

Local Food Networks in West Africa: Resilience in the Context of Global Shocks

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Abstract

The intertwining of climate change, geopolitical instability, post-COVID-19 pandemic consequences, and macroeconomic volatility has exposed the systemic vulnerability of cross-border national supply chains. For West African countries, particularly Togo and Nigeria, diversifying food security through regionalization and adaptive management is becoming a strategic priority. The objective of this work was to assess existing practices and a conceptual model for maintaining the resilience of local food networks, integrating socio-managerial adaptation mechanisms and the prospects of Russian-African cooperation. Data from the FAO, national statistical services of Togo and Nigeria, comparative indicators for West African countries, as well as trade and logistics reports on Russia's interaction with countries in the region were analyzed. Systems analysis and comparative regional assessment methods were applied. Regional markets effectively mitigate global price fluctuations and logistical disruptions. Resilience is ensured not so much by technical solutions as by managerial and social cooperation (flexible procurement, modular storage facilities, distributed leadership, and shared risk allocation). Local communities, mutual aid traditions, as well as women's and youth initiatives play a key role in crisis food distribution. An adaptive framework applicable under conditions of instability is proposed. An important supplement is the Russian experience in building domestic national food supply chains and export routes to Africa. Priority items include wheat, vegetable oils, poultry meat, frozen fish, and mineral fertilizers, which are critically important for the region's agricultural sector. According to 2023–2024 data, Russia's trade turnover with Nigeria exceeds \$1.2 billion, with Togo totals about \$48 million, and with West African countries as a whole reaches \$3.5 billion. Prospects include the creation of joint agro-logistics hubs, the transfer of grain storage technologies, and the development of regional food clusters. The resilience of food systems requires the integration of managerial flexibility, the application of modern change management methods, social solidarity, and international partnerships, including taking into account environmental factors. Russian experience and the deepening of bilateral cooperation create a practical foundation for risk reduction and strengthening the food sovereignty of West Africa.

Keywords

Food System Resilience, Supply Chain Vulnerability, West Africa, Togo, Nigeria, Agro-logistics Hubs, Distributed Leadership, Food Sovereignty