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**"Poision Me If You Can:
Who is Concerned About Food Safety in China?"**

Abstract

Food safety has been an issue of growing substantive public and policy concerns in contemporary China. While journalist reports, legal writings and anthropological case studies on the troublesome food-safety governance in China proliferate, it remains unclear why some Chinese citizens have been worrying about the safety of food more than others. This article proposes a delegation theory of individual food safety concern to resolve the puzzle. It argues that farmers who are able to directly produce food and monitor food production practices in rural villages or suburban towns are better able to avoid the moral hazard problem arising from the food supply chain than non-farming consumers in urban cities; as a result, all else equal, farmers living in rural villages or suburban towns are less likely to worry about food safety than non-farming consumers living in urban cities. The statistical analyses of a new public opinion dataset collected from China are consistent with the delegation argument. This study provides the first theoretical explanation for individual food safety concerns in the political economy literature. It also sheds lights on China's ongoing agenda of reforming her national food safety regulatory regimes. To effectively address public food safety concerns, the Chinese government has to encourage and improve the transparency of the farm-to-fork food supply chain.