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The purpose of the *Kuveza neKuumba - Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University Journal of Design, Innovative Thinking and Practice* is to provide a forum for design and innovative solutions to daily challenges in communities.

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Abstract: must be 200 words

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Agropolitan-based Area Development: Linking Rural Production Spaces to Urban Regional Markets

EDSON CHAGWEDERA¹ AND GIFT MANHIMANZI²

Abstract

To integrate rural production areas with urban regional markets, this study investigates the idea of agropolitan-based area development. This approach's possible advantages, difficulties and consequences for sustainable development are all examined. The study identifies important ideas and arguments around agropolitan development through a thorough examination of literature and case study analysis. The case studies of agropolitan-based area development in Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, Kenya and Brazil are employed and provide valuable insights into the practical implementation and outcomes of this concept. These case studies on agropolitan development highlight the diverse approaches, challenges and impacts of this concept in different contexts. These examples demonstrate the potential of agropolitan-based area development in enhancing rural-urban linkages, promoting economic growth and addressing social and environmental challenges. The results underline the necessity of integrated policies and approaches that close the gap between rural and urban areas, promote economic development and consider social and environmental issues.

Keywords: sustainability, market integration, community welfare, economic development, livelihood diversification; food security

INTRODUCTION

The marketing system of agropolitan production is closely linked to regional growth centres, regional markets and

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metropolitan cities that serve as national market centres (Surya, *et al.*, 2021). These centres have a global orientation and play a significant role in regional development policies and practices. However, the relevance of these policies has been questioned due to the emergence of a new economic geography influenced by globalisation. Many countries are now adopting a more democratic and decentralised approach to planning and implementing development activities. Additionally, large cities have transformed into manufacturing hubs with modern transportation systems, connecting urban consumers with rural areas and villages. This interdependence highlights the importance of a production marketing system for urban communities.

The concept of agropolitan-based area development has gained significant attention as a strategy to bridge the gap between rural production spaces and urban regional markets (Rifani *et al.*, 2020; Surya, *et al.*, 2021). This approach aims to create integrated and sustainable development models that maximise the potential of rural areas, while meeting the demands of urban centres. By linking rural and urban economies, agropolitan-based area development seeks to address issues of poverty, food security and rural-urban migration (Newman and Page, 2017; Ahmad and Saleh, 2019; Rifani *et al.*, 2020).

The current problem lies in existing disparities between rural and urban areas which often result in economic and social imbalances. Rural regions face challenges such as limited market access, inadequate infrastructure and a lack of opportunities for economic growth (Sakir, 2017). On the other hand, urban centres experience strain on resources, overcrowding and increased pressure on local food systems. Agropolitan-based area development offers a potential solution by creating a symbiotic relationship between these two areas, leveraging the strengths of both to drive sustainable development and improve the livelihoods of rural communities (Ahmad and Saleh 2019, Surya, *et al.*, 2021).

This article aims to explore the concept of agropolitan-based area development in depth, examining its potential benefits, challenges and implications for sustainable development. It

provides a comprehensive analysis of the current literature on the subject, highlighting major debates and identifying any gaps or missing links in the scholarship. Additionally, the article presents case studies that illustrate the practical implementation of agropolitan-based area development, analysing the outcomes and lessons learned. The findings of this study contribute to the existing knowledge and provide insights for policy-makers, researchers and practitioners involved in rural and urban development planning and decision-making processes.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework of this study revolves around several key concepts that define the understanding and implementation of agropolitan-based area development. These concepts provide a foundation for examining the linkages between rural production spaces and urban regional markets and the broader implications for sustainable development. The word "agro" refers to agriculture and the word "politan" refers to a city. An agropolitan city is an agricultural town that thrives on agriculture and contributes to the agricultural activities of its surroundings. Regarding the term "agropolitan", Friedman and Douglas coined it in 1975 in response to the then existing development divide between the city and the countryside. People-centred development, a development paradigm that emerged at the time, influenced this idea (Sitorus, 2015). Agropolitan-based area development refers to a comprehensive approach that integrates rural and urban areas to foster economic growth, social development and environmental sustainability (Townsend *et al.*, 2019; Surya, *et al.* 2021). It emphasises the development of agro-industrial activities, value chains and market linkages that connect rural producers with urban consumers. This concept recognises the importance of leveraging the agricultural potential of rural areas and simultaneously addressing the needs and demands of urban markets.

