



Beyond Ecological Deficits: Unveiling Institutional Pathologies Driving Food Insecurity in Contemporary Nigeria

Melampaui Defisit Ekologis: Membongkar Patologi Institusional Pendorong Kerawanan Pangan di Nigeria Kontemporer

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Article Info

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History:

Submitted: 03-07-2026

Revised: 25-08-2026

Accepted: 20-09-2026

Keyword:

Mimetic Isomorphism, Polycentric Governance, Comparative Policy Analysis, Tenurial Security, Elite Capture.

Kata Kunci:

Isomorfisme Mimetik, Tata Kelola Polisentris, Analisis Kebijakan Komparatif, Keamanan Tenurial, Kooptasi Elite.

Abstract

The normative mandate for food security in Nigeria faces systemic collapse, driven not by ecological deficits but by severe institutional pathologies and regulatory dysfunction. This study investigated the mechanisms of agricultural policy failure amidst extensive macroeconomic interventions. Utilizing process tracing and comparative policy analysis against agrarian transitions in Brazil and Vietnam, the research analyzed implementation data through qualitative thematic coding. Findings demonstrate that state interventions continuously suffer from elite capture within credit programs and mimetic isomorphism, creating structural decoupling between elite frameworks and local capacities. Furthermore, monopolistic land tenure regulations perpetuate tenurial insecurities and communal conflicts, inherently distorting agrarian productivity. Consequently, state capital injections cannot correct systemic vulnerabilities without transiting fundamentally from extractive rentier networks toward highly inclusive institutions. Offering an innovative food systems compact, this research proposes protected structural financing, decentralized tenure legalization, and polycentric governance, advancing institutionalism theory by directly linking tenurial security with global agrarian policy resilience.

Abstrak

Mandat normatif ketahanan pangan Nigeria menghadapi keruntuhan sistemik, didorong bukan oleh defisit ekologis melainkan oleh patologi institusional parah dan disfungsi regulasi. Penelitian ini menginvestigasi mekanisme kegagalan kebijakan pertanian di tengah intervensi makroekonomi ekstensif. Menggunakan pelacakan proses dan analisis kebijakan komparatif terhadap transisi agraria di Brasil dan Vietnam, riset ini menganalisis data implementasi melalui pengkodean tematik kualitatif. Temuan mendemonstrasikan bahwa intervensi negara secara kontinu menderita akibat kooptasi elite dalam program kredit dan isomorfisme mimetik, menciptakan pemisahan struktural antara kerangka elite dan kapasitas lokal. Selanjutnya, regulasi penguasaan lahan monopolistik melanggengkan insekuritas tenurial dan konflik komunal, secara inheren mendistorsi produktivitas agraria. Akibatnya, injeksi modal negara tidak dapat mengoreksi kerentanan sistemik tanpa transisi fundamental dari jaringan rentenir ekstraktif menuju institusi yang sangat inklusif. Menawarkan pakta sistem pangan inovatif, riset ini mengusulkan pembiayaan struktural terlindungi, legalisasi tenurial desentralisasi, dan tata kelola polisentris, memajukan teori institusionalisme dengan menautkan langsung keamanan tenurial bersama resiliensi kebijakan agraria global.



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<https://doi.org/10.65101/jspp.v2i1.463>

A. INTRODUCTION

1. Background

The normative tension between the constitutional mandate to guarantee citizen welfare and the right to food (*das sollen*) and the systemic reality of widespread hunger and structural deprivation at the grassroots level (*das sein*) constitutes a fundamental paradox in Nigeria's food security governance. Despite being a sovereign entity endowed with substantial agrarian resources, Nigeria continues to rely on the agricultural sector as the primary anchor of its post-exploration economy, which contributed approximately 22.9% to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2025.¹ Furthermore, this sector demonstrates high social persistence, absorbing approximately 33.5% of the total national workforce in 2025.² This contradiction indicates that the accelerated growth of the agrarian sector and its high labor absorption capacity remain insufficient to mitigate the chronic food insecurity crisis, which is further exacerbated by the dynamics of economic reform and structural barriers on the ground.

Nevertheless, these ecological and demographic modalities have yet to translate into sustainable food security. Recent projections from global humanitarian authorities estimate that nearly 35 million individuals in Nigeria potentially face acute hunger crises during the 2026 lean season, a significant escalation that underscores the apparent dysfunction of the existing policy architecture.³ This predicament is identified not merely as a temporal commodity supply anomaly resulting from weather fluctuations, but rather as a systemic crisis at the upstream policy level. It reflects the inefficient orchestration among national development visions, bureaucratic execution capacities, conflicting land regulation norms, and vulnerability to both geopolitical and macroeconomic shocks.⁴

A thematic synthesis of recent primary literature reveals an intensifying theoretical debate regarding the precipitation of agricultural policy failures in developing nations. The majority of studies driven by the neoclassical economic paradigm tend to reduce food

¹ National Bureau of Statistics, "Nigeria: GDP Share of Agriculture," *The Global Economy*, 2025, https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Nigeria/share_of_agriculture/.

