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**The Balanced Planning for
Economic and Social
Development: A case Study
of China's Special
Economic Zones**

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**The Balanced Planning for Economic and
Social Development: A case Study of China's
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1. Introduction

China has one of mankind's richest histories, dating back almost 5,000 years. China's current population is around 1.41 billion. As a result, China's economic growth has had a significant impact not only on China, but also on the world. More importantly, the understanding of China's recent economic prosperity as a phenomenon has been discussed by many authors and experts. Furthermore, China has provided many successful development models and policies, such as poverty reduction measures and the creation of special economic zones.

Although China has faced many challenges it has taken a variety of measures to achieve prosperity. In 1958, Mao Zedong introduced the policy of the Great Leap Forward (Five-Year Plan), which lasted until 1962. The aim of this strategy was to transform the agricultural base of the Chinese economy into an industrial one. One of the fundamental components of China's socialist economy is planning. A plan reflects the strategy of the country as a whole and includes detailed guidelines for economic development. The policy of the Great Leap Forward failed, and a famine killed 56 million people. After this, in 1966, Mao felt that the Chinese Communist Party was heading in the wrong direction. He announced the Cultural Revolution, known as the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, to pull China out of the economic depression caused by the Great Leap Forward. However, the Cultural Revolution damaged China's economy.

In the 1970s, China adopted the self-reliance policy, depending on its local resources without any foreign support due to the deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations. At that time, China's government firmly believed that the international market is risky and difficult to control. However, the leaders gradually noticed that their policies were ineffective in boosting China's economic development. After the death of Mao, in 1979, China adopted the policy of reform and open-up to recover the economy from the impacts of the Cultural Revolution. The leader Deng Xiaoping revised the policy moving toward economic reforms and opening to the world. The economy of China was shifted from a planned economy to a market economy. Reform

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and open-up policy have changed the image of China completely, from an agricultural backward country to the second-largest economy in the world. This strategy is called "Socialism with Chinese characteristics" and "socialist market economy". In 1979, Leader Deng stressed the aim of the "Four Modernizations" policy to rejuvenate China's economy by improving the fields of industry, defense, science, agriculture, and technology in China.

The concept of the special economic zone (SEZ) is defined as a region in which flexible administrative procedures and other conditions are provided to facilitate economic objectives. SEZs foster economic collaboration with foreign companies and is a comprehensive economic development area in which all types of business are performed.⁽¹⁾ It is profitable to apply the concept of the SEZs to allocate land or area dedicated to all kinds of business activities to achieve overall economic development with special policies and incentives.

In 1979, the Shekou Industrial Zone of Shenzhen was established, which was the first experimental region in China to open up. In the 1980s, the Chinese government established five special economic zones in the coastal areas of China Shenzhen, Zhuhai, and Shantou in Guangdong Province, Xiamen in Fujian Province, and Hainan. One of the best outcomes of reform and open-up policy has been the creation of these special economic zones. The special economic zone as defined by leader Deng is a gate of knowledge, technology, and management.

Located in the southern part of Guangdong, neighboring Hong Kong, Shenzhen was the pioneer Special Economic Zone (SEZ), spanning 327.5 square kilometers – the biggest of its kind. Known as one of the biggest cities in China it has made remarkable progress in industry, commerce, agriculture, culture, finance, transport and education.

Zhuhai was established in 1980, near Macao 137 kilometers away from Guangzhou to the north. It is west of the Pearl River on the coast of Guangdong province. Zhuhai shares maritime borders with Shenzhen and Hong Kong. Zhuhai is recognized as one of China's prominent tourist destinations and with a sizable population. The industrial development of Zhuhai is driven by its focus on high technology and heavy industries.

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Shantou SEZ is on the eastern coast of Guangdong; it is one of the key special economic zones of China established in the 1980s. Shantou SEZ in Guangdong Province is autonomous of provincial intervention. It has advantages such as being an industrial base. Shantou was considered the weakest in terms of invention. ⁽²⁾

The Xiamen SEZ is a sub-provincial city in southeastern Fujian, near Taiwan. It has a natural harbor in Yundang Bay with a low population.

Hainan was established in 1988 which is the most southern part of China. It is the largest island opposite Vietnam with 34,000km. While relatively less developed than other SEZs, Hainan has sound production of agriculture and good income of foreign trade. Despite having the lowest per capita among the SEZs, Hainan boasts a robust infrastructure and comparative advantages, such as its location and climate with its tropical crops, aquaculture, and tourism.

China's SEZs play a pivotal role in strengthening economic growth, fostering prosperity, and enhancing foreign trade while attracting crucial elements like technology, management expertise, and employment opportunities. To continue on this trajectory of SEZs, fourteen coastal cities spanning from Dalian in the north to Behei in the south were unveiled in 1983 to foreign investments and business expansion. Among these, twelve were designated as Economic Technical Development Zones (ETDZ).

Subsequently, the government extended its efforts by establishing science parks and High Technology Development Zones (HTDZ), along with the introduction of Free Trade Zones (FTZs). This strategic expansion broadened the avenues for technological advancement, innovation, and trade, solidifying China's position as a hub for cutting-edge industries and fostering an environment conducive to global economic integration.

The political-economic reforms implemented in China's SEZs are characterized by a strategic approach that embraces gradualism, pragmatic flexibility, and decentralization. The SEZ's functioned as experimental

domains or testing grounds for the new policies. Notably, China's accomplished model within these special economic zones has garnered significant attention and became a focal point of discussion.

Special Economic Zones (SEZs) offer encouraging policies for trade and business among communities for mutual benefits. China has presented leading paradigms of such zones which have functioned for the evolution of human resources and management through the utilization of the strategic location and the advancement of exports through flexible measures and preferential policies.⁽³⁾

Nations of developing countries are attracted to embrace elements of China's prosperous path to economic development since 1978, and this has been obvious as in the formation of special economic zones (SEZs) to direct overall development. An appeal to China's paradigm is pushed by the aim to achieve some of the results of China's SEZs in promoting exports, attracting foreign direct investment (FDI), improving manufacturing, and developing industrialization and other economic and social profits. Therefore, several developing countries have newly established SEZs in hope of acquiring some of China's accomplishments. China itself is advocating this movement. The Chinese Government has been increasingly willing to share with other developing countries its experience and "wisdom" on how to achieve economic prosperity.⁽⁴⁾

Scholars have been discussing the "China's model" of the special economic zones. Many scholars believe that China's model is proved to be a successful model that can be followed by other developing countries.

This study discusses China's model of special economic zones. Why are China's efforts to build SEZs a success? What are the political-economic reforms that have been implemented? What are the unique features of China's model? What are the key factors that support this success?

The purpose of this study is to analyze the causes, reasons, and factors that contributed to making the special economic zones of China a successful model to be followed by other countries. It examines the effects and the impacts of the special economic zones on the social-economic development

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of China. This research explores China's successful model of SEZs to learn applicable lessons from China's experiences. In addition, it takes a closer look at how to apply China's model of SEZs to other developing economies.

2. The Review of Literature

The relevant literature can be divided into three categories. The first group of scholars focuses on the establishment of the SEZs and their contribution to the national economy, their success factors, policies, and challenges.

Zhihua Zeng provides well-written insight analyzing case studies to discuss the development and the success of the SEZs. He considers the economic shift of the SEZs to develop a better understanding of China's growth and prosperity. He presents a good overview of the establishment of the SEZs and their impacts on the Chinese economy. He puts forward a useful conclusion by stating that China faces many challenges and difficulties. Yet, China is still an important engine for growth, which influences global prosperity. China offers helpful experiences and lessons for developing countries which should be applied in a local context.

China has accomplished unprecedented economic development during the past 30 years which is considered a miracle in human history. Since the adoption of reforms and the open-door policy in 1978, China's gross domestic product (GDP) has been increasing at an average annual rate of more than 9 percent. In 2010, it is ready to surpass that of Japan and become the world's second-largest economy.⁽⁵⁾

Fang discusses the construction and the development of the special economic zones of China. He analyses the reform of the economic systems in the economic zones. He explores the establishment of the SEZs in a flexible system of the market economy.

In the 1980s, five special economic zones were established in the coastal provinces of China; they are Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Shantou, Xiamen, and Hainan. These zones are the result of the reform and open-up policy to the world.⁽⁶⁾

The second group of authors discusses the economic-political reforms that were carried out to set up China's SEZs and their contribution to the growth of the Chinese economy.

Kanungo provides a fine analysis of how foreign direct investment played an essential role in promoting exports. He puts forward a good policy recommendation for the future establishment of SEZs in China and the world. He emphasizes the fundamental role of political, economic, and legal reforms on SEZs. He emphasizes that the establishment and success of SEZs have been great learning experiences for China.

