

*V. Karp,*

*PhD in Economics, Associate Professor,*

*Associate Professor of the Department of International Business, Educational and Scientific Institute of International Relations, Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv*

*ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2231-8517>*

*N. Reznikova,*

*Doctor of Economic Sciences, Professor, Professor of the Department of World Economy and International Economic Relations, Educational and Scientific*

*Institute of International Relations, Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv*

*ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2570-869X>*

*V. Panchenko,*

*Doctor of Economic Sciences, Associate Professor, Professor of the Department of Economics and International Economic Relations, Mariupol State University*

*ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5578-6210>*

*M. Grod,*

*PhD in international economic relations, Associate Professor, Department of Management,*

*Marketing and Public Administration, National Academy of Statistics, Accounting and Audit*

*ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7539-5778>*

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## AGRI-FOOD MARKETING AS A DRIVER OF FOOD SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION: STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES OF SUSTAINABILITY AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

*В. С. Карп,*

*к. е. н., доцент, доцент кафедри міжнародного бізнесу,*

*ІН інститут міжнародних відносин Київського національного університету імені Тараса Шевченка*

*Н. В. Резнікова,*

*д. е. н., професор, професор кафедри світового господарства і міжнародних економічних відносин,*

*ІН інститут міжнародних відносин Київського національного університету імені Тараса Шевченка*

*В. Г. Панченко,*

*д. е. н., доцент, професор кафедри економіки та міжнародних економічних відносин,*

*Маріупольський державний університет*

*М. І. Грод,*

*Доктор філософії зі спеціальності "Міжнародні економічні відносини", доцент кафедри менеджменту,*

*маркетингу та публічного управління, Національна академія статистики, обліку та аудиту*

### АГРО-ПРОДОВОЛЬЧИЙ МАРКЕТИНГ ЯК ЧИННИК ТРАНСФОРМАЦІЇ ПРОДОВОЛЬЧОЇ СИСТЕМИ: СТРАТЕГІЧНІ ІМПЕРАТИВИ СТАЛОСТІ ТА СОЦІАЛЬНОЇ ВІДПОВІДАЛЬНОСТІ

*The purpose of this article is to examine the role of agri-food marketing as a key driver of food system transformation under global structural shifts, climate challenges, and social inequality. The central hypothesis assumes that the contemporary food system is evolving from a mass production model toward a network-based paradigm of sustainable development, in which marketing functions as a strategic mechanism harmonizing economic efficiency, social equity, and environmental resilience. The study employs a system-structural and comparative analysis, typological classification, and cognitive modeling to identify the transmission channels through which marketing influences food system transformation.*

*The research provides a classification of food market types (global, regional, local, state-regulated, and socially motivated) and corresponding marketing strategies that ensure stability, inclusivity, and social orientation. The structure of the food system is defined through four interconnected levels: production,*

market, institutional, and social, which together determine the dynamics of food security. A typology of agri-food marketing transmission channels is proposed, including economic, institutional, informational, social, environmental, and ethical mechanisms.

The findings demonstrate that marketing acts not merely as an intermediary between producers and consumers but as a coordinator of interests across the entire food chain, creating synergy between economic performance, social justice, and sustainability. The developed typology of food markets and marketing transmission channels constitutes the authors' original contribution to the theoretical framework of strategic food system management. The practical value of the study lies in its applicability to policy design in food security, investment planning, and public-private partnership development.

Метою статті є дослідження ролі агропродовольчого маркетингу як чинника трансформації продовольчої системи в умовах глобальних структурних зрушень, кліматичних викликів і соціальної нерівності. Гіпотеза дослідження полягає у твердженні, що сучасна продовольча система переходить від лінійної моделі масового виробництва до мережевої моделі сталого розвитку, у якій маркетинг виступає ключовим координатором взаємодії між економічною ефективністю, соціальною справедливістю та екологічною стійкістю. Методологічну основу дослідження становлять системно-структурний підхід, методи типологізації, когнітивного моделювання та порівняльного аналізу, що дозволили виявити канали впливу маркетингу на функціонування продовольчої системи, класифікувати типи продовольчих ринків і визначити закономірності їхнього розвитку.

На основі міждисциплінарного підходу розкрито сутність продовольчої системи як інтегрованої сукупності економічних, соціальних та інституційних механізмів, які забезпечують виробництво, розподіл і споживання продовольства. Здійснено типологізацію продовольчих ринків (глобальних, регіональних, локальних, державних, соціально мотивованих) і визначено для кожного типу відповідні маркетингові стратегії, що забезпечують їхню стійкість і соціальну орієнтацію. У структурі продовольчої системи виокремлено виробничий, ринковий, інституційний та соціальний рівні, між якими відбувається циркуляція ресурсів, інформації та довіри.

