


Chapter 4

Agricultural and Food Policy: Pathways to Sustainable Food Systems and Food Security

Abiodun Elijah Obayelu

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3328-7717>

Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Nigeria

Simeon Olusola Ayansina

Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

Policy plays significant role in defining the food system of any country, and a sustainable food system is necessary for food security. This chapter maps out the causal interactions between food systems, food security and policy, and the challenges in transition to a sustainable food system while respecting the rights of all people to have access to adequate food in Nigeria. Explicit, rigorous, and transparent literature search was undertaken and many articles were assessed and reviewed. Although the results established a mutual relationship between food system and food security, existing literature have widely failed to take interactions between food systems, food security and policy into account. While food production is used as an entry point to improving food system sustainability, the quest for food security are undermining transition towards sustainable food systems. It was found that without right policies in place, it may be difficult to have food systems that are sustainable and ensure food security. This chapter provides a useful contribution to policy, and research on transitions towards sustainable food system. Any policy intervention to address one part of the food systems will impact on other parts and will determine whether a country is food secure or not. Enabling policy environment is therefore essential in ensuring a sustainable food system and for the attainment of food security.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-5352-0.ch004

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Food system is a web of multiple interconnecting elements (Hospes & Brons, 2016; Béné, et al., 2019) and is at the center of global environmental, social, and economic challenges such as resource scarcity, ecosystem degradation, and climate change (Freibauer et al., 2011; Garnett, 2014; Gladek et al., 2016; IPES-Food, 2015; Lang, 2009; Searchinger et al., 2013). It is the interconnected system of everything and everybody that are involved in bringing food from farm to fork and beyond (Parsons et al., 2019). Agriculture is the foundation of all food systems and *food systems* are at the heart of many of the major *challenges* facing the world today. This may not be unconnected to the fact that agricultural produce is the primary source of most nutrients. If agriculture cannot supply all the essential nutrients in the quantity required for good health and productive lives, malnutrition develops (Miller & Welch, 2013). Food systems are linked to the nutritional wellbeing and health of individuals and populations through the nutrients and other bioactive components contained in the foods they supply. Food system is a term used frequently in discussions about nutrition, food, health, community economic development and agriculture and is influenced by social, political, cultural, technological, economic and natural environments (High-Level Panel of Experts [HLPE], 2014; United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP], 2016; Global Panel, 2016; HLPE, 2017). The concept of food system provides a framework for an integrated description of two-way interaction of food with both natural resources and socio-economic conditions. The food we grow, harvest, process, trade, transport, store, sell and consume is the essential connecting thread between people, prosperity, and planet. A food system involves all processes and infrastructure involved in satisfying a population's food security (Porter et al., 2014). Food systems include food security outcomes (availability, accessibility, utilization and stability) of food as well as other socioeconomic and environmental factors (Ericksen, 2008; Ericksen et al., 2010; Ingram, 2011; Kearney, 2010).

Current food systems in Nigeria is observed not to be delivering food security and healthy food for everyone, nor are they sustainable using the limited natural resource inputs. While food production has more than doubled and diets have become more varied (and often more energy-intensive); a lot of people are still hungry, suffering from micronutrient deficiencies (in particular of vitamin A, iodine, iron and zinc) and overweight or obese. The complexity of the food system creates challenges for identifying and incorporating food security supporting policy opportunities. Due to the breadth of policies, there are possibilities of some policies negating another policy's effectiveness. For example, the benefits of local community incentives for more fruits and vegetables in convenience stores may be overwhelmed by federal or state policies that create a favourable business environment for the production of highly processed foods. Food related studies seem not to have paid due attention to the linkages between sustainable food systems, food security and food policy.

This chapter therefore synthesizes the interrelationships between food systems, food security and food policy goals, the challenges, and how to overcome them in the case of Nigeria. The chapter addresses the following questions:

1. What are the challenges facing food systems?
2. How do food systems link to food security and food policy?
3. What are the missing links in connecting food systems, food security and food policy in Nigeria?
4. How can food systems and policy help to address the problem of food insecurity in Nigeria?

13 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:

www.igi-global.com/chapter/agricultural-and-food-policy/299245

Related Content

Sustainable Entrepreneurship in Indigenous Communities in Colombia

Omar Alonso Patiño, Catalina Lucía Ruiz Arias and Paula Echeverry Pérez (2020). *Handbook of Research on Smart Territories and Entrepreneurial Ecosystems for Social Innovation and Sustainable Growth* (pp. 378-398).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/sustainable-entrepreneurship-in-indigenous-communities-in-colombia/246544

Advancing Sustainability: Green Product Satisfaction, Circularity, and Sustainable Development

Christakis Kremmydas and Pantelis C. Kostis (2024). *International Journal of Social Ecology and Sustainable Development* (pp. 1-12).

www.irma-international.org/article/advancing-sustainability/335037

Survey of State-of-Art in Green Cloud Computing

Sanjay P. Ahuja and Karthika Muthiah (2016). *International Journal of Green Computing* (pp. 25-36).

www.irma-international.org/article/survey-of-state-of-art-in-green-cloud-computing/172465

Critical Success Factors of Sustainable Manufacturing and Procurement: An Empirical Study

Alok Khatri, D. Garg and G. S. Dangayach (2019). *International Journal of Social Ecology and Sustainable Development* (pp. 17-27).

www.irma-international.org/article/critical-success-factors-of-sustainable-manufacturing-and-procurement/234486

Sustainable Practices in Enogastronomic Tourism: The Case of Feudi di San Gregorio

Mario Ossorio (2025). *Global Sustainable Practices in Gastronomic Tourism* (pp. 513-528).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/sustainable-practices-in-enogastronomic-tourism/363772