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Abstract

### **Das Hainanprojekt und die Grenzen zentralstaatlicher Reformpolitik in der Volksrepublik China**

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In 1988, the Chinese leadership established Hainan Island as a new province, declaring the whole island a special economic zone with a high degree of autonomy. Hainan was supposed to give new impetus to China's economic reforms by creating basic "Pillars of a Socialist Market Economy" and by realizing the concept "Small Government and Big Society". While previous research concentrated on Hainan's economic and political development after 1988, the complex interactions among local, regional and central authorities before 1988 have been widely ignored. This paper argues that structural deficits in decision-making and divisions among China's leadership prior to 1988 were key determinants of the Hainan development strategy. Persistent rivalry in the central leadership left unresolved crucial issues such as the assignment of property rights and administrative competences among national, provincial and local government bodies. The central authorities proved incapable of assuring the conception, implementation and revision of a comprehensive regional development strategy in the face of competing interests. Thus, the evolution of the Hainan project between 1980 and 1988 sheds new light on fundamental constraints to reform initiatives that emanate from China's central party and government leadership.