

The Special Areas for Economic Restructuring and Decentralization of the Regional Development from Japan

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Abstract. After several decades of economic prosperity based on a system of centralized government control, the Japanese economic recession during the '90s has led to approving a set of acts of decentralization so as to promote systems of direct democracy for the management of local governments. The decision-making decentralization aims to support regional competitiveness within the overall efforts for Japan's economic recovery.

In the above mentioned context this paper analyses the policy of the Special Zones for Structural Reform that grants exemptions from regulations governing education, urban renewal, agriculture, distribution, medical care, industry-academic cooperation and other areas, aiming to increase the competitiveness of local regions and municipalities and, thus, to selectively test the new economic policies, in order to expand the successful ones at the whole country level.