

Spatial Distribution Dataset of Provincial Intangible Cultural Heritage Projects and Inheritors in China

Liu, X. H.¹ Li, B. J.¹ Bi, F. S.¹ Zhang, Y.^{1,2*} Luo, X. R.¹ Wang, X.¹ Huang, C. Y.¹
Peng, J. Z.¹ Liu, Y. L.¹ Tang, B.¹ Ye, W. Z.¹ Zhao, C. W.¹

1. College of Geography and Planning, Chengdu University of Technology, Chengdu 610059, China;
2. School of Architecture, Southeast University, Nanjing 210096, China;
3. Chengdu Shuangliu District Bureau of Culture, Radio, Sports and Tourism, Chengdu 610200, China

Abstract: Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) is important for consolidating the national identity and deep patriotic sentiments. ICH protection and inheritance are crucial to the continuation of the historical context, enhancement of cultural confidence, promotion of civilisation exchange and establishment of a cultural power. Based on a list of representative provincial ICH projects and inheritors published by the cultural and tourism departments of provincial administrative regions (excluding Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan) from 2005 to 2024, this study spatially identifies representative ICH projects and inheritors based on the application area or location of the application unit, then creates a spatial distribution dataset of representative provincial ICH projects in China. The dataset consists of the representative provincial ICH project category, project name, name, publication date, batch, provincial administrative region, municipal administrative region and other information. The dataset is stored as .shp and .xls formats and consists of 17 data files, with a data volume of 504 MB (compressed into one 10.3 MB file).

Keywords: intangible cultural heritage; spatial distribution; provincial level

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Dataset Availability Statement:

The dataset supporting this paper was published and is accessible through the *Digital Journal of Global Change Data Repository* at: <https://doi.org/10.3974/geodb.2024.08.09.V1> or <https://cstr.science.org.cn/CSTR:20146.11.2024.08.09.V1>.

1 Introduction

Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) refers to traditional cultural expressions and related physical objects and places that reflect the cultural characteristics of various ethnic groups and are presented in a living form^[1]. Owing to changes in the ICH environment, many ICH

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***Corresponding Author:** Zhang, Y., Chengdu University of Technology, zhangyang2020@cdut.edu.cn

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elements are gradually moving towards mutation and extinction^[2]. The Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (hereinafter referred to as the ‘Convention’) was introduced by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in 2003 to save ICH^[3]. In 2004, China announced its accession to the Convention and intention to formally engage in protection efforts as a state party to protect its ICH. In 2005, the State Council issued the Notice of the State Council on Strengthening the Protection of Cultural Heritage, which proposed the establishment of a national, provincial, municipal and county ICH listing system^[4]. The system plays an important role in actively promoting the identification, protection, display and standardisation of the country’s ICH^[5]. Since the issuance of the notice, in light of the actual situation, China has classified its ICH into 10 major categories, including folk literature, traditional music, traditional dance, traditional theatre, opera and traditional fine arts, on the basis of which relevant government departments at all levels have successively declared and identified a number of representative ICH items and inheritors. As of 2024, the country’s four-level ICH list, that is, national, provincial, municipal and county, has recognised more than 100,000 representative ICH items and more than 90,000 representative ICH inheritors.

More than 20 years have passed since the introduction of the concept of ‘ICH’ in China in 2003. During this period, the academic community has focused on folklore, history, sociology and geography and conducted research at different scales, namely, national^[6,7], regional^[8,9], provincial^[10,11] and city^[12]. Existing research focuses on macro content, such as the spatial distribution of and factors that can influence ICH^[13,14], holistic protection^[15] and integrated development with related industries^[16,17]. In addition, research has expanded gradually to the exploration of protection development for specific ICH projects^[18,19] or regions^[20]. However, most existing research focuses on national ICH, and few studies examined provincial and lower-level ICH. Compared with city and county ICH, representative provincial ICH projects and inheritors, which have high research value, are of higher level and involve more standardised identification work.

Therefore, based on the existing five batches of 3,610 national intangible cultural heritage spatial distribution datasets^[21], this study uses the municipal administrative region as the basic unit to develop a spatial distribution dataset of representative provincial ICH projects and inheritors in China. The dataset covers information on the spatial distribution of representative provincial ICH items and inheritors in 31 provincial administrative regions (Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan no data available) and thus can provide the necessary data support for research on ICH preservation.

2 Metadata of the Dataset

The dataset full name, short name, authors, year of the dataset, data format, data size, data files, data publisher, and data sharing policy, and other information of the spatial distribution dataset of representative provincial ICH projects and inheritors in China^[22] are presented in Table 1.

