

## Intergovernmental Cooperation in Cheng-Yu Economic Zone: A Case Study on Chinese Regional Collaboration under Synergy Governance

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### Abstract

Intergovernmental collaboration is a universal trend with regional integration. What the local governments, as the public sector, should do to effectively respond to this trend, to strengthen the regional cooperation, transform local governmental functions to improve administrative performance and propel the regional development, a series of such questions, have aroused widespread concern. Cheng-Yu economic zone in the southwest of China, playing an important role in the economic development of this region, is faced with increased demand for addressing regional public issues and promoting regional synergic development. However the intergovernmental cooperation in Cheng-Yu economic zone is complex with fruits accompanied by problems, which makes the study of corresponding countermeasures feasible and necessary.

On the basis of synergy governance theory and other relevant theory on intergovernmental cooperation, the paper builds a theoretical framework to analyze regional intergovernmental collaboration. Then considering the current condition of collaboration between and among local governments in Cheng-Yu economic zone, the paper leads a case study, elaborating on the problems lying in the cooperation in this zone and the corresponding causes. Then with the internal and external environmental analyses, the paper designs a brief conception on propelling synergic development in this zone.

**Key words:** Intergovernmental cooperation; Cheng-yu economic zone; Synergy governance

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### INTRODUCTION

For the severity of problems or the limited capacity of a home organization or a single agency, cooperation across organizational boundaries becomes a preference of many managers, which gives birth to collaboration between governments and non-profit organizations, public sectors and the private, etc. However, with regional affairs or issues, for instance, regional emergencies, disasters, public service and local policy issue, etc. which having been confronted by local governments, increasing apace, intergovernmental collaboration attracts much attention from scholars, researchers and officials. McGuire and Silvia (2010) posit rapid changes in the scope and severity of the issues increase the extent of intergovernmental collaboration. And in practice, public problems in a certain region are increasingly decomposable into multijurisdictional solutions through which can effectively manage these problems, minimize negative externalities, and maximize economics of scale (LeRoux, Brandenburger, and Pandey, 2010). Meanwhile for the service transformation in governments, better intergovernmental collaboration will be needed to satisfy the citizens of the future (Dorris, 2007).

Although local governments choose to collaborate for different purposes, it is surely a truism that intergovernmental cooperation is necessary and advantageous. Thus debates on how to cooperate or collaborate emerge permeated with different perspectives.

Quite early enough, Greg (1995) delineates an interest-based problem-solving process focusing on the application of a collaborative approach in a regional, interlocal context. Further studies on intergovernmental collaboration shed important light on interaction between parallel governments, and put forward the concept of “Inter-organizational Networks” whose existence relies on an interdependent organization (Mandell, 1988). Then Helen Sullivan and Chris Angonaff (1988) led a relevant literature review to summarize ten ways and methods for strengthening intergovernmental cooperation and management. Skelcher (2002) analyzed the revolution of trans-jurisdictional cooperation in English where problems in politics, operation and finance were perceived as hampering factors, and proposed contract, partnership and network to better respond to regional issues.

So is the case with intergovernmental cooperation in China that it gradually becomes frequent and mature both in depth and width. The Yangtze River Delta Economic Zone, located in east of China, through collaboration has achieved many fruits in economy and social development. In addition, the north Metropolitan Region, centred on Beijing municipality, has greatly boosted the Bohai development by intergovernmental collaboration. And the cooperation also works in the Pan-Pearl River Delta Region, a zone in the south of China. However, in order to balance the construction and development of the east and the west of China, the central government issues many policies to support the western zone. Under these contexts, Cheng-Yu economic zone comes into being, which implies the tendency of cooperation among local governments in this zone.

## 1. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION IN CHENG-YU ECONOMIC ZONE

The term “cooperation” is probably imbued with conceptual definitions among researchers and scholars. Here, the paper adopts the definition of Agranoff and McGuire (2003) that cooperation is simply “a concept that describes the process of facilitating and operating in multi-organizational arrangements for solving problems that cannot be achieved, or achieved easily, by single organizations”. Intergovernmental cooperation in Cheng-Yu economic zone is such cooperation among local governments including all levels of province, county, and town in this zone.