The establishment of special economic zones (SEZs) in China has been the core study for several developing countries. It was started with a concept of an experiment that foreign capital is a significant tool to set the country on the development path of economic growth and innovation while involving the Chinese regions with the primary economic activities and development of the country. The Chinese experience of SEZs proved to be a success as it could achieve the expected goals of the government.⁽⁷⁾

Stoltenberg claims that likely the most effective factor in the evolution of foreign trade and investment in the People's Republic of China has been pragmatic flexibility. Deng Xiaoping defines this pragmatic method in the 1960s. He emphasizes the influential element in the development of foreign trade and investment, which has been pragmatic flexibility. In his opinion, the establishment of the SEZ appears as an excellent illustration of pragmatism. He describes the purpose of China's SEZs and the background that has been appointed for their process. Then he provides a useful overview of the SEZs and their achievements to date. He provides valuable findings with consideration to the problems of the SEZs to accomplish their objectives. He emphasizes the SEZs' importance in the evolution process and their role in the socialist economy.⁽⁸⁾

Ross Garnaut discussed the economic growth of China over the twenty years. He provides an in-depth analysis of the economic reforms in agriculture, trade, state-owned enterprises, financial system, and labor market. Reform

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in China has not and could never have been an easy or effortless path. There have been challenges in each phase.⁽⁹⁾

The third group of scholars discusses China's Model of the SEZs. Scholars discuss the origin of China's model of development that was introduced by Deng Xiaoping. They argue that the Chinese model of economic development is increasing in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and some parts of Europe, as an alternative development model. They offer a fine overview of whether the China model is successful and sustainable or not. Likewise, they discuss that countries have been attracted to the success of China's model and are increasingly drawing lessons from and applying aspects of its development paradigm in their contexts. Moreover, they discuss China's model, whether good or bad, whether restricted to China or applicable to other countries. They argue that China's model is about the debate over "socialism" or "capitalism". The "Beijing consensus", the history, uniqueness, and civilization of China versus the West.

Luo discusses the idea that the establishment of the SEZs has not only served as "windows" "experimental fields" models and drives but also has been developed into regional development models. He presents a well-written conclusion that the establishment of the special economic zones in China is the core and the foundation of the China model.

This demonstrates that the special economic zones have no longer primarily operated as the windows for the opening up and the exploratory areas for institutional reforms; rather, they have evolved into a regional developmental standard and have formed a pole for the economic growth of this region. New special zones were formed with special policies to advance economic development which has become a new regional developmental model. The economic reform was primarily conducted and put into practice by the special economic zones; therefore, the new special zone developmental approach is the foundation and core of the China's Model. The China's Model has been a summarization of the development experience in various fields, including economy, politics, culture, and society, since China's reform and opening up, while the special economic zone model is the foundation and core of the China Model.⁽¹⁰⁾

He Li focuses on the aspects of the Chinese model of development and its implications. He reflects on inquiries such as: what does this model contain? What are major critics and limitations? In addition, is it applicable to other nations? He concluded that China does illustrate another development model that has attracted the attention of other developing countries.⁽¹¹⁾

Previous studies discussed the establishment of the SEZs and their contribution to the national economy, their success factors, policies, and challenges, the economic-political reforms that were applied to set up China's SEZs, and the China model of the special economic zones. They have added valuable contributions to my research.

However, it is important to address the peculiarities of the China model of the SEZs. It is essential to focus on the efforts that were exerted to support the success of the SEZs. It is also fundamental to present an overall study of the political-economic reforms with the background and the unique features of China's special economic zones.

This study complements previous research and makes a particular contribution to developing and Arab countries, given the possibility of following the SEZs Chinese model.

3. Methodology

This study is based on a case study method. The case study depends on detailed data to describe and analyze China's SEZs as a model. It includes quantitative and qualitative methods to define, compare, and evaluate these case studies to obtain an in-depth understanding of the success factors and to gain basic knowledge about the significance of the China SEZs paradigm. In three specific case studies, the China SEZs will be investigated as a significant phenomenon for development.

This case study is used to explore the unique features of China's SEZs model and to broaden our understanding of why China's efforts to build the SEZs are a success by collecting data to describe and analyze the key characteristic, implications, and success factors to come out with lessons

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learned for the prospects of developing countries. It explores the broader context in which these zones were introduced and their tangible impact on society and the economy. Additionally, it's a chance to learn from this leading model to attain economic growth and prosperity. By understanding challenges and benefits of SEZs, it aims to offer real solutions to prevailing economic issues.

This study provides three case studies to compare and show the relationships between them in terms of location, population, challenges, success, lessons, achievements, stages of development, favorable policies, and contribution to the economy.

4. The Chinese Model of Special Economic Zones

The concept of a special economic zone dedicated to fostering development and facilitating trade is not new. In the modern era, the establishment of trade zones dates back to the 18th century, evidenced by Gibraltar in 1704, Singapore in 1819, and Hong Kong in 1842.⁽¹²⁾

A special economic zone could be defined as a specific allocated area for trade and industrial activities with special incentives and other facilities distinct from the economic regulations applied to the rest of the country to create an attractive environment for investment and foreign business. If implemented effectively, special economic zones hold the potential to significantly bolster economic growth. Moreover, special economic zones worldwide have a variety of types such as, export-processing zones, free trade zones, economic and technology development zones, industrial parks, high-tech zones, science and innovation parks, free ports, enterprise zones, and others.

Furthermore, the primary notion of SEZs contains many distinctive characteristics: it is a geographically bounded region, it has free management or administration; it provides advantages for investors within the zone, and it has an independent customs zone and simplified procedures. In addition, SEZs normally function under more flexible economic laws than those generally applied in the country. In general, the SEZs provide two major

types of advantages, “static” economic advantages such as job opportunities generation, export growth, foreign exchange and more, “dynamic” economic advantages such as skills advancement, invention, technology transfer, economic diversification, and productivity development of local companies.⁽¹³⁾

In addition, the Chinese ambition of developing the SEZs in 1979 is a deliberate and carefully planned effort. The Chinese Government examined several existing zones before they formed their own.⁽¹⁴⁾

China’s development of the SEZs has been a carefully planned endeavor, that is aligned with the governments approach to gradualism and experimentation approaches, also known as "crossing the river by feeling the stones". While acknowledging the unique characteristics of each region, the government has undertaken a careful consideration of the country’s specific situations and conditions in the process of setting up these SEZs. It is essential for the implementation of SEZs hat they are tailored to the local context. While at the same time, it is also important to evaluate the success of these new policies to determine their feasibility to be implemented on a broader scale in the country.

More importantly, the Chinese had their own experience with such notions not taken from the treaty port system which came into being during the Opium War in 1842, but more recently from their local matters by establishing special export goods production bases guided under the leadership of Zhou Enlai after the Cultural Revolution. The Ministry of Foreign Trade set this agenda as a state policy in 1971.⁽¹⁵⁾

China has showcased a distinctive model and developmental experience, this could be attributed to its effective economic and political reforms. What is China’s model? The concept of “model” has been defined in various methods by different scholars. At times it is used to indicate a developmental approach or distinctive developmental policies, principles, strategies, or procedures with special features. Others explained it as a type of Chinese experience or Chinese case. In most publications, the term “model” is meant to generalize China’s all-around development and innovation. But rarely is it used to indicate China’s development in a specific sector or region. For

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instance, Yu Keping explains China's model as both a strategic alternative that China embarks to accomplish modernization, as well as a set of developmental methods that the country has slowly formulated during reforms and opening up.⁽¹⁶⁾

“The Beijing consensus” was first used by Josh Ramo in 2004, “Beijing consensus” or China model was formulated to oppose the Washington Consensus as an alternative model of development. The Beijing Consensus or the China model of development is the economic-political reforms and policies which were formulated by Deng Xiaoping after Mao Zedong's death in 1976. According to Ramo, China's model is marked by innovations, balanced and sustainable development, and self-determination. He also stated that the Beijing Consensus is distinguished by three elements: economic evolution is led by creations; development must be balanced and enduring; and more importantly, China's approach to development is a search for self-determination, without replicating blueprints for economic development from any country. However, the term ‘Beijing Consensus’ does not receive overall consent and agreement among Chinese scholars, who prefer to use the ‘China model’ in their discussion. They argue that consensus is normally understood as an ‘ideal model’ that other states can recognize and promote. By contrast, the China model refers to a model, which implies China's experience of development. China has formed its unique course of development, including the idea of “socialist modernization with Chinese characteristics” over the past three decades.⁽¹⁷⁾

The discussion about the existence and the characteristics of China's model was widespread among scholars and policymakers. Scholarly arguments in the West on the China model began with the publication of Joshua Cooper Ramo's “Beijing Consensus” in 2004, in which he claimed that China has found a special approach to innovation. Since then, the ‘China Model’ conception, whether the model exists or not, and what it entails, has been argued not only in academic publications in the fields of contemporary Chinese studies, International Relations (IR), and development studies but also among policymakers in and outside China.⁽¹⁸⁾

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China's model appeared as an alternative to the west model due to China's influence and soft power. China's model provides a platform to facilitate business and trade. China has provided a role model with successful criteria factors, as well as a suitable environment for investments. SEZs have been tools and laboratories for policies and engines for growth.

Generally, China's model of development has features such as gradualism, pragmatism, autonomy, experimentation, and modernization. As for gradualism, step by step approach is based on experimentation. One essential element of Chinese reform has been gradualism, as represented by the Chinese saying: "crossing the river by feeling the stones". The SEZs have been operated as a laboratory for new policies and reforms, including planning, industry, foreign trade, management, labor, and law system. The strategies which proved to be successful were implemented in the rest of the country.