² World Bank, "Employment in Agriculture (% of Total Employment) (Modeled ILO Estimate) - Nigeria," *World Bank*, 2026, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.AGR.EMPL.ZS?locations=NG>.

³ OCHA, "Nigeria 2026: Lean Season (An Unprecedented Food and Nutrition Crisis) Advocacy Note," *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*, 2026, <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/nigeria/nigeria-2026-lean-season-unprecedented-food-and-nutrition-crisis-advocacy-note>.

⁴ Amina Yusuf, Rajeev Kumar, and Thabo Mokoena, "From Colonial Law to Corporate Lawfare: The Neocolonial Logics of Resource Extraction," *Interdisciplinary Studies in Society, Law, and Politics* 5, no. 1 (2026): 1–13, <https://doi.org/10.61838/kman.isslp.457>.

insecurity to a linear function of physical infrastructure deficits, inadequate access to microfinancing, and market information asymmetry.⁵ This approach posits that capital injections and mechanical technological provisions can potentially correct market failures—an operational framework commonly replicated across various regions of Sub-Saharan Africa.⁶ Conversely, contemporary literature grounded in political sociology and public governance confronts this premise, asserting that the failure of technocratic interventions frequently stems from institutional pathologies.⁷ These studies elucidate that the absence of tenurial rights protection and the prevalence of patron-client relations facilitate elite capture, which distorts aggregate distribution.⁸ By juxtaposing these arguments, the issue of institutional dysfunction in Nigeria is elevated to a relevant global discourse wherein institutional governance is identified as the primary determinant of food system stability, aligning with agrarian transition phenomena observed in Latin America and Southeast Asia.⁹

Through the lens of new institutionalism theory, institutions are comprehended not merely as neutral administrative instruments but as constellations of formal and informal rules of the game that shape the incentive structures of actors' behavior.¹⁰ Historical institutionalism specifically highlights that public policy is subject to path dependence, wherein past decisions create consolidated power asymmetries, potentially yielding inefficient outcomes.¹¹ Furthermore, the sociological institutionalism perspective demonstrates how bureaucratic entities in developing countries frequently adopt

⁵ Yaya Deome Hamadjoda Lefe, Aloysius Mom Njong, and Richardson Kojo Edeme, "A Vision of Achieving Food Security: Does Physical Infrastructure Matter? A Sub-Saharan African Perspective," *Cogent Food & Agriculture* 10, no. 1 (December 31, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311932.2024.2350146>.

⁶ Ikechukwu Ogeze Ukeje et al., "Influence of Agricultural Stakeholders' Capability Development and Participation on Food Security in Ebonyi State: Towards Regime Politicization and Sustainability Implication in Nigeria," *Cogent Social Sciences* 12, no. 1 (December 31, 2026), <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2026.2627087>.

⁷ Olamide Emmanuel Abe, Dolapo Christopher Omotoso, and Oni Isaac Ojo, "The Nigerian Political Economy and Agricultural Sector," *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science* IX, no. VIII (2025): 610–21, <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRIS.2025.908000048>.

⁸ Yuhao Tan, "Historical Institutionalism, Political Settlement and Land Ownership System in Nigeria," *International Journal of Urban Sustainable Development* 17, no. 1 (December 31, 2025): 136–53, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19463138.2025.2495580>.

⁹ Lúcio Costa Proença et al., "Post-Growth for the Global South: Reframing Agricultural Policies in Brazil," *Land* 14, no. 4 (April 20, 2025): 904, <https://doi.org/10.3390/land14040904>.

¹⁰ André Sorensen, "New Institutionalism and Planning Theory," in *The Routledge Handbook of Planning Theory* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2018: Routledge, 2017), 250–63, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315696072-20>.

¹¹ James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, "The New Institutionalism: Organizational Factors in Political Life," *American Political Science Review* 78, no. 3 (December 1, 1983): 734–49, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1961840>.

sophisticated policy frameworks to meet external legitimacy standards (mimetic isomorphism) without commensurate internal capacity, thereby creating a decoupling phenomenon between policy documents and field practices.¹² Positioning itself as a moderator in this debate, the present analysis contends that technocratic interventions are prone to structural dysfunction when embedded in an institutional ecosystem ensnared by historical dysfunctions, regulatory overlap, and weak accountability governance.