3 Methods

3.1 Data Sources

The basic data of this study cover the list of the representative ICH projects and inheritors published by the cultural and tourism departments of each provincial administrative region (Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan no data available), from the announcement of the first batch of representative provincial ICH projects by the Fujian Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism in 2005^[24] to 30 June 2024. The dataset consists of 20,924

Table 1 Metadata summary of the spatial distribution dataset of provincial intangible cultural heritage projects and inheritors in China

Items	Description
Dataset full name	Spatial distribution dataset of provincial intangible cultural heritage projects and inheritors in China
Dataset short name	ProvICH_China_2005-2024
Authors	Liu, X. H., Chengdu University of Technology, 1303940151@qq.com Liu, B. J., Chengdu University of Technology, 3401498504@qq.com Bi, F. S., Chengdu University of Technology, 2719568547@qq.com Zhang, Y., Chengdu University of Technology, zhangyang2020@cdut.edu.cn Luo, X. R., Chengdu Shuangliu District Culture, Radio, Sports and Tourism Bureau, 461091459@qq.com Wang, X., Chengdu University of Technology, 2698311081@qq.com Huang, C. Y., Chengdu University of Technology, hcyhl0822@163.com Peng, J. Z., Chengdu University of Technology, 3050638918@qq.com Liu, Y. L., Chengdu University of Technology, 1579209591@qq.com Tang, B., Chengdu University of Technology, 3599134583@qq.com Ye, W. Z., Chengdu University of Technology, yewanzhi@stu.cdut.edu.cn Zhao, C. W., Chengdu University of Technology, 772121266@qq.com
Geographical region	China, covering 31 provincial administrative regions (no data in Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan)
Year	2005–2024
Data format	.shp, .xls
Data size	504 MB (compressed into one file, 10.3 MB)
Data files	Consisting of 20,924 records of provincial non-heritage items and 22,361 records of provincial non-heritage inheritors
Data publisher	Global Change Research Data Publishing & Repository, http://www.geodoi.ac.cn
Address	No. 11A, Datun Road, Chaoyang District, Beijing 100101, China
Data sharing policy	(1) <i>Data</i> are openly available and can be free downloaded via the Internet; (2) End users are encouraged to use <i>Data</i> subject to citation; (3) Users, who are by definition also value-added service providers, are welcome to redistribute <i>Data</i> subject to written permission from the GCdataPR Editorial Office and the issuance of a <i>Data</i> redistribution license; and (4) If <i>Data</i> are used to compile new datasets, the ‘ten per cent principal’ should be followed such that <i>Data</i> records utilized should not surpass 10% of the new dataset contents, while sources should be clearly noted in suitable places in the new dataset ^[23]
Communication and searchable system	DOI, CSTR, Crossref, DCI, CSCD, CNKI, SciEngine, WDS, GEOSS, PubScholar, CKRSC

representative provincial ICH project subitems and 22,361 representative provincial ICH inheritor subitems, with records of the category of the representative ICH projects and inheritors, name of the items, time of publication, batch, provincial and municipal administrative districts and other information.

3.2 Methodology

The cultural and tourism departments of each provincial administrative region (except Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan) announced batches of representative provincial ICH projects and inheritors. However, their directory does not contain geographic coordinates. Thus, this study identifies the municipal administrative region to which the ICH projects belong based on the information on the declared areas or declared units. With the aid of Google Earth, this study obtains the geographic coordinates of the administrative quarters of the municipal administrative districts where the ICH projects are located and clarifies the spatial information of the representative ICH items at the provincial level and the ICH inheritors at the municipal level. Meanwhile, to meet the data timeliness requirements, this study refers to the Administrative Division Codes of Counties and Above of the People’s Republic of

China in 2023 to determine the municipal administrative region to which each batch of representative provincial ICH projects and inheritors belongs^[25].

4 Data Results and Validation

4.1 Data Composition

The spatial distribution dataset of representative provincial ICH items and inheritors in China consists of two parts: data of the representative provincial ICH items and data of the representative provincial ICH inheritors. The dataset is archived as spatial point data as one .xls file and two .shp files, with a total of 17 files. The attribute fields of the records are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 The attribute field table in the data set

Order number	Field name	Field content examples
1	Index	1, 2, 3, 4, ...
2	Name (in Chinese)	Traditional Drama, Traditional Dance, ...
3	Name (in English)	Traditional Drama, Traditional Dance, ...
4	Project name (in Chinese)	Anhui Opera, Huangmei Opera, Flower Drum Lantern, ...
5	Project name (in English)	Anhui Opera, Huangmei Opera, ...
6	Personal name (in Chinese)	Yang Zaixian, Chang Zhongshan, Chen Yonglan, ...
7	Personal name (in English)	Yang Zaixian, Chang Zhongshan, Chen Yonglan, ...
8	Provincial administrative Region name (in Chinese)	Anhui Province, Beijing City, Fujian Province, ...
9	Provincial administrative Region name (in English)	Anhui Province, Beijing City, Fujian Province, ...
10	Municipal administrative Region name (in Chinese)	Hefei City, Anqing City, Bengbu City, ...
11	Municipal administrative Region name (in English)	Hefei City, Anqing City, Bengbu City, ...
12	Batch (in Chinese)	The First Batch, The Second Batch, ...
13	Batch (in English)	The First Batch, The Second Batch, ...
14	Publication time	2006, 2007, 2008, ...
15	Longitude (WGS84)	116.958,837,9, 118.332,174,9, ...
16	Latitude (WGS84)	33.649,217,88, 29.717,037,23, ...