In May 2011, the enactment of *regional planning in Cheng-Yu economic zone* was approved by the State Council to further accelerate the development of Cheng-Yu economic zone and push forward the coordinated development in the Western zone. The planning spans from 2011 to 2015 and makes this zone rise up to a national strategy which covers 15 cities in Sichuan province, 31

districts or counties in Chongqing municipality, with a total area of 206,100 square kilometers, a population of 98.407 million, a total GDP of RMB 1.58 trillion. In Sichuan province, the 15 cities are Chengdu, Deyang, Mianyang and Meishan, Ziyang, Suining, Yaan city, Zigong, Luzhou, Neijiang, Leshan, Yibin, Dazhou and Nanchong, Guangan; while in Chongqing, the 31 counties include Wanzhou, Fuling, Yuzhong of Chongqing, Dadukou, and Jiangbei, Shapingba, Jiulongpo, and South Bank, Beibei, Kaixian County, and Liangping, Fengdu,, Dianjiang and Zhongxian, etc. And the so-called intergovernmental cooperation in Cheng-Yu economic zone refers to that local governments, in accordance with the appropriate legal authority, collaborate with each other in solving regional problems and public issues to enhance the common interests and propel synergic development.

## 2. THEORETICAL REFERENCE AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Under synergy governance theory and other relevant theories, the analytical framework is built for further analysis.

### 2.1 Theoretical Reference

Based on the theoretical references, synergy governance theory and the relevant theories on intergovernmental cooperation, the paper observes the corresponding theoretical supports for further analysis of the collaboration between and among local governments in Cheng-Yu economic zone.

#### 2.1.1 Synergy Governance Theory

As demands for public service become complex and social management pluralism, synergy governance, stressing diversity, collaboration of subsystems, dynamics and stability of social order, comes into sight, which provides a new method for social governance. In Western countries, the theory has been widely applied in political science, economics, sociology and management, etc. developing into an important and useful analytical framework. Synergy governance including both formal and informal rules enables different stakeholders to reconcile conflicts and take joint action continuously. Under the current trend of regional integration, the theory emphasizing that all subsystems are interdependent, benefit-sharing and risk-sharing contributes to an all-win intergovernmental collaboration. Ou Liming and Zhu Qin (2009) insist that social trust is the brace while information sharing and convergence of interests are the keys, which are a reflection of the importance of positive social capital.

#### 2.1.2 Theories of Intergovernmental Relations

As regional interactions are closer and closer, studies are fraught with different perspectives on intergovernmental relations in a certain region. But there is a consensus that with de-concentration, de-centralization and devolution,

relationships among local governments are competitive mixed with some collaborative elements; however the ratio of these two kinds of elements may differ in different regions. Zhang Keyun (2002) applies the game theory focused on regional interests as core motivations; and analyzes the relations from economic competition to economic links, then to economic balance and conflicts and cooperation; thus builds up the theoretical framework on regional economy relations and intergovernmental cooperation. So from the perspective of game, motivations and interests are important factors accounting for intergovernmental cooperation.

### **2.1.3 New Public Service Theory**

Presented by Robert B. Denhardt, new public service theory provides a framework for the many voices calling for the reaffirmation of democratic values, citizenship, and services in the public interest. New public service refers to a set of ideas of public administration, which is citizen-centric on governance systems. Denhardt believes that administrative officials in the management of public organizations and the implementation of public policies should bear responsibilities for the provision of public service and decentralization of power to citizens. And the focal works do not lie in operating the helm or rowing it which is the contention of new public management theory; but rather to establish some public organizations with clearly perfect integration and social response. Guided by the new public service theory, local governments within the same region should enhance cooperation through extensive dialogue and citizen involvement, in the pursuit of public interests to achieve functions of social management and public service.

