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THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC-POLITICAL DRIVERS OF SYNERGETIC GREEN DEVELOPMENT OF URBAN AGGLOMERATION: A STUDY OF CHENGDU-CHONGQING ECONOMIC CIRCLE IN CHINA

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Abstract

Due to differences in resource endowment, economic foundation, development strategy, and intergovernmental competition, China's green development has shown prominent regional imbalance and significant polarization. To understand the country's green development from a regionally coordinated perspective, this paper put forward the concept of synergetic green development (SGD) of urban agglomeration and takes Chengdu-Chongqing Economic Circle (CCEC) as a case to examine the evolution of SGD and its socio-economic-political drivers. By combining multiple methods, including synergy degree model for composite system, obstacle degree model, grey relation analysis, social network analysis, and semi-structured interviews, this research finds that the SGD level of CCEC gradually increased from -0.02 in 2001 to 0.66 in 2020, evolving from a non-synergetic state to a synergetic state. In this process, the green development of Zigong, Leshan, Yibin, and Chongqing had the greatest impacts, and resource and environmental carrying capacity was the primary obstacle. However, the current inter-local collaboration is still limited due to the fragmentation of local interests, lack of inter-local trust caused by economic and political competition, and the absence of a leading authority. Finally, this research put forward relevant policy suggestions, including paying particular attention to key cities, strictly controlling major pollutants to enhance resources and environmental carrying capacity, and strengthening the top-down institutional guidance and promoting the establishment of cross-city coordination and communication platforms.

Key words: Chengdu-Chongqing economic circle, intergovernmental relationship, regionally synergetic green development, urban agglomeration

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