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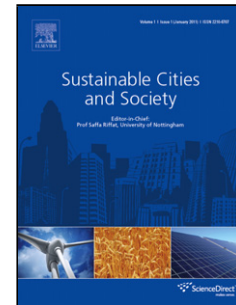
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Mutualism of intra- and inter-prefecture level cities and its effects on regional socio-economic development: A case study of Hubei Province, Central China

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Mutualism of intra- and inter-prefecture level cities and its effects on regional socio-economic development imbalance: A case study of Hubei province, Central China

Highlights

- This paper proposes a method to identify mutualism of both intra- and inter- prefecture level cities.
- This paper uses people flow extracted from train and public bus timetable as real mutualism to verify the identified mutualism.
- This paper demonstrates that mutualism of both intra- and inter- prefecture level cities has positive effects on regional socio-economic development imbalance.
- This paper proposes a model of dealing with regional socio-economic development imbalance in the framework of mutualism.

Abstract: Regional social and economic interactions are proved to related with local development, however, the relations of such interactions with regional development imbalance are usually neglected. By utilizing symbiotic theory, this paper mainly analyzes the effects of mutualistic relation of intra- and inter- prefecture level cities on regional socio-economic development imbalance. Since mutualism denotes a reciprocal and sustainable relationship among cities and from which cities gain benefits, two hypotheses are proposed. The first hypothesis postulates that mutualism of intra-prefecture level city is positively correlated with its coordinated development. The second one suggests that mutualism of inter-prefecture level cities has positive effects on balanced development of the province. Method of comprehensive evaluation and social network analysis method are adopted to identify mutualism among cities. Real mutualism is estimated from people flow data which are extracted from train and public bus timetable to verify the identified mutualism. With verification of the two hypotheses, a model of dealing with regional imbalanced development in the frame work of mutualism. This study contributes to understanding the mutualism of both intra- and inter-prefecture level cities, analyzing the effects of mutualism on regional socio-economic development imbalance, and offering a new perspective on promoting regional stable and sustainable development.

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