### **2.1.4 Good Governance Theory**

During the 1990s, good governance theory was widely spread with the development of civil society reflecting the return of rights or powers to society and citizens. Yu Keping (2000) holds that good governance is a process of social management to maximize the public interest; its essence exists in cooperative management between governments and civil society; legitimacy, transparency, accountability, the rule of law and responsiveness are five fundamental ingredients. With a gradually increasing consciousness in intergovernmental cooperation, regional cooperation among local governments could be carried out smoothly under the guidance of good governance theory, focusing on social pluralism of participation, emphasizing good cooperation between governments and civil society where the above ingredients are integrated into the whole process.

### **2.1.5 Public Choice Theory**

Public choice theory links governmental behaviors in political systems to the human behaviors in market system, that is, under the assumption of economic man to discuss the behaviors in the political field. James M. Buchanan an economist in United States is a representative of

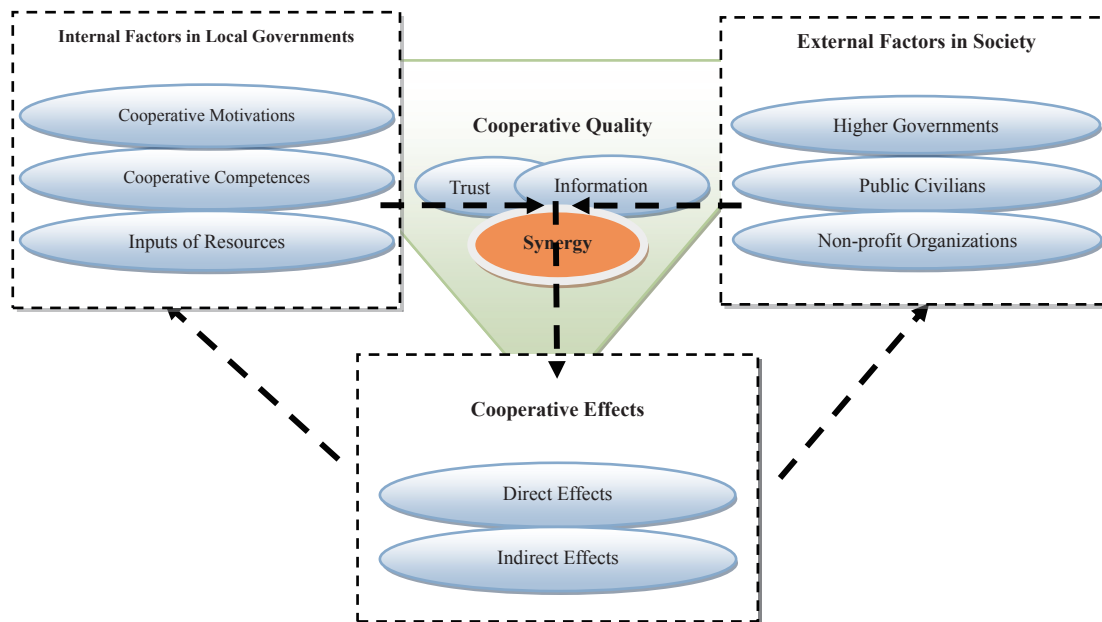
this theory. The saying “government failure” states that the absence of competition, lack of incentives to reduce costs, self-inflation, incomplete information for monitoring and the rent-seeking activities, etc. are major causes for inefficiency governmental organizations or agencies. Public choice theorists correspondingly propose some instructive policy recommendations: strengthen democracy, improve running efficiency and bind governmental rights.

In the process of regional integration, intergovernmental cooperation may be blocked by the possibility of “government failure”; thus completing relevant laws, regulations and mechanisms is crucial and indispensable in order to maximize public interests, improve public service and propel synergic development.