Rural-urban linkages play a crucial role in agropolitan-based area development. These linkages encompass the economic, social and institutional connections between rural and urban areas, facilitating the flow of goods, services, capital and

knowledge (Syarifudin and Ishak, 2020). They enable rural producers to access urban markets, technologies and resources, while urban centres benefit from a diversified and sustainable supply of agricultural products. Effective rural-urban linkages can lead to increased income generation, job opportunities, improved livelihoods for rural communities and enhanced food security and urban resilience.

The concept of sustainable development is fundamental to agropolitan-based area development. It emphasises the integration of economic growth, social progress and environmental protection (Ahmad and Saleh, 2019). In the context of this study, sustainable development entails ensuring that the development of rural production spaces and their integration with urban regional markets are environmentally sound, socially inclusive and economically viable in the long term. It involves balancing economic profitability with environmental conservation, promoting social equity and inclusiveness and fostering resilient and adaptive systems. The successful implementation of agropolitan-based area development requires the formulation and implementation of integrated policies and strategies (Sakir, Tikson et al., 2017). These policies should holistically address the multi-dimensional aspects of development, considering economic, social and environmental factors. Integrated policies promote coordination and collaboration among various stakeholders, including government agencies, private sector entities, civil society organisations and local communities. They help align objectives, harmonise regulations and promote synergies between rural and urban development efforts, enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of agropolitan-based area development initiatives.

The community predominantly engages in three types of businesses: (i) agricultural food crops; (ii) horticultural commodities; and (iii) plantation commodities. The concept of agropolitan-based area development, which focuses on rural agribusiness, aims to address regional development imbalances by recognising cities as centres of economic growth and rural areas as centres of agricultural activity. However, the current interaction between these two regions is not yet optimal or mutually beneficial in most countries, as highlighted by Surya

(2021). Several factors contribute to this situation, including the stagnant economic productivity of community businesses, excessive burdens placed on urban areas as market destinations and the presence of social problems, poverty and environmental degradation. These development gaps exist at various spatial scales and can be utilised as indicators of regional development inequality, as discussed by Hansen (2018) and Surya (2021).

Figure 1 shows how the agropolitan-based area development model achieves the goal of linking rural production spaces to urban regional markets.

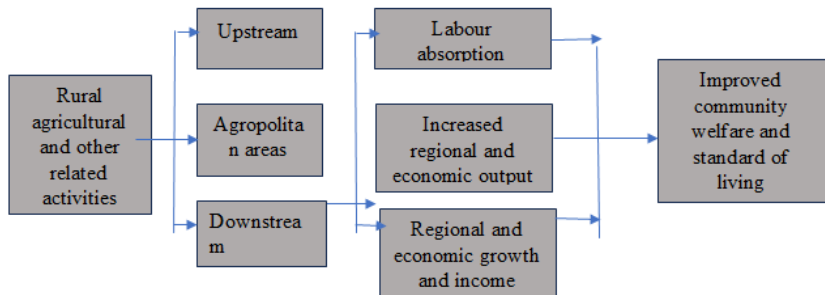


Figure 1: *Conceptual Framework* (Authors elaboration)

Figure 1 illustrates that the sustainable development of agropolitan-based agribusiness areas in rural regions presents a potential solution for promoting interaction between rural areas, which serve as the foundation for agricultural production and cities, which act as marketing centres. The integration process encompasses the flow of agricultural commodities from upstream to downstream subsystems, as analysed by Latif *et al.* (2022). This integration involves establishing synergistic and productive linkages between upstream and downstream business activities (vertical integration) and fostering connections between regions, sectors even different commodities, as highlighted by Santoso (2021). By implementing harmonised upstream-downstream policies, it is anticipated that a favourable business environment will be created, leading to increased productivity, quality and sustainability of agricultural production. Moreover, these

policies are expected to boost the volume and enhance the quality of agricultural product processing industries. The foundation of this integration is characterised by cooperation, collaboration, information sharing, trust, partnership, technology deployment and a transition from individual processes to an integrated value chain.

