannah areas in Africa. As the first study area, Mozambique is selected for triangular cooperation of agricultural development.” (JICA, 2010, p. 1-1)¹¹

This explicit connection between the Brazilian Cerrado and the “Savannah” in Mozambique is important, since it became a key point of contention and mobilization, as will be explained in the next section.

5.3 PRODECER as a role model for ProSavana?

While some authors such note that ProSavana will not replicate PRODECER (Ekman and Macamo, 2014, p.34) and rather seeks to draw on its lessons, Fingermann declares the replication of PRODECER in Mozambique a “myth” (Funada-Classen, 2013b, p.9). Earlier publications by Japan call this portrayal into question. For example, Hosono describes it as a reference (Hosono, 2012, p.43), while the aforementioned preparatory study (JICA, 2010) speaks of technological *transfer from the Cerrado to the Savannah*. Moreover, according to Funada-Classen, the term “replica” was first used by the Mozambican Minister of Agriculture, in 2012 (Funada-Classen, 2013 b, p.11). This connection is further supported by statements of business companies (4.1). Moreover, the joint experience of Brazil and Japan in the conduct of PRODECER was one of the reasons for the cooperation in the first place and thus played a role for the inception of ProSavana.

However, later official portrayals dispute this connection, which can be attributed to the communication strategy devised after initial contestation of ProSavana, described later on. The existing documents show that a connection was present from the beginning, but that the framing of ProSavana was changed. However, some documents from the beginning also note that there are differences between the Cerrado and the Nacala Corridor.

To conclude, ProSavana was initially modelled after PRODECER, but its proponents thought to dissociate ProSavana from PRODECER. This is plausible given the importance of this association for resistance against ProSavana. The contradiction between earlier and later descriptions of the project show the difficulty in

¹¹ Pages in the document indicate pages per chapter, thus 1-1 refers to chapter 1 page 1.

grasping the project, but they also imply a change in the framing of the project, or else, a deliberate misrepresentation.

5.4 Leaking of ProSavana Master Plan and Contestation of ProSavana

From 2012 onwards, after the draft of the ‘Master Plan’ for ProSavana was leaked, public interest in ProSAVANA drastically increased. A group of 23 Mozambican and 43 international NGOs responded in an Open Letter denouncing the project of ProSAVANA.

Among other things, it criticizes ProSavana for the ‘manipulation of information and intimidation of communities of and civil society organisations.’

Furthermore, they point out the risk of land grabs, the destruction of family farming systems due to the integration of rural populations in international production processes controlled by MNCs, the expansion of monocultures, and the importation of a contradictory Brazilian development model. The details of the criticism will be analysed later on.

At the same time, media coverage increased. In Brazil, several interviews were published and information was spread about the availability of land and the investment opportunities.

In November 2012 FASE, LVC, UNAC, and several other organizations organized a trip for Mozambican Peasant leaders to Brazil. During this visit, they were shown the Brazilian Cerrado and took video-footage documenting the impact that PRODECER had on the area. This was used for the creation of a documentary called “‘A face oculta do ProSAVANA’ (‘The Hidden Face of ProSAVANA’), which also included testimonies by Brazilian peasants regarding their experience with PRODECER (Shankland, Goncalves, Favareto, 2016, p.22). This video footage was brought back to Mozambique and was one of the main tools used by UNAC convincing many peasants of the destructive nature of the Brazilian model of development (ibid., p.22). This form of mobilization relied on the explicit connection between PRODECER and ProSavana. According to Milhorange, the majority of documents produced by UNAC in their contestation of ProSavana refer to the demonstrated consequences of PRODECER, and not ProSavana (Milhorange, 2017, p.86). This illustrates the relevance of this connection for the resistance against ProSavana.

5.5 Communication Strategy Controversy

Shortly after the visits to Brazil, in December 2012, ProSavana proponents realized that they faced resistance against the project and set out to formulate a communication strategy. After several meetings with potential consultancies, a contract between JICA and CV&A, regarding the development of a communication strategy was signed, which was disclosed in 2015 on request of Japanese citizens (Funada-Classen 2016, p.22).

The consultancy developed a communication strategy which recommended to “remove the link of Nacala Corridor (sic.) to the Brazilian Cerrado” in order to “devalue...some of the main arguments ...international NGOs” (cited according to Funada-Classen, 2019, p.29). The communication strategy also states that the goal of establishing a network with contact to local peasants, drawing on existing hierarchies, is to devalue social movements as representatives for local populations (Funada-Classen, 2016, p.31).

Apart from these heavily criticized steps, the communication strategy states the need for an increase in information.

After this period of contestation, the project went into “hibernation” for a while (Monjane and Bruna, 2020, p.79), during which Japanese parliamentarians raised their concerns in the parliament about a conflict of interests of FGV Projetos, due to its dual role in both the Master Plan, and the Nacala Fund. From these inquiries it became clear that the contract with FGV Projetos was terminated, partly due to the negative impact it had on their reputation (Funada-Classen 2019, p.29).

5.6 Zero Draft and Community Consultation

The aforementioned hearings eventually led the JICA to adapt the project and carry out community consultations (Funada-Classen, 2019). For this purpose, the “Zero Draft” of the Master Plan for ProSAVANA, was published in 2015, which is an updated version of the leaked Draft of the Master Plan. The Zero Draft was supposed to be the basis of discussion for a new consultation process that was supposed to incorporate the concerns of local farmers and civil society. However, the consultation process itself was criticized as ‘lacking democratic spirit’, visible in the timing and location of consultation meetings, and intimidating behaviour by government officials (Shankland, Gonçalves, and Favareto, 2016). The Zero Draft was posted online on March 31, 2015, with public hearings to begin within weeks. It was not disseminated to any organizations in the three countries (Funada-Classen, 2019, p.30). In response to this, until June 2015 over 30 organizations had published statements criticizing the consultation process. (Funada-Classen, 2019, p.34). A successive workshop was described as a process of ‘forced legitimat[ion]’ by opponents of ProSavana (Shankland, Gonçalves, and Favareto, 2016, p. 24).

A further controversy in the context of the consultation process resulted from the contracting of a consultancy company (MAJOL) that was supposed to be an independent third-party. This consultancy was hired by JICA, and carried out a “mapping of stakeholders”, resulting from numerous interviews with civil society actors carried out at the end of 2015 (MAJOL,2016b, p.2).

NGOs and social movement organizations were grouped (among other things), according to their willingness to engage with the project.

Regarding 4 out of 32 civil society actors who are completely opposed to dialogue, MAJOL stated that they can “be essentially disregarded in terms of negotiations” (MAJOL, 2016a, p.1). This is the most problematic aspect of the document – or the one that is most opposed to social movements – and clearly indicates a top-down approach.

