

MODELING THE EXPLOITATION OF AGRICULTURAL POTENTIALS IN THE MELAKY REGION

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ABSTRACT

A nation's development is largely shaped by the effectiveness of its public policies, aligned with the vision of its leaders. Despite its abundant natural resources—especially in agriculture—the Melaky region of Madagascar continues to face rising rural poverty, underscoring the gap between potential and reality. This study addresses a persistent paradox that endures despite successive political regimes. It aims to develop a tailored model for optimizing the region's agricultural potential to drive sustainable development. The methodology focuses on diagnosing the underlying causes of inefficiencies in sectoral agricultural policies, employing analytical tools such as SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats), an assessment of budgetary trends in the agricultural sector, and the '5 Whys' method to pinpoint barriers to resource development. The proposed model is centered on mobilizing and engaging stakeholders, eliminating bottlenecks, and leveraging local potential. Findings emphasize that empowering farmers and local actors—through strengthened local governance and prioritization of the agricultural sector—is a key driver of both regional and national development. The discussion underscores the limitations of existing governance, which is often perceived as a superficial form of decentralization. It highlights the critical need for a genuine transfer of authority, supported by adequate resources, to reduce conflicts of interest and establish territorial governance capable of fostering sustainable development rooted in local assets.

Keywords: Agriculture, rural poverty, governance, model, local development

1. INTRODUCTION

A country's development is closely linked to the effectiveness of its public policies, which are shaped by the vision of its leaders. In developed countries, a small minority of farmers manage to feed the entire population while generating a surplus for export. These countries focus on agricultural exports not only for economic reasons, but also to contribute to global food security and to support rural economies through international trade (Ritchie et al., 2023). Their legislation ensures consistent support to farmers in terms of equipment and agricultural credit, particularly through the Common Agricultural Policy (Le Cacheux, 2011).

However, the performance of agriculture in African countries varies across sub-sectors. These differences result from differentiated public incentives, varied technical constraints, heterogeneous market dynamics, and uneven levels of sectoral organization across products. Moreover, agriculture in Africa remains neglected in public budgets. Development and financial institutions are often inefficient or failing (NEPAD, 2013). According to key statistics published by the EDBM in 2021, 80% of Madagascar's active population works in the agricultural sector, which contributes about 30% to the national GDP - or 43% when agro-processing is included. In 2018, Madagascar ranked first in global lychee exports (around 60% of the market) and accounted for 50% of global vanilla exports (EDBM, 2021).

In any case, local governance in Madagascar has not achieved the expected outcomes. International institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, through their conditionalities imposed on developing

countries, tend to replicate models from developed countries without adequately considering local realities. The impact of government actions on rural producers remains largely imperceptible.

According to the World Bank's 2016 report on agriculture and rural development in Madagascar, *"over 30 years, the growth of the Malagasy agricultural sector (including farming, livestock, and fisheries) has remained very modest, with an average annual growth rate of just over 1.5%. Madagascar experiences a very high poverty rate: 92% of the population lives on less than US\$2 per day"* (World Bank, 2016). Although agriculture remains central to the agendas of successive regimes striving for development, the country continues to decline and ranks among low-income nations. Unfortunately, poverty has continued to deepen from one regime to the next, and economic takeoff remains elusive.

The central issue of this study is the growing poverty of the rural population despite the succession of governments in Madagascar. This situation raises two key research questions: How can public policies influence the exploitation of regional agricultural potential, and what model should be adopted for the appropriate use of such potential? The main objective of this study is to develop a model for the appropriate exploitation of regional agricultural potential to support sustainable development. The specific objectives are to determine the influence of public policies on the utilization of regional agricultural resources and to identify the key parameters necessary to design an appropriate exploitation model. The following hypotheses will be tested: (1) the effective implementation of public policies determines the success of regional agricultural potential exploitation, and (2) the development of a suitable model for agricultural potential utilization can reduce poverty and foster sustainable development.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 Sampling

The formula developed by Josselin and Le Maux (2017) was used to determine the sample size:

$$n = z^2 \cdot p \cdot (1-p) / e^2$$

where:

n is the sample size,

e is the margin of error ($e = 5\%$) at a 95% confidence level,

z is the constant from the normal distribution corresponding to the confidence level,

p is the percentage of individuals representing the observed characteristic (8%).