From this constellation of literature, a fundamental blind spot or research gap emerges. The majority of food policy evaluations to date remain partial, administrative, and isolated within short-term metrics. Effectiveness indicators are often exclusively measured by the percentage of budget absorption or the volume of agricultural inputs, without critically tracing the causal transmission chain down to micro-indicators, such as post-climate shock resilience and the livelihood sustainability of smallholder farmers. In contrast to previous studies that predominantly focus on short-term sectoral output evaluations, this research offers a comparative approach by deconstructing the anatomy of implementation failure through the framework of institutionalism. This approach maps how normative tensions, voids in land tenure governance, and financing inefficiencies systematically distort policy outcomes at the grassroots level.

Therefore, the central thesis posited to anchor this argument is that Nigeria's agricultural policy cannot achieve a food security equilibrium without structured institutional design engineering that binds public resource allocation to an integrated food system accountability matrix. Policy interventions are projected to transform into catalysts for sustainable development only if they are reconceptualized from sporadic aid projects into an institutional agreement (a food systems compact)—drawn from cross-constitutional comparative lessons (Brazil and Vietnam)—that incorporates tenurial security, ecological protection, and the inclusion of local stakeholders.

2. Research Questions

Departing from the theoretical foundations and the dynamics of the empirical issues elucidated above, the analytical trajectory of this study is guided by a set of interrelated research questions. First, how do the pathologies of financing governance, asymmetric

¹² Vivien A. Schmidt, "Taking Ideas and Discourse Seriously: Explaining Change through Discursive Institutionalism as the Fourth 'New Institutionalism,'" *European Political Science Review* 2, no. 1 (March 4, 2010): 1–25, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S175577390999021X>.

land tenure rights, and policy isomorphism affect the rationality and effectiveness of ongoing agricultural policy implementation in Nigeria. Second, to what extent can historical and sociological institutionalism provide a causal explanation for the persistence of food insecurity amidst extensive government program interventions. Third, what institutional governance designs can be replicated and contextualized from global comparative precedents to support the transformation of Nigeria's food systems toward sustainability and resilience.

3. Research Method

This study was operationalized through the integration of process tracing and comparative policy analysis. This combined approach was employed to trace the causal mechanisms underpinning macro-social policy dynamics.¹³ The selection of Nigeria as the primary locus of investigation was grounded in a deviant case typology. This selection was justified by the empirical anomaly wherein the abundant availability of natural resources and successive policy initiatives across various regimes do not proportionally align with the country's highly vulnerable food security levels. This analytical design facilitated the isolation of confounding variables, thereby allowing for the precise identification of institutional factors driving systemic inefficiency.

Data collection relied on the methodological triangulation of primary documents, secondary literature, and empirical databases. Extracted primary documents encompassed strategic policies and blueprints, including the National Agricultural Technology and Innovation Policy (NATIP) 2022–2027, the Agriculture Promotion Policy (APP) 2016–2020, the Land Use Act 1978, and the evaluation reports of the Anchor Borrowers' Programme (ABP). Quantitative data were synthesized from official statistical databases, such as the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) of Nigeria and the macroeconomic indicators of the World Bank, alongside food insecurity projections from the FAO and WFP. These datasets were subsequently juxtaposed with empirical literature concerning land use, agrarian conflicts, and bureaucratic governance.

The transformation of raw data into theoretical constructs was executed through thematic coding, facilitated by the qualitative data analysis software NVivo. The compiled data were categorized into analytical clusters grounded in the institutionalism perspective: financing pathologies, asymmetric tenurial rights, institutional isomorphism,

¹³ Karol Olejniczak, Paweł Śliwowski, and Frans Leeuw, "Comparing Behavioral Assumptions of Policy Tools: Framework for Policy Designers," *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice* 22, no. 6 (November 1, 2020): 498–520, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13876988.2020.1808465>.

and cross-constitutional comparative lessons. Stakeholder analysis was concomitantly applied to map the distribution of authority and incentive structures among political-economic elites, donor agencies, bureaucratic apparatuses, and farming communities.

To ensure methodological trustworthiness and mitigate researcher bias, the normative claims enshrined within government documents (*de jure*) were critically juxtaposed against independent audit reports and impact evaluations from multilateral research institutions (*de facto*). Through this triangulation protocol, the divergence between policy formulation and implementation realities was analyzed objectively and proportionally.