Funada-Classen’s analysis reveals a multitude of steps taken by JICA in the context of the consultation that are criticized. These include changes to documents prior to their release, and the description of MAJOL as “independent”, a statement Funada-Classen refuses on the grounds that the consultancy was contracted by JICA. In this context, she criticizes the contracting of someone who has experience in Mozambican civil society, arguing that this shows that JICA needed someone that was perceived as friendly to the social movements. (Funada-Classen, 2016, p. 51).

However, the other parts of the document do not suggest any intention to ignore demands made by other actors. To conclude the analysis, MAJOL made a number of recommendations. The closing paragraph (of half a page recommendation in total) reads:

“Opposition to ProSAVANA was triggered initially about concerns of land tenure for family sector farmers. ProSAVANA proponents must be prepared to go beyond Mozambican law and what is currently written in the draft ProSAVANA master plans, to create broadly accepted and publicly monitored safeguards for family sector land and resource access. Otherwise, opposition to ProSAVANA will continue.” (MAJOL, 2016a, p.4)¹²

To clarify, what is meant by “going beyond the law” is not a breaking law, but instead interpreted as reference to the previous section, citing the civil society position “that the current legal framework and government guarantees are insufficient and that ProSAVANA must adopt clearer, compulsory, and more stringent standards than those existing in Mozambican Law” (MAJOL, 2016a, p.3)

¹² Page number refers to the page number of the PDF document

In other word, MAJOL suggests that the current plan must be revised, and that standards imposed on land law should be stronger than existing Mozambican law. Furthermore, MAJOL describes civil society organisations as “valuable” and experienced and urges JICA to carry out an Environmental Impact Assessment.

However, this negative perception of the consultation process is in line with the experience of social movements like LVC, who consider consultations often a form of ‘channelling dissent’ without democratic purpose (Martínez-Torrez and Rosset 2010, p.158), and is supported by research suggesting that more confrontational tactics are often more beneficial for poor movements (ibid.). The former view is taken by Nogueira and Ollinaho’s work (2013), pointing out that officials in Mozambique’s approach to discontent was to “explain” and “spread information”. Hence the authors describe the approach as “explanatory” and not “participatory”. In their words “Genuine ‘participation’ does not imply asking someone’s opinion before doing what has been already planned (and what would be done anyway, in many cases)” (Nogueira and Ollinaho, 2013, p.11).

5.7 Activities in Brazil

In Brazil, Social Movements initially focused on pressuring ABC, and the open letter was also sent to the president’s office but met with no response (FASE, 2016).

After realizing that ABC was merely tasked with the execution of the project, they started “mapping” out the actors “that had a real voice”, Brazilian movements and organisations realized that there is a “maze” of actors involved, including FGV-Projetos, agribusiness companies, the Lula Institute and the Gates foundation which “make decisions privately” (FASE, 2016, p.18). This led to efforts on an institutional level which succeeded in including a discussion of ProSavana in the meeting of the National Council on Sustainable Rural Development (CONDRAF), as well as in the annual assembly of the Brazilian National Council for Food Security and Nutrition (CONSEA) (Cabral and Leite, 2015, p.442). Moreover, connections with workers unions in Brazil were used, that helped to shape the Brazilian engagement (see chapter 7.2).

A declining presence of Brazil in ProSavana was visible from January 2014 (Funada-Classen, 2019). Internal documents clearly show a lack of funds, the review on the progress of ProSavana-PI by JICA states that “Economic standstill in Brazil cut the budget of ABC and limited missions of EMBRAPA, so there are some activities by Brazilian side with no progress so far.”(JICA, 2015, p. 2-3).

According to the review, this led to the decision of ending all activities that have not begun.

Initiatives carried out and described in the document include building of laboratories, meteorological data collection, and studies on soil quality. However, the document describes plenty of problems, including delayed decisions and failure to carry out projects. In the case of a laboratory that was to be build a representative was dispatched but had no financial means to carry out the task. The overall impression is, that JICA is dissatisfied with the Brazilian contribution to the project. At the same time, Brazilian investment in general sharply declined (Nogueira et al., 2017).

5.8 Termination of ProSavana

Between December 2016 and March 2017, Japanese civil society groups participated in meetings with the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). During these meetings, they presented JICA documents, which they had acquired through leaks and the Information Disclosure Law. These “astonished” the then president of the MOFA who declared he would take action. (Funada-Classen, 2019, p.54).

In 2018, the MOFA expressed in a meeting with NGOs that ProSavana cannot be finalized with Japanese money unless UNAC and other groups opposing ProSavana are included in the consultation process and agree with the project (Funada-Classen, 2019, p.56). This shows at least formal or official concessions to democratic concerns.

In July 2020 the Japanese Embassy in Mozambique released a statement on its website saying, “no qual ambos confirmaram que o Programa de cooperação triangular (ProSAVANA) foi concluído com sucesso.” (Japanese Embassy, 2020). While the Mozambican Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development also released a statement announcing the termination of the project. (MINAG, 2020) Interestingly, the Japanese statement frames it as a success (“concluído com sucesso”), consistent with the view that Japan wants to ‘save face’.

6 Different Approaches to Development

For the purpose of this thesis, the distinction of different “grand-narratives” of development, made by Urs Geiser (2014) will be used. He distinguishes between “mainstream”, “relational-radical”, and “post-development” approaches. The post-development approach is not emphasized in the context of this case. The literature on development is vast and the multitude of perspectives on development cannot be substantially discussed in the framework of this thesis. For example, there is a large theoretical tradition focusing on “underdevelopment”, as proposed by Latin American scholars in the mid 20th century, which is not included in this distinction, although it was influential for economic policies in many Latin American countries, including Brazil. Therefore, only a partial description of selected approaches to development is applied here.

6.1 The Mainstream Approach to Development

The mainstream perspective became dominant in the 1970s with rural development concepts developed by the World Bank (Geiser, 2014). In this approach, poverty is explained as a residual of lacking development. Poverty is seen as a consequence of low-yielding subsistence production, but also as a result of “cultural backwardness” (Geiser 2014, p.5). While this has been a perspective formulated in the 1970s, it still persists. The policy supposed to solve these problems focuses on structural-reforms (integration of small-scale farmers into global value chains) through improved inputs like seeds, irrigation systems, and through technical assistance from ‘modern’ countries (Geiser, 2014, p.6). The changes are supposed to improve productivity which would lead to a transcendence of subsistence farming towards profitable commercially-oriented agriculture. In the view of the World Bank, the solution is not redistribution, but instead sustained rates of economic growth, fiscal prudence, and sharing of welfare (Geiser, 2014, p.7). This approach is clearly visible in the World Bank study cited earlier. (see 5.1).