## **2.2 Analytical Framework**

Different frameworks or hypotheses have been built for analyzing factors concerning promoting or hampering intergovernmental cooperation. For example, Thomson and Perry (2006) propose a framework in terms of an antecedent—process—outcome sequence. McGuire and Silvia (2010) demonstrate empirically three hypotheses concerning the determinants of intergovernmental collaboration through which elucidates the collaboration is a function of the problem severity, organizational and managerial capacity, and internal structure. This paper, based on the idea of synergic governance, delineates the intergovernmental cooperation in China, especially in Cheng-Yu economic zone emphasizing that all the subsystems are interdependent, benefit-sharing and risk-sharing. The realization of local governmental cooperation, on the whole, lies in the analysis of cooperativity between the internal and external environment, both in local governments themselves and in the society. Before the start of local governmental cooperation, the antecedent factors having an impact on cooperative effects are internal aspects of local governments and external factors of social environment; in the process of cooperation, the cooperative quality as an intermediary factor influences the outcomes, i.e. cooperative effects.

The analytical framework (showing in Figure 1) is built from the perspective of synergic governance. The internal factors in local governments mainly consist of cooperative motivation, cooperative competence and inputs of resources. “Demand” in economics means two aspects, namely having the desire to buy while being able to afford it. So is the case with intergovernmental cooperation whose success and improvement need the inclination of local governments to cooperative relationship and relevant competences for implementing collaboration. And the collaborative capacity depends on several kinds of boundary-spanning activities, including network ties, revenue source, as well as the number of stakeholder groups (Gazley, Chang, & Bingham 2010). In addition, inputs of resources, for instance labors,



**Figure 1**  
**Framework for Analysis on Intergovernmental Cooperation under Synergic Governance**

organizations, play a crucial role in the cooperation, as consumers finally decide to pay for goods when the deal really happens. Resolution of any public issues is “applying particular types of data, information and knowledge to complex situations” (Agranoff 2007, 221). In China, the resources mainly involve labor, material, finance, information, institution, authoritative resource, etc. The external environmental factors, other than local governments, include approval of the Central Government, support from the public, and participation of non-profit organizations. Due to the severity and complexity of public issues and limited individual and organizational energy, no single organization or local government could perfectly address all incidents or emergencies, which makes intergovernmental and intersectoral collaboration essential (McGuire and Silvia 2010), and the involvement of plural participation necessary. As the intermediary in the process of cooperation, cooperative quality comprehensively reflecting the result of the internal and external factors mainly includes cooperative trust, transparency of information and effectiveness of synergic governance. Scholars have studied effects of the social capital on local governance and reasoned that mutual trust and reciprocity will develop in social networks (Feiock 2007). Cooperative effects are indicated in the direct and indirect facets. For regional intergovernmental cooperation, whether the ultimate effects are good will conversely affect the response of internal and external environment to the cooperation, forming new factors

in local governments and social environment for the cooperation, thereby affecting cooperative quality, leading to different cooperative effects under the new context. Therefore the circulation goes on (as shown by the dashed lines in Figure 1). And to keep the sustainability of intergovernmental cooperation and get the ultimate synergic effect, it is available and necessary to find or create beneficial factors according to the subsystems, that is, internal factors in local governments, external factors in society and cooperative quality system.

### 2.3 Summary

This chapter under synergy governance theory, a new perspective for studying regional intergovernmental cooperation, discusses the realization of intergovernmental cooperation and the achievement of concerted development. Based on synergic governance theory, theory of inter-governmental relations, the new public service theory and the theory of good governance, public choice theory, these theoretical references from different perspectives give support for intergovernmental cooperation. Under the trend of regional integration, regional socio-economic development in favor of cooperative relationship among local governments, urges local governments to focus on the function of regional public services, integrate legitimacy, transparency, accountability, the rule of law and social responsiveness to the whole process of intergovernmental cooperation in a certain zone, and return rights to the civil society

preventing “Government failure” in the process of the cooperation. Under this context, from the perspective of synergic concept, the analytical framework for the achievement of intergovernmental cooperation in a certain zone is build, which adopts three dimensions, namely the internal and external factors and cooperative quality, to analyze cooperative effects of intergovernmental cooperation; and holds that cooperative motivation, cooperative competences, the quality of inputs of resources, and the condition of external environment, etc. have a determinant impact on the cooperative effects.