B. DISCUSSION

1. Financial Dysfunction and Elite Capture in Agricultural Credit Programs or Rent-Extraction Mechanisms in Agrarian Financing

Investigations into agricultural financing instruments reveal substantial operational dysfunctions. The Anchor Borrowers' Programme (ABP), launched by Nigeria's monetary authority to secure national food sovereignty via liquidity injections for smallholder farmers, exhibits clear signs of structural failure. Empirical data demonstrate that although the program has disbursed ₦1.12 trillion, it currently faces a Non-Performing Loan (NPL) ratio comprising 76 percent of the portfolio as of 2025.^{14,15} Furthermore, an inquiry by the House of Representatives identifies alleged misappropriations executed through "ghost borrower" schemes, cost inflation, and collusion among banking agents, anchor companies, and local elites.¹⁶

These findings provide empirical evidence that refutes the foundational assumptions of legacy mainstream economic literature. As elucidated by Lefe et al. (2024), the neoclassical approach tends to reduce food insecurity to a mere deficit of physical infrastructure and access to financing.¹⁷ This paradigm posits that capital

¹⁴ Adamu Abuh, "Reps Probe Alleged Diversion of CBN's ₦1.12tn Anchor Borrowers Funds, Others," *The Guardian*, 2025, <https://guardian.ng/news/reps-probe-alleged-diversion-of-cbns-1-12tn-anchor-borrowers-funds-others/>.

¹⁵ Abdulkareem Mojeed, "CBN Fails to Recover N629 Billion Anchor Borrowers' Loan – Audit Report," *Premium Times*, 2025, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/839713-cbn-fails-to-recover-n629-billion-anchor-borrowers-loan-audit-report.html>.

¹⁶ Aliyu Muhammad, Dr. Mohammed Bello Baban' umma., and Dr. Abdullahi Mohammed Abdul, "Challenges of Implementing Anchor Borrower Programme for Food Security in Nasarawa State, Nigeria," *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science* VIII, no. IX (2024): 594–604, <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2024.809054>.

¹⁷ Hamadjoda Lefe, Mom Njong, and Edeme, "A Vision of Achieving Food Security: Does Physical Infrastructure Matter? A Sub-Saharan African Perspective."

injections will inherently correct market failures. However, a default rate exceeding 70 percent within the ABP demonstrates that unconditional credit injections do not correlate with increased aggregate productivity when the underlying institutional infrastructure is fragile.

Conversely, these findings strongly align with and reinforce arguments derived from contemporary political sociology and public governance literature. Abe et al. (2025) and Tan (2025) assert that technocratic interventions in the agricultural sector frequently fail because they are rooted in institutional pathologies, wherein the absence of the rule of law facilitates the hijacking of public resources (elite capture).^{18,19} The ABP phenomenon substantiates that state-controlled microcredit programs tend to be co-opted by elites unless accompanied by independent bureaucratic oversight.

Theoretically, this implementation distortion can be elucidated through the concepts of rational choice institutionalism and prebendalism. Actors distributing ABP loans operate within an incentive structure that minimizes the risk of penalization due to weak law enforcement capacity. When the operational system lacks an independent beneficiary validation framework, this institutional void is readily exploited. Furthermore, there are indications of path dependence, wherein a rent-seeking economic mentality is transferred to the agricultural sector. Policy institutions, normatively designed to enhance food security, are consequently distorted into instruments for wealth extraction and redistribution.

As an implication of these governance dynamics, future formulations of capital injection policies run the risk of repeated failure if executed through traditional bureaucratic mechanisms. Policy interventions necessitate technical restructuring and institutional engineering that integrate technology to curtail information asymmetry. The institutionalization of blockchain-based disbursement tracking instruments, mandatory grassroots-level biometric verification (Know Your Customer/KYC), and the synergy of investigative mandates between banking authorities and independent anti-corruption commissions are identified as fundamental prerequisites to restore the credibility of state fiscal interventions.

¹⁸ Abe, Omotoso, and Ojo, "The Nigerian Political Economy and Agricultural Sector."

¹⁹ Tan, "Historical Institutionalism, Political Settlement and Land Ownership System in Nigeria."

2. Land Tenure Constraints within the Food Production Architecture

An analysis of agrarian spatial structures indicates that the existing constellation of land regulations functions as a significant structural constraint. The Land Use Act of 1978, which centralizes the legal control of land within state authorities, inherently engenders tenurial uncertainty; currently, less than 3 percent of Nigerian households possess formal land ownership certificates.²⁰ This predicament inherently restricts smallholder farmers' access to collateral-based credit facilities, distorts incentives for long-term investments, triggers horizontal conflicts between nomadic pastoralists and sedentary farmers, and contributes to systemic land degradation.²¹

