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Regional Graphic

The geography of green technology licensing in China

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The adoption of green technologies is crucial for tackling climate change and offering solutions to resource depletion and further environmental challenges. While there is a growing body of literature on the geography of green technology development (Barbieri et al., [2020](#)), research on adoption and diffusion is scarce. This regional graphic provides information on the geography of license agreements for green technology patents in China, highlighting the importance of intra-regional diffusion processes.

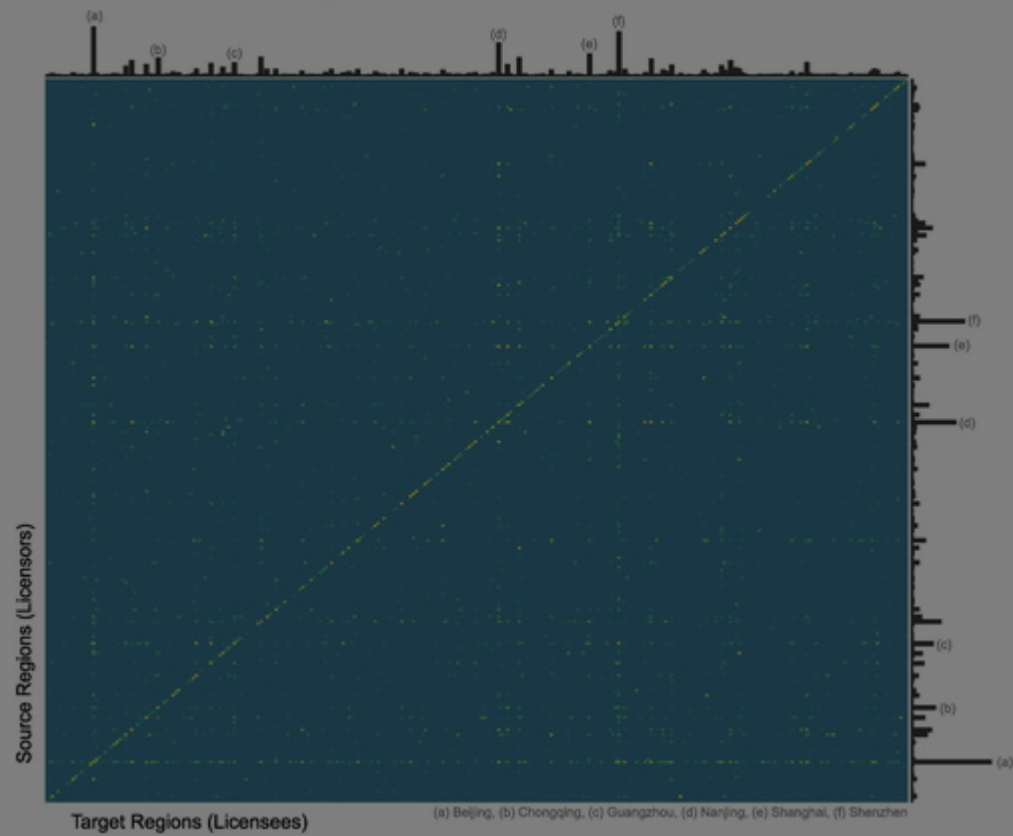
A license agreement is a contract between a licensor (patent owner) and a licensee who is authorized to make use of the technology. Licenses thus allow the measurement of both innovation development and innovation adoption. The data underlying this graphic was retrieved from IncoPat, a Chinese patent database listing license agreements. Green technology patents were identified using the ENV-TECH classification (Haščič & Migotto, [2015](#)). A geocoding process was then employed to regionalize the licensor and licensee addresses to the prefectural level, resulting in a data set of 9396 license agreements for 8565 patents. To be specific, licensor addresses from the patent documents were geocoded using the open-source GeoNames database, while licensee names (e.g. firms, universities) were used to obtain locations via Google Maps and Baidu Maps API queries. In a final step, licensors and licensees were aggregated to 294 prefecture-level regions. Based on the regional information for licensor-licensee linkages, a directed asymmetric adjacency matrix A with the dimensions 294×294 was constructed, with cells a_{ij} indicating the number of

licensed (i.e. a_{ij} is the number of licensees in region j that are licensed by licensors in region i). This data represents the regional diffusion of green technologies, which is a key component of the innovation system. This often leads to regional specialization, with 57% of all license agreements leading to a regional licensee. However, the distribution is not uniform; however, 15% of all license agreements are intra-regional. For example, Beijing, with 51% of its license agreements being intra-regional, is a major hub for green technology patent diffusion.



Figure 1. Regional geography of license agreements for green technology patents in China. The map shows the distribution of license agreements between 294 prefecture-level regions. Licenses are represented by colored dots: darker colors indicate higher density of licenses. Licenses are categorized as intra-regional (top) or inter-regional (bottom). Licenses with counties not included in the database were excluded.

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Heatmap visualization techniques help to analyze network loops in that respect, while (spatial) network visualizations often lead to an overestimation of the value of interregional linkages (e.g. Gui et al., [2019](#)). This regional graphic adds to the literature by arguing that knowledge diffusion via license agreements relies on geographical proximity (e.g. [2019](#)). M... & Sonn, of technologies often seems to... ([2015](#)).

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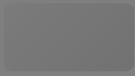
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