

On the Necessity of Autonomy in China's Local Government Systems

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In recent years, China has attracted worldwide attention on account of the rapid development of its economy since the government decided to change the economic regime from a planned market to a socialist free market. However, differences between regions have increased, conflicts between ethnic groups have deepened, and the problem of regionalism has been aggravated as a result of such economic development. Consequently, the relationship between the central government, on the one hand, and local governments and local systems of governance on the other, has become an issue requiring urgent attention.

The People's Republic of China is a multi-ethnic country, and adherence to national unity is the main premise for the relationship between the central and local governments. The realization of local autonomy should be based on this premise. However, in reality, this principle seems to impede the development of local autonomy and limit self-governance.

This paper discusses the local systems of government in China from the standpoint of the relationship between the central and local governments. It focuses on issues common to all or most regions and discusses the necessity of autonomy in local government systems.