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An exploratory study of chinese organic consumption

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Abstract

This paper presents the results of a doctoral study within the program “Biodiversity and Society” of the Graduate School of Social Sciences at the Georg-August University, Göttingen. Food safety and organic consumption are key concepts of the study, focussing on the current situation in the People's Republic of China. The consumption of organic products in Germany is introduced for comparison.

The lack of food safety has become a symbol for consumer concerns. Uncertainties regarding contaminated food and a polluted environment are promoting a megatrend of sustainable consumption that manifests itself in a combination of personal, social and environmental interests. Worldwide, the "organic market" is growing. Germany and China represent the largest organic markets in Europe and Asia respectively and an important objective of the study is to understand why organic consumption may be developing in different ways, despite many similarities. Specifically, the study shows in which way organic consumption in China is similar or different to that in Germany, regarding specific conditions, motives and dietary preferences, and against the background of globalization. In this way, the study follows the social science debate on reflexive modernization and contributes to a better understanding of ecological modernization.