While ProSavanas opponents criticize the ‘exploitative’ elements of this approach, for proponents there is an understanding of what ‘development’ is, which is implicit in ProSavana. This view is explicit in some of the documents that informed ProSavana, such as the World Bank study “Awakening Africa’s Sleeping Giant”

(Morris, Binswanger-Mikhize, and Byerlee, 2009). The classification of the development approach is further supported by ProSavana as ‘mainstream’ is justified by the institutional context in which it was developed (see 5.1).

Moreover, the Master Plan and other documents include specific elements of this approach, like a focus on industrial agriculture and technical advancements like irrigation systems, or the use of fertilizers. The technical cooperation initiatives undertaken by Brazil in the context of ProSavana also incorporate these elements.

The perspective of ProSavana on developing the Savannah in Mozambique, is based on the ‘mainstream perspective’ on development. In other words, ProSavana is in line with the convictions of the primary proponent of the ‘mainstream’ view on development, exhibited by institutions like the World Bank, the UN, the G20, and others.

In contrast, the social movements opposed to ProSavana, subscribe to a different perspective on what development is. As will become clear in the analysis, drawing on Geiser’s distinctions, these can be characterized as relational-radical approaches to development. In this alternative view on development, poverty is not a result of lacking development or even culture, but rather a result of exploitative social relationships.

6.2 The Relational-Radical Development Approach

The following positions and beliefs are used to define the relational-radical approach to development (Geiser, 2014)

- A focus on Social Relations of production
- Usage of Class as a concept
- Criticism of Capitalism
- „Some are poor because others are rich”
- State facilitates exploitation
- Suspicion against those who have more influence
- Structural adjustments benefit only the asset-owning class
- State and not market has to ensure non-exploitative relations
- Affirmation of the state as instrument of people

- A more progressive state must be achieved through struggles which require mobilization

6.3 Qualitative Document Analysis - The Development Approach of Opposition to ProSavana

The following section provides the results of a Qualitative Document Analysis carried out for the first Open Letter (UNAC et al., 2013). The first goal was to classify the development approach of opponents of ProSavana. For this purpose, the categories derived inductively from the analysis will be presented by explicating statements falling into the category. While the categories derived from Geiser's classification of the 'relational-radical' approach are used, the results of the analysis are presented in order of their relevance (indicated by number of paraphrases assigned to each category).

To introduce the Letter, a brief summary of its content helps to comprehend the analysis.

The Open Letter is addressed to the heads of the states of Japan, Brazil, and Mozambique. It makes the case that ProSavana is undemocratic, illegal, and threatens the traditional family-farming system. It argues that international cooperation should be based on solidarity and justice, and that instead of supporting 'export-based' commodities and 'multinational corporations', Mozambique and other states should support family-farming and small-scale agriculture. Moreover, as the letter argues, ProSavana has negative social and ecological consequences and should be ended immediately.

The biggest category was that of "Family Farming/Small-Scale Agriculture": Paraphrases in this category express demands for the protection and support of family farming and small-scale agriculture, as well as benefits of family farming. "Food sovereignty", "Conservation Agriculture" and "Agro-ecology" are described by the authors as the only sustainable solutions, demanding their prioritisation by governments. The letter shows a clear juxtaposition between family-farming and ProSavana, with family-farming described as a traditional and sustainable solution that is threatened by ProSavana.

Overall, this is the category to which most paraphrases were assigned with 21 out of 77 statements.

Arguments regarding the importance for family-farming are tightly linked to paraphrases falling into the category of Nationalism. The contrast between family-farming and ProSavana is used to evoke the image of a fight for national independence, reminding President Guebuza of his engagement in the liberation from Portuguese rule. Moreover the dream of sovereignty as deriving from the people, the claim to land, ("our land"), the dream of a Mozambique were all feel to be "children of the land", can all be categorised as nationalist, or at least as having nationalist connotations.

7 statements fell into the category "Democracy". The letter posits that ProSavana is undemocratic, and that the signatories of the letter are more democratic - they are representing the people, and have carried out community level discussions, while ProSavana has used intimidation and misinformation and violated constitutional rights. Moreover, they demand the establishment of democratic mechanisms. Lastly, it states that the signatories "dream" of a state whose sovereignty comes from the people.

The following sections makes use of the categories used by the 'relational-radical' approach to development. Four paraphrases fell into the category "Suspicion": The claim that ProSavana poses a threat to national independence, the phrasing of ProSavana as 'purportedly' promoting development, and the claim that ProSavana supports 'obscure commercial transactions.'

All of these indicate suspicion. One other paraphrase falling into the category of "exploitation" could also be seen as an expression of distrust; that the state creates conditions which allows corporations to enter the country which will "inevitably rob rural families of their autonomy."

Social relations of production are mentioned explicitly, in the demand of a focus on 'production systems' - as opposed to a focus on 'products.' In this context 'production system' refers to family-farming, of which social relations are a defining feature.

Class is not explicitly mentioned as a concept. This can be attributed to the partly negative connotation of socialism in Mozambique. For this reason, UNAC has consistently avoided socialist language in the past, which may be an explanation for the lack of socialist language in this case.

Likewise, capitalism is not mentioned by name, but ProSavana is described as integrating farmers into a system that is "exclusively controlled by multinational-corporations", which is at least consistent with a critique of capitalism.

The category “some-are-poor-because-others-are-rich” was not explicitly found, but the language of ‘robbing’ is at least consistent with the category, as is the term ‘land grabbing’.

The category ‘facilitation of exploitation through the state’ is equally consistent with the claim that international cooperation (between states) ‘facilitates’ obscure financial transactions and land grabbing.

“Affirmation of the state as instrument of the people” is clearly part of the letter: the heads of states are addressed formally and individually, and the main purpose of the letter is to end ProSavana - which is based on the that the state can and should act in accordance with the concerns of Mozambicans, as represented by the signatories of the letter.

The category of “necessity of struggle and mobilization for a more progressive state” was not found in the letter, which can be explained through the target audience – nonetheless, at least Guebuza is addressed in a way that is linked to ‘struggle’ (for independence).

To conclude, virtually all the categories derived from Geiser’s Definition of the relational-radical approach to development are present. The only category that was not found is ‘structural adjustments benefit only the asset-owning class’. The factor of ‘social relations’ is emphasized in demands for a focus on ‘production systems’, corporations are criticized and regarded with suspicion, while the state is seen as enabling exploitation although it can - and should - act on behalf of the people. Going beyond the features of the relational-radical approach to development, the letter uses language with nationalistic connotations to appeal to the head of the state.

7 Political Opportunity Structure and Contestation

7.1 Access and Institutional Setting

There are three countries involved in ProSavana and its contestation, and a comprehensive overview of their institutions and venues of democratic participation is beyond the scope of this paper.

However, there are several specific institutions that were facilitating the process of contestation.

First, the Mozambican Constitution, which includes restrictive laws on land-ownership (see chapter 4.3).