In terms of pragmatism, the reason behind the growth of foreign trade and investment in China has been the pragmatic flexibility with which the country has faced challenges in the development process. This pragmatic approach is defined by the declaration of Deng Xiaoping made in the 1960s during the period of reform after the Great Leap Forward, when he preferred to increase production even at the cost of efforts to socialize the economy.⁽¹⁹⁾

China had pursued a very different developmental approach from the one defined by the United States which was differentiated by China's innovation and experiment. Developing countries have been interested in China's model of development in general and its model of the SEZs in particular. Delegations from many countries in Asia visited China SEZs to identify the useful features of the SEZs to be adopted to their countries' conditions. China's economic and political paradigm is increasing in Africa, Latin America, Asia, and parts of Europe. Leaders in developing countries are pursuing China's alternative model of development.

There are several SEZs models worldwide. However, what are the factors that have contributed to making China SEZs a successful experience? Scholars discuss some key success factors such as strategic location, clear

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objectives, economic-political reforms, policy innovation, incentives, and effective management.

Several factors contributed to the success of China's SEZs, and each case has its different conditions and features. However, their success indicates some shared lessons such as firm adherence and support of the government to direct market-oriented economic reforms, investment incentives, land reforms, foreign direct investment, institutional independence, technology and innovation upgrading, creativity, clear purposes, standards, competition, and area advantages.⁽²⁰⁾

The selection of the strategic locations of the SEZs is a very important factor. China selected its primary SEZs in coastal cities or vital areas such as Fujian and Guangdong to have easy access to the global market. Most SEZs in China are established in the coastal regions or close to main cities which have access to the international market and with good experience in foreign trading and business. They have good infrastructures. The location advantage is evident for the SEZs in the Pearl River Delta region near Hong Kong, and Taiwan.²¹

Moreover, the support of the leaders and government is a highly significant factor. The top leaders were committed to making reforms by the gradualist approach and by decentralizing their power hand in hand with the local governments to create a suitable attractive environment for investment and business. In addition, the government was willing to face the challenges and to solve the problems which might front the process of forming the SEZs.

Furthermore, the land reform has had a fundamental impact on the success of the SEZs. In China, the land reforms initiated in Shenzhen have played a vital role in the SEZs' success. Before the implementation of the reform and open-up policy, the state owned all lands in the urban and rural areas, the land was "collectively" owned. Since 1981, the SEZs were allowed to rent land to investors for 20-50 years with the chance of renewal. Meanwhile, the government established the land auction system for all the commercial land (2002) and industrial land (2007) to assure the efficient use of land resources.

These reforms allowed to form a modern land market, which has changed the whole of China's urban geography.⁽²²⁾

China's Government offered **favorable policies** and incentives to attract foreign investment. The SEZs had provided diverse incentives and preferential policies, including simplified administrative procedures, sound infrastructure, fast customs clearance, and flexibility in hiring workers to promote businesses (especially FDI) to invest in the zones. Favorable policies were also set to attract skilled labor, such as housing, training, and education etc. In addition, the SEZs (especially the first generation) were given greater political and economic independence. They had the legislative power to develop local laws and regulations to manage these zones. Such an exceptional preference granted them more freedom in pursuing new policies and development measures considered essential to vivify the economy.⁽²³⁾

Moreover, foreign direct investment FDI is a very influential factor in the success of China's SEZs. Essential factors have encouraged FDI to flow into China. For example, the inexpensive labor and suitable infrastructure in the SEZs, as well as the open-door policies associated with diverse incentives, capital investment, management skills and technologies, enhancing the local industrial capabilities. In addition, SEZs have promoted their industrial bases and have shared their labor in manufacturing sectors offering a great opportunity for FDI to flow into China from abroad.

In addition, skilled labor is a significant factor in the success of the SEZs. One of the main strong points of the SEZs is that they have become the hub of technology, innovation, and knowledge. They have kept high attention and priority on recruiting very skilled people, including research and development personnel. The plenty of FDI offers a sound chance for technology learning. Governments also put a strong focus on technology learning and innovation. In addition, the SEZs are closely connected to local companies and industrial clusters. This linkage helps achieve economic development and enhances competitiveness.⁽²⁴⁾

SEZs have motivated a large number of foreign workers searching for better job opportunities. Besides institutional flexibility, the people in the SEZs also have encouraged innovation and entrepreneurship. Most SEZs, which

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were constructed in new regions, attracted qualified workers and personnel, and a considerable number of immigrants from the country and abroad, who looked for new opportunities and better jobs. Such an intensely boosted migrant society which is aimed at creating an innovative and entrepreneurial culture.⁽²⁵⁾

Furthermore, a clear purpose is a very fundamental factor for the success of the SEZs. With precise purposes, standards, and competitions, China gradually established the SEZs. In the beginning, there were four zones and then the number grew. Despite the big number of these zones, most of them have clear purposes and targets for GDP growth, employment, exports, revenues, and FDI. These challenges placed great pressure and responsibility on the management of the zone. The SEZs are highly competitive; such competition allows them to be more efficient.⁽²⁶⁾

The special economic zones of China are the foundation and the core of the China model or Beijing consensus. The China Model has been the overall developmental experience in different areas, including economy, culture, politics, and society. Since the adoption of reform and opening-up policy, the special economic zone model is the essence and basis of the China Model. The special economic zones have rapidly developed through reform and opening up for 35 years, enhancing the development from several cities in the coastal areas to the whole of China, to develop the establishment and evolution of the China Model. Foreign capital, technologies, managerial experience, and talents were massively presented as driving forces for developing the economy of the special zones. The special zones have formulated rich successful experiences from development and function as the models to be learned and adopted for the development of other areas. Therefore, different regions have drawn upon the successful experience of the special economic zones to boost their development, thus further pushing the development of the China Model forward.⁽²⁷⁾

China's Government has introduced economic-political reform policies to accelerate economic growth and development.

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The major elements of the new policy can be outlined as decentralization, diversification, the establishment of markets, the focus on the development of the coastal provinces, and the integration of the local economy into the global market.

One characteristic of economic reform is decentralization. Deng had succeeded in establishing the concept of decentralization in the structure of the party. He formulated a policy change of a stronger decentralization of the decision-making power from the party to government institutions and from central to local levels. The policy managed to get approval from the Central Committee because it supported the interest of most of the people, especially the local representatives. Gradually the decentralization process was institutionalized. The decentralization included the consent to conduct experiments in any economic field on the local level.⁽²⁸⁾

Decentralization was manifested by granting the decision-making powers gradually to the local officials, the central government utilized the instrument of decentralizing. The local governments were urged to reinforce the development of private and joint enterprises which raised rivalry and pushed the SOEs to reform.

The Chinese government has reduced the involvement of bureaucratic procedures in the economic system of the SEZs. Prices were used as the new coordination mechanism. The government used taxes and interest rates to influence economic behavior.⁽²⁹⁾

Moreover, the Government decreased direct involvement with private enterprises. They could independently determine the prices, marketing, goods specifications, and without being under the direct monitoring and control of the government. An autonomous contract system was founded to regulate the relations between the government and private enterprises. The government has aimed at creating a comfortable and attractive environment for investors to find their own interests freely and to fulfill the market's needs.

Furthermore, the price reform was introduced by the Chinese Government to attract foreign investment. A distorted price system continued until the

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reforms started. It was needed to restructure the distorted price system to benefit from the formation of SEZs and to interact with the world market system. A three-price system was introduced, namely fixed, free, and floating, keeping into consideration that it will be very beneficial for the consumers, the producers, the world market, and the Chinese economy.⁽³⁰⁾ In addition, reforms tackled employment and banking sectors which are considered influential sectors.

A contract labor market system was introduced in place of the system of guaranteed employment which was canceled. Foreign-invested companies were entitled to freely hire people and these employments were supported by the labor service-based company to locate the proper type of skilled workers for employment in SEZs. Enterprises had the option of employing qualified people with various salaries and many advantages were given to those workers as incentives. Foreign banks were authorized to open their representative offices in China. Other functions of the financial systems were reformed, and a floating rate of interest was introduced for many users. Other institutions of the financial sector such as swap centers were first tested in the SEZs only. With all these reforms and restructuring, China's experiment of forming SEZs became successful, and the experiments were allowed to be tested at different places in the country.⁽³¹⁾

Trade reform was a great step forward. Before the reform period, China's trade system was a controlled and centralized planned system. The major element of this kind of trade system was conducting foreign trade precisely according to central planning, which covered areas such as trade, imports, exports, and foreign exchange. The main actors who controlled the process were the State Planning Commission and the Ministry of Foreign Trade to meet the government's overall strategy. Trading enterprises and producers were not responsible for profits or losses in their production and trading activities because of the centralized accounting system handled by the Ministry of Foreign Trade and the Ministry of Finance.⁽³²⁾

Pre-reform era, trade was handled, monitored, managed, and controlled only by the state trading company. Foreign exchange transactions were also centrally controlled. A planned price system was used for conducting foreign

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trade. There was a high degree of protectionism and centralization. The trading system was based on a distorted price system and monopoly. In addition, it lacked incentive policies and competition. Yet, in the reform era, trade reform has gone through five stages.