The process will have an impact on increasing regional competitiveness, economic value addition, improving community welfare through labour absorption, increasing economic output and increasing economic and regional growth and income.

By considering the above key concepts, this study provides a comprehensive understanding of agropolitan-based area development and its potential for fostering sustainable rural and urban development. These concepts provide a framework for analysing the challenges, opportunities and implications of this approach, guiding the exploration of relevant literature and case studies in subsequent sections of the article.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Agropolitan-based area development is situated within a broader contextual framework that encompasses rural-urban dynamics, sustainable development and regional economic integration. This literature review explores how the concept is positioned within this framework, identifies major debates and highlights missing links in the scholarship.

RURAL-URBAN DYNAMICS

Rural and urban areas are interdependent and interact, as highlighted by the literature on rural-urban dynamics. Recognising the interdependence of rural and urban areas, instead of seeing them as distinct entities, is reflected in agropolitan-based area development. The flow of capital, labour and goods between rural production zones and metropolitan regional markets has been studied by various academics (Agergaard *et al.*, 2009; Montalvo, 2019; Peng *et al.*, 2019). Discussions in this field revolve around the best ways to take advantage of these connections to accomplish goals related to sustainable development. Some scholars emphasise more on

value chain development (Sitorus *et al.*, 2015; Sakir *et al.*, 2017; Surya *et al.*, 2021), while inclusive governance frameworks that empower rural people are emphasised by others (Friedmann, 1981; Buang, *et al.*, 2011; Blay-Palmer *et al.*, 2017; Syarifudin and Ishak, 2020; He and Zhang, 2022).

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Agropolitan-based area development aligns with the principles of sustainable development which seek to balance economic growth, social equity and environmental protection (Syarifudin and Ishak, 2020). The literature explores how this approach contributes to sustainable rural and urban development by addressing poverty, food security and environmental degradation. However, there are debates regarding the trade-offs and synergies between economic growth and environmental sustainability. Scholars emphasise the importance of adopting integrated strategies that promote resource efficiency, climate resilience and social inclusiveness. Additionally, there is need for further research on social dimensions of sustainability, such as gender equity and social justice, within the context of agropolitan-based area development (Park *et al.*, 2000; Wirahayu *et al.*, 2022).

REGIONAL ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

Agropolitan-based area development has implications for regional economic integration, particularly in the context of market access and trade. The literature highlights the potential benefits of connecting rural producers with urban regional markets, such as increased income generation and employment opportunities. Scholars examine the role of agropolitan development in enhancing regional competitiveness, reducing income disparities and promoting regional value chains. However, there are debates surrounding the potential risks of market concentration and inequitable distribution of benefits (Ahmad, 2019; Surya *et al.*, 2021).

MISSING LINKS IN THE SCHOLARSHIP

While the literature on agropolitan-based area development has made significant contributions, several missing links warrant further exploration. There is need for more empirical studies that provide in-depth analyses of successful cases and lessons

learned. This can help identify best practices, challenges and contextual factors that influence the outcomes of agropolitan-based area development initiatives. There also exists a gap in understanding the social and cultural dimensions of agropolitan development, including issues of social inclusion, cultural preservation and community empowerment. There is limited research on the scalability and replicability of agropolitan-based area development models across different contexts. Future studies should examine the transferability of successful cases and explore adaptation strategies in diverse socio-economic and environmental settings.