Using this formula, a sample of 111 agricultural households was determined, rounded, and strategically distributed across six communes in the district of Maintirano (Latitude: 18°03'48" S, Longitude: 44°01'46" E): Andrea, Maintirano, Mafajijjo, Andabotoka, Betanatanana, and Ankisatra. Field observations were conducted directly with agricultural producers, complemented by interviews with technical service officials, project representatives, and local authorities to gain a comprehensive understanding of the region's agricultural landscape.

2.2 Approach

To assess the first hypothesis - that the effectiveness of public policy implementation directly influences the successful exploitation of regional agricultural potential - the methodology was structured around two key components. The first involved analyzing declared public policies alongside their actual implementation, identifying the factors contributing to their inefficacy in Madagascar's agricultural sector. The second focused on evaluating the ways in which agricultural potential is currently being utilized within the study area.

To assess the evolution of food self-sufficiency in Madagascar and the budget allocated to Decentralized Territorial Communities (DTC) and the agricultural sector, a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) was conducted. This analysis helped to understand the blocking factors and identify opportunities for enhancing local agricultural potential. Additionally, the "5 Whys" method was used to identify the root causes of the underutilization of agricultural resources and to highlight potential levers for action.

Testing the second hypothesis - that developing an appropriate model for exploiting regional agricultural potential can help address rural poverty and ensure sustainable development - involved two complementary approaches: first, analyzing methods of enhancing the value of agricultural resources and products, and second, examining how the agricultural sector can contribute to economic recovery and long-term poverty reduction in rural areas. This also included identifying weak links that hinder the performance of the agricultural sector.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Current Implementation of Public Policies and Their Effectiveness on the Exploitation of Regional Agricultural Potential

3.1.1 Food Self-Sufficiency and Dependence on External Sources

The central government's policy toward promoting the Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries (ALF) sector can be assessed through indicators such as food self-sufficiency and dependence on external sources, particularly rice imports. Using the year 2020 as a reference, rice imports have increased by 55.4% over a two-year period (Table 1).

Table 1: Evolution of Rice Imports Recorded by Madagascar

Year	2020	2021	2022
Quantity (tons)	479,359	629,414	744,846
Growth rate	1	1.313	1.554

Source: INSTAT, 2023

3.1.2 Limited Budget Allocation to the Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries Sector

Budget allocations to the ALF sector represent less than 8% of the national budget, with domestic financing contributing no more than 1.8% (Table 2).

Table 2: ALF Sector Budget Allocations and Expenditures as a % of the National Budget (2015–2020)

Description	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2019
ALF Allocations (General Budget, % of State Budget)	6.0	4.7	8.0	6.4	6.3	5.7
ALF Allocations (Domestic Financing, % of State Budget)	1.2	1.4	1.7	1.8	1.4	0.7
ALF Expenditures (General Budget, % of State Budget)	2.4	1.8	5.4	7.6	5.3	-

Source: Amended Finance Acts (2015–2020), Budget Execution Laws (2015–2019)

Indeed, the share of budget allocations to the ALF sector has fluctuated, from 6% in 2015 to 5.7% in 2020. Sectoral spending within the national budget only began to increase from 2017, reaching 5.4% in 2017 and peaking at 7.6% in 2018, before falling again to 5.3% in 2019. The ALF sector remains heavily dependent on external funding. Domestic financing is very limited and even declined to just 0.7% in 2020.

3.1.3 SWOT Analysis of the Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries Sector

An assessment of the ALF sector in the Melaky region, along with an analysis of its 2005–2010 Regional Development Plan, highlights its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (Table 3).