The government started by investigating the possibility of reforming the trading system. The target of the first stage was to examine the potential of reforming the highly centralized trading system taken from the Soviet-style planning system. Different experiments were undertaken during this phase of reform including decentralization of foreign trade power by ceasing the monopoly on foreign trade. The right to conduct foreign trade was slowly given to provinces and enterprises. The government created the “import and export licensing system” and many enterprises were given the right to conduct foreign trade. A new trading system was established to facilitate the procedures for the investors.

Then, the government embraced a reform program that pursued separating government procedures from enterprises, facilitating administrative measures for approving imports and exports, modifying tariff rates to raise competition, with more decentralizing authority to enterprises. The procedures taken in the second phase characterized a step toward the liberalization of the trading system depending on the step-by-step approach. After that, the government focused on the contract system which is considered an effective mechanism to regulate the relationships between parties. The government implemented the contract system in the export sector including trading and production companies and applied it to the relationship between local and central governments. The system covers contracts between enterprises, trading companies, local and central governments, in the fields of foreign exchange profits, and responsibility for export profits and losses.⁽³³⁾

Next, the government allowed the enterprises to be responsible for their profits and losses. The main purpose of the reform agenda at this phase was to entitle companies to be fully responsible for their profits and losses to provide them with a tool for competition both locally and internationally on a proper basis. China also boosted its endeavors to re-enter GATT by decreasing the volume of exports subject to planning, further enhancing the

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export-licensing system by improving its clarity, and reinforcing reform of the enterprise system.⁽³⁴⁾

Finally, the government applied wide reform which included reforming taxes, currency system and finance. This phase has been the most essential so far in the reform process of the trading system.

Economic reform has achieved outstanding outcomes in China. The public ownership system has been replaced by a multi-ownership system with various economic aspects. The market mechanism has played an essential role in specific significant fields and the formation of a competitive market system has progressed. The usage of indirect management has been the essence of macroeconomic management; economic rather than administrative procedures are now used because of different reforms in public finance, taxation, banking, and investment. There have been substantial modifications in the labor market regarding income distribution. Basically, the government has established a multi-dimensional system.⁽³⁵⁾

Other steps of reforms, which were complementary, included the reform of the urban sector, the price reform, and the reform of the contract system for state-owned enterprises.

Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping believed in the need for political reform corresponding to economic reform. Therefore, The CCP has reformed itself from a revolutionary to a sophisticated modernized party to achieve an effective political role in China.

The central Government and CCP leaders were committed to improving the socialist democratic system by advancing the reform of the political system, which primarily seeks to follow the criteria of skillful staff recruitment and management. Direct political and social participation at the local level, more independence for the people's congresses, and applying more democracy inside the party, as well as reinforcing the rule of law, which has become the basic target of reform.

Other reform steps included the development of a modern legal system, the rational selection of labor in government institutions, promoting of a modern personnel management system, and the founding of new examination tools to manage staff performance while ensuring the quality and the skill of the labor force are required.

5. The Background of China's Special Economic Zones

In the mid-1970s, Deng Xiaoping criticized the old economic policies due to the fundamental problems encountered by the Chinese economy. By late 1978, when Deng took power, he launched the "four modernizations" program as part of the open-door policy to steer China toward political-economic reforms.

In 1978, thousands of people were risking their lives to run across the border to Hong Kong. That problem was the top concern of the central government and Guangdong province to find out why many people fled to Hong Kong.

In 1978, the central government of China sent a delegation specialized in trade and economics to Hong Kong and Macau for a survey. The delegation submitted a report and suggested that the regions near Hong Kong and Macau should be appointed export bases moving toward the establishment of production bases and tourism destinations. The suggestions of the delegations were efforts exerted to solve the problem of the people who were fleeing to Hong Kong.⁽³⁶⁾

Deng Xiaoping defined the problem by addressing the economic disparities of living standards on the two sides of the border. Therefore, it was an urgent need for China to modify its policies to improve the living standards of the Chinese people.

Deng decided to promote the agriculture sector to attract foreign currency.

Deng believed that the government should promote the agricultural sector through the establishment of collection centers for the crops to be exported. He stated that Guangdong province should construct modern hotels and other facilities to gain more foreign currency through tourism.⁽³⁷⁾

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At that time, there were no factories for industry and neither foreign companies nor foreign investments were not yet allowed to establish a business in China.

After that, China Government suggested establishing export-processing zones to develop the industry. Beijing Government urged local officials in Guangdong and the neighboring province of Fujian to promote tourism industries. They also proposed constructing export-processing zones, where foreign commodities and equipment would be brought in and local labor would produce goods for export.⁽³⁸⁾

In 1979, the green light was granted to Guangdong province to accept foreign investment. The proposal by the Hong Kong Company was approved as the first case of foreign investment. The first place in China to allow foreign direct investment was Shekou. It was open for foreign companies to establish enterprises in China.

Deng was supportive to give the necessary autonomy for provinces to facilitate the process of establishing business and to develop a suitable environment for foreign investment.

In addition, flexible measures were introduced, suggested, and discussed. Governmental officials proposed that provinces should be permitted to formulate special policies that would give Guangdong province the flexibility to implement procedures that would attract foreign capital, management expertise, and technology necessary for the commodities production exports. China would provide the land, and infrastructure including transport, electricity, water, and labor needed as well as housing, restaurants, hotels and other factories. The central government supported additional efforts to establish three SEZs in Guangdong; Shenzhen across the border from Hong Kong, Zhuhai across the border from Macao, Shantou on the northeast coast of the province, and one in Fujian (Xiamen).⁽³⁹⁾

After that, the Chinese Government decided to establish pilot special zones as an experiment stage in Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Shantou, and Xiamen. In 1979,

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the Chinese government approved the foreign investment and the economic activities that would be conducted in Guangdong and Fujian provinces and the flexible procedures related. The government also decided to form pilot SEZs in Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Shantou, and Xiamen.

In 1980, the central government directed Guangdong province to exert efforts on the formation of the Shenzhen SEZ and accepted the suggestion that the special export zone should be renamed a special economic zone.⁽⁴⁰⁾

Deng was supportive of establishing the SEZs and to advance their evolution. He declared that the central government would work on formulating policies that facilitate the challenging road of development.

Moreover, Deng approved that Guangdong and Fujian should be granted the flexibility needed to attract foreign investment from overseas. The Central government granted Guangdong and Fujian special policies with flexible measures to attract foreign capital. The four SEZs were officially established in 1979. Due to the determination of Deng, the procedures were completed in seven months only despite the complexities of the national plans and the opposition of some officials.⁽⁴¹⁾

However, Deng had more overall vision for the special economic zones in Guangdong and Fujian than just export processing. He aimed to build comprehensive metropolitan centers which cover all sectors.

Furthermore, Deng clarified that the four special economic zones would implement policies that are distinct from the policies implemented in other areas. The SEZs will be controlled mainly by the market. Deng motivated experimentations with markets, industry, construction, labor, finance, and foreign currency.

In addition, the determination to open Guangdong, Fujian, and other coastal provinces shortly led to the distribution of industry from China to the coast. To ensure that the SEZs will not be related to politics, therefore the name “special zones” was adjusted to become “special economic zones”.

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More importantly, officials working in the SEZs learned precious lessons. During the period of Deng, the government officials in Guangdong and Fujian learned invaluable lessons from the sophisticated people of Hong Kong and their open media including TV shows and newspapers, and from their lifestyle. A visitor to Guangdong would notice the transformation that the province has witnessed including the skyscrapers, large sites, hotels, and superhighways.⁽⁴²⁾

In 1984, the issue of people who were fleeing to Hong Kong was solved. SEZs have generated new job opportunities for them to return to Shenzhen. Deng returned to Beijing and ordered to formulate the policy announcements that China would open the fourteen coastal cities. Countries around Guangdong and Fujian and within Guangdong Shenzhen, Zhuhai, and Shantou all flourished. The Shantou SEZ was expanded to include the entire island on which the SEZ was located. With the opening of Taiwan in the late 1980s, investment funds from Taiwan, Southeast Asia, and the United States increased; the Xiamen SEZ, near Taiwan, began to prosper.⁽⁴³⁾

In addition, Deng had an important reason to be pleased that the success of the Guangdong SEZs was now spread to other areas. In 1984, Deng as an achievement appreciated the opening of the fourteen coastal cities to foreign business.

Indeed, Deng's wisdom and farsightedness were manifested by his ideology that has transformed poor China into a powerful prosperous country. The successful strategies, which were experimented with the support of Deng, have placed China on the right path toward growth and prosperity.

At the first beginning, Deng bravely acknowledged the gap between China and the rest of the world. He stated that we must acknowledge that we are backward in the fields of science and technology. We cannot deceive anyone because you cannot visit our country without seeing how backward we are. So, we shouldn't deceive ourselves.⁽⁴⁴⁾

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For Deng, it was essential to learn from advanced countries and to believe in one's own capacity in the process of applying foreign experience to homeland conditions.