Окрему увагу приділено трансмісійним каналам агропродовольчого маркетингу (економічному, інституційному, інформаційному, соціальному, екологічному, етичному), які поєднують економічні стимули, соціальні зв'язки й управлінські механізми у єдину систему регуляторних і комунікативних впливів. Уточнено, що саме ці канали є рушіями структурних змін продовольчої системи, оскільки забезпечують баланс між ефективністю, справедливістю та довірою.

У статті узагальнено результати міжнародних досліджень, що дозволило інтегрувати макrorівневий і локальний виміри агро-продовольчого маркетингу. Показано, що короткі ланцюги постачання є інструментом інституціоналізації довіри, етичного споживання і соціальної згуртованості. Вони формують простір комунікації між виробником і споживачем, у якому відбувається практична реалізація стратегічних імперативів сталого розвитку.

Результати дослідження дали змогу довести, що агропродовольчий маркетинг є не лише посередницькою функцією, а системоутворюючим чинником продовольчої політики. Запропонована класифікація типів ринків і трансмісійних каналів маркетингу становить авторський внесок у розвиток концепції стратегічного управління продовольчими системами. Практичне значення одержаних результатів полягає у можливості використання їх для формування державних і регіональних стратегій продовольчої безпеки, диверсифікації інвестиційних потоків, розвитку державно-приватного партнерства та посилення соціальної відповідальності бізнесу.

*Key words: global problems, imperative, risks, transformation, food market, agri-food market, food system, food security, food, investment, investment strategy, diversification, public-private partnership, digital marketing, marketing, marketing strategy, marketing tools, pricing, logistics, value chains, supply chains, demand, supply, pricing, competitiveness, consumer, social justice, social responsibility, sustainability, sustainable development.*

*Ключові слова: глобальні проблеми, імператив, ризики, трансформація, продовольчий ринок, агропродовольчий ринок, продовольча система, продовольча безпека, продовольство, інвестування, інвестиційна стратегія, диверсифікація, державно-приватне партнерство, цифровий маркетинг, маркетинг, маркетингова стратегія, маркетингові інструменти, ціноутворення, логістика, ланцюги вартості, ланцюги поставок, попит, пропозиція, ціноутворення, конкурентоспроможність, споживач, соціальна справедливість, соціальна відповідальність, стійкість, сталість, сталий розвиток.*

## INTRODUCTION

The issue of food security in the modern world extends far beyond agricultural production and is increasingly viewed as a complex socio-economic, institutional, and

moral-political problem. Under the conditions of globalization, growing social inequality, intensifying climate risks, and instability in trade relations, the food system has become a key component of global security.

Its effectiveness determines not only economic stability but also social justice and sustainable development. In this context, the food market should be understood not as a mere aggregation of transactions in food products but as a complex system of interaction among economic, technological, social, and cultural factors. Within this system, trust is built, access to resources is defined, the balance between supply and demand is maintained, and the human right to adequate nutrition is realized.

Transformational processes in the world economy have led to the emergence of diverse types of food markets, from globalized and highly integrated systems to local "nested markets" functioning on principles of trust, reciprocity, and social responsibility. These markets arise where global supply chains fail to operate effectively and where traditional mechanisms of competition cannot ensure sustainability or fair distribution of resources. As a result, a new typology of agri-food systems is emerging, where global, segmented, state-supported, traditional, and socially oriented markets coexist and interact. Each of these market types requires a distinct marketing logic adapted to demand structures, institutional capacity, information accessibility, technological development, and consumer expectations.

Marketing within the food market system performs a dual function: an economic one, aimed at improving the efficiency of production, distribution, and consumption, and a social one, expressed through the formation of trust, promotion of fairness, environmental responsibility, and the strengthening of food security. Unlike industrial marketing, food marketing deals with essential, perishable, and seasonally dependent products, thus requiring specific strategies for positioning, pricing, logistics, and communication with consumers.

The alignment between types of food markets and marketing strategies is becoming increasingly crucial. For globalized markets, effective models include mass branding, standardization, large-scale distribution, and digital marketing, while for local or socially oriented markets, personalized approaches, transparency of origin, authenticity, and reputation are decisive. Nested markets form their own system of values, where quality, trust, environmental soundness, ethical standards, and social solidarity outweigh the importance of price. Through marketing tools, these intangible values acquire economic significance, becoming integral to the market value of products.