### 3 ANALYSIS ON PROBLEMS IN INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION IN CHENG-YU ECONOMIC ZONE

Since 1997 when Chongqing was separated from Sichuan province becoming a municipality, Cheng-Yu cooperation become a natural tendency due to geographical, cultural, economic and other links. In the process of intergovernmental cooperation in Cheng-Yu economic zone, the fruits or achievements are accompanied by some problems and deficiencies at the same time.

**Table 1**  
**Development of Intergovernmental Cooperation in Cheng-Yu Economic Zone**

Time	Participants	Achievements
Early 1990s	Six provinces in Southwest	seven-party economic coordination conference
21 <sup>st</sup> Dec. 2001	Chengdu, Chongqing	<i>Chongqing-Chengdu economic cooperation talks</i> , proposed creating the Chengdu-Chongqing economic corridor
4 <sup>th</sup> Feb. 2004	Sichuan, Chongqing	“1+6” cooperation conference
5 <sup>th</sup> Feb. 2004	Sichuan, Chongqing	<i>Agreement of Sichuan and Chongqing Road Transportation Development Framework</i>
2 <sup>nd</sup> Apr. 2007	Sichuan, Chongqing	Agreement on promoting cooperation between Sichuan and Chongqing and building Cheng-Yu economic zone
7 <sup>th</sup> Oct. 2007	Chengdu, Chongqing	Sichuan provincial people's Government and Chongqing Municipal People's Government on framework for deepening Sichuan-Chongqing economic cooperation
20 <sup>th</sup> Oct. 2007	Chengdu, Chongqing	Agreement of Sichuan, Chongqing on cooperative interaction framework in adjacent areas
17 <sup>th</sup> Oct. 2008	Sichuan, Chongqing	Signing contracts of cooperative projects
early Dec. 2009	National Development and Reform Commission, Sichuan, Chongqing	Drawing up <i>Regional planning in Cheng-Yu economic zone</i>
2 <sup>nd</sup> Oct. 2009	Sichuan	Guidance On speeding up the construction of one pole –one axis –one block for the development of Cheng-Yu economic zone
6 <sup>th</sup> Nov. 2011	Sichuan	establishing the portal site of Chengdu-Chongqing network
26 <sup>th</sup> Sep. 2012	Sichuan, Chongqing	Well-known private entrepreneur to Sichuan and the seventh Summit of Commerce Chamber in Cheng-Yu economic zone

Partial material comes from *memorabilia of the development in Chengdu-Chongqing economic zone* written by Yue Chaoming, 2006; <http://cq.people.com.cn>

### 3.1 Developmental Path of Intergovernmental Cooperation in Cheng-Yu Economic Zone

In order to make a case study on intergovernmental cooperation in Cheng-Yu economic zone, first of all, it is necessary to have a general knowledge of its developmental path. Table 1 briefly draws a conclusion of the fruits or achievements along the road of the cooperation.

As far as the related literature review and actual situation are concerned, the history is divided into three stages. During 1997—2003, the cooperation is in embryonic time when Cheng-Yu economic zone was still investigated and under-conceptual. Then from 2004 to 2009, the zone welcomed its fast development with many fruits enumerated in the above table 1. Since the end of 2009 when National Development and Reform Commission undertook to draw up *Regional planning in Cheng-Yu economic zone*, intergovernmental cooperation in this zone drew on its booming time. The participation grows more and more extensively with local governments, private sectors and non-profit organizations being involved. In 2011, the portal site of Cheng-Yu network was established, making information communication

more transparent and effective, and thus encouraging plural participation of civil society.