Deng's intelligence lies in his ability and capability of forming successful policies and seeking suitable solutions to problems. Deng's policy was not specific but rather a revolutionary state of mind. His strategy was manifested in the experimentation policy, which aimed at the accomplishment of economic growth and prosperity, then applying the policies that proved successful in all regions.⁽⁴⁵⁾

For Deng, the most important method is decentralization, including granting powers and decision-making to companies. He also adopted the approach of experimentation, all experiments have been proved successful, and have become part of the system.

Deng exerted tremendous efforts to set China on the right path of development, end poverty, introduce the market economy and to attract foreign capital. In addition, Leader Deng was open to learn from the experiences of Japan, the United States, and other advanced countries.

Furthermore, Deng was carrying the economic problems of China in his mind, in 1978, Deng visited Singapore, Japan, Malaysia, US and Thailand.

He praised the successes of the Singaporean economy and the commitment of its government to the policies pursued to seek trade and relations with developed economies. Deng was considering alternative methods for advancing the economy and examining the impact of these new policies on the development of China. The SEZs were established, and many scholars reflected on the purposes of the establishment of the special economic zones. The aim of establishing the SEZs is to attract foreign capital, import advanced technology, develop industrial and agricultural production, expand the export trade, and increase foreign exchange.

The objective of SEZs in China is to get benefit from the location advantages and labor force in the zone through the adoption of favorable policies to enhance the economic activities with foreign countries, to gain more foreign

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capital, to obtain advanced technology, to promote industrial bases and agricultural production. Also, to extend export and trade and to raise the foreign currency and capital. The SEZ objective is to learn from foreign experiences in scientific achievements and economic management to reform the economic system, to study, examine and collect information about the international market and how to train personnel.⁽⁴⁶⁾

Another reason is to modify the path of development and to keep on track of capitalism, to master and promote socialism through learning from the experience of other countries. Special zone gains and employs foreign capital and presents modern technology and management expertise for building socialist innovation and modernization.⁽⁴⁷⁾

In addition, China adopted the planned economy for 30 years; SEZs have been established to make an institutional change. To modify the traditional system, to transform the economy from a planned economy to a market economy, pursuing the path of wealth for all.

Furthermore, the establishment of the special economic zones has been developed through three generations:

The first generation of the special economic zones was established in the 1980s, Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Shantou, and Xiamen. Selection of the geographical areas of the SEZs was an important feature for the first generation of the SEZs.

The selection of the first generation of the SEZs is based on location. The specific selection of the location assures the rapid development of the first generation of SEZs which mirrors the policymakers' wisdom and the right decisions concerning the establishment of the SEZ. The selection of location is an important aspect of the first generation of SEZs.⁽⁴⁸⁾

The second generation of the SEZs was established in 1990, the Pudong New Area for development and opening-up includes the Binhai New Area of Tianjin for development and opening-up.

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The second generation of the SEZs, which was established in 1990, is different from the first generation. The major difference was the agreement reached about deciding between the planning system and the market system through institutional experimentation. The second generation was created to develop the basic national strategic growth to accelerate regional development.⁽⁴⁹⁾

The third generation of the SEZs, represented by Kashgar established after 2000, including Kashgar and Zhoushan special economic zones, Wuhan, Changsha-Zhuzhou-Xiangtan pilot zones, and the Chengdu-Chongqing Pilot Zone for Integrated Urban-Rural Development.

The third generation of the SEZs becomes various in the selection of locations. The main characteristics of the third generation of SEZs are clearly defined and well-targeted.⁽⁵⁰⁾

China's opening-up has experienced three developmental phases: the first phase from 1978 to 1991 concerned the experimentation of the opening up illustrated by pilot work; the second phase from 1992 to 2000 was characterized by the expansion of the opening up; the third phase from 2001 until now has been a phase of all-round opening up with institutional opening up marked by the accession of China to the WTO. China's opening-up has changed from a phase dominated by local opening up to another phase primarily marked by comprehensive institutional opening up.

The Shenzhen Special economic zone is the first SEZ of China, which covers the whole process of reform and opening up.

5.1 1980-1990 period

During this phase, the state council required Shenzhen to shift its priorities and to focus on industry, trade, and technology.

In 1986, the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone entered a new phase in which market-oriented economic reform was implemented in a comprehensive way moving toward achieving an outward-looking economy.⁽⁵¹⁾

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The achievements of the open-up policy in this period are summarized in the employment of foreign capital and technology to build ports, power plants, expressways, and other infrastructures. Investment was enhanced, overseas capital and technologies were supported, and a big number of inland-related corporations were constructed to cover the deficiency of capital, technologies, and skills. Science and technology industrial parks were opened, the technology industries were promoted, industrial zones were created to encourage the development of an outward-looking economy, and foreign trade enterprises were established. These steps of opening-up efforts were taken to rapidly initiate an outward-looking economy, which was based on industry and trade. In 1987, Shenzhen's export trade exceeded its import trade, in 1988; Shenzhen rated number two among large and medium-sized cities nationwide in terms of total exports. Shenzhen achieved number one on the list of large and medium-sized cities nationwide in the total volume of import and export trade.

In 1987, Deng Xiaoping announced that Shenzhen was able to enter the international market and that was a real success. In 1992, Deng emphasized the remarkable achievements in the reform and open-up policy and the establishment of the SEZs in general and the establishment of Shenzhen in particular. He stressed that the SEZs were socialist, not capitalist. During this period, GDP grew by an annual 30% on average and hit 5 billion Yuan, 10 billion Yuan in 1987 and 1989. Shenzhen's industrialization boosted; the urban building advanced rapidly and its economy took off.⁽⁵²⁾

5.2 1990-2000 period

In this stage, Shenzhen entered a new period by making strategic modifications.

CCP Party of China emphasized endeavors to make strategic modifications and accomplish three essential changes: the transformation from the comprehensive economic development paradigm to the intensive economic development paradigm, the transformation from the planned economy to the

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socialist market economy; the transformation from special strategies to quality advancement, the creation of new benefits for the SEZs growth.⁽⁵³⁾

In this period, many institutional reforms were made to build the regulations system adopted by the market economy.

The Chinese government has made significant reforms to the state-owned enterprises and established a new enterprise system in 1994. The government reformed the state-owned asset management system and developed a three-level state-owned asset supervision and operation mechanism in 1992, improved the ownership system, developed the private economy in 2003, reformed the commercial and trade systems, and established a foreign exchange broking center in 1994. The government also established property rights exchange market in 1993 and developed a technology market, improved the a venture capital investment market in (2002), promoted the labor market and developed a modern market system, reinforced the transformation of government functions, promoted the reform of the fiscal system (1996), applied the reform of the governmental procurement system (1998), it rapidly reformed the investment and financing system (2001), reinforced the building of a credit system (2002), promoted the macro-control system , reformed the distribution system and implemented the an annual salary system for enterprise operators (1997), adopted the distribution system (2002), established the overall reform of the social insurance system, implemented the systems of the medical insurance, endowment insurance, and housing accumulation fund systems (1992), adopted the work-related injury insurance system (1993), established a pilot medical reform (1995), implemented law-based city governance in comprehensive way, improved the reform of the administrative system, improved the reform of the civil servant management system and implemented the national public servant system (1993), accelerated the grass-roots democratic construction (1993), reformed the judicial system (2001) and established the systems for preventing corruption and keeping clean government.⁽⁵⁴⁾

Shenzhen witnessed a great leap forward, during this phase, Shenzhen has achieved great economic development, and strong development of three pillar industries: the high and new technology industry, the modern financial industry and the modern logistics industry. There was constant progress in

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metropolitan processes, and comprehensive improvement was made in various fields in society, as well as a significant improvement in people's lives. The annual economic growth rate was about 20% on average, and Shenzhen's total output value reached 100 billion Yuan in (1994), 200 billion Yuan in (1998), 300 billion Yuan in (2002); the accumulative amount that was dedicated to the central finances was 366.3 billion yuan, and Shenzhen was ranked the top of large and medium-sized cities in terms of all-around economic power nationwide.⁽⁵⁵⁾

5.3 2000-2020 period

At this point, Shenzhen has witnessed great changes in development. The goal was to build a city based on scientific development with a new strategy for building a culturally advanced city and a self-dependent model of innovation.

The Chinese Government comprehensively improved the recycling economy and established the construction of a resource saving and environmentally friendly society (2006), strengthened the reform of the administrative system and the Industrial Association Service Agency (2004), established the Reform Office (2005), and the Municipal Government Service Hall (2004), established E-government affairs. The government reformed the examination and approval system for major investment projects (2006), and rapidly formed the construction of a modern service-oriented government. The government rapidly urbanized Shenzhen to be the first city in China. The government reinforced the reform of the cultural system by reforming the newspaper, broadcasting, and TV, and by holding the Cultural Industry Fair, which boosted the development of the cultural industry (2004), accelerated the reform of public institutions, and applied the employee system (2005), improved the reform of the scientific and technological management system; constructed the national innovation-oriented city. Reinforced the reforms of the social management system (2004) and the social security system, established the People's Net Welfare Index System (2006), improved the public service system, the government strengthened efforts toward improving the well-being of people.⁽⁵⁶⁾

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Shenzhen was granted the title of “Model City for Environmental Protection” by the State in 1997, and the title of international “Garden City” in 2000.

