

UNIVERSITY OF HOHENHEIM



University of Hohenheim
Institute of Social Sciences in Agriculture

**Peasant Seed Systems and the Influence of Legal Frameworks and
Civil Society Organisations – case study from Mali, West Africa**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master in Agricultural Science in Tropic and Subtropics

by

Ann Christin Weiler

Matriculation number: 673699

Submitted

May 2019

First examiner: PD Dr. Stefanie Lemke

Second examiner: Prof. Dr. Regina Birner

This work was financially supported by the Foundation fiat panis

II Abstract

Peasants constitute two fifth of the world population and 60-100% of the seed used in developing countries stems from peasant seed systems that contributes to food security, the adaption to climate change and the conservation of agrobiodiversity. The legislative frameworks that are related to seeds are becoming increasingly obstructive to peasant seed systems and are influenced by a complicated construct of regional and global legal frameworks. Civil society organisations (CSOs) all over the world have become active to advocate for peasant-friendly seed legislations. The study made use of a single case study design and the data collection methods document analysis and key informant interviews. Further this study aims to examine the possible influences of the current national, regional and global seed-related legislative frameworks of Mali on peasant seed systems by applying a literature-based analytical model to the current seed legislation of Mali, that focuses on the recognition of peasant seed systems and farmers' varieties, marketing rules and intellectual property rights. Moreover, the study objects to analyse how CSOs influence the seed-related legislative frameworks on the basis of a case study of the 'Seeds, Norms and Farmers' process initiated by Malian CSOs. It examines the process' activities as well as the challenges and successes and the role of networking throughout the process. The study has found that the national seed-related legislative frameworks do not acknowledge the importance and value of peasant seed systems and farmers' varieties and do not prioritise their protection and promotion. The legislation could have long lasting impacts on the contribution to food security, adaptability to climate change and conversation of biodiversity that are important components of peasant seed systems. The SNP process initiated by Malian CSOs, made use of a highly cooperative and evidence-based approach that involved other CSOs, peasant farmers, research institutions and policy makers and influenced the national seed-related legislative frameworks of Mali through implementing a space for dialogue in form of a consultation framework, that collectively developed an alternative seed legislation.

Key words: Mali, peasant seed systems, seed legislation, policy influence, civil society organisations