Table 3: SWOT Analysis of the Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries Sector in the Melaky Region

Sectors	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Agriculture	- Availability of large cultivable lands not yet exploited - Presence of rivers, streams, and lakes suitable for rice cultivation - Fertile soil - Possibility for organic farming - Potential for crop diversification - Complementarity between agriculture and livestock	- Outdated water control infrastructure - Lack of quality seeds, performing varieties, and inputs - Outdated techniques and equipment - Rural insecurity, crop theft - Low productivity due to traditional practices - Lack of training and agricultural extension workers - Lack of staff and resources - Geographic isolation - Lack of collectors and processing industries - Low education level among farmers
Livestock	- Favorable temperature for livestock breeding - Availability of vast grazing areas - Potential for short-cycle farming (small ruminants, poultry, etc.) - Geographical advantage: breeding zone with one-way commercial livestock flow - Presence of Barea cattle breed in the region, beneficial for research - Available research results from FOFIFA	- Insecurity, cattle rustling (dahalo) - Uncontrolled bovine diseases - Insufficient veterinary products - Lack of livestock technicians - Theft and extensive breeding practices - Livestock malnutrition, especially during the dry season - Absence of forage cultivation - Traditional livestock practices - Degenerated breeds - Passive livestock management - Rare and low-profile presence of NGOs and farmers' associations
Fisheries	- Long marine coastline (350 km) - Presence of ponds and lakes	- Insufficient materials and equipment, etc. - Lack of support staff - Fishing regulations not enforced: mesh size and fishing season

	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Agriculture	- Availability of research results on improved varieties (FOFIFA) - Possibility for seasonal farming (Asara, Jeby) - High-demand international market for organic products - Availability of improved techniques	- Uncontrolled soil erosion - Climate disruptions - Siltation of rice fields and riverbeds (and/or riverbed changes) - Decline in cattle population used for farming
Livestock	- Heritage of "Manjan'i Boina" breed - Availability of FOFIFA research results	- Uncontrolled infectious diseases
Fisheries	- Presence of the Aqualma Company	- Incursion of pirate fishing vessels

3.1.4 Low Valorization of Local Potential

The Melaky region in Madagascar possesses vast natural resources, including extensive areas suitable for agriculture, livestock, and fishing. However, technical and social obstacles persist, leading to rural poverty and limiting the local benefits derived from these resources.

By applying the "5 Whys" method to the issue of underutilization of local potential and its specificities, the root causes are clearly revealed. The poor valorization of agricultural resources is primarily due to ineffective development policies and the lack of prioritization of the sector. Poor governance and the absence of a clear vision among leaders also negatively impact farmers (Table 4).

Table 4: Low Valorization of Local Potential and Its Specificities

Problem	Question: Why?	Answer: Because	Justification
Low valorization of local potential and its specificities	1. Why is it low?	Obstacles remain unresolved: insecurity, outdated infrastructure and production equipment, shortage of support personnel	(Table 1)
	2. Why are the obstacles unresolved?	Development policies are ineffective	(Tables 2; 3)
	3. Why are the development policies ineffective?	The ALF sector is not treated as a priority; weak funding allocation; poor governance; low motivation among local actors; Extensive tracts of arable land remain unutilized, even as rice imports continue.	(Tables 1; 2; 3)
	4. Why do these factors persist?	Lack of understanding of local realities; absence of visionary leadership; incompetence; lack of civic responsibility	(Tables 1; 2; 3; 4)
	5. Why is there a lack of vision, incompetence, and civic responsibility?	Political appointments of officials; nepotism, favoritism, and corruption	(Tables 1; 2; 3; 4)

3.1.5 Observations on the Implementation of Public Policies in Madagascar

The analysis of public policies in general, and those related to the ALF sectors in Madagascar, reveals a significant discrepancy between policy formulation and implementation. Although policies are often well defined and ambitious, their actual application is inconsistent. This section examines the alignment between declared policies and their implementation (Table 5).