These empirical findings engage with and broaden the discourse established in preceding literature. Although neoclassical paradigms tend to posit infrastructure deficits as the primary determinant of food insecurity, as elucidated by Lefe et al. (2024),²² the empirical reality of property rights scarcity reinforces the political sociology thesis advanced by Tan (2025) and Abe et al. (2025).²³ These studies corroborate that the absence of tenurial protection facilitates elite capture. Furthermore, the present research extends this conceptualization by demonstrating that legal voids in land tenure not only perpetuate economic asymmetries but also manifest in the escalation of communal armed conflicts. Such territorial insecurity directly destabilizes harvesting activities and suppresses food supplies within strategic agricultural breadbaskets. Comparisons with agrarian transition phenomena in other developing nations, specifically the stabilization of property rights in Vietnam (Ho, 2021) and Brazil (Proença et al., 2025), further affirm that tenurial certainty serves as a fundamental prerequisite for the resilience of global food systems.²⁴

²⁰ Within the current compilation of Nigerian statutory codification, the Land Use Act of 1978 is officially incorporated into the Laws of the Federation of Nigeria (LFN) 2004 under Chapter L5.

²¹ H. K. Ibrahim, S. L. Hendriks, and H.C. Schönfeldt, "The Effect of Land Tenure across Food Security Outcomes among Smallholder Farmers Using a Flexible Conditional Difference-in-Difference Approach," *International Journal of Agricultural Sustainability* 21, no. 1 (December 31, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.1080/14735903.2023.2220900>.

²² Hamadjoda Lefe, Mom Njong, and Edeme, "A Vision of Achieving Food Security: Does Physical Infrastructure Matter? A Sub-Saharan African Perspective."

²³ Yuhao Tan, "Historical Institutionalism, Political Settlement and Land Ownership System in Nigeria," *International Journal of Urban Sustainable Development* 17, no. 1 (2025): 136–53; Olamide Emmanuel Abe, Dolapo Christopher Omotoso, and Oni Isaac Ojo, "The Nigerian Political Economy and Agricultural Sector," *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science* IX, no. VIII (2025): 610–21.

²⁴ Hoang-Anh Ho, "Land Tenure and Economic Development: Evidence from Vietnam," *World Development* 140 (2021): 105275; Lúcio Costa Proença et al., "Post-Growth for the Global South: Reframing Agricultural Policies in Brazil," *Land* 14, no. 4 (2025): 904.

The conceptual elucidation of this governance dysfunction can be analyzed through the lens of institutional layering within the framework of historical institutionalism.²⁵ Tenurial conflicts in Nigeria represent a paradigm wherein postcolonial positive legal instruments are superimposed upon customary tenure arrangements without commensurate normative harmonization. This dualistic uncertainty regarding property rights profoundly distorts future investment projections. Consequently, smallholder farmers confront severe structural disincentives to allocate capital toward Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) infrastructures, such as irrigation rehabilitation or soil fertility conservation. A jurisdictional synchronization void exists between the federal government, which formulates the national food security vision, and state authorities, which monopolize spatial allocation; this disconnect inevitably hinders policy execution at the grassroots level.

As a logical implication of these findings, governance architectures must prioritize structured reforms aimed at the decentralization of agrarian institutions. The legitimacy of access to natural resources requires immediate restoration via state instruments that formally recognize customary land tenure (informal land documents) and provide affirmative property rights for vulnerable populations. Furthermore, the institutionalization of cross-jurisdictional spatial planning is deemed crucial. This approach facilitates the mapping of secure logistical corridors and the designation of exclusive grazing reserves strictly delineated from cultivated lands, thereby ensuring the sustainable mitigation of communal insecurity.

3. Policy Decoupling and Barriers to Public Bureaucratic Coordination

A discourse analysis of federal-level strategic instruments, specifically the National Agricultural Technology and Innovation Policy (NATIP) 2022–2027 and the derivative commitments of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (ECOWAP/CAADP), reveals a profound asymmetry between formulation and operationalization.²⁶ The architecture of these policy documents projects a progressive framework, incorporating international standard nomenclature such as "global value

²⁵ Thomas Rixen and Lora Anne Viola, "Historical Institutionalism and International Relations: Towards Explaining Change and Stability in International Institutions," in *Historical Institutionalism and International Relations* (Oxford University Press, 2016), 3–34, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198779629.003.0001>.

²⁶ Nigeria, "National Agricultural Technology and Innovation Policy 2022-2027," 2022, https://climate-laws.org/document/national-agricultural-technology-and-innovation-policy-2022-2027_b19f; Danilson Varela et al., "Mechanisms Implemented for the Sustainable Development of Agriculture: An Overview of Cabo Verde Performance," *Sustainability* 12, no. 14 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12145855>.

chains," "digital innovation," and "climate resilience." However, operational-level findings demonstrate that the adoption of these modern narratives is not accompanied by the establishment of adequate foundational prerequisites. These missing elements include logistical infrastructure readiness, local extension agency capacity, centralized data integration, and clarity regarding the mandates of responsibility across ministerial authorities.