Secondly, the court in Maputo, which ruled against ProSavana coordination unit. While this is only one event among many, it nonetheless shows that the judiciary system in Mozambique does have sufficient freedom to charge institutions that are contracted by the Mozambican government. This also led to the publication of further documents.

Japanese civil society, while said to be “less active” (Funada-Classen, 2019) was still sufficiently well organised to assist UNAC and other groups in their contestation of ProSavana. This was also possible due to parliamentary democracy. As mentioned earlier, Japanese Civil Society organisations participated in meetings with the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In these meetings they exerted influence using internal documents. This process was facilitated by the National Information Disclosure Law, and the parliamentary system which allowed opposition politicians to ask questions.

Mozambican groups were also present at the conference of the TICAD V during which they handed over the letter, which triggered media reactions (Funada-Classen, 2019, p.16). This, again, is a form of political participation that was enabled due to the institutional setting. A similar situation would have not been possible in authoritarian states like China or Russia. While this kind of publicity may be taken for granted, it was only in the late 19th century that civil society groups were allowed to even participate in diplomatic meetings on the international stage (Sluga, 2013). This public event raised awareness for the cause of social movements. In Brazil, the influence exerted was less directly linked to institutional features, apart from the “multi-stakeholder” forums such as CONSEA and CONDRAF.

7.2 Influential Allies

While Giugni notes that a “minimal consensus” could include a definition of political opportunity structures as factors that are “external” to the movement, he also mentions that it is increasingly difficult to keep the two apart, in the sense that the distinction between members and challengers of social movements is increasingly fuzzy (Giugni, 2011, p. 281.).

In the case of ProSavana, the leaking of internal documents cannot be clearly attributed to any particular individual – but it must have been someone who had access to internal documents. However, the publication of the Master Plan was very influential for the contestation and quickly became the main object of criticism, serving as a reference point for mobilization. This eventually led to the revision of the Master Plan and the initiation of a public consultation process.

One important ally was the parliamentarian Michihiro Ishibashi in Japan, who was previously working for the International Labour Organisation. He brought a case regarding the “Master Plan” to the Audit Committee at the House of Councilors, where he raised questions regarding its formulation, civil society consultation, (who was invited and who was not), and regarding access to the document (Funada-Classens, 2019, p.30).

In another instance, a formal request to JICA was made by Japanese NGOs, which led to the disclosure of the contract between JICA and MAJOL (Funada-Classens, 2019, p.35).

Apart from raising questions regarding ProSavana repeatedly in the Japanese Parliament, he also requested the release of relevant documents and received several documents and was active in this way from at least 2014-2018. He also forwarded information from meetings between JICA and MAJOL to UNAC.

This shows that he was not only able to secure relevant information, but also that he was persistent in his engagement for the cause of movements opposing ProSavana.

Interestingly, both individuals - the unknown whistle-blower and the Japanese parliamentarian – primarily aided with the flow of information. This information was subsequently used for campaigning, but also played a role in the court case against the ProSavana coordination in Maputo (Funada-Classens 2016).

Within Brazil, alliances are harder to evaluate. While Shankland, Gonçalves, and Favareto (2016) note that Brazilian movements achieved “that their concerns circulated among a subset of the intelligentsia linked to progressive political parties, including the ruling PT.” it is not clear who these allies are or how influential they are.

Interviews conducted by Cabral (Cabral, 2015) revealed internal disagreements in Brazilian institutions. For instance, one member of EMBRAPA said that “[t]here is no family farming component in ProSavana, full stop.” (Cabral, 2015, p.13), thereby contradicting the official portrayal of ProSavana, in one of the most contentious aspects. Moreover, a number of interviewees from ABC and EMBRAPA are described by Cabral as “reproducing” a critical view of ProSavana according to which agribusiness destroys the positive aspects of family farming (Cabral, 2015, p13).

Furthermore, CONTAG, Brazil’s biggest workers union, exerted influence on the MDA which was expected to play a role in implementing ProSavana, but eventually left ProSavana in favour of other initiatives that are more supportive of family-farming, in line with peasant movements preferences (Shankland, Gonçalves, and Favareto, 2016, p.25). Therefore, it can be said, that Brazilian civil servants played a role in the demise of

Brazilian engagement with ProSavana, which through connections to Mozambique, but also an expression of their political alignments existing prior to ProSavana.

7.3 Elite Coherence

The situation in Brazil is hard to evaluate (Monjane and Bruna, 20) and most of the case-studies have focused on either the ProSavana program and the communication (Funada-Classen, 2016) or on the resistance, mainly in Mozambique (Monjane and Bruna, 2020), or Japan (Funada-Classen, 2019).

While the aforementioned disagreements existed between members of a state-agency (ABC), and a state-led research institute (EMBRAPA), these are not necessarily part of the elite. Nonetheless, these statements may reflect diverging opinions in other strata of the Brazilian society.

Digging a bit deeper, the presidency of Dilma Roussef is an overlooked example of elite rifts.

Her impeachment has been controversial and involved accusations of corruption, leading to the end of her presidency. Therefore, it can be argued that what occurred in Brazil around the inception of ProSavana is a case of elite rifts. However, a direct causal relationship between the end of Dilma Roussef's presidency and the decline in Brazilian engagement in ProSavana cannot be established. Rather, the withdrawal of Brazil from ProSavana is consistent with her approach to development policies, resulting in a lack of funding as explained earlier. Moreover, her development policies were continued by Temer, who replaced Roussef and is part of the political camp that opposed Roussef. Likewise, even the relationship between Brazil's withdrawal and the termination of ProSavana cannot be evaluated without veering into counterfactual speculations, unless further evidence – such as statements by Japanese officials – is found.

7.4 Electoral Changes

During the period of ProSavana and its contestation, three electoral changes took place that had an influence on the movement. The reason for this large number is that ProSavana was carried out by three countries, in all of which social movements were active.

In Brazil, no election occurred during the time of ProSavana, but the electoral change prior to ProSavana had a clear influence on ProSavana. Already in 2015, internal documents show that a lot of activities to be conducted by Brazil have not been carried out, citing a lack of funds as a reason (JICA, 2015, p.). This is plausible given the reduction of the budget ABC was using in the execution of projects from over 35 million USD in 2010, to less than 7 million USD in 2014 (Suyama, Waisbich, and Leite, 2016, p.46).

This can be attributed to the fact that Dilma Rousseff pursued a different aid policy than her predecessor Lula, who was in office when the conversations about ProSavana began.

In this case a time-lag between policies and the consequences of their implementation lead to an influence of previous electoral changes on ProSavana. The policy-shift under Rousseff, which was deepened under Temer, inhibited the project against which social movements were campaigning, by reducing financial commitments, thereby benefitting opposition to ProSavana. However, this does not imply a 'success', of movement activity in the sense that it cannot be attributed to movement activity.