Table 5: Observations on the Implementation of Public Policies in Madagascar

Problem	Question: Why?	Answer: Because	Justification
Low valorization of local potential and its specificities	1. Why is it low?	Obstacles remain unresolved: insecurity, outdated infrastructure and production equipment, shortage of support staff.	(Table 1)
	2. Why are the obstacles unresolved?	Development policies are ineffective.	(Tables 2; 3)
	3. Why are the development policies ineffective?	The ALF sector is not treated as a priority; weak funding allocations; poor governance; low motivation among local actors; Extensive tracts of arable land remain unutilized, even as rice imports continue.	(Tables 1; 2; 3)
	4. Why do these factors persist?	Lack of understanding of local realities; absence of visionary leadership; incompetence; lack of civic responsibility	(Tables 1; 2; 3; 4)

	5. Why is there a lack of vision, incompetence, and civic responsibility?	Political appointments of officials; nepotism, favoritism, and corruption	(Tables 1; 2; 3; 4)
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3.2 The New Model of Local Governance

3.2.1 Socio-Economic and Social Component

To address the challenges related to agricultural development in the region, the adopted model must meet three interdependent sustainability criteria: economic, social, and environmental. Sustainable economic development leads to sustainable social development, which in turn promotes environmental preservation (Figure 1). The proposed model is therefore political and cross-sectoral, considering technical, economic, sociocultural, and environmental aspects.

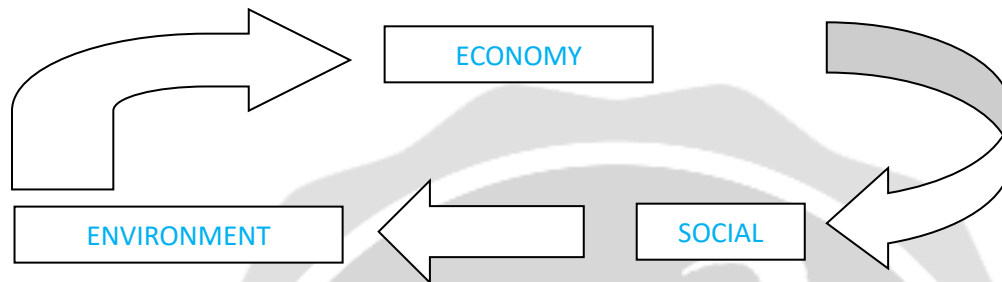


Fig -1: Causal diagram of the economic-social-environmental component

Economic development increases household income and thus purchasing power. Improved income impacts the ability to acquire production equipment and enhances living standards and social well-being (education, health). A better economic environment fosters job creation and reduces insecurity. Agricultural modernization, through the restoration of hydro-agricultural infrastructure combined with improved production tools and inputs, reduces deforestation and shifting cultivation practices. This dynamic sets in motion a virtuous cycle, where the economy serves as a structural catalyst for enhancing social well-being and alleviating environmental pressures through the efficient utilization of existing land resources. The objective is to find out a sustainable solution that protects the environment.

3.2.2 Local Governance Model for the Promotion of Agricultural Development at the Central Level (Local Authorities)

At the central level, it is essential to support decentralized local authorities by establishing effective local governance through appropriate laws and regulations, and by providing them with the necessary resources.

3.2.2.1 Stakeholder Mobilization

The model proposes that the management of so-called strategic products be entrusted to local authorities through the establishment of clear regulations regarding authority, revenue collection methods, and distribution rates between the central government and the Decentralized Territorial Communities (DTC). The restoration of provincial budgets and their subdivisions is also suggested. The model encourages the central government to focus on sovereign roles and the preservation of national unity - currency, national security, diplomacy, integrity, and state sovereignty. However, decentralized international cooperation could be entrusted to the local level through legislation governing DTC, under the coordination of the State. The creation of a state-guaranteed development bank is also recommended. Major investments such as dams, and structuring infrastructure (ports, airports, maritime infrastructure, etc.), would remain the responsibility of the central government.

3.2.2.2 Ownership of Local Governance and Projects

The model is designed to be an effective tool to both clarify and delineate responsibilities between the central government and local authorities while fostering empowerment of local governance through legislation and the transfer of powers and resources. It also proposes the establishment of a council of farmers to mobilize stakeholders in agricultural development, encourage rural accountability, involve various actors, and reconcile government priorities with those of farmers. Moreover, the establishment of a development bank is envisioned to assist farmers in acquiring improved production tools and equipment, and to promote rural access to banking services. Strengthening support from Deconcentrated Technical Services (DTS) to meet farm needs is also planned, to optimize the value of local resources (Figure 2). The objective of the model is to identify sustainable solutions to the obstacles affecting agricultural development and to lift farmers out of the poverty trap.