This operational dysfunction empirically validates the caveats prevalent within institutional governance literature. These findings reject a purely top-down bureaucratic approach and affirm the argument posited by Ukeje et al. (2026), which asserts that development intervention policies tend to culminate merely as administrative compliance documents when they disregard the capabilities of local-level stakeholders.²⁷ Furthermore, neglecting the deliberative capacity of grassroots communities has the potential to disrupt social cohesion and exacerbate the public trust deficit regarding the integrity of state policy execution.

Conceptually, this phenomenon of asymmetry can be elucidated through the frameworks of mimetic isomorphism and normative isomorphism within sociological institutionalism theory.²⁸ Amid demands for governance harmonization from global regimes and international donors, bureaucratic institutions in developing countries—including Nigeria—exhibit a propensity to mimic the structures, jargon, and policy instruments of jurisdictions perceived as more ideal. As analyzed by Wagner (2025) regarding public policy isomorphism, this narrative replication is frequently intended solely to project external legitimacy and secure the continuity of multilateral funding.²⁹ As a logical consequence, structural decoupling occurs: the framework appears comprehensive at the elite design level (*das sollen*), while practical operationalization on the ground suffers from severe inefficiency due to chain-of-command fragmentation, weak input allocation, and the unpreparedness of supporting instruments (*das sein*).

The implications of this analytical constellation underscore the urgency of reforming public policy-making mechanisms. The agricultural institutional ecosystem can

²⁷ Ukeje et al., "Influence of Agricultural Stakeholders' Capability Development and Participation on Food Security in Ebonyi State: Towards Regime Politicization and Sustainability Implication in Nigeria."

²⁸ Paul J. Dimaggio and Walter W. Powell, "Chapter 4 The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism And Collective Rationality In Organizational Fields," in *The New Economic Sociology* (Princeton University Press, 2004), 111–34, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780691229270-005>.

²⁹ Paul M. Wagner, "Institutional Pressures and Local Climate Policy Isomorphism in Ireland," *Local Government Studies*, November 25, 2025, 1–22, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03003930.2025.2591602>.

no longer rely solely on the production of elitist strategic documents without designing operational roadmaps that guide actor transitions at the grassroots level. The rationality of food system governance necessitates the institutionalization of co-production mechanisms or cross-sectoral coordination councils. This deliberative entity should ideally be legislatively mandated, involving a balanced representation of structural authority holders, private entities, academics, and community representatives. Its primary mandate must focus on monitoring key performance indicators based on measurable functional outcomes—such as strengthening caloric price stabilization and reducing malnutrition indices—rather than merely reporting formalistic budget absorption metrics.

4. Cross-National Policy Learning: Reflections on Agrarian Transformations in Brazil and Vietnam

To circumvent the pitfall of pessimistic determinism, this analysis operationalizes the "local case, global lesson" learning principle by comparing Nigeria's trajectory of institutional pathology against two precedents of food system transformation in the Global South: the Federative Republic of Brazil (*Fome Zero*) and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (*Doi Moi*). This comparison is justified to isolate the institutional design elements that comparatively correlate with the stabilization of food security. The comparative matrix (Table 1) is constructed by dissecting four structural variables: the nature of intervention, the land use regime, the institutional architecture, and socio-economic impact metrics. The selection of these variables is predicated upon the identification of vulnerable choke points previously excavated during the analysis of domestic policy implementation failures in Nigeria.

Table 1. Institutional Comparison Evaluation Metrics

Institutional Comparison Evaluation Metrics	Nigeria (Policy Variability 1976–2022, including NATIP & ABP)	Brazil (Integrative Strategy of Fome Zero & PRONAF)	Vietnam (Structural Transition of Doi Moi since 1986)
Nature and Orientation of Policy Interventions	Sporadic, highly fragmented across ministries, alternating directions alongside political regime succession, and focused on short-term projects and technical input distribution.	Integrates agrarian growth policies symmetrically with social safety nets, thereby dismantling the economic versus social dichotomy.	Continuous, state-led liberalization (across decades); gradual transformation from a centralized command to a socialist market economy.

Governance and Distribution of Land Tenure Rights	Monopolized land control by state governors (Land Use Act) and legal uncertainty regarding customary rights, creating collateral vulnerabilities for >95% of smallholder farmers.	High-level juridical recognition of family farming entities, bolstered by structured access through constitutional mandates and subsidized credit (PRONAF).	Radical decollectivization of state cooperatives; issuance of long-term land use rights certification to autonomous households.
Architecture and Capabilities of Key Institutions	Dominant sectoral silos, underperforming extension bureaucracies, corruption-prone financing oversight, and the absence of a centralized data institution.	Co-governance orchestration via the National Council on Food and Nutrition Security (CONSEA), integrated with an advanced state-led research corporation (EMBRAPA).	Fully operational cooperative restructuring to facilitate logistics, while the state transitioned into a massive provider of irrigation infrastructure.
Socio-Economic Impact and Food Security	Dual stagnation: supply deficits, extreme price inflation, and projected famine for ~35 million individuals, despite multi-trillion Naira capital injections.	Successfully removed Brazil from the UN Hunger Map (2014), drastically reducing rural poverty and malnutrition through guaranteed harvest absorption.	Exponential leap from post-conflict famine to becoming a leading global agrarian commodity exporter, with export values reaching \$70 billion (2023).

