

THE SENSITIVITY OF INNOVATION MODES TO DISTANCE: CAN WE GO THE DISTANCE?

PUBLICATION FACTS

JOURNAL

TECHNOLOGICAL FORECASTING
AND SOCIAL CHANGE

PUBLICATION DATE

2025

VOLUME/ISSUE

210

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ABSTRACT

We introduce a spatial approach to study the innovation modes of small firms in Canada. Using a sample of 4887 small firms across different metropolitan regions in Canada, we examine whether innovation modes vary in a continuous manner across space. The findings reveal that geographic distance to metropolitan regions is a meaningful predictor of small firms' innovation mode. Firms are more likely to pursue learning activities associated with the science-technology-innovation (STI) mode and the external dimension of the doing-usinginteracting (DUI) mode at close distances from metropolitan regions. Whereas use of STI and external DUI modes relies on external interactions, the internal activities associated with the DUI mode remain comparatively viable for firms in less proximal locations from metropolitan areas.

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Times Cited

2

Journal Citation
Indicator

2.53