The development of modern agri-food systems is inseparable from investment in infrastructure, innovation, digitalization, diversification, and public-private partnerships. These factors not only enhance market efficiency but also strengthen the resilience of food systems, reduce losses, and promote social stability. At the same time, intensified competition, global price fluctuations, and climate challenges compel both producers and governments to seek new models of interaction between the market and society, between profitability and social responsibility.

Therefore, studying the typology of food markets and their corresponding marketing strategies holds both theoretical and practical significance. It helps to identify how various institutional models of markets affect food

security, which mechanisms contribute to balancing economic efficiency and social justice, and which marketing instruments can serve as the foundation for building sustainable food systems of the future.

## THE REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Modern research on food markets, food marketing, and food security is formed at the intersection of economic theory, global transformations, institutional adaptation, and sustainable development. Scholarly discourse increasingly emphasizes that the efficiency of food systems depends not only on the economic capacity of a country but also on institutional flexibility, strategic coherence of public policy, and the degree of interaction between the market and society [1; 2; 3].

The concept of green marketing has become central in this research field, framing sustainable development and food security as interconnected elements of a single system. The ideas of ethical consumption, fair trade, and corporate social responsibility are now strategic drivers of competitiveness in agri-food markets. They demonstrate that demand and supply in the food sector are increasingly shaped not only by price mechanisms but also by perceptions of social justice, trust in producers, and ecological sustainability [1; 2; 3].

A major trend in marketing studies is the emphasis on digital technologies, integrated communications, and new forms of consumer engagement. Analyses of the transformation of marketing tools reveal that the effectiveness of food marketing strategies depends on the ability to integrate traditional promotion methods with modern digital platforms, social networks, and analytical instruments for demand management [4; 5; 6; 7]. Such integration opens new opportunities for small and medium-sized producers who, by using digital tools, can increase brand visibility and form their own loyal consumer communities.

The issue of resilience and adaptability of agri-food systems in the global context is further developed through the theory of social-ecological transformation, which explains the interrelation between economic efficiency, environmental responsibility, and the system's capacity for self-recovery [8]. Within this framework, artificial intelligence and digital technologies are recognized as key factors of production diversification, risk reduction, and improved precision in agricultural management [9; 10]. Studies on digital transformation in the agri-food sector demonstrate that innovation enables the creation of new markets, optimization of pricing, and anticipation of demand while ensuring ecological and social efficiency [14; 15].

Research on international development strategies demonstrates that food security is derivative of broader economic and political processes. The resilience of national markets to external shocks is achieved through systems of investment, production diversification, and public-private partnership development [11; 12; 13]. These mechanisms help balance economic profitability with social responsibility and integrate local producers into global value chains. Growing attention to the concept of strategic foresight in the field of economic security highlights the importance of anticipation and cognitive preparedness for future risks. Recent studies view foresight as an instrument



for shaping adaptive management strategies in food systems, taking into account both economic and social parameters of development [16; 17]. This approach forms the basis for shifting from reactive to preventive management of food markets, thereby enhancing investment efficiency and public trust in state policy.

The intellectual foundation of contemporary food system governance draws upon the ideas of J. Tinbergen and T. Slembeck, who conceptualized policy as an integrated system of goals, instruments, and social legitimacy [18; 19]. Their approaches provide a theoretical framework for understanding food security as a cognitive-rational system, in which decision-making efficiency is determined not only by economic indicators but also by trust, transparency, and the moral maturity of institutions.

A valuable contribution to this line of thought comes from studies in global political economy, which highlight the interdependence between economic openness, inequality, and the vulnerability of food systems [20]. These works argue that sustainable development cannot be achieved without the integration of economic efficiency, social justice, and environmental responsibility [21; 22].

Overall, the literature review reveals a gradual shift from technocratic models of food market governance toward a cognitive-rational paradigm that combines analytical precision, adaptability, and social sensitivity. This emerging framework lays the conceptual foundation for developing modern marketing strategies capable of ensuring food security, social justice, and resilience in the global economy.

## THE PURPOSE OF THE ARTICLE

The purpose of the article is to explore the role of agri-food marketing as a key driver of food system transformation under conditions of global structural change, environmental challenges, and social inequality. The study argues that marketing in the food sector has evolved beyond its traditional function of promoting sales and has become a strategic mechanism of governance that supports sustainable development and social responsibility.

