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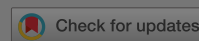
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Regional Graphic

The geography of green technology licensing in China

Sebastian Losacker

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ABSTRACT

Heatmap techniques are used to visualize the geography of green technology license agreements in China. The map is based on unique patent and licensing data, linking

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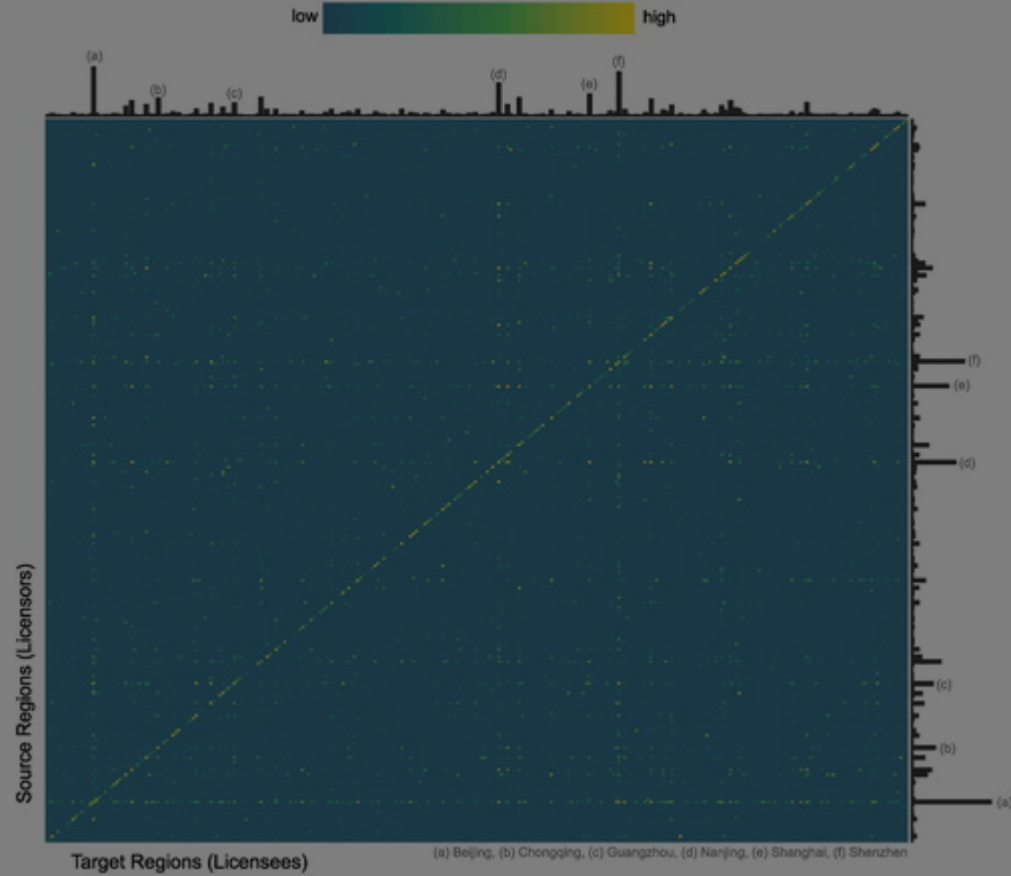
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A license agreement is a contract between a licensor (patent owner) and a licensee who is authorized to make use of the technology. Licenses thus allow the measurement of both innovation development and innovation adoption. The data underlying this 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 patents from source region (licensors) i to target region j (licensees). This data representation allows a detailed study to be made of the diffusion of technologies, which is usually done in network visualizations (Gui et al., [2019](#)). However, this often leads to large numbers of edges, making it difficult to visualize. To address this, we present a map showing the spatial distribution of green technology patent licenses across China. The map displays the geographical locations of licensors (lighter colors) and licensees (darker colors) at the prefecture level. The size of the circles indicates the number of licenses granted, with larger circles representing a higher number of licenses. The map shows a concentration of licenses in the eastern part of China, particularly around Beijing and Shanghai.

Figure 1: Spatial distribution of green technology patent licenses across China. The map displays the geographical locations of licensors (lighter colors) and licensees (darker colors) at the prefecture level. The size of the circles indicates the number of licenses granted, with larger circles representing a higher number of licenses. The map shows a concentration of licenses in the eastern part of China, particularly around Beijing and Shanghai.





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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 and established local collaborations (Bidault & Fischer, [1994](#); Seo & Sonn, [2019](#)). Moreover, the findings support arguments for regional specificities of sustainability transitions, as the development and adoption of green technologies often seems to

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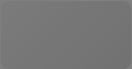
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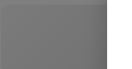
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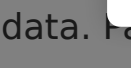
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