The literature reviewed reveals that agropolitan-based area development is situated within the broader context of rural-urban dynamics, sustainable development and regional economic integration. It highlights the need for integrated strategies, inclusive governance and attention to social and cultural dimensions. The debates centre on optimising rural-urban linkages, balancing economic growth with environmental sustainability and ensuring equitable distribution of benefits. The missing links in the scholarship call for more empirical studies, a deeper understanding of social and cultural dimensions and research on scalability and replicability.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study used a qualitative methodology with a leaning towards the case study research design since the goal of the study was to provide a comprehensive concept of agropolitan-based area development. Amaechi *et al.* (2022) observe that the case study research design looks into specific cases to give a detailed picture of the phenomenon under study. There is need for a clear picture of the implementation and outcomes of the agropolitan-based area development initiatives. To craft the discourse for this study, secondary data collection, through an analysis of journals from Google Scholar, was engaged. The study used a narrative data analysis method to analyse the study findings as guided by the research objectives.

FINDINGS

This section presents the findings of the study, focusing on the analysis of selected case studies that illustrate the practical

implementation and outcomes of agropolitan-based area development. The selection of case studies on agropolitan development in Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, Kenya and Brazil was based on several reasons. Firstly, these countries have notable and well-documented initiatives in agropolitan development, making them significant case studies in the field of rural development. They have received international recognition and have been thoroughly studied by scholars, policy-makers and practitioners.

The success and impact of the agropolitan approach in these countries have been remarkable. The initiatives led to increased income generation, employment opportunities, improved quality of life for rural communities and the preservation of cultural heritage. These positive outcomes make them compelling case studies for understanding the potential benefits of agropolitan development. Moreover, these case studies have demonstrated replicability, as the agropolitan development strategies implemented in these countries have been adapted and replicated in various regions globally. The successful implementation and the lessons learned from these experiences have served as inspiring examples for other countries, making them influential cases to study.

The agropolitan development strategies in these case studies encompassed diverse elements that include the identification of unique local products, capacity-building, marketing assistance and infrastructure development. This comprehensive approach provides valuable insights into the multidimensional aspects of agropolitan development and sheds light on the interplay between economic, social and cultural factors. Additionally, the challenges encountered during the implementation of these agropolitan development strategies, such as limited access to finance, inadequate infrastructure and sustained market demand, are also highlighted. Understanding these challenges and the strategies employed to address them can provide valuable lessons for future agropolitan development initiatives. Overall, the case studies of agropolitan development in these countries exemplify how the implementation of a comprehensive

rural development strategy can yield positive outcomes for rural communities. They offer insights into the potential benefits, challenges.

The case studies provide insights into the diverse approaches, potential benefits, challenges and key considerations for policy-makers and practitioners seeking to promote sustainable development in rural areas. These cases were selected to have an appreciation of agropolitan development in some of the fast-growing economies across the world that are moving towards sustainable development in rural areas. These countries have focused on improving the effectiveness of rural products, thus bringing about infrastructural development strengthening market linkages, hence allowing agro-entrepreneurship in rural areas.

THE CASE OF AGROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT IN THAILAND

The Thai government introduced the "One Tambon, One Product" (OTOP) programme in the early 2000s, which aimed at promoting rural development by identifying and supporting unique products from each administrative sub-district (*tambon*) (Natsuda, *et al.*, 2012). The OTOF programme was a key component of the broader agropolitan development strategy that sought to create sustainable rural economies and reduce urban-rural disparities.

The agropolitan approach in Thailand focused on enhancing the competitiveness of rural products, improving infrastructure and strengthening market linkages. Local communities were encouraged to identify and develop their unique products, such as handicrafts, textiles and agricultural goods. The government provided support through capacity-building, marketing assistance and infrastructure development.

The outcomes of the agropolitan development initiative in Thailand were significant. It led to increased income-generation, employment opportunities and improved quality of life for rural communities. The promotion of local products and the establishment of market linkages helped rural producers access urban markets, leading to higher prices and increased market

visibility. The agropolitan approach also contributed to the preservation of traditional knowledge and cultural heritage, as local communities were empowered to showcase their unique products and skills.