Nonetheless, it is a "window of opportunity" since the new administration did not support the project to the extent that the previous administration did.

Secondly, in Mozambique an election was held. According to this had the effect of taking the focus away from ProSavana. Other authors claim that the changes in the election "did not seem to represent a significant transformation for programs of agricultural development such as ProSavana." (Bussotti and Nhaueleque, p.122). While some authors claim that it resulted in more repression (see the next section 7.5).

Lastly, in Japan the administration changed. This change was the most significant, since it was the new president who decided to abolish ProSavana. As previously mentioned, Japan has a reputation for not-giving-up on projects. Some of those involved in ProSavana have attributed this to a cultural-factor of "saving-face" (Funada-Classen, 2019, p.29), while Funada-Classen has called the abolishment of projects under the same administration a "political impossibility" (ibid.). Thus, the change in administration is a crucial aspect for the outcome of opposition to ProSavana, perhaps even a necessary condition. This, again, suggests that government continuity matters for the outcome of policies.

7.5 Repression and Facilitation

While the Mozambican government has shown willingness to engage in violent repression of protests, as during the last protests from 2008-2010, during which 30 people died (Bussotti and Nhaueleque, 2022, p.115) the protests against ProSavana have not been met with government violence (Bussotti and Nhaueleque, 2022,

p.116). Nonetheless, there were instances of threats, such as verbal statements mentioning previous assassinations (Funada-Classens, 2016, p. 43). Some authors note that a number of assassinations were carried out against civil society leaders, creating a climate of fear (Shankland, Gonçalves, and Favareto, 2016, p.13), while other authors, such as Funada-Classens despite her comprehensive research, clear alignment with the social movements and very critical stance on ProSavana, does not mention any violence. Therefore, it is hard to be certain about the extent of repression in the form of violence.

During the community consultation process, there was a strong presence of party-members, an underrepresentation of rural people, and some of the meetings began with singing of FRELIMO's song, as well as salutes to ProSavana (Funada-Classens, 2019, p.30). Furthermore, the proponents of ProSavana inhibited its contestation by giving last-minute information on the location and timing of consultation meetings, thereby raising costs for contestants. Moreover, the communication strategy had the clear intention of 'raising the costs' for social movements, and aimed specifically at reducing their influence (see chapter 5.5) For this reason, it can rightfully be characterized as "lacking democratic spirit" (Shankland, Gonçalves, and Favareto, 2016, p.19)

Additionally, the Japanese Government took several measures to ensure that ProSavana would be implemented. The most controversial episode in this was the contracting of a consultancy that was tasked with developing a media-strategy. The recommendations they made include, among other things, attempts at devaluing the opponents' criticism, changing the narrative of ProSavana, and diminishing the role of social movements as representatives (see chapter 5.5)

7.6 Foreign Policy Pressures

There are several foreign policy issues that are relevant to ProSavana and its contestation.

On the one hand, Japanese engagement in Mozambique can be seen as resulting from competition with China. During the period of planning ProSavana, Japanese politicians perceived China as expanding into Africa. ProSavana can be seen as motivated by this perception, which led Japan to engage in Mozambique (Funada-Classens, 2019, p.26). Moreover, China and Japan compete in terms of their Official Development Aid in general, although this is often not explicitly acknowledged by state officials (Hirono, 2019).

Secondly, both Brazil and Japan use Development Aid as a tool for foreign policy.

Brazil tries to promote Development Aid in other countries under the paradigm of South-South Cooperation.

The implicit understanding is, that Brazil is distinct from the Global North, and that it acts out of Solidarity with other southern countries (Fingermann, 2015, p.4). This factor is relevant insofar, as the negative publicity regarding ProSavana impacted the public opinion regarding its implementation. This negative publicity questioned the framing of Solidarity and played a role in forcing Brazil to end the participation (Funada-Classen, 2019, p.29). Therefore, the development narrative used by Brazil for purposes of Foreign Policy, restricted the policies available to Brazil by creating a framework of accountability.

While these are only two points, they still mattered for the inception of the project and its outcome and can be said to be part of the International Political Opportunity Structure.

Brazil's development policy narrative gave legitimacy to demands made by social movements and affected public opinion. Japan's competition with China was a driving force for the project against which social movements were mobilizing.

To conclude, foreign policy objectives can influence movement activity by motivating states to engage in activities that trigger contestation, and by establishing narratives that can limit the range of policies they can implement without undermining their public image.

The latter part seems contingent on a certain amount of democratic accountability since undemocratic states are less dependent on public approval of their policies and might be more willing to engage in misinformation and secrecy to implement unpopular policies.

7.7 International Networks

The opposition to ProSavana made use of several international networks. The most important is the connection to LVC, which helped organize the trip to Brazil that was influential in the campaign. Support also came from other groups like the Catholic Church in Mozambique which offered space for meetings and helped to make information available in remote areas (Bussotti and Nhaueleque, 2022, p.120).

Adriano Vicente a UNAC member involved in opposition to ProSavana stated in an interview with Luca Bussotti and Laura António Nhaueleque, that the idea of succeeding in halting ProSavana seemed impossible without international support (Bussotti and Nhaueleque, 2022, p.118). He also notes that it was ironically the international nature of the project that enabled them to stop ProSavana, since there were already connections with Brazilian movements. This shows that international connections can have a strong impact on "perceived opportunities".

7.8 Unused Opportunities?

As pointed out by other scholars (Van der Heijden, 2006) one important political arena for transnational social movements, and in particular environmental movements, are the United Nations.

A change in the UN system in 1992 allows national and subnational groups to acquire “consultant” status with the UN (Smith, 2005). This has changed the environment of transnational social movements by slowing down the previously rapid growth of transnational social movement organisations, since it gives national groups more leverage. However, UNAC did so far not acquire consultant status. Within the UN, La Vía Campesina successfully campaigned for a “Declaration of the Rights of Peasants” – a longstanding goal that was achieved only recently. This declaration also includes many of the rights UNAC is trying to defend in opposition to ProSavana. While the UN does not have the same possibilities to enforce declarations as some other institutions like the WTO, it still offers institutional settings in which problems can receive attention.

7.9 Outcomes

Overall, it can be said that opposition to ProSavana succeeded in ending the project. However, parts of the process were carried out, such as research into ecological characteristics. Moreover, there are other activities that are carried out which can be seen as posing the same – or even bigger – threats to the movement goals. Chiefly among these is the reform of the Land Law that is currently under way. Apart from these institutional changes – which can be considered a form of closing of existing opportunities for political participation –

With respect to the social movement, a major outcome are increased ties with international activists.