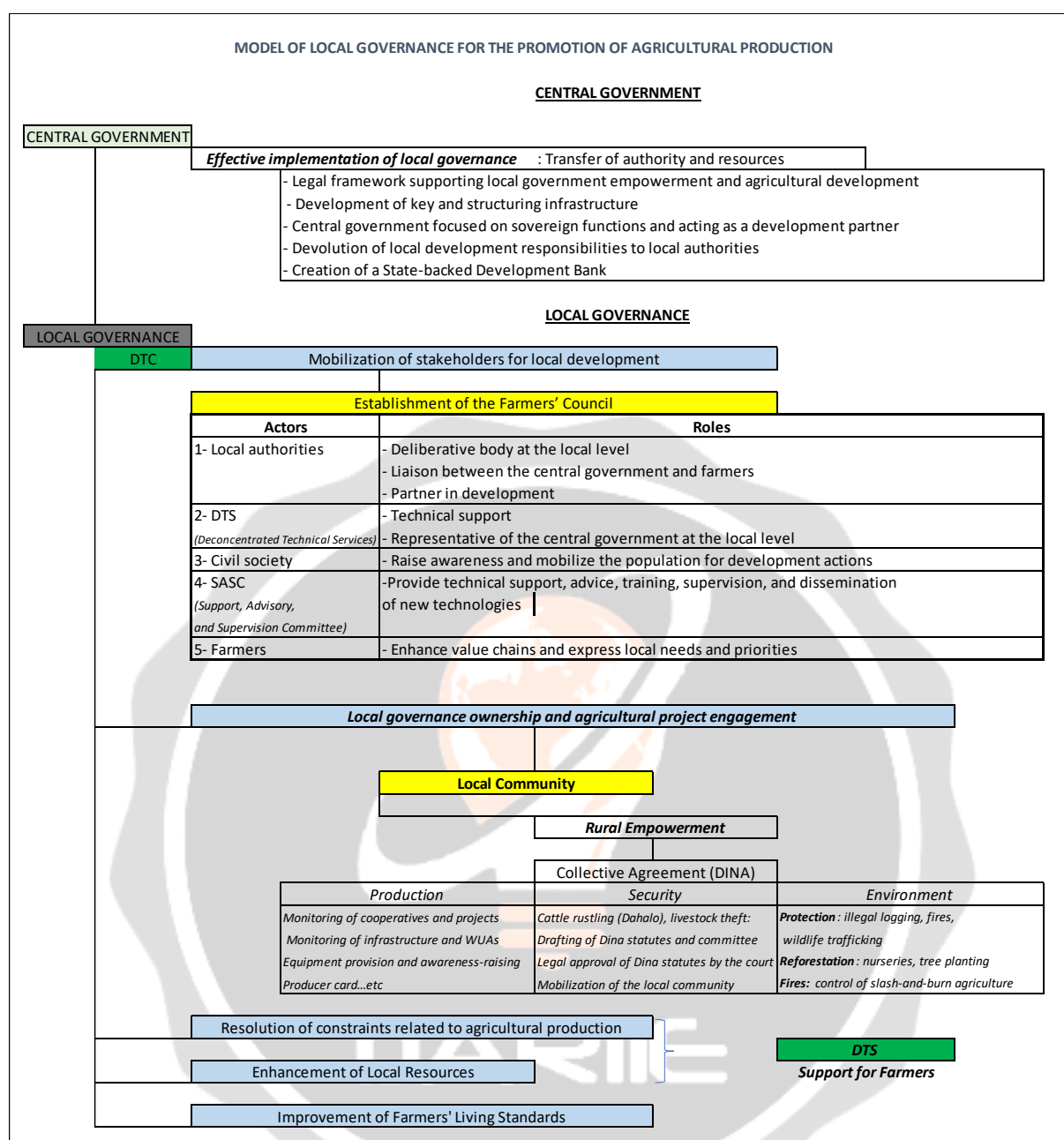


Fig -2: Local Governance Model for the Promotion of Agricultural Development

4. Discussion

4.1 Current governance: a superficial decentralization

4.1.1 Weak budget allocation to the agricultural sector

Despite the formulation of public policy stating that the Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (ALF) sector is one of the engines of the Malagasy economy and an essential component of the *Initiative for the Emergence of Madagascar (IEM)*, an analysis by UNICEF showed that the share of the general state budget allocated to this sector remains minimal (Table 2). "It ranked 7th in 2015 and 2018 but dropped to 8th position in 2020. Despite a modest increase between 2015 and 2020, allocations and expenditures for Madagascar's ALF sector remain below the 10% Maputo target. Yet, the ALF sector contributes on average 24% to total added value. It is also the main source of employment, providing more than 80% of jobs (PSAEP, 2015), but most of its actors still earn very low incomes" (UNICEF, 2020). The trend in these expenditures is not improving; in 2015, the share represented only 1% of the general state budget, compared to 3% during the Transition period (2010–2015), and 5% before 2009

(Sefafi, 2016). Moreover, not only is the allocation insufficient, but the actual implementation of the ALF sector policy is also lacking (Table 5).

4.1.2 Governance and valorization of local natural resources

The effectiveness of public policy implementation determines the success of exploiting regional agricultural potential. The key question is: who truly benefits from the policies formulated by the central government? An examination of public policy implementation highlights the political will - or lack thereof - of the government to promote the ALF sector in favor of smallholder farmers, who represent the majority of Madagascar's population (Tables 1–5). Public investment budget analysis reveals that in 2004, 80% of the budget was still managed centrally. This central bias is also evident in the location of Ministry of Agriculture personnel, with "55% assigned to offices in the Antananarivo province" (Minten, 2006); 27% of staff are based in central services in Antananarivo, 29% assigned to regional agricultural centers (DRDR) in Antananarivo and Antsirabe, and only 45% distributed across other DRDRs (MAEP, 2003).