The article aims to identify the main transmission channels through which marketing influences the food system, including economic, social, institutional, informational, and ethical dimensions. Through these mechanisms, agri-food marketing shapes a new model of interaction among producers, public authorities, and consumers. Within this framework, marketing is interpreted as a factor that harmonizes economic efficiency with social justice, ecological stability, and food security.

The research also seeks to generalize the typology of food markets and to define corresponding marketing strategies that strengthen the resilience and inclusiveness of food supply systems. The analysis integrates structural classifications of market types, models of the marketing mix (4P), scales of supply chains, and forms of institutional cooperation such as public and private partnerships, cooperatives, and social initiatives. These arrangements ensure a balance between commercial objectives and collective welfare. As a result, the article presents a conceptual framework for agri-food marketing as a transformative force within the food system, guiding its

evolution from a mass production paradigm toward a structure based on trust, transparency, and social solidarity.

## RESEARCH RESULTS

The food system is a multi-level structure in which food markets play an integrative role, linking production, logistics, consumption, and institutional regulation. Their main function is to balance economic efficiency with social responsibility. Transformation of the food system implies a shift from vertically organized hierarchies toward network-based models where markets become spaces of partnership, trust, and sustainable interaction. Food markets thus operate not merely as arenas of exchange but as mechanisms of social and economic integration, generating value through transparency, cooperation, and ethical consumer practices.

The transformation of the food system reflects a shift from an industrial model focused on mass production and profit toward an integrated model of sustainable development centered on human well-being, quality of life, and social justice. This transformation unfolds through several dimensions. The economic dimension involves restructuring production, logistics, and distribution. The institutional dimension concerns the redefinition of the roles of the state, civil society, and business in ensuring food security. The technological dimension relates to the digitalization of agriculture, the introduction of artificial intelligence, precision farming, and biotechnology. The value-based dimension embodies ethical consumption, fair trade, and environmental responsibility.

Strategic imperatives of sustainability and social responsibility determine the logic of this transformation. The sustainability imperative requires the harmonization of economic growth with environmental security, biodiversity conservation, and rational use of natural resources. The social responsibility imperative directs the food system toward a fair distribution of benefits, employment support, community development, and universal access to safe and high-quality food. Within this framework, the food system functions not only as an economic mechanism but also as a social institution that strengthens trust and stability in society.

Marketing plays a decisive role in this process. It transforms the food system from a mechanism of production and exchange into a system of communication, trust, and social interaction. It is essential, however, to distinguish between food marketing and agri-food marketing. Food marketing focuses on promotion, positioning, pricing, and distribution of food products within consumer markets. Its central object is the final product and consumer behavior. Agri-food marketing, by contrast, has a systemic character. It encompasses the entire value chain, from raw material production to final consumption, and aims to optimize interaction among all participants of the agri-food complex. Therefore, food marketing can be considered a subsystem of agri-food marketing, while the latter functions as an integrated management mechanism for the entire food system.

The structure of the food system includes four interrelated levels: production, market, institutional, and social. The production level covers agriculture, processing,

**Table 1. Structure of the food system and the role of food markets in its functioning**

Level of the food system	Main components	Key processes	Role of food markets	Expected outcomes of transformation
<b>Production</b>	Agriculture, agri-industrial enterprises, resource suppliers	Production of raw materials, innovation adoption, digitalization of agriculture	Formation of demand for eco-friendly products, promotion of sustainable practices, contract farming	Increased efficiency, resource conservation, ecological sustainability
<b>Processing and logistics</b>	Processing, transportation, storage, and packaging enterprises	Supply chain optimization, waste reduction, food safety assurance	Transparency of supply chains, development of origin-based brands	Higher product quality, reduced losses, development of short supply chains
<b>Market (commercial)</b>	Retail networks, farmers' markets, e-commerce platforms	Pricing, sales, customer communication, demand formation	Market segmentation, product differentiation, development of nested markets	Fair pricing, food accessibility, growth of local markets
<b>Institutional</b>	State bodies, international organizations, agricultural associations, financial institutions	Regulation, monitoring, support, partnership, standardization	Building trust, coordination, and public-private partnerships	Synergy between public policy and business, institutional integration
<b>Social</b>	Consumers, households, communities, educational and public organizations	Consumption behavior, food culture, social practices	Reflection of social values in demand, promotion of ethical consumption	Social justice, responsibility, food security

Source: developed by the authors.

and logistics. The market level includes trade, supply systems, and pricing mechanisms. The institutional level involves state regulation, quality standards, and international agreements. The social level concerns consumer behavior, dietary culture, and ethical practices.