This is visible in the establishment of the Triangular People’s conference, which not only lays the foundation for further international cooperation, but also represents an increasing institutionalisation of social movement activity (Monjane and Bruna, 2020, p.81). Apart from that, the contestation of ProSavana also led to internal division in Mozambican civil society between those opposed and in favour of ProSavana (Monjane and Bruna, 2020, p.82), and changes in the relations between social movements in Mozambique and international NGOs and movements (Shankland, Gonçalves, and Favareto, 2016, p.25).

8 Conclusion

8.1 Political Opportunity Structures and Outcomes

As described above, the Political Opportunity Structure can be summarized as follows.

The three states involved show very different levels of political access (low in Mozambique, and high in Brazil and Japan) repression (low in Brazil, High in Mozambique, and mixed in Japan).

In Japan, institutional features were crucial for the influence of influential allies.

Influential Allies were present, although their influence was stronger in Japan and Brazil, than in Mozambique, where they did not play an important role. In Japan, influential allies could use existing institutional features, which forced the release of information crucial for mobilization, and eventual abandonment of ProSavana due to evidence of antidemocratic methods.

Elections were carried out in all three states. This was crucial in the case of Japan where it removed the necessity of an administration to 'give up' a project they had begun, thereby allowing termination of the project without 'losing face'. While this is a result of electoral changes, it suggests an influence of cultural values on policies. Likewise, Brazil's electoral change altered the governments technical assistance policies, resulting in a lack of funds.

Elite Rifts could not be extensively analysed, due to a lack of sources on political rivalry within the elites, regarding ProSavana. A notable exception is Brazil, where diverging conceptions of development played a role. However, this can also be seen as an expression of existing pluralism and the abandonment of ProSavana by MDA was not the result of any changes in political alignments, as suggested by Tarrow. Overall, the proponents of ProSavana showed a great deal of cohesion in carrying out the project, voicing support along the same lines. Moreover, there were no signs of open conflict within elites.

In terms of Foreign Policy Pressure, the project itself was established under the influence of Foreign Policy considerations, while Brazil's departure from the project can partly be attributed to Foreign Policy considerations too. In the case of Japan, rivalry with China played a role for the beginning of the project. In Brazil, negative publicity resulted in a conflict between Brazil's international identity and the continuation of ProSavana.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to establish with certainty causal relations or to quantify the influence each of these factors has had. However, the Japanese termination of the project would not have taken place without the social movement opposition to ProSavana, which convinced Japanese Politicians of its unlawful aspects and of resistance against its implementation. One factor that was crucial in this respect was the steady

flow of information from insiders and parliamentarians, and the sustained effort of a highly international network of social movements and academics.

8.1.1 Implications

There are a number of conclusions to be drawn from this analysis. In this case electoral changes did play a crucial role, despite no changes in governing parties.. The influence of electoral changes in Brazil resulted from a discontinuation of previous policies, by a government of the same party that initiated the project. In Japan too, the administration changed without a change in the ruling party.

In both Brazil's and Japan's case, the termination of the project was a result of discontinuing previous policies. This implies, that government continuity can be more relevant to international development projects than party affiliation. Secondly, it also shows that there can be a time-lag to policies, and that previous electoral changes are worth considering. Both factors helped the cause of the social movement but cannot be attributed to their success. Instead, they were facilitating conditions for the efforts of opposition to ProSavana to come to fruition.

Secondly, in the case of Brazil an important observation is the time-lag of the influence of electoral changes. The lack of funds can be attributed to the policies of the new president, which took office before the start of the project. This suggests that previous elections need to be considered to evaluate the impact of electoral changes.

Another, fairly obvious, conclusion with respect to electoral changes is that international projects involve more elections, and to the extent that elections have an impact on movement activity or outcome, these effects can be heightened in an international setting.

Lastly, with respect to the influence of repression on movement outcomes, the movement achieved its goals despite considerable repression in Mozambique. Since important changes occurred in Brazil and Japan (in the case of Japan due to the activity of social movements and their allies) this suggests that repression can be circumvented in international processes of contestation, by exerting influence on those states that are less repressive and more democratic.

The influence of whistle-blowers also shows that influence can be wielded even if allies are not in government positions or the judiciary system, as long as they are able to access information. While the framework of POS

does not currently include these kinds of actors, it could be argued that whistle-blowers, informants, or hackers, that are able to obtain incriminating information may be valuable allies in their own right, regardless of their position within the political system.

Moreover, the POS of social movements contesting international projects, can be considered as resembling ‘decentralized’ states more, than ‘centralized’ ones, with respect to their venues for contestation. To the extent that the political architecture of international projects resembles decentralized states, inferences from existing relations between centralization and social movement activity, can be used to inform further research.

8.1.2 The International Dimension

Speaking about the influence of the exchange with Latin American activists to one of the participants in the contestation of ProSavana, said that “We saw that our struggles were their struggles too, so it was not difficult to understand that there was a common, international front which has the same objectives.” (Bussotti and Nhaueleque, 2022, p.119)

This is mirrored by a statement from a Brazilian working for EMBRAPA, who said that „I believe that [what is behind the ProSavana contestation] is the same that is behind the contestation from these movements that support landless workers, family farming, here in Brazil. It is a political rather than a technical question. It is a battle for political space.”(Cabral, 2015, p.12).

Likewise, the commonalities between Brazilian and Mozambican peasants are very real, and illustrated by the links between Prodecer and ProSavana, both of which are consistent with the „mainstream approach“ to development. This suggests, that the contestation of ProSavana is part of a global process, in which agricultural policies, as well as resistance against these policies, share similarities. Likewise, the historical context of emergence of LVC and UNAC is similar and influenced by economic policies that took place in many areas of the world at the same time. Importantly, there is not only a similarity in the policies and projects across countries, and in the resistance against these, but there is also a shared understanding of this process. While definitions of Globalization differ, “simultaneousness” of events, as well as awareness of global processes are features commonly understood as defining features of Globalization.

Therefore, ProSavana and its contestation can be seen as an example of Globalization.

In the context of Brazilian and Mozambican interactions, some authors emphasize, that changes are under way, regarding the connections between UNAC and other organizations. Despite the membership of UNAC in LVC, their research concludes that other movements which are more „mainstream“, such as FASE, are becoming more important. Moreover, NGOs such as ActionAid or Oxfam are becoming more important partners due to their relationships with governments and UNACs goal to maintain access to developmental initiatives (Shankland, Gonçalves and Favareto, 2016, p.25). These connections are not mentioned by authors like Funada-Classen who is only referring suspiciously to the blackening-out of their names from records of JICA, arguing that this was done to conceal their alliances (Funada-Classen, 2016, p.80).

