

DOCTORAL THESIS

Borderland and nation: China-Hong Kong border control and its relations with the Chinese socialist construction, 1949-1962

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**Borderland and Nation:
China-Hong Kong Border Control and
Its Relations with the Chinese Socialist Construction, 1949-1962**

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ABSTRACT

Since the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the China-Hong Kong border has played a strategic role in Chinese socialist construction. During the Cold War, the China-Hong Kong border was not only a division of territorial sovereignties, it was also the national defence area in south China and one front in the confrontation between Socialism and Capitalism. The situation was further complicated because of the traditional close ties between Guangdong and Hong Kong and the resulting frequent cross-border activities. The China-Hong Kong border was affected by a variety of domestic and international issues, and border control played a role in the nation building of the People's Republic of China. The complexity of this border, without a doubt, tested the wisdom of both Beijing and local authorities.

This thesis focuses on the development of the measures adopted by Beijing, authorities of Guangdong Province and Bao'an County to deal with various China-Hong Kong border issues, particularly entry-exit, illegal emigration, sabotage activities and other incidents between 1949 and 1962. The thesis examines the influence of four diverse factors, including the nationwide socialist policies of Beijing, local administration in Guangdong and Bao'an, relationship between the People's Republic of China and British/Hong Kong governments, as well as the Cold War situation, among others, on the border control of the People's Republic of China. These issues reflect the challenges to the People's Republic of China's development and the authorities' responses. The thesis also illustrates the regional differences in the People's Republic of China through a description of the unique policies applied in the border area and comparison of the attitudes of Beijing and those of the local authorities. The relaxation of border control in Bao'an even served as a historical model for the Chinese opening policy at the end of the 1970s. Finally, this thesis emphasizes the communication patterns between the People's Republic of China and the Hong Kong government. The Sino-British diplomatic channel was used to deal with important border incidents. Informal contact, such as the participation of civil representatives, was applied to minor issues, with the Bao'an border control authorities then indirectly joining the discussion by helping to prepare these representatives.

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