The interaction among these levels determines the typology of food markets that differ in openness, scale, cooperation, and social orientation. Modern food markets form a continuum ranging from global and regional to local and socially motivated types. Global markets provide scale, standardization, and efficiency but also generate ecological and social risks. Regional and segmented markets are based on product origin, quality, and innovation, while local and nested markets rely on short supply chains, partnership between producers and consumers, ethical trading principles, and community solidarity. In this configuration, agri-food markets play a pivotal role as integrators between global and local systems. They connect production and consumption, diversify farmers' income sources, stabilize prices, and enhance the resilience of food supply chains. Within the food system, agri-food markets act not only as economic mechanisms but also as social institutions that accumulate trust, ensure transparency, and promote social responsibility (Table 1).

The effectiveness of transformation therefore depends on how deeply marketing strategies are integrated into the system's functional structure (Table 2).

Agri-food marketing influences the food system through several transmission channels. The economic channel shapes fair pricing, equitable profit distribution, contract-based production, and innovation investment. The social channel promotes sustainable consumption, ethical behavior, local producer support, and food culture development. The institutional channel connects market mechanisms with public policy, certification systems, and public-private partnerships. The informational channel establishes feedback between producers and consumers as well as between markets and policy institutions, ensuring transparency and predictability. The ethical channel reinforces the moral dimension of food relations, transforming the food system into a domain of trust, accountability, and solidarity (Table 3).

Together, these channels constitute a multidimensional mechanism of food system transformation. Marketing acts not merely as an intermediary between producers and consumers but as a coordinator of interests across the entire food chain. It generates synergy among economic efficiency, social equity, and environmental sustainability, which represent the core strategic imperatives of contemporary food policy [21; 22].

The multidimensional character of agri-food marketing is further confirmed by the large body of research summarized in the Special Issue "Agricultural Food Marketing, Economics and Policies" [23]. It shows that marketing processes today extend far beyond the transactional sphere and increasingly determine the

**Table 2. Typology of food markets and corresponding marketing strategies**

Type of market	Key characteristics	Marketing strategies	Main instruments	Socio-economic effect
<b>Global</b>	Large scale, standardization, high competition, digital integration	Mass marketing, branding, quality standardization, international logistics	Digital marketing, big data, international certification, franchising	Growth of trade volumes, but risk of monopolization and ecological losses
<b>Regional / segmented</b>	Focus on product origin, authenticity, innovation, environmental quality	Diversification, origin-based branding, "value through quality" strategy	Geographical indications (PDO, PGI), storytelling, premium segment promotion	Added value growth, regional identity development
<b>Local / nested</b>	Short supply chains, trust, social interaction, fair trade	Personalized marketing, community-based branding, cooperation marketing	Local platforms, direct sales, farmers' markets, cooperative programs	Social cohesion, food accessibility, community sustainability
<b>State / institutional</b>	State regulation, stabilization programs, public procurement	Socially oriented marketing, public-private partnerships	Support programs, state contracts, public communication	Market stabilization, food security, social justice
<b>Socially motivated / humanitarian</b>	Support for vulnerable groups, fight against inequality and hunger	Social marketing, humanitarian campaigns, volunteer initiatives	Charity networks, social platforms, ethical brands	Increased trust, reduced food inequality

Source: developed by the authors.

strategic directions of agricultural production, policy coordination, and sustainable consumption. According to Timpanaro, agricultural and food systems must integrate economic performance with social inclusion and ecological integrity in response to structural transformations driven by demographic growth, geopolitical instability, and the global transition toward the Sustainable Development Goals. Agri-food marketing thus becomes a framework

that connects innovation, governance, and local development through collaborative mechanisms and public-private partnerships.

A complementary perspective on the transformation of food systems is provided by the growing body of research on short food supply chains (SFSCs) (Table 4).