The project was abandoned partly due to its international nature. If it was only conducted by Mozambique, the gains achieved via the Japanese institutions would not have been possible, because Mozambique’s institutional structure does not offer similar venues. Likewise, the state’s willingness to repression is much higher, and the involvement of other states like Japan – which conducted extensive studies on the resistance – possibly reduced the Mozambican government’s willingness to engage in violent repression of the protest. This implies, that international projects with multiple states can open *more* possibilities for contestation, especially if influential states offer more political participation.

9 Theoretical Prospects for International Political Opportunity Structures

9.1 “Nested” Political Opportunity Structures?

In the following section I will argue that the concept of Political Opportunity Structures does not lend itself to the idea of nestedness. The idea of “nested” Political Opportunity Structures implies, that there is a Political Opportunity Structure within a Political Opportunity Structure.

Political Opportunity Structures are referring to a *context* (see 2.3). A context is always a context *of something*. The concept of Political Opportunity Structures was developed to describe the context of *social movements*. Political Opportunity Structures are analysed to explain such things as movement dynamics or outcomes. A specific Political Opportunity Structure is the specific context in which a specific social movement is acting. Thus, analyses of Political Opportunity Structures make use of terms and concepts that refer to social movements. The concepts, like the dimensions of POS, used in the framework of Political Opportunity Structures, describe the political context in reference to attributes of the social movement.

This can be illustrated using the example of the dimension of Influential Allies. Part of the Political Opportunity Structure of UNAC, is the fact that UNAC has Influential Allies in the Japanese parliament. Influential Allies endorse the goals of social movements and try to support their activities. These goals and activities are attributes of social movements. Japanese Parliamentarians are Influential Allies by virtue of their relationship with UNACs goals and activities. Therefore, an analysis of the dimension of Influential Allies, using the framework of Political Opportunity Structures, makes reference to an attribute of social movements. To use the term applied by Oliver and Rothmann (1999), social movements are “embedded” in political opportunity structures. This embeddedness is expressed in concepts that describe a relationship between social movements and other actors or institutions.

While POS refer to a political context, social movements are a social entity. Since POS and social movements are different kind of entities, they have different kinds of attributes that can be analysed. While social movements can be described as “having influential allies” (which are part of a movement’s POS) it does not make sense to say that a POS “has influential allies”. The reason is, that the concept of influential allies only exists in reference to specific attributes of social movements (such as their goals), which are not attributes of Political Opportunity Structures. While social movements can have goals, Political Opportunity Structures do not have goals. This is easily visible when considering that a Political Opportunity Structure consists of a range of institutional features, actors, or political processes like electoral changes. All these elements together form the Political Opportunity Structure, and it would be difficult to ascribe a goal to the Political Opportunity Structure.

Therefore, POS are not embedded in further POS. The main reason for this is that the empirical observations expressed in analyses of POS involve concepts that describe features which are specific to social movements.

While it may be possible to develop a POS for specific dimensions of a POS (such as influential allies), advantages of this approach are unclear. Firstly, since the concept of POS was developed for social movements, a different framework could be more useful for specific actors.

Secondly, if social movements are the focus of research, the influence these expanded political opportunity structures have on social movements, would at best be indirect. Most importantly, the political opportunity structures would not be political opportunity structures *of* these social movements but the political opportunity structures of their opponents or allies. In such a case, the additional POS would yield at best inconclusive results in reference to social movements, since it is described in reference to other actors.

Lastly, it is much easier to take social movements as a vantage point and incorporate political opportunity structures according to their relevance for specific social movement activities, irrespective of their level of governance, as was done in the present thesis. As I will describe in the next section, it is easier to use the concept of Political Opportunity Structures for the purpose of its initial development, which is to *unify* several factors and treat them as forming a coherent whole.

9.2 Political Opportunity Structures of International Organisations?

Van der Heijden suggests an International Political Opportunity Structure by listing several international governmental organizations, like the WTO, and UN. In doing so, he lists the Political Opportunity Structure for each of the institutions. While there are a lot of empirical results that can be achieved this way, this approach has a number of disadvantages that will be explicated in the following section.

9.3 Considerations for the development of International Political Opportunity Structures

The two approaches laid out in the earlier section (see 2.5.6) suffer from similar shortcomings (Van der Heijden, 2006; Oliver and Rothman 1999). Both approaches try to expand the concept of Political Opportunity Structures by developing a *multitude* of Political Opportunity Structures. This approach is problematic for at least two reasons.

The first reason are problems resulting from a neglect of taking social movements as a vantage point for their own analysis. It is illustrated in the following example: If social movements want to lobby institutions to further their cause, limited resources, such as limited availability of funds for paying lawyers, force movements to make decisions *between* various options. Financial resources do not differ per institution or per level of governance, although the costs of lobbying may differ per institution or level of governance. Rather, financial resources can be described as an attribute of social movements. While the costs of lobbying an international organisation can be higher than for lobbying a local institution, their decisions are not limited to specific “levels of governance”, rather, they can decide *between* engaging with various institutions on different levels of governance. Thereby, different levels of governments can be part of the same decision process. In order to understand decisions involving multiple levels of governance, or multiple institutions, it is therefore necessary to conceptualize the available options within one coherent framework and consider them in relation to one another. Separating several available options within a decision process analytically into different realms, makes the analysis of such decision processes almost impossible.

Therefore, it would not make much sense to separate these levels of governance of into different “structures”. If different levels of governance are conceptualized as different political opportunity structures, all decisions made by social movements that involve options on multiple levels of governance become incomprehensible. The reason for this is, that alternative options disappear from the analysis, because they are not part of the specified opportunity structure.

A second example for the same problem is illustrated in the following section. It has long been acknowledged that political opportunities are only relevant insofar as they are *known* to the social movement (Giugni, 2011, p.277), and “expectation” is also a defining feature of Tarrow’s definition of POS (see 2.3). While there has been debate about the exact nature of the relationship between perceived opportunities and movement activity, it is clear that the set of all opportunities known to social movements matters for their perceived opportunities. These perceived opportunities can be analysed most plausibly when taking movements or individuals as a vantage point. In order to make a statement about perceived opportunities, it is – again – important to consider opportunities on all levels of governance. The reason is that a perceived opportunity can be on any level of governance. To say that there are “no perceived opportunities” is a statement about all potential opportunities. While it is possible to say that there are “no perceived opportunities within the political opportunity structure of the WTO”, it is unlikely that the presence or absence within one specific structure will be as relevant, as the overall presence or absence of opportunities.

The reason for this is, that the presence or absence of perceived opportunities within one specific level of governance entails the presence or absence of perceived opportunities in general.

Analysing perceived opportunities *in general* therefore entails analysing any *specific* opportunities.

Therefore, the preference for analysing perceived opportunities in general – and not for each level of governance – is based on a theoretical argument, and not an empirical one.