Apart from rice mills and husking facilities, no agricultural processing industries have been identified in the Melaky region. Yet, due to the absence of an agro-industrial sector, agricultural production remains limited. Strengthening the industrial fabric for processing agricultural products is beneficial not only for generating additional wealth through added value but also for stimulating production and creating employment opportunities. Industrial development in the region plays a crucial role in combating underemployment and idleness, which are closely linked to rural and urban insecurity. Enhancing industrial capacity facilitates the conservation, processing, and commercialization of agricultural goods, thereby driving both quantitative and qualitative production growth—key factors in value creation. A slowdown in agricultural production could result in food shortages at the local, regional, or even national level. For instance, in sub-Saharan Africa, the second half of the 20th century saw recurrent famine crises, whereas food security was generally assured for most rural populations in earlier periods (Mathieu et al., 1996). With diminishing food self-sufficiency, farmers were forced to sell their land and labor, becoming agricultural wage workers for wealthier landowners or migrating to cities in search of better opportunities (Sandron, 2008).

The central government's agricultural policy is also evaluated through the lens of food self-sufficiency and reliance on imports of essential products, particularly rice (Table 1). If increasing rice imports is the government's response to population needs, what does that mean for Madagascar's vision of food sovereignty and the future of its farmers? Ever-rising imports ultimately penalize local farmers. Public policies promoting excessive imports do not benefit agricultural producers but rather reinforce the state's external dependence. Madagascar's public policies thus prioritize short-term fixes over long-term sustainability. Yet, official frameworks such as the Agricultural Development Policy Letter (LPDA), Rural Development Agricultural Policy (PADR), and the Sectoral Program for Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries (PSAEP) all stress the importance of the ALF sector as a foundation for socioeconomic development. Key figures from the EDBM (2021) on Madagascar's agricultural performance reveal that 80% of the active population is engaged in agriculture, contributing 30% to GDP (43% with agro-processing included). The country is the world's top exporter of lychees and supplies 50% of the global vanilla market (EDBM, 2021). Rural poverty in Madagascar is thus tied to opaque government policy on agricultural resource valorization - resources that could form the basis of development and improved livelihoods. The real shortcoming lies not in policy design but in implementation.