However, there were challenges in the implementation of the agropolitan development strategy. Limited access to finance, inadequate infrastructure and a lack of technical expertise, were identified as major barriers. Additionally, sustaining market demand for rural products and ensuring the long-term viability of agropolitan initiatives remained ongoing challenges. Despite these challenges, the case of agropolitan development in Thailand demonstrates the potential of this approach in enhancing rural-urban linkages and promoting sustainable development.

THE UDON THANI FRUIT CORRIDOR

The Udon Thani Fruit Corridor is an agricultural development project located in Udon Thani Province, Thailand, focused on fruit production. It aims at creating a specialised fruit production zone, enhancing productivity and promoting value-added processing and marketing of fruits (Supatn, 2012). The corridor leverages the region's favourable climate and fertile soil to cultivate a variety of fruits such as *durian*, *longan* and *pomelo*. Key features of the Udon Thani Fruit Corridor include the establishment of orchards, infrastructure development, research and development support and the formation of farmer cooperatives. The project aims at increasing farmers' income, creating employment opportunities and fostering economic growth in the region. Challenges such as water management, pests and diseases and market access need to be addressed for the sustained success of the Udon Thani Fruit Corridor. Continued investment in infrastructure, technology adoption, farmer training and market integration efforts will be crucial for the corridor's long-term viability and competitiveness.

THE CASE OF AGROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT IN BRAZIL

The Brazilian government launched the "Integrated Territorial Development" (ITD) programme, which aimed at promoting territorial development by strengthening rural-urban linkages and fostering value chains in selected regions (Levidow *et al.*,

2021). The ITD programme sought to address issues of poverty, rural migration and food security through an integrated and participatory approach.

The agropolitan development strategy in Brazil focused on diversifying rural economies, improving infrastructure and promoting inclusive governance structures. It aimed at integrating small-scale producers into value chains, strengthening local agro-industries and enhancing access to markets. The ITD programme emphasised the involvement of local communities, civil society organisations and public-private partnerships in decision-making processes and implementation. The outcomes of the agropolitan development programme in Brazil were promising. It led to increased agricultural productivity, income-generation and employment opportunities in rural areas. The integration of small-scale producers into value chains enabled them to access higher-value markets and achieve economies of scale. The agropolitan approach also contributed to environmental sustainability by promoting sustainable agricultural practices and natural resource management.

However, challenges were encountered during the implementation of the agropolitan development programme in Brazil. Issues such as land tenure, access to credit and market volatility were identified as significant barriers. In some cases, power dynamics and conflicts emerged between different stakeholders, highlighting the importance of inclusive governance structures and conflict resolution mechanisms. Despite these challenges, the case of agropolitan development in Brazil demonstrates the potential of this approach in fostering rural-urban linkages, reducing poverty and promoting sustainable development.

THE BRAZIL FAMILY FARMING DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The Brazil Family Farming Development Programme (PRONAF) is a significant initiative aimed at supporting family farming and rural development in Brazil. Launched in 1995, PRONAF focuses on improving the livelihoods of family farmers, reducing rural poverty and enhancing agricultural productivity (Mulyana, 2014). The programme operates through various strategies,

including targeted credit facilities, technical assistance, agricultural insurance and market access facilitation. PRONAF has demonstrated positive impacts such as poverty reduction, increased productivity, improved food security and empowerment of family farmers. However, challenges remain, including limited programme reach, access to markets, climate change resilience and policy coherence. Overall, PRONAF serves as an essential case study in promoting sustainable family farming and inclusive rural development in Brazil.