6. Case studies

I selected three case studies which were established at different times in different locations to illustrate their leading role in China’s economic growth and prosperity. Tianjin Economic-Technological Development Area was established in 1984, located in the northern part of China. Pudong New Area is one of the fourteen coastal cities established in the 1990s in the eastern part of China. Guangzhou Development District (GDD) was established in 2002 and is located to the east of Guangzhou City in Guangdong Province on the coast of the South China Sea.

This section discusses the background, the location, and the population of the three zones. It examines their challenges, their success, stages of development, and the lessons to be learned. It analyzes their achievements, favorable policies, and their contribution to the Chinese economy.

Tianjin Case Study

Background

The Tianjin Economic-Technological Development Area (TEDA) was officially established on December 6, 1984.

The state council of China officially established The Tianjin Economic-Technological Development Area TEDA in December 1984. TEDA has proved to be a great success over the past 24 years of experience and is one of the earliest state-level development areas in China.⁽⁵⁷⁾

Tianjin has an important port with a developed local and international trade system as well as a substantial industrial base, which have been considered suitable factors for the establishment of SEZs. Tianjin has a strategic location for the establishment of an economic and technological zone. After the approval of the State Council, the Tianjin Economic-Technological Development Area was officially established in December 1984.⁽⁵⁸⁾

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TEDA has special endowments that have played a vital role in promoting its fast economic development. These endowments such as productive land, affluent natural resources, transportation infrastructure, technology, and human capital.

TEDA has 40 square kilometers; its southern part includes apartments, governmental offices, and financial services, while the northern part includes the industrial manufacturing zone. Tianjin's labor costs are somewhat cheap and its labor power is well educated compared to other zones.⁽⁵⁹⁾

TEDA's remarkable economic development depends on a series of favorable tax and fiscal policies. These policies have been constantly modified to maintain rapid economic growth in the region.

The formation of the SEZ has several advantages for Tianjin's economic development.

The formation of TEDA was of essential significance to Tianjin's economic growth because it supported promoting the export-oriented economy, introducing advanced technology from abroad, and exploring new methods of economic development. A sequence of preferential policies has been executed in TEDA to attract foreign investment, such as a lower income tax rate of 15 percent for foreign-funded enterprises, and special policies for high-tech and exporting companies. For foreign-capital enterprises, the foreign share of the enterprises' profit can be remitted abroad without paying income tax. All these preferential policies have made TEDA a priority for foreign investors. More important, TEDA develops a good model of how to enhance the environment for foreign investment. TEDA has slowly become the base for Tianjin's export-oriented economy and has advanced the attention of foreign trade in developing the regional economy.⁽⁶⁰⁾

The Tianjin government has played a vital role in creating an excellent investment environment by several means such as the implementation of the land policy, the formation of an integrated development plan, and the promotion of foreign investment by the establishment of specialized organizations for attracting investment. TEDA is considered to have the best

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comprehensive facilities and infrastructures. For planting and ecological construction, the authorities have issued administrative regulations on the maintenance of green lands. In addition, TEDA provides good services for industrial parks.

Challenges faced by TEDA are summarized in the difficulty of balancing the favorable policies and market competition. The land usage challenges, the relationship between TEDA and Tianjin, and the industrial development in the zone.

TEDA's Success

TEDA has become the driving force for Tianjin's social and economic development.

TEDA is the development area with the most powerful overall strength in China. After 24 years of reform and growth, it has become the new driving force for Tianjin's social and economic development. Binhai New Area, with TEDA at the center, has become one of the three primary sources of China's economic development and the economic center of northern China, along with Shenzhen City in Guangdong Province and the Pudong economic zone in Shanghai. During the development and opening-up strategy, TEDA accumulated influential experience and learned priceless lessons.⁽⁶¹⁾

The key success factors of TEDA are summarized in TEDA's low cost of land, labor, and infrastructure. TEDA's international transport and communications, the commitment of government, public services, and attractive environment for sustainable development in TEDA.

Lessons learned from TEDA

TEDA's successful experiences offer applicable lessons and valuable policy recommendations for economic and development areas in other countries and regions. One of the lessons is the importance of coastal areas and their advantages for attracting foreign investment.

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The significance of developed open harbor coastal sites with more advanced transportation systems, industrial bases, technology, administrative capacity, and education. These privileges are important elements for luring foreign investment. In addition, the long history of international interaction and communication, coastal areas are less restrained by tradition and more open to new ideas.

Favorable policies help attract foreign capital and accelerate development. Favorable policies were necessary for TEDA's evolution in the early period. The special policies helped attract foreign capital and assign domestic resources to TEDA to boost its growth. However, if these policies were continually revised, that would directly affect investors' trust in the government and negatively affect the future development of the area.

The essential need for managerial independence for presenting sufficient public services to meet the requirements of the investors and the market. The role of government is important to the prospects of TEDA. The local government needs to offer the administrative committee of TEDA proper autonomy so that TEDA can create a modernized innovative managerial system that fulfills market needs and allows dealing with foreign investors in more flexibly and efficient ways.⁽⁶²⁾

SEZs' development depends on their comparative advantages and rich resources as incentives for their economic growth.

TEDA's evolution should benefit from its comparative advantages, depending on its affluent local resources. For example, if the local area has several professional workers, it should take advantage of cheaper labor costs. On the one hand, optimizing resource allocation can decrease costs, enhancing profitability, and shifting the resource advantage into incentives for rapid industrial development. On the other hand, through encouraging institutions and policies, the development area can balance its resource disadvantages by presenting the basic elements for economic development that are missing in the zone.⁽⁶³⁾

The governmental planning and commitment with consideration to the market needs are significant factors for the success of the SEZs development. TEDA's remarkable success depends on the government's obligation and advancement. At each development phase of TEDA, the government formulates development strategies, assuring the right path for the industry. The scope specified by the government should be complemented by market powers instead of being controlled only by the government, a method that might be called "government plan, market control". Government should support the companies that act in accordance with the industrial development strategy through favorable tax and fiscal policy instead of interfering through administrative procedures.⁽⁶⁴⁾

Achievements

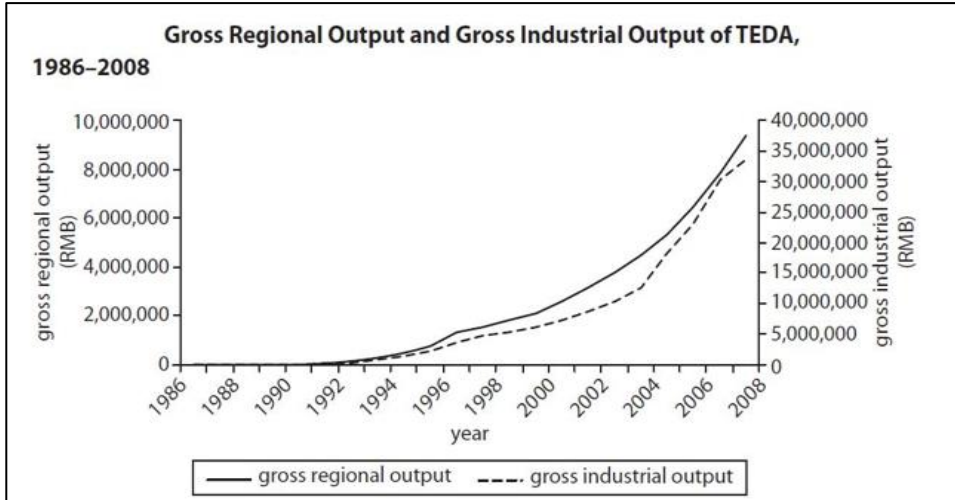
TEDA has 40 square kilometers with a population of 143,000, which is considered the largest among other developmental areas. TEDA's gross regional product is estimated at RMB 93.87 billion, gross industrial output of RMB 335.067 billion, tax income of RMB 19.816 billion, a total import and export value of US\$335.01 billion, and a total social investment of RMB 25.577 billion in fixed assets. With per capita disposable income of RMB 41,700 and per capita consumption of RMB 26,100, which is considered the most profitable, rapidly growing area, among the 57 state-level economic and technology development areas. TEDA has become the pioneer of the Binhai New Area and has participated greatly in the economic growth of the city of Tianjin.⁽⁶⁵⁾

TEDA has encountered many phases of development. It has undergone three development phases. The first phase, from 1984 to 1994, was marked by investing primarily in goods or technology. During the second phase, from 1994 to 2004, with constant upgrading the high-tech enterprises became the driving force in TEDA. Since 2004, TEDA, as part of the Binhai New Area, has been concentrating on cooperation across provinces. The experimentation zone appointed in the Binhai New Area in 2006 has offered new development prospects for TEDA.