While there may be benefits of specifying political opportunity structures for specific levels of governance or specific institutions, such an approach would reduce the utility of POS as an *explanatory* framework, since it would use concepts that have been developed to explain social movement activity but limit the number of variables under study to those variables from a specific context. While this may be useful in cases where only the specified context (such as the WTO) is relevant, all other variables (such as influential allies in a different institution) are ignored.

The present case-study gives an example of problems resulting from analytically separating levels of governance: there are a number of international allies that are relevant for the success of movement activity:

the whistle-blowers in the ProSavana team, the Japanese parliamentarians, and Brazilian activists. These are linked to different states and levels of governance. All these allies have to be seen in the context of which they are part. There would have been little explanatory value in analysing the “political opportunity structure” for Japan only, since it would have cut-off the importance of Brazilian activists or whistle-blowers in the ProSavana team from the picture.

However, if certain aspects of social movement activity are treated as independent variables, and political opportunity structures – such as access to political participation – are treated as dependent variable, the approach of isolating levels of governance can be useful. In this case, when the influence of social movements on institutions is studied, other dimensions of POS may be irrelevant, since the object of analysis is not the social movement and its activities, but the effect social movement activity has on a particular institution. Therefore, it may be asked if it is not easier to develop or use a different framework than POS, which includes factors based on their explanatory value for the dependent variable (institutions) under study.

The second reason is, that it makes the concept of Political Opportunity Structures more complex. By doing so, it makes research more complicated and demanding by introducing a multitude of Political Opportunity Structures that have to be analysed. This approach would diminish the value of the concept of Political Opportunity Structures, which lies precisely in its ability to describe a *context* in which a social movement is acting, and in its *combination* of several factors into one coherent concept. In the present case, this is visible in the connection between institutional access in Japan, and the influence that influential allies exerted. Another example is the connection between elite rifts and electoral changes in the case of Brazil. Both are examples of interrelations between factors that are united in one POS.

Therefore, the preferred approach is to posit *one* political opportunity structure for the given social movement and objective, considering the political opportunity structures from the vantage point of a social movement (if aspects of social movements are treated as dependent variable).

This approach has been taken in the present thesis and resulted in a list of all relevant institutions and actors. It can be seen as a type of “map” of the political environment, from the perspective of the opposition to ProSavana. To incorporate the relevance of multilevel governance, and the increasing importance of international connections, the present thesis has introduced one additional dimension, Foreign Policy Pressures, that was an important for the present case.

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10 Literature

Political Opportunity Structures and Social Movements

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11 Appendix

Categories

(Categories of the relational-radical approach to development)

1.2.1 A focus on Social Relations of production

- 1.2.2 Usage of Class as a concept
- 1.2.3 Criticism of Capitalism?
- 1.2.4 „Some are poor because others are rich“
- 1.2.5 State facilitates exploitation
- 1.2.6 Suspicion against those who have more influence
- 1.2.7 Structural adjustments benefit only the asset-owning class
- 1.2.8 State and not market has to ensure non-exploitative relations
- 1.2.9 Affirmation of the state as instrument of people
- 1.2.10 A more progressive state must be achieved through struggles which require mobilization

11.1 Inductive Categories and assigned paraphrases

Rhetoric:

- The goal of promoting economic, social, and cultural development is important
- Guebuza: You fought along your people against colonial oppression
- Dilma Rousseff: You also suffered oppression
- Japan supported development and agriculture

International Cooperation

- International cooperation should be based on principles of solidarity and justice
- International cooperation should support solidarity among people
- International Cooperation is used for a different purpose
- We (people as defined above) demand international cooperation that promotes care and justice

Exploitation

- The conditions created benefit MNCs and rob rural families of their livelihood
- This phase in history is marked by MNCs exploiting natural resources

Distrust

- The project poses a threat to national independence
- The purpose of the program is „purportedly“ promotion of development
- ProSavana supports obscure commercial transactions
- These arguments have been used to justify FDI and deployment of large investments in mining, hydrocarbons, monoculture tree plantations, and agribusiness for the production of commodities

Demand of Ending ProSavana

- We demand suspension of all activities within the scope of the ProSavana programme
- We denounce the project / we are outraged
- Urgency/ Demand urgent intervention

Criticism of ProSavana

- ProSavana supports Monocultures
- ProSavana supports export of agriculture/ The investment has the purpose of exporting agricultural commodities through the port
- ProSavana destroys the family farming system
- The Development model is imported
- The Development model is contradictory
- Negative impact: Emergence of landless families
- Negative impact: Socio-environmental conflicts
- Negative impact: Poverty in rural families
- Negative impact: Destruction of production system of rural families
- Negative impact: Corruption and conflict of interests
- Negative Impact: Pollution through pesticides, fertilizers, and other toxins
- Negative impact: Deforestation
- There is a threat of land grabbing
- ProSavana promotes the grabbing of community land

Criticism of the Conduct

- Opponents to ProSavana have been intimidated
- The information provided is incomplete and contradictory
- Environmental Impact Assessment has not been carried out.
- This is undemocratic, and
- Illegal
- Violates constitutional rights to access on information, consultation, participation, and consent

Democracy

- We demand a democratic mechanism and the creation of a broad dialogue with all sectors of Mozambican society, particularly with small-scale farmers, rural people, corridor communities, religious organisations that should establish their real needs, aspirations, and priorities in the development matrix and agenda
- We conducted discussions on community level and nationally.
- We engaged in dialogue
- We speak for the rural population, and families from the Nacala corridor, religious organisations, and Mozambican civil society
- The signatories are social movements and organisations

Small Scale agriculture /Family Farming

- Why is the Food Acquisition programme not supported?
- We demand the reallocation of resources to the National Plan for the Support of Sustainable Family Farming
- The Mozambican government should focus on small-scale agriculture

- Small-scale agriculture requires rural credit,
- Small-scale agriculture requires farming extension services,
- Small-scale agriculture requires irrigation,
- Small-scale agriculture requires valuation of native seeds that are resistant to climate change,
- Small-scale agriculture requires rural infrastructure linked to the creation of productive capacity and
- Small-scale agriculture requires policies that support and promote the commercialization of rural production.
- Japan should focus on small-scale agriculture
- We demand that the government prioritises food sovereignty
- We demand that the government prioritises conservation agriculture
- We demand that the government prioritises agro-ecology
- We demand that the family method of production is not destroyed
- Family farming is crucial for the majority of people in Mozambique
- The family method has a specific way of occupying geographic spaces
- The family method is sustainable
- The family method is a historical tradition
- The above mentioned are the only sustainable solutions for reducing hunger and promoting proper nutrition
- Only small-scale agriculture is able to produce enough food for Mozambique
- Development of production systems should take place instead of development of products

Traditionalism/Identity

- These are our lands and our community
- We dream of a better Mozambique where all can feel that they are children of the land
- We dream of a Mozambique where all are united
- We dream of a state whose sovereignty comes from and resides in the people