KENYA'S PERI-URBAN AGRIBUSINESS CLUSTERS

Kenya's peri-urban agribusiness clusters have emerged as a strategic approach to connect rural agricultural production with urban market demand. These clusters are located near urban centres and encompass diverse agricultural activities, value addition and agro-processing (Akkoyunlu, 2015). The benefits of peri-urban agribusiness clusters include improved market access, employment generation, enhanced food security and increased income through value addition. However, challenges such as land-use pressures, infrastructure development, access to finance, market dynamics and climate change resilience, need to be addressed. To ensure their success, supportive policies, investment in infrastructure, access to finance, capacity-building and climate adaptation strategies are necessary. Kenya's peri-urban agribusiness clusters serve as a valuable model for promoting sustainable agriculture and economic development, bridging the gap between rural and urban sectors.

VIETNAM'S MEKONG DELTA VEGETABLE AGROPOLIS

Vietnam's Mekong Delta Vegetable Agropolis is an agricultural development concept focused on the production of vegetables in the Mekong Delta region. The agropolis aims at enhancing agricultural productivity, promoting sustainable practices and meeting the increasing demand for vegetables, both domestically and internationally (Fang *et al.*, 2020). The key features of the Mekong Delta Vegetable Agropolis include the utilisation of advanced farming techniques, adoption of climate-smart practices and establishment of value chains to facilitate market access. This initiative seeks to boost the income of farmers, improve food security and contribute to the economic

growth of the region. However, challenges such as water management, land degradation and market integration need to be addressed for the successful implementation of the Mekong Delta Vegetable Agropolis. Efforts to strengthen infrastructure, enhance research and development and promote collaboration among stakeholders will be crucial for the long-term sustainability and prosperity of the agropolis.

INDONESIA'S AGROPOLITAN AND MINAPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Indonesia's Agropolitan and Minapolitan Development Programme aims at promoting rural development and economic growth by focusing on the development of agribusiness and fisheries sectors. Agropolitan refers to the development of integrated agricultural-based communities, while Minapolitan focuses on the development of integrated fishery-based communities. The programme aims at transforming rural areas by modernising agricultural practices, improving infrastructure, providing access to finance and technology and facilitating market linkages (Handayani, *et al.*, 2021). The goals of the programme include poverty reduction, increased productivity, job-creation and food security. Challenges such as limited access to resources, inadequate infrastructure and market constraints need to be addressed for the successful implementation of the Agropolitan and Minapolitan Development Programme. Continued investment, policy support and collaboration among stakeholders are crucial for the sustainable development and prosperity of rural communities in Indonesia.

Overall, the case studies of agropolitan development in Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, Kenya and Brazil highlight the diverse approaches, challenges and impacts of this concept in different contexts. These examples demonstrate the potential of agropolitan-based area development in enhancing rural-urban linkages, promoting economic growth and addressing social and environmental challenges. However, challenges such as limited access to finance, inadequate infrastructure and governance issues need to be addressed to ensure the long-term sustainability and scalability of agropolitan initiatives. The findings of these case studies contribute to the understanding

of the practical implementation of agropolitan-based area development and provide insights for policy-makers, researchers and practitioners involved in rural and urban development planning.

DISCUSSION

The findings from the case studies of agropolitan-based area development in Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, Kenya and Brazil provide valuable insights into practical implementation and outcomes of this concept. The discussion assesses whether the theory and findings are converging, diverging or bringing new evidence and discusses the implications for policy and practice.

Overall, the findings from the case studies align with the theoretical foundations of agropolitan-based area development, demonstrating convergence between theory and practice. The case studies illustrate the potential of this approach in enhancing rural-urban linkages, promoting economic growth and addressing social and environmental challenges. The emphasis on value chain development, market access and infrastructure improvement in both cases aligns with the theoretical underpinnings of agropolitan development. Furthermore, the empowerment of local communities, the preservation of cultural heritage and the focus on participatory governance reflect the principles of sustainable development and social inclusion embedded in the theoretical framework.