4.1.3 Causes of decentralization failure in Madagascar

A report by Ibra Ndiaye on a December 2017 conference organized by the National School of Administration Alumni Association (AAENA Madagascar), published by OIDP Africa in January 2018, highlights several obstacles to successful decentralization. According to the Director General of Decentralization within the Ministry of the Interior and Decentralization, the abrupt removal of state oversight over Decentralized Territorial Communities (DTC) and the introduction of post-hoc controls were premature. Local governments need support to manage public affairs and resources effectively. The forum also identified the ineffectiveness of decentralization, lack of resource mobilization capacity, insufficient state support, and insecurity as major barriers. The Director of Public Accounting at the Ministry of Finance and Budget, Mr. Rajaonarivony Ramanoel, pointed out that some resources are transferred too late to communes. Other constraints include low levels of digitalization among DTC, weak revenue collection, and poor data reporting. The most appropriate solution is the development of local economies. Rasendrasoa Max from Ambre Associates emphasized that sustainable development is tied to local development, which requires increasing communal revenues and reallocating sectoral financing to local budgets (Ndiaye, 2018). Resource shortages remain the major challenge to establishing effective local governance in Madagascar.

4.1.4 Limits of current governance and agricultural resource administration

The limitations are evident in the under-administration of the territory, poor understanding of local realities, and a lack of inclusiveness and local ownership. It is clear that Madagascar's development process is far from complete (African Union, 2019), and that DTC remain heavily centralized in both administration and public finance (Bird *et al.*, 1998), despite legal commitments and donor support. Moreover, the persistence of a land administration system unresponsive to public expectations has saturated and paralyzed relevant services. The land administration is widely considered inefficient due to delays in issuing land title certificates (Sandron, 2008). This situation stems from centralized decision-making and insufficient state budget allocations and staffing for the agricultural sector (Table 2). This confirms that agriculture has not been prioritized by successive Malagasy governments. The failure of centralized governance underscores the need to adopt a local governance model, regardless of its label. Investment policy misalignment and sectoral policy ineffectiveness are evident. Centralized governance, with standardized measures applied across all regions without regard for their specific contexts, limits the effectiveness of public policy. This is especially visible in budget allocations to DTC, which fail to consider the number of districts, communes, *fokontany*, population, or local potential. Most development initiatives are still implemented by the central state, leading to weak ownership of local projects.

4.2 A new model of local governance: a lever for sustainable development

To initiate sustained development for the Malagasy population in general and improve farmer incomes in particular by involving local communities in the valorization of agricultural potential, a local governance model is proposed.

The model is based on the one hand, on its ability to mobilize and engage agricultural producers and local stakeholders in the development process, as well as to reconcile the priorities of governing authorities with those of agricultural producers. On the other hand, it relies on the capacity of development policies to address blocking factors and enhance local potential.

At the national level, as in several Francophone African countries, Madagascar has steadily advanced toward decentralization, particularly since 1993 with the adoption of Law No. 93-005, which outlines the general orientation of decentralization policy (Razafarijaona, 2008). AYDALOT (1982) asserts: "Development can genuinely meet the population's needs only within a local framework, through the enhancement of local resources and the participation of the population." This statement holds even greater relevance considering that farmers are both key actors and beneficiaries of development. The Melaky region still possesses vast cultivable land that remains available for exploitation. The proposed model aims to maximize local potential, promote the agricultural sector, and generate employment to help mitigate insecurity. It clarifies and delineates responsibilities between central and local authorities. In this model, the primary mission assigned to the state is the establishment and empowerment of local governance. The central government is responsible for drafting and passing laws through parliament, as well as implementing regulatory texts that govern not only the effective transfer of power but also the necessary resources to ensure the autonomy of local governance. This autonomy is primarily aimed at strengthening the capacity of Decentralized Territorial Communities (DTC) to independently manage their administrations and execute the development projects they initiate. Thus, the central government remains a key partner of local governance and DTC in matters of development and coordination, contributing to the reinforcement of national unity. In turn, DTC is entrusted with all aspects of development and continues to serve as an effective collaborator of the central government.