TEDA's gross domestic product (GDP) was estimated at 9.35 million RMB. twenty years later, in 2007, TEDA's GDP had reached RMB 93.87 billion,

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and RMB 106.5 billion in 2008, keeping an annual growth rate of 20 percent. Its gross industrial output grew fast as well that number for 1986 was RMB 38.72 billion compared to RMB 335.067 billion in 2007 and at the end of 2008, it was estimated RMB 373 billion.⁽⁶⁶⁾



Sources: Li Yong 2004; Economic Bureau of TEDA 2001-07; 2008 data from the statistics of www.bh.gov.cn.

The export trading of TEDA began in 1986 with just six export companies, in 2007 that number had increased to 783, and the value of exports grew from US\$2.02 million in 1986 to US\$18.5 billion in 2007.⁽⁶⁷⁾

TEDA's Number of Exporters and Value of Products Exported, 1986–2007

US\$ millions

Year	Exporter (company)	Export value (US\$ millions)	Year	Exporter (company)	Export value (US\$ millions)
	1986–96			1997–2007	
1986	6	2.02	1997	263	2,004.15
1987	23	16.16	1998	285	2,081.35
1988	38	37.80	1999	385	2,553.80
1989	56	46.04	2000	397	3,266.91
1990	75	63.70	2001	446	4,035.00
1991	99	113.48	2002	396	5,706.00
1992	137	160.22	2003	466	6,886.00
1993	151	292.35	2004	481	11,175.00
1994	184	544.26	2005	575	13,971.00
1995	221	901.03	2006	604	17,145.00
1996	253	1,450.20	2007	783	18,500.00

Sources: Li 2004; Economic Development Bureau of TEDA 2001–07.

The export trading activities formed 90.3 percent of the total to Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, the UK, and the US in 1994. TEDA had conducted commercial relations with 188 countries, the United States was classified as the top partner with an export value of US\$5.24 billion, reckoning for 28.3 percent of total foreign trade in the region. ⁽⁶⁸⁾

Foreign direct investment (FDI) is a very important factor, which has played an essential role in the establishment and development of all SEZs.

FDI is a very significant factor in the establishment and development of TEDA. FDI kept growing and offered good quality investment. At the initial level, 217 projects were approved valued at 400 million USD from 1985 to 1990. FDI has developed greatly and has reached its height in 1993, 909 projects were approved in 1992. After 1993, the total value of investment projects was rising with the average investment size despite the decline in the number of investment projects. There were 4,485 foreign enterprises from 74 countries with an investment value of US\$40.33 billion, foreign capital of US\$30.04 billion, foreign investment of US\$16.93 billion, with an average project size of US\$8.99 million. Some 657 enterprises had an

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investment value of more than US\$10 million, and 31 enterprises had an investment value of more than US\$100 million, at the end of 2007.⁽⁶⁹⁾

Pudong Case Study

Shanghai is one of the fourteen coastal cities that enjoys a special regulatory system, not similar to that of the SEZs. However, since the opening-up of the Pudong New Area, the local authorities and the central government have formulated favorable policies that were only applied in the SEZs. The development of the Pudong new area illustrates China's adherence to the procedures of economic reform and its open-door policy and has achieved a significant share of interest within China and in the outside world.

Shanghai has an area of 6,340.5 square kilometers and a population of more than thirteen million people. Shanghai has become the hub of commerce, industry, and transportation in China due to its size, location on China's east coast, and its key role in China's narrative.

In 1990, the Chinese State Council announced that Pudong would be opened to foreign investment.

The government of Shanghai adopted preferential policies in Pudong for its growth and development. In 1992, the government approved 157 foreign capital enterprises with total investments of \$770 million.⁽⁷⁰⁾

The Shanghai government has adopted several principles to guide the development of business in Pudong.

The Shanghai government has set several principles to direct the development process in Pudong. The business must be profitable to China and to Shanghai in particular which includes obtaining foreign capital and investment, boosting international trade, participating in the competition, obtaining advanced technology and enhancing export trade increasing coordination and integration of local industries between Pudong and Puxi supporting Shanghai to be center of trade and financial-economic activities to be developed as an overall modern industrial base.⁽⁷¹⁾

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Shanghai's Government has encouraged specified types of business to develop in the SEZs.

The Shanghai government has offered a more transparent view of the kinds of business enterprises that are motivated to develop in Pudong based on these principles. Acceptable enterprises need to produce, manufacture or build power and transportation establishments, urban infrastructure facilities, products for export, or advanced technology. These purposes are typically compatible with China's foreign investment law. Foreign investors in Pudong were granted preferential treatment in case their investment projects were included in one of these classifications. Since 1990, Pudong has extended the scope of these industries to include service businesses in, trade, finance, real estate, tourism, and others⁽⁷²⁾

Land usage rights can be acquired in Pudong for up to seventy years, and investors may be given preferential treatment for the development and utilization of parts of the land.

Shanghai has a big and well-trained labor force. The labor force is also somewhat cheap when compared to industrialized countries or Asian countries. The labor force could be recruited from Shanghai or from outside Shanghai, but the approval of authorities is required. Employment contracts should be conducted between employees and foreign enterprises.

Pudong's system of approval is a simple governmental approval process that required foreign capital enterprises to fulfill the conditions of the planning and investment objectives of Pudong.

As for the preferential tax treatment, Pudong offers the same fifteen percent tax rate as the SEZs. Manufacturing enterprises with operations of over ten years will be exempted from income tax in the first and the second years if the enterprises are profitable and are entitled to a fifty percent reduction from the third to the fifth profitable years. Foreign capital enterprises in Pudong that invest in vital facilities and infrastructure such as airports, ports, railways, highways, power stations, and others also enjoy the same 15 percent tax rate. The enterprises with 15 years of operation are exempted

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from income tax from the first profitable year for five years and they enjoy a 50 percent reduction from the sixth to the tenth profitable year.⁽⁷³⁾

Guangzhou Case Study

Guangzhou Development District is located to the east of Guangzhou City in Guangdong Province on the coast of the South China Sea. It was established in 2002 and it is the first area to combine the four types of national-level zones. The Guangzhou High-technology Industry Development Zone (GHIDZ), the Guangzhou Economic and Technological Development District (GETDD), the Guangzhou Export-Processing Zone (GEPZ), and the Guangzhou Free-trade Zone (GFTZ), GETDD was the first to be constructed as one of the 14 initial ETDZs authorized by the State Council. It was established in 1984 with an area of 37.18 square kilometers, including Guangzhou Science City (20.24 square kilometers). GETZ was founded in 1992 with an area of 1.4 square kilometers. GEPZ has an area of three-square kilometers, which was established in 2000, the International Biological Island with 1.8 square kilometers related to GDD's area with the four types of national EDZs.⁽⁷⁴⁾

GDD is a good example to show the evolution of zones in China. GDD is a perfect model to demonstrate the development of zones in China; it is in Guangdong Province. Guangdong has had many shoemaking and textile manufactory enterprises and has been an export center. However, its share of Chinese exports decreased from 37 percent in 2000 to 26 percent in 2010. With the increase in salaries in China and the removal of many preferential policies, GDD as well as other manufacturing-based clusters in Guangdong are likely to face increased competition from other zones and cities within China, as well as abroad. Therefore, GDD acts as a model of the structural modifications emerging in China and of the fundamental challenges that many zones are encountering.⁽⁷⁵⁾

GDD has several development stages. GDD's development stages are equal to the evolution of all EDZs in China. During the first stage (1984-1992), GDD developed the west part with small manufacturing plants. In the second stage (1993-2001), GDD created two more areas (the East part and Yonghe)

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and redirected its compass to large manufacturing factories. Science City was designated to attract S&T companies. During the third stage (2002-2007) the four types of zones were connected. After the Luogang district was constructed, real estate development was also set as one of the objectives of GDD. During the fourth stage (2008-present), GDD started to build a new development zone with vital facilities, such as restaurants, schools, and shopping malls. In addition, attracting S&T enterprises, green technology, and environmental protection have been priority objectives for GDD.

The most essential challenges confronting GDD during the past five years have been the national policy modifications and regulations, rising salaries, and competition from other zones. GDD has executed a sequence of strategies concentrating on motivating the development of high-technology enterprises. These policies include resettling labor-intensive enterprises, offering financial aid, and attracting qualified entrepreneurs and employees to find alternative solutions to rising labor expenses and to the strict tax and labor law.⁽⁷⁶⁾

Achievements

GDD achieved a 10-fold increase since 2000, it reached 450 billion RMB in industrial output and 172 billion RMB in value-added in 2010. GDD GDP per capita grew from \$28,000 in 2001 to \$69,000 in 2010. The number of personnel in GDD rose from 58,000 in 2001 to 285,000 in 2010. Productivity of labor doubled. The size of enterprises has increased. The investment raised in GDD considerably. GDD has supported 100 enterprises to increase their investment from 5 million\$ per square kilometer to over 10 million\$ per square kilometer. In 2007, the investments grew from 20\$ per square meter to 700\$ per square meter. GDD enterprises are green (friendly to the environment) and more oriented toward obtaining high technology. The share of the industrial output of the high technology enterprises grew from 35 percent in 2004 to 50 percent in 2012. The industrial output for leading industries in electronics, telecommunications, and chemicals achieved 284.201 billion RMB in 2009 estimating 82 percent of GDD's total industrial output.⁽⁷⁷⁾

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GDD Contribution to the Local Economy

Over the past two decades, GDD achieved much higher development compared to Guangzhou and Guangdong. Between 1992 and 2010, GDD's average annual growth in FDI of 24 percent compared with 9 percent for Guangzhou and 8 percent for Guangdong. Its share of FDI was low compared with other zones. GDD's contribution to the local economy has been growing. GDD industrial output in 2010 was double those for Guangzhou and Guangdong. The exports of Guangzhou and Guangdong came from GDD.⁽⁷⁸⁾

In 2010, China acquired knowledge from Singapore's successful metropolitan growth experience; the Sino-Singapore Guangzhou Knowledge City (SSGKC) project was established.