Nevertheless, the case studies also reveal some divergences and nuances that provide new evidence and insights. For instance, the challenges encountered in the implementation of agropolitan development initiatives, such as limited access to finance, inadequate infrastructure and governance issues, highlight the need for tailored approaches that address specific contexts and constraints of each region. Additionally, the case studies shed light on the importance of addressing social and cultural dimensions alongside economic considerations. The preservation of traditional knowledge, cultural heritage and community empowerment emerged as critical factors for the success and sustainability of agropolitan-based area development.

The implications of these findings for policy and practice are significant. Firstly, policy-makers and practitioners need to recognise the importance of context-specific approaches and tailor interventions to address the specific challenges and opportunities of each region. A one-size-fits-all approach may not be effective in achieving sustainable outcomes. Secondly, the findings highlight the need for comprehensive and integrated strategies that encompass economic, social and environmental dimensions. Agropolitan-based area development should not focus solely on economic growth, but also aim to promote social inclusion, cultural preservation and environmental sustainability. Thirdly, governance structures need to be inclusive, participatory and responsive to the needs and aspirations of local communities. Engaging stakeholders from different sectors and ensuring their active involvement in decision-making processes can enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of agropolitan initiatives.

In conclusion, the findings from the case studies of agropolitan-based area development in Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, Kenya and Brazil demonstrate convergence between theory and practice, while also providing new evidence and insights. The case studies highlight the potential of agropolitan development in enhancing rural-urban linkages, promoting economic growth and addressing social and environmental challenges. However, challenges such as limited access to finance, inadequate infrastructure and governance issues need to be addressed through tailored approaches. The findings underscore the importance of comprehensive and integrated strategies that encompass economic, social and environmental dimensions and the need for inclusive governance structures. These implications should inform policy and practice in the design and implementation of agropolitan-based area development initiatives.

RESULTS

IDEAL SCHEMATIC AGROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT MODEL

For the whole ADVOCACY made in this article, Figure 2 provides an ideal schematic agropolitan development model.

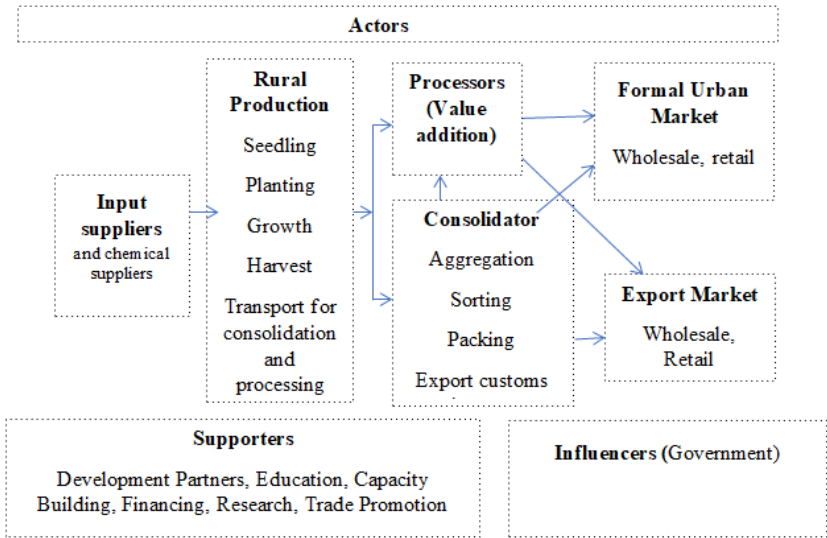


Figure 2: Schematic Agropolitan Development Model (Author elaboration, 2024).

As shown in Figure 2, discussions made in the article have shown that the agropolitan rural-urban linkages involve various actors and stakeholders who play crucial roles in connecting rural production spaces to urban markets. Here is a description of the key actors shown:

- Input suppliers are companies or entities that provide agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, pesticides and machinery to farmers or producers in agropolitan areas. Input suppliers play a vital role in ensuring the availability of quality inputs for agricultural production.
- Farmers or producers are at the core of the agropolitan system. They engage in agricultural activities, cultivate crops, raise livestock or engage in other forms of agricultural production. They are responsible for producing the raw materials that are later processed or sold in urban markets.
- Processors or value-addition industries play a crucial role in the agropolitan system by adding value to raw agricultural products. They transform primary agricultural commodities into processed or value-added products such

as food products, beverages, textiles or biofuels. Processors enhance the marketability and profitability of agricultural products, creating new opportunities for farmers and expanding the range of products available in urban markets.