Local governance primarily aims at making local communities accountable and mobilizing stakeholders in agricultural production. The model proposes the creation of a farmers' council to align the priorities of central authorities with those of farmers. It recommends supporting Deconcentrated Technical Services (DTS) to overcome production obstacles and assist farmers. Reactivating Rural Animation Services, disseminating new technologies, and strengthening Agricultural Service Centers are also crucial. A Center for Support, Advice, and Supervision (SASC) would help in valorizing local agricultural resources.

Through this model, and by virtue of the development coordination role assigned to Decentralized Territorial Communities (DTC) at the local level, elected executive leaders hold authority over the heads of Deconcentrated Technical Services (STD) within their jurisdiction to ensure the effectiveness of the measures implemented. This model enhances the adaptation of interventions and improves the responsiveness and efficiency of public services at the local level.

Local coordination responsibilities empower the rural community. Together with DTS, local authorities handle awareness campaigns, safeguard public investments and projects, and manage the conception and implementation of *DINA* (community conventions). Three types are envisioned:

- Security *Dina*: Establishment of Local Security Committees (LSC) to combat rural insecurity and banditry, and to protect communal assets.
- Production *Dina*: Creation of Local Production Committees (LPC) using production cards to monitor agricultural goods movement, combat idleness and cattle rustling (*dahalo*), and promote agricultural productivity. They also oversee tax awareness campaigns.
- Environmental *Dina*: Formation of Local Environmental Committees (LEC) to protect the environment, prevent deforestation, wildfires, and promote reforestation.

These community conventions serve both educational and punitive functions. The ultimate goal of local governance and rural accountability is the optimal valorization of local resources, thereby improving farmer incomes and breaking the rural population poverty trap in the Melaky region.

5. Conclusion

Madagascar's current public policy on agriculture is centered around the ALF Sectoral Program and the National Agricultural Investment Program. However, despite the Malagasy government efforts in developing an agricultural services strategy in 2008 - including the establishment of CSA and FRD to meet the sector's needs - the outcomes have fallen short of expectations. The key question remains: Why has the implementation of public policies been ineffective? Analyses indicate that the limited effectiveness stems from issues related to the insufficiency, allocation, and management of financial resources. Furthermore, two major challenges emerge: on the one hand, a lack of political will among those in power, as the agricultural sector is not considered a priority; and on the other hand, a lack of inclusiveness among the various stakeholders involved in the sector.

The agricultural sectoral policy is both inadequate and ineffective, with actions largely confined to the theoretical formulation of policies without due consideration for their implementation. Meanwhile, farmers, livestock breeders, and small-scale fishers continue to grapple with persistent challenges, including outdated production methods, obsolete techniques, poor access to markets and financing for capitalization, weak adherence to quality and standards, limited access to essential services, inadequate organizational and structural support, and minimal participation in policy dialogues. Furthermore, the inequitable distribution of agricultural product revenues throughout the supply chain remains unfavorable to producers.

The political model is also chosen for its ability to generate cross-cutting effects. Local governance of regional potential provides a positive and suitable approach to addressing the complex issues that contribute to agricultural producers' poverty. This model equally facilitates the mobilization of all development stakeholders in the agricultural sector by defining their respective roles and responsibilities while reinforcing the accountability of rural communities. The inclusion of the Fokonolona - Madagascar's grassroots community - in all decision-making processes that concern them, particularly regarding the exploitation of local resources, is essential. Consequently, actions taken will align with field realities, reflect the aspirations of producers, enhance their involvement in decision-making on matters affecting them, improve the transparency of decisions, and expand the accountability of elected officials. Beyond promoting the rational exploitation of regional agricultural potential, this model provides a sustainable solution to the poverty trap faced by agricultural producers by improving their incomes. If these expected results are achieved, all proposed hypotheses are confirmed. However, a new research question emerges: To what extent do the conviction and political will of the central government enable the effective implementation of this local governance model, regardless of its designation, associated structures, and their autonomy?

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