### **3.2 Principal Problems in Intergovernmental Cooperation in Cheng-Yu Economic Zone**

Summarizing the relevant documentation, negative factors restricting the cooperation among local governments in Cheng-Yu economic zone involve political, managerial, legal and financial aspects, etc. Under the analytical framework showed as Figure 1, the paper takes a tentative analysis of problems lying in intergovernmental cooperation in Cheng-Yu economic zone as follows:

#### **3.2.1 Deficiency of Cooperative Motivations and Low Qualities in Inputs Of Resources**

The internal factors hindering the cooperation in Cheng-Yu economic zone are the lack of cooperative motivations and inputs of resources. On the one hand, insufficiency of cooperative motivations: Chengdu economic region and Chongqing economic circle have their respective planning of construction and development, which aggravates the competitive relationship and weakens the cooperative. Due to ubiquitous responsibility conflicts, Fei Guangsheng and Yang Long (2011) elucidate that “the current organizational culture which deviated from public nature is the source of non-cooperative tendency of local administrative organizations in China” and leads to the deficiency of cooperative motivations. On the other hand, deficiency of inputs of resources: stipulations – institution, mechanisms and norms – is rather immature for intergovernmental cooperation in Cheng-Yu economic zone; the administrative organization undertaking the executive affairs badly needs improvement; the further development asks for coordinated mechanisms between all levels of Governments. In contrast to the respective inputs in Chengdu economic region and Chongqing economic circle, the inputs are quite low both in quality and quantity for the construction and development of Cheng-Yu economic zone, including labor, materials, finance, information, institution, authoritative resource, which is the embodiment of deficiency of the inputs and also the barriers to deepen the cooperation in this zone.

#### **3.2.2 Lack of Cooperative Diversity in Contents and Forms**

The above mentioned “1+6” cooperation conference and the later agreements mainly dealt with major projects of transport infrastructure, energy, agriculture, rural economy, public authorities, tourism and the development of radio and television broadcasting, etc. Therefore through the analysis of the developmental path, it indicates that the cooperation in Cheng-Yu economic zone is currently concentrated on economic areas despite some involvements in the sectors of social management and public service which definitely do not meet the requirements of synergic development for addressing regional public affairs. Meanwhile the participants lead a

trend of pluralism, but it is dominated by the government. The portal site of Chengdu-Chongqing network has been established adding vitality to mutual communication; but it is mainly for the function of introduction and spreading regional information, which urges the informatization of e-Government for the cooperation to be further improved.

#### **3.2.3 Limitation in the Cooperative Quality and Synergic Effects**

Since the position of Cheng-Yu economic zone as a national strategy, local governments in this zone have taken some effective actions, but the quality is not high and cooperative synergy is not strong. These mainly reflect in the lack of cooperative trust due to role conflicts and conflicts of interest which are associated with higher administrative costs of regional cooperation and the opportunity cost; Asymmetric information and imperfect cooperative synergy are other aspects. In the contrast of the development in Sichuan and Chongqing, the competitive relationship is relatively obvious. Industrial assimilation, similar characteristics of economic development, both as the experimental district for balancing urban and rural development, suggest the low complementarity in this zone, which would not be conducive to the reach of synergic effects and coordinated development.

#### **The Causes for the Problems in Intergovernmental Cooperation in Cheng-Yu Economic Zone**

The benign and sustainable development of things depends on the harmonious balance of internal and external environment. Therefore the key is to analyze local governments and the social environment to searching the causes for the problem existing in the cooperation in Cheng-Yu economic zone. Corresponding to the tentative analysis of the problems, the paper provides an analysis of the corresponding reasons as followings.

#### **3.3.1 Lack of Long-Term and Stable Cooperative Mechanisms**

Relative stability of systems or mechanisms is essential for effective implementation. Without the support of long-term and stable mechanisms of organization or leadership for cooperation, the development would have encountered obstacles and been faced with adverse impacts. The cooperation in Cheng-Yu economic zone primarily was and is initiated and pushed forward by local governments. Leadership turnover has a great impact on time horizons of local officials (McCabe, Feiock, Clingermayer and Park 2008). And once the official system has some changes, the forms, contents and process of cooperation will have corresponding variations, which will engender obstructed procedure and result in inefficiency and ineffectiveness of cooperation. Furthermore, the related cost-sharing, coordination mechanisms are incomplete for the cooperation in Cheng-Yu economic zone, leading

to imbalance of interests and inadequate financial resources for a wide range of cooperative projects. Under the current tax system, while actively seek support from the Central Government, local governments in Cheng-Yu economic zone should make a consensus on a sound and reasonable ratio of financial investment in regional cooperation, and establish a scientific and rational mechanism for cooperation.