- Aggregators or consolidators act as intermediaries between farmers/producers and markets. They collect and aggregate agricultural products from multiple farmers, often providing services such as quality control, grading, packaging and storage. Aggregators facilitate the efficient movement of produce from rural areas to urban markets.
- Domestic and foreign markets are the ultimate destinations for agricultural products from the agropolitan areas. Domestic markets refer to the local or national markets where the produce is consumed or sold. Foreign markets involve export-oriented trade, where agricultural products are sold to international buyers.
- Supporters of agropolitan development include various stakeholders such as development partners (international organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs)), transporters, banks, academia, civil society organisations, researchers and trade promotion agencies. They provide financial, technical and knowledge support to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of agropolitan initiatives.
- Government ministries and agencies hold significant influence in shaping agropolitan development policies and frameworks. They play a crucial role in formulating regulations, providing infrastructure support, facilitating market access and coordinating various stakeholders involved in the agropolitan system.

Processors may include food processing companies, textile mills, biofuel refineries, or other industries involved in value addition. These can be established in or near rural areas close to raw materials. They often require a steady supply of raw materials from farmers or aggregators and their activities contribute to job creation, economic growth and the diversification of rural economies. By integrating processors or value-addition industries into the agropolitan rural-urban linkages, the overall agricultural value chain is strengthened.

This integration allows for higher-value products, increased market opportunities and improved income-generation for farmers and other stakeholders involved in the agropolitan system.

The aforementioned actors and stakeholders work together to establish and strengthen rural-urban linkages in the agropolitan context, enabling the flow of agricultural products, knowledge, resources and support between rural production spaces and urban markets. Their collaboration is essential for the success and development of agropolitan-based area initiatives.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, this study has examined the concept of agropolitan-based area development through analysis of case studies in Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, Kenya and Brazil. The findings demonstrate the potential of this approach in enhancing rural-urban linkages, promoting economic growth and addressing social and environmental challenges. The case studies have provided valuable insights into the practical implementation and outcomes of agropolitan development, highlighting the importance of tailored approaches, comprehensive strategies and inclusive governance structures.

To ensure the effective implementation of agropolitan-based area development using the recommended model, several recommendations can be made:

- Policy-makers and practitioners should prioritise the development of context-specific approaches that address the specific challenges, opportunities and aspirations of each region. This requires conducting a thorough analysis of the local context, engaging local communities and stakeholders and designing interventions that are tailored to meet their needs.
- Comprehensive strategies that encompass economic, social and environmental dimensions should be adopted. This includes promoting value chain development, improving infrastructure, facilitating market access and preserving cultural heritage and traditional knowledge.
- It is also crucial to prioritise inclusive governance structures that actively involve local communities, civil

- society organisations and public-private partnerships in decision-making processes.
- There is also need for continued research and knowledge exchange on agropolitan-based area development. This includes further exploration of innovative approaches, best practices and lessons learned from different regions and countries.
 - Additionally, monitoring and evaluation frameworks should be developed to assess the impact and outcomes of agropolitan initiatives. This will provide evidence-based insights and inform the design and implementation of future projects.

In conclusion, agropolitan-based area development has considerable potential in promoting sustainable rural-urban linkages and addressing development challenges. By adopting tailored approaches, comprehensive strategies and inclusive governance structures, policy-makers, practitioners and communities can foster economic growth, social inclusion and environmental sustainability. Through continued research, knowledge exchange and monitoring, the effectiveness and scalability of agropolitan initiatives can be enhanced, leading to more equitable and sustainable development outcomes.

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