All the SEZs mentioned have created an attractive environment for investment through their cheap labor force, strategic locations, natural resources, favorable taxes, fiscal policies, and the support of the government. SEZs have promoted the growth of their economies as driving forces and have provided successful models of development. SEZs have faced several challenges and provided many applicable lessons to be learned.

7. The Chinese Lessons to the World

China has achieved its miracle of economic growth through its own efforts and hard work. China's achievements in the economic development of the SEZs rely on many reasons such as the adoption of experimentation and the scientific approach.

Since 1978, China has become the global manufactory, the manufacturing center of the world with the largest share of GDP. China has witnessed a prominent shift from the global factory to the world's largest market with the exceptional largest growing purchasing power in history. China is the second-largest economy in the world.⁽⁷⁹⁾

The social effects of the SEZs have been demonstrated in generating job opportunities and improving the living standards of people. The significance of these zones lies in diminishing unemployment, improving the well-being of people, and building a harmonious community in China.⁽⁸⁰⁾

China Economic Selected Indicators

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Population (million)	1,361	1,368	1,375	1,383	1,390
GDP per capita (USD)	7,124	7,662	7,948	8,103	8,806
GDP (USD billion)	9,694	10,480	10,925	11,204	12,241
Economic Growth (GDP, annual variation in %)	7.8	7.3	6.9	6.7	6.9
Consumption (annual variation in %)	6.8	7.9	7.2	7.8	-
Investment (annual variation in %)	9.8	7.3	6.9	6.6	-
Unemployment Rate	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.0	3.9
Trade Balance (USD billion)	259	383	594	510	419
Exports (USD billion)	2,209	2,342	2,273	2,098	2,263
Imports (USD billion)	1,950	1,959	1,680	1,588	1,844
Exports (annual variation in %)	7.8	6.0	-2.9	-7.7	7.9
Imports (annual variation in %)	7.2	0.5	-14.3	-5.5	16.1
International Reserves (USD)	3,880	3,899	3,406	3,098	3,236
External Debt (% of GDP)	8.9	17.0	12.7	12.7	14.0

Source: Focus Economics. See, <https://www.focus-economics.com/countries/China>.

There are a few points that countries should avoid in the process of establishing the SEZs. Many governments started to establish industrial zones in coastal cities to attract foreign investment without any planning or evaluation which resulted in a waste of natural resources and environmental damage. China has applied important environmental standards and pushed enterprises to adopt green technology by utilizing fiscal policies. SEZs have accomplished great success yet many of them still do not provide adequate social services, especially in distant regions.⁽⁸¹⁾

Moreover, other developing countries can draw applicable strategies from the useful lessons and experiences of China's SEZs.

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Scholars stressed the significance of improving the business environment rather than concentrating on incentives as well as the need for the commitment of the government and the communications between government and enterprises.

China has utilized the SEZs to achieve dramatic development toward the market economy in a comprehensive way. China has provided fiscal incentives, good suitable infrastructure, and adequate public services to attract foreign investment. Today's business environment is different so the government should concentrate more on improving the investment environment and infrastructure considering incentives that motivated training and technology instead of focusing only on tax incentives. The adherence and dedication of government are required to set proper policy and sufficient public goods and services with appropriate communication and cooperation system between governmental institutions at all levels.⁽⁸²⁾

Furthermore, the establishment of the SEZs should be part of the national plan based on the comparative advantages of the country.

The establishment of the SEZs should be based on the national and regional development policy and a part of a proper model depending on the comparative and competitive advantages. It is essential to carry out an in-depth analysis of the country's basic conditions to define the right model which will be established on local strengths through deliberate and overall planning and the proper industrial placement. This process requires evaluation of the local market, the investment environment, the industrialization, labor, land, etc. In most SEZs of China, all services and basic infrastructure are provided with high quality and skilled labor.⁽⁸³⁾

In addition, the pilot zone or the experimentation zone is a very important step during the formation process of the SEZs.

It is important to establish one or two zones initially before establishing more zones. China formed four zones at the beginning in strategic locations and when they achieved success, the program was applied to the whole country.

Some African countries established 10 or 20 zones all at once at the initial stage which is a failed task. It is essential for the zones to train the personnel and to obtain high modern technology and competitive goods. China's zones have well-equipped training centers and technical support for enterprises. Governments have set policies to attract well-qualified people to work in the zones. Unlike other countries, China's zones are well linked to the local clusters to strengthen each other and establish joint ventures and technological assistance with local partners.⁽⁸⁴⁾

Contributions of SEZs to China's Development.

More importantly, The SEZs have made vital contributions to China's economy. The first SEZs successfully tested the market economy and established leading paradigms for the rest of the country to follow.

SEZs have made a significant contribution to China's economy. The first generation of the SEZs successfully explored and examined the market economy and established a leading model for the rest of the country. The notion of an open policy has been spread widely to all cities. Several types of SEZs started to come out in the country. Since the famous visit of Deng, the task started with the formation of the five SEZs. From an economic point of view, SEZs have made an important contribution to the national GDP and to exports, employment, investment, technology, and management. In 2006, the GDP contribution of the first generation of the SEZs was estimated at 5 percent of China's total GDP. 22 percent of exports and 9 percent of FDI. In 2007, the employment of the FDI of the first generation of the SEZs reached USS 7.3 billion. For Shanghai Pudong and Tianjian was 7.2 billion USS. In 2006, the employment of the first generation of the SEZs reached 15 million estimated 2 percent of the national employment.⁽⁸⁵⁾

In addition, The SEZs are also the cradle of China's new science and high-technology enterprises. Despite the success of the SEZs, they still have challenges to address. The SEZs are the home of new and high technology enterprises. 54 high and technology industrial development zones hosted half of the Chinese's high-tech enterprises and hosted 102 million research and development personnel and registered 50.000 invention patents in 2007 and accounted for 33 percent of the national high-tech output. Since the

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establishment of HIDZs, they have accounted for one-third of China's high-tech exports and half of China's high-tech gross industrial output. Another one-third of China's high-tech industrial output and exports have been generated by ETDZs (from 31.3 percent in 2004 to 35.5 percent in 2005). HIDZs are also particularly R&D intensive: their expenses on R&D in 2002 were RMB 31.4 billion and reckoned for 24.4 percent of China's total R&D expenses. The R&D expenses increased to RMB 105.4 billion, and in 2006 the share grew to 35.1.⁽⁸⁶⁾

Policy Recommendation.

Policy recommendation is important for developing countries in terms of learning from the successful experience of China in the establishment of the SEZs to achieve economic growth and prosperity. The SEZs should be carefully established depending on several factors. First, the purpose of the zones should be clearly defined and the SEZs should be tested later to see if they functioned as good policy tool to achieve the goals. It is important to determine whether the goal of the SEZs is short or long term and that requires planning, infrastructure, and investment. Second, the location of the SEZs is a very significant factor. SEZs should not be established in distant areas because foreign enterprises will not invest in a backward area that lacks good infrastructure and skilled labor. The SEZs should have access to the international market and should be established in strategic locations like airports and ports considering large regions for overall economic development. Third, FDI should be controlled, monitored, and employed in the right way. A balance should be achieved between local and foreign enterprises. Fourth, the factor of time is essential. The initial stage of forming the SEZs should be well planned in a short time otherwise the investors will distrust the system. Fifth, well-developed infrastructure is fundamental for the success of the SEZs which includes the necessary facilities such as water, transport, electricity, and communication systems. The labor force is very important as well as the establishment of the legal system. The legal system is important to protect foreign investment and should clarify how the system will secure the investors' business and their property rights. The Legal system should be effective, transparent, and applicable to the whole country. Simplified procedures are fundamental for the process of formation of the

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SEZs and for the investors such as the establishment of the single window clearance. Lastly, forming too many zones would expose the economy to potential risk because that would increase the competition between zones to attract FDI by offering more favorable policies. Therefore, an overall economic strategy is essential.⁽⁸⁷⁾

China's model of the special economic zones proved to be successful and applicable to other developing countries in case the model was implemented in the right context. With consideration to the particularities and the conditions of each country and to several sensitive factors such as governmental support, strategic locations, favorable policies, economic-political reforms, sound infrastructure, clear objectives and planning, technology, and innovation.

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