### **3.3.2 Insufficiency of Positive Social Capital for Promoting the Cooperation**

The benign social capital for cooperation in Cheng-Yu economic zone is relatively lacking, which is mainly reflected in the existing administrative system and socio-cultural aspects. In terms of political, or economic, cultural considerations, Chengdu and Chongqing cities are quite equal. Under the current assessment system of officials for promotion, disputes over the regional leader in this zone hinder the improvement of collaboration and cooperation, reducing the consensus on cooperative relationship. In addition to these, local protectionism aggravates the condition to some extent, which implies the crucial task to find motivations for cooperation. In Socio-cultural aspects, as shown in the literature review, although academia and relevant administrative authorities are aware of the importance of establishing information-sharing platform and the need to reshape cooperative culture in administrative organizations, the cooperative trust, synergy, etc. in Cheng-Yu economic zone are comparatively scarce, impeding the optimization of cooperation both in width and depth.

### **3.3.3 Inadequacy of Specification of Laws and Social Participation**

Constitution and laws in China just empower local governments to address social affairs in the concerned region, but no provision or regulation is related to cooperation among local governments. Thus the cooperation lacks stipulations or specification at the legal level on cooperative forms, rights and obligations, which brings about extensive freedom for local governments to determine whether to choose cooperation, how to cooperate and what level the cooperation will come to, etc. Furthermore, in china, civil society is immature, the public participation insufficient. And non-governmental organizations themselves are not perfect due to internal and external governance problems, so their function to assist governments in the provision of public services is insufficient, pending further guidance on the improvement of regional intergovernmental cooperation. Under such circumstances, inputs of resources, especially supports from laws or policies and approvals from the public, and the multiple cooperative forms are adversely affected.

## **3.4 Summary**

This chapter leads a specific case study on cooperation among local governments in Cheng-Yu economic zone.

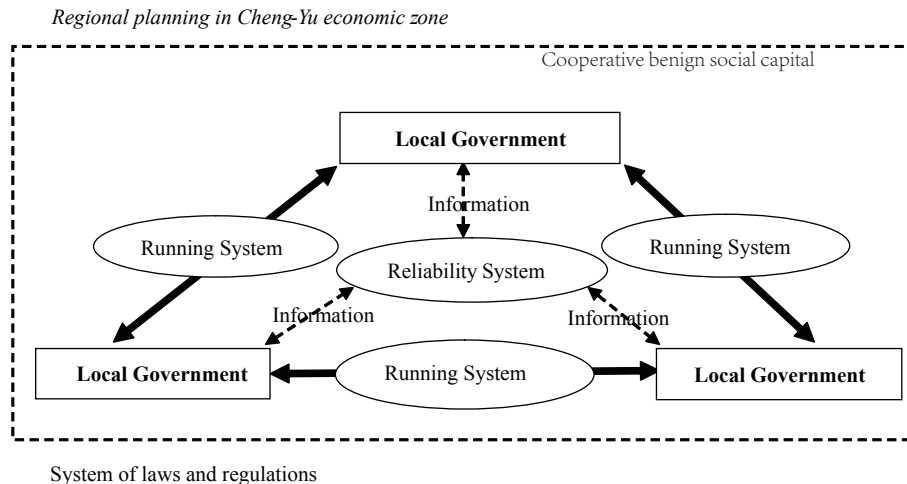
Through the tentative analysis of the developmental path, the paper holds that the cooperation in this zone is a coexistence of achievements and problems, a mixture of competition and cooperation, which means a vast space for further optimization. Under the analytical framework, based on the practical, the current problems for the cooperation are three facets: deficiency of cooperative motivations and low quality in inputs of resources; lack of diversity in cooperative contents and forms; limitation in the cooperative quality and synergic effects. Corresponding to the problems, the paper attributes the causes to three respect, namely the first is lack of long-term and stable cooperative mechanisms; the second insufficiency of positive social capital for promoting the cooperation; and third inadequacy of specification of laws and social participation.