As S. Huller [24] notes, local food marketing operates through mechanisms that shorten the distance between

**Table 3. Transmission channels of agri-food marketing and their impact on the transformation of the food system**

Transmission channel	Main mechanisms of influence	Key marketing instruments	Results for the food system	Contribution to food security and sustainability
<b>Economic</b>	Pricing, diversification, investment, contract farming development	Strategic planning, financial incentives, value-based branding	Supply chain optimization, increased added value	Improved efficiency, market stability, risk reduction
<b>Institutional</b>	Public-private partnership, regulatory coordination, standards, certification	Sustainability policy, government support programs, partnership models	Integration of policy and business, reduced institutional fragmentation	Enhanced trust, transparency, regulatory effectiveness
<b>Informational</b>	Transparency, producer-consumer communication, digitalization	Digital marketing, social media, data analytics, storytelling	Feedback formation, consumer awareness	Growth of trust, responsible consumption, innovation
<b>Social</b>	Market localization, community development, social initiatives	Community marketing, local platforms, short supply chains	Social integration, job creation, local development	Social justice, reduced inequality
<b>Environmental</b>	Food loss reduction, implementation of green practices	Eco-packaging, labeling, waste reduction strategies	Balanced resource use, decreased ecological pressure	Higher ecological resilience of the food system
<b>Ethical</b>	Responsible communication, fair advertising, consumer protection	Certification, awareness campaigns, focus on healthy food	Strengthened trust, ethical consumption culture	Reinforced social capital, fair trade

Source: developed by the authors.



**Table 4. Types of short food supply chains (SFSCs) and their role in local food marketing**

Type of SFSC	Key characteristics	Marketing mechanisms	Contribution to food system transformation
Face-to-face	Direct exchange between producer and consumer	Personal communication, storytelling, local branding	Strengthens trust and consumer awareness
Proximate	Regional distribution within short logistical distance	Cooperative marketing, joint labeling, regional networks	Builds local identity and supports community development
Extended	Wider distribution while maintaining traceability and authenticity	Certification, e-commerce, transparent value chains	Expands market reach without losing sustainability principles

Source: developed by the authors based on S. Huller

production and consumption, re-establishing transparency, trust, and social interaction within the agri-food system. These mechanisms illustrate how sustainability can be achieved through proximity, cooperation, and authenticity rather than scale or market concentration.

Three principal types of short food supply chains are identified: face-to-face, proximate, and extended. Face-to-face chains are based on direct sales and interpersonal trust; proximate chains involve regional cooperation and community-based marketing; extended chains use labeling, certification, and digital platforms to preserve product authenticity even in distant markets. Each of these forms represents a distinctive balance between economic rationality and social responsibility, contributing to the diversification and resilience of agri-food systems.

Short food supply chains exemplify how marketing mechanisms can bridge the economic, social, and ethical dimensions of the food system. By reducing intermediaries and emphasizing proximity, these systems promote fairness, transparency, and community engagement. They also redefine the meaning of value in agri-food marketing — from price-centered competition toward relationship-based cooperation and shared benefit.

This typology confirms that the transformation of the food system depends not only on technological modernization or policy reform but on the institutionalization of trust. Through localized marketing practices, short food supply chains operationalize the imperatives of sustainability and social responsibility, integrating economic performance with collective well-being.

Agri-food marketing therefore emerges as a catalyst for systemic change rather than a peripheral market function. Through economic incentives, social innovation, and cultural transformation, it creates a new paradigm of the food system that moves beyond commercial efficiency toward social and ecological resilience, where human well-being, community development, and trust represent the highest forms of capital.

## CONCLUSIONS

The conducted research confirms that agri-food marketing represents a structural and functional core of the modern food system. Its influence extends beyond market transactions, shaping the architecture of production, distribution, and consumption through interrelated economic, institutional, informational, and

social mechanisms. The typology developed in this study—covering both food market structures and marketing transmission channels—demonstrates that marketing is an integral driver of systemic transformation, capable of synchronizing economic efficiency, social justice, and ecological balance.

The classification of food markets into global, regional, local, state, and socially motivated types provides a conceptual framework for understanding how marketing strategies adapt to different institutional and social environments. Similarly, the identification of six transmission channels (economic, institutional, informational, social, environmental, and ethical) reveals the pathways through which marketing operationalizes sustainability and social responsibility. These results substantiate the hypothesis that marketing acts as a coordination mechanism within the food system, linking production incentives with ethical and societal imperatives.

The study's novelty lies in integrating macro-level policy analysis with micro-level marketing practices, thereby bridging strategic governance and local implementation. It proves that the transformation of the food system cannot be achieved solely through technological modernization or state regulation, but requires communicative and trust-based mechanisms facilitated by marketing.

This approach allowed the authors to conclude that agri-food marketing serves as a unifying platform that translates the principles of sustainable development into concrete economic behavior and institutional practices. It enables the diversification of food markets, enhances social inclusion, and strengthens the resilience of food systems in the face of global uncertainty. The typological and analytical framework proposed in this paper provides a scientific foundation for future research and policy formulation in food security, sustainable investment, and public-private cooperation.

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