Based on this cross-border comparison, the findings of this study establish a dialogue between the problem-solving paradigms of two developing nations that have demonstrably succeeded in correcting their institutional pathologies. Congruent with the study by Proença et al. (2025), which highlights the resilience of Brazil's food ecosystem, the foundation of this success is identified not merely as stemming from ecological endowments, but from the establishment of deliberative participatory instruments such as CONSEA.³⁰ This institution effectively synergizes technological capacity with public food procurement instruments. Conversely, addressing the complexities of communal rights, the Vietnamese precedent—as examined by Ho (2021)—demonstrates that reforms hinge on the political will to provide property rights certainty through the structured decollectivization of land to individual households.³¹ This measure has measurably stimulated entrepreneurial incentives at the grassroots level.

³⁰ Proença et al., “Post-Growth for the Global South: Reframing Agricultural Policies in Brazil.”

³¹ Hoang-Anh Ho, “Land Tenure and Economic Development: Evidence from Vietnam,” *World Development* 140 (April 2021): 105275, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2020.105275>.

When these global literature findings are juxtaposed against the empirical conditions in Nigeria, a sharp conceptual explanation emerges: policy modernization in developing countries can only translate into communal welfare if the state apparatus successfully transitions from an "extractive-rentier" phase toward the establishment of "inclusive institutions." In Nigeria, multi-trillion Naira capital interventions failed because the overarching institutions are non-inclusive and perpetuate property rights uncertainty (as evidenced in the preceding subsections). This provides empirical substantiation that the metric of state capacity is determined not by the accumulation of budgets disbursed for physical input distribution, but rather by how adaptively state institutions regulate vulnerable choke points within the supply chain—ranging from legal certainty over arable land to post-harvest absorption instruments that sustain aggregate stability.

5. A Food Systems Compact Framework for Policy Transformation

The synthesized convergence of the diagnosis of domestic implementation pathologies and the extraction of global governance regime lessons provides a substantial indication that persistent food vulnerability in Nigeria is not a byproduct of ecological resource incapacities. Conversely, this crisis is identified as a manifestation of institutional accountability voids, property rights ambiguities, and structural political asymmetries accumulated through path dependence mechanisms. These findings conceptually corroborate preceding literature, particularly the studies by Tan (2025) and Abe et al. (2025), which assert that institutional dysfunctions and patron-client relations constitute the root causes of agrarian technocratic intervention failures.³² Proceeding from this evidentiary framework, the present study posits that agriculture can only transform the economy if elements of production, conflict mitigation, climate adaptation, and social inclusion are orchestrated within an integrated systems governance framework.

To mitigate the stagnation of the current policy architecture, this research recommends an institutional design engineering framework predicated upon the philosophy of a food systems compact. This transformative approach necessitates the institutionalization of four structurally binding commitment pillars:

³² Yuhao Tan, "Historical Institutionalism, Political Settlement and Land Ownership System in Nigeria," *International Journal of Urban Sustainable Development* 17, no. 1 (2025): 136–53; Olamide Emmanuel Abe, Dolapo Christopher Omotoso, and Oni Isaac Ojo, "The Nigerian Political Economy and Agricultural Sector," *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science* IX, no. VIII (2025): 610–21.

First, the mandate of continuous funding across administrative regimes (protected multi-year financing) via constitutional instruments. As argued by Lefe et al. (2024), the availability of physical infrastructure is absolutely imperative in Sub-Saharan Africa, yet its effectiveness hinges heavily on allocation sustainability.³³ Therefore, this first pillar aims to protect crucial capital expenditure budgets—such as irrigation revitalization, rural corridor construction, and cold storage facilities—from the fluctuations of electoral political cycles. Expenditure evaluations must be converted into independent performance indicator metrics, such as the quantified reduction of monthly post-harvest losses.

Second, the systematic restructuring of agrarian tenure governance. Referencing the study by Ho (2021) regarding successful agrarian stabilization through land rights decollectivization, empirical findings in Nigeria necessitate a similar trajectory.³⁴ This research recommends that smallholder farmers—with specific affirmative protection for rural women and youth entrepreneurs—be facilitated in legalizing their communal cultivation rights into official registries. This tenorial recognition acts as a fundamental prerequisite to reduce transaction costs, facilitate integration into formal banking finance, and establish an incentive foundation for long-term investments based on Climate-Smart Agriculture.