## **4. COUNTERMEASURES FOR IMPROVING THE COOPERATION IN CHENG-YU ECONOMIC ZONE**

Based on the theoretical framework, the paper elaborates on the basic countermeasures to improve the intergovernmental cooperation in Cheng-Yu economic zone, trying to reach the goal of synergic development in this zone, through improving the reliability system, optimizing the running system, and structuring the rule system. Figure 2 briefly illustrates the conception of intergovernmental cooperation in Cheng-Yu economic zone.

Situated in the Southwest, Chengdu and Chongqing should actively construct their respective economic centers to guarantee cornerstone for benign cooperation. Then under the guidance of Regional planning in Cheng-Yu economic zone and the bounds by relevant laws and regulations, the cooperation should firstly perfect the reliability system through setting up cooperative trust, an important element of social capital, by sharing information, benefits and responsibilities. Simultaneously the cooperation should optimize the running system with the aggrandizement of cooperative efficiency and effectiveness by expelling ineffective activities or processes according to the unanimous standards.

Meanwhile great importance should be attached to the whole process in which the dynamic mechanisms and eco-collaborative culture are deemed vital for achieving synergic governance and development in Cheng-Yu economic zone. In practice, local governments can reengineer the cooperative culture with the suggestions that administrative organizations should return to public nature; new administrative values should be established; the roles of local governments should be redefined; and the formal system arrangement should be coordinated (Fei Guangsheng and Yang Long 2011).



**Figure 2**  
**Conception of Intergovernmental Cooperation in Cheng-Yu Economic Zone**

## 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Under the trend of regional integration, cooperation among local governments is an important and necessary strategy chosen by local governments based on the role as providers of public services, considering pressures from enhancing governance competence, and in view of regional integrated advantages. Currently the cooperation in Cheng-Yu economic zone has certain positive social capital, policy support and a series of internal and external favorable factors, which are active response to the increase of regional economic integration and regional public affairs. However the cooperation in Cheng-Yu economic zone has released limited synergic effects while the cooperative quality badly needs improved. Thus further exploring the paths for optimization becomes an important issue.

Intergovernmental cooperation in Cheng-Yu economic zone is a complex of interaction and integration of multiple factors; is a comprehensive result of cooperative qualities infecting the cooperative effects under the influence of internal and external environment. The internal factors in local governments include cooperative motivations, cooperative competences and inputs of resources. The external factors in social environment include the central government, the public and non-profit organizations. Based on the actual circumstances, the paper holds that cooperative trust, information and synergistic factors are important dimensions for analyzing cooperative qualities. With theoretical reference, from different viewpoints, the paper tries to interpret and explore the path to “Pareto improvement” in the process of intergovernmental cooperation increase mutual interest and reach the goal of synergic development. Obviously, the analytical framework here is structured on theoretical references and under Chinese contexts. Therefore

additional empirical research and analyses are required to explore this field further.

Currently the intergovernmental cooperation in Cheng-Yu economic zone may be improved or propelled through perfecting the reliability system, optimizing the running system and simultaneously constructing the rule system. Under the analytical framework, it was found that the hindering factors or barriers are three aspects: deficiency of cooperative motivations and low quality in inputs of resources; lack of diversity in cooperative contents and forms; limitation in the cooperative quality and synergic effects. With the guidance of *Regional planning in Cheng-Yu economic zone* and the policy support from central government as experimental districts for balancing urban and rural development, it is crucial to accumulate positive social capital, especially mutual trust; promote the development of civil society by encouraging and appealing to multi-level participation; shape eco-collaborative culture; and build up sustainable and dynamic mechanisms, etc. in pursuit of synergic development in this zone. However, the countermeasures mentioned above are quite not enough or adequate. Therefore more qualitative and quantitative researches will be expected in this field.

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