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SYSTEMS AND TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT: ANALYSIS AND CASE
STUDIES

**COORDINATING MULTIPLE ACTORS AND THEIR INTERACTIONS IN
TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT: EVIDENCE FROM A LOCAL PRODUCTIVE
SYSTEM IN WESTERN CHINA**

Zijian Bai (18310798516@163.com)

Huilian Yang (topyhl@163.com)

Qizhen Zhu (zhuqz@cau.edu.cn)

Fengtian Zheng (zft2000@126.com)

This paper examines how interactions between local governments and farmers are reconfigured across different stages of agricultural industrial development. Existing studies often emphasize resource and locational constraints in less-developed regions; this paper instead highlights the importance of organizational and coordination capacities. From a process-oriented perspective, regional industrial development is not determined by the strength of any single actor, but by how heterogeneous capacities held by governments, enterprises, village organizations, and farmers are reorganized and adjusted over time. In many

developing contexts, smallholders face difficulties in forming collective organizations, while enterprises encounter high transaction costs in contracting with dispersed farmers. As a result, local governments often become the central governing actors responsible for integrating resources and coordinating production.

Drawing on a case study of kiwi fruit industry in Liupanshui, a mountainous region in western China, the paper analyzes how local governments intervene in different development stages. In the early stage, governments play a key role in selecting industrial directions, coordinating resources, and facilitating technological diffusion, while allowing limited autonomy for farmers' experimentation. As development goals become clearer, governance arrangements tend to strengthen administrative coordination and control to enable rapid scale expansion and standardization. Although control and empowerment are not inherently contradictory, excessive emphasis on control often constrains farmers' agency and reduces the effectiveness of empowerment.

The findings suggest that when governance remains focused primarily on technological diffusion without corresponding institutional adjustments, farmers are likely to be positioned as technical executors rather than autonomous economic actors. Sustainable and resilient territorial development therefore depends on governance adjustments that gradually reallocate production decision-making power to capable and willing farmers, enhance cooperation among actors, and balance coordination with flexibility. This study highlights the non-linear and contested nature of governance transitions in local productive systems and contributes to broader discussions on territorial development in developing regions.

Palavras-chave: agricultural industrialization; governance; multi-actor coordination ; organizational capital; smallholder agriculture.