Third, the regulatory synchronization of agrarian spatial security belts (secure production corridors). Given that communal insecurity is identified as a determinant variable in harvest depletion within production centers, state instruments must formulate an integrated, multi-agency territorial intelligence unit. This approach must emphasize early conflict escalation prevention, the mapping of exclusive livestock grazing zones, and the integrated safeguarding of commodity logistics evacuation routes under joint federal-state jurisdictional oversight.

Fourth, inclusive oversight institutions via polycentric governance. Aligned with the participatory governance model in Brazil reviewed by Proença et al. (2025) and the urgency of stakeholder involvement emphasized by Ukeje et al. (2026), Nigeria is deemed to require a contextualized replication of the National Council on Food and Nutrition

³³ Hamadjoda Lefe, Mom Njong, and Edeme, “A Vision of Achieving Food Security: Does Physical Infrastructure Matter? A Sub-Saharan African Perspective.”

³⁴ Ho, “Land Tenure and Economic Development: Evidence from Vietnam.”

Security (CONSEA).^{35,36} This autonomous institution must be designed to remain free from elitist bureaucratic monopolies by representing independent farmers' associations, private institutions, academics, and civil society. This multi-stakeholder council is projected to possess specific, delimited functions: detecting sectoral regulatory bottlenecks in real-time, providing sanction advocacy against the pathology of fictitious subsidy disbursements, and reforming the tradition of mimetic isomorphism by aligning the adoption of foreign technologies with the local sociology of indigenous communities.

6. Methodological Reflections and Future Agrarian Research Agenda

Notwithstanding the institutional findings elucidated herein, this study possesses methodological evaluative limitations, particularly concerning the probability of spatial quantification and inferential generalizability. Given that this research framework was designed utilizing a historical qualitative design anchored in macro-institutional analysis and the extraction of policy documents from preceding decades, deterministic fluctuation dynamics have not been mathematically measured. Dynamic variables—such as daily geopolitical shocks, post-pandemic inflationary macroeconomic crises, and the penetration rate of technological innovation at the village level—remain unquantified in detail within a mathematical proportion model. An intersection of dynamic empirical realities evolves more rapidly than bureaucratic recording cycles, thereby constraining the capacity of this study to measure direct causality at the household level.

Consequently, a strategic roadmap for future research orientation must be directed toward hybrid investigations employing longitudinal spatial econometrics modeling. Such a quantitative research design is estimated to possess the capacity to measure and standardize standard deviations regarding the correlation between the decentralization of agrarian authority variables (e.g., the ownership ratio of informal land certificates) and the reduction rate in the proportion of district-scale poverty and malnutrition indices. This spatial approach is projected to precisely map food vulnerability clusters based on jurisdictional boundaries and land conflict typologies.

Furthermore, in response to the financing pathology findings identified in this study, the initiation of randomized controlled trials (RCTs) at the pilot provincial level is highly recommended. Future investigations must focus on testing the effectiveness of direct

³⁵ Proença et al., "Post-Growth for the Global South: Reframing Agricultural Policies in Brazil."

³⁶ Ukeje et al., "Influence of Agricultural Stakeholders' Capability Development and Participation on Food Security in Ebonyi State: Towards Regime Politicization and Sustainability Implication in Nigeria."

subsidy disbursements utilizing artificial intelligence validation (AI validation) and blockchain-based financial track records. The advancement of this analysis is anticipated to provide precise empirical metric testing concerning the extent to which distribution automation can mitigate elite capture, curtail information asymmetry, and optimize agrarian market absorption capacities unhindered by traditional bureaucratic impediments.

C. CONCLUSION

An analysis of agricultural governance pathologies in Nigeria demonstrates that existing financing interventions and fragmented land tenure regulations have compromised the rationality of policy implementation, triggered elite capture, and escalated communal insecurity at the grassroots level. In alignment with historical and sociological institutionalism perspectives, the persistence of food insecurity amidst massive assistance programs occurs due to path dependence, which perpetuates extractive institutions, and the phenomenon of isomorphism, wherein the adoption of global policies is unsupported by operational legal certainty at the local level. Drawing upon comparative precedents from Brazil and Vietnam, the architecture of sustainable food systems governance necessitates a transition toward inclusive institutions that synergize technology with deliberative participation. Therefore, this research projects a structural engineering framework through a food systems compact that integrates guarantees of fiscal continuity, the redistribution of land rights certification, the stabilization of agrarian security corridors, and the institutionalization of an autonomous, cross-sectoral oversight council.

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