4.2 Data Products

At the provincial level, the provinces with the largest number of ICH programmes are Zhejiang, Jiangsu and Sichuan, followed by Guizhou, Shandong and Hebei. Hainan, the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region and the Tibet Autonomous Region have the smallest number of ICH programmes (Figure 1). Meanwhile, the provinces with the largest number of NGTs are Zhejiang and Shanxi, followed by Henan, Hebei and Sichuan. Jilin, Liaoning and Hainan have the smallest number of NGTs (Figure 2). The spatial distribution of the provincial-level ICH programmes and inheritors in the regions exhibits certain differences. (1) The number of ICH projects in the southern provinces is higher than that in the northern provinces. (2) The number of ICH projects in the eastern coastal provinces is higher than that in the west, as a whole. (3) At the national level, the high-value projects can be found in the developed coastal areas centred around the Jiangsu–Zhejiang belt and the southwestern ethnic minority-populated areas centred around Sichuan.

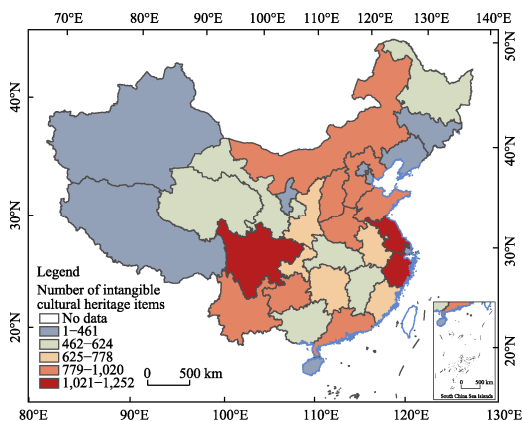


Figure 1 Spatial distribution map of the number of provincial ICH programmes by province

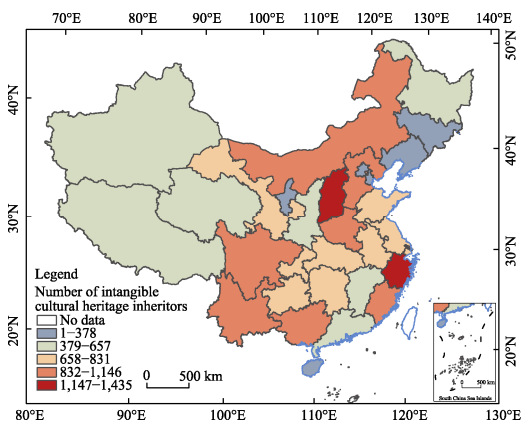


Figure 2 Spatial distribution map of the number of provincial ICH inheritors by province

Figures 3 and 4 show that, at the municipal level, the high-value representative ICH projects and inheritors are distributed mainly in the Beijing–Tianjin–Hebei region, with Beijing as the core; the Yangtze River Delta region, with Shanghai as the core; and the Southwest China Nationalities region, with Chongqing as the core, and show a decreasing trend from the core to the periphery. In addition, several independent high-value projects can be found in some provincial capital cities and areas inhabited by ethnic minorities, such as Lhasa City, Xining City and the Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. The reason for this finding is that, on the one hand, the spatial distribution of provincial ICHs may be affected by the economic level, location and other socio-economic factors. For example, the historical economic development and superior location of the Beijing–Tianjin–Hebei, Yangtze River Delta and other regions guaranteed the emergence and development of the country’s ICH. On the other hand, the distinctive ethnic minority cultures contribute to the large number of representative provincial ICH projects and inheritors in areas inhabited by ethnic minorities.

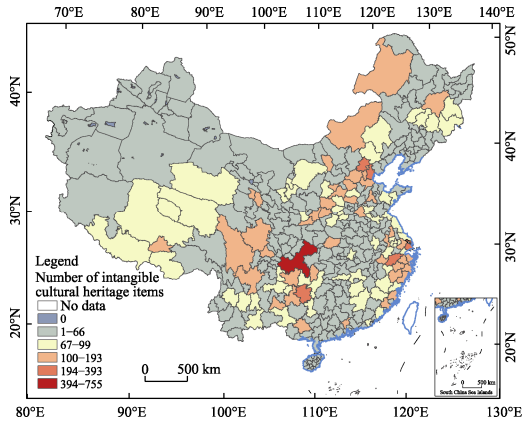


Figure 3 Spatial distribution map of the number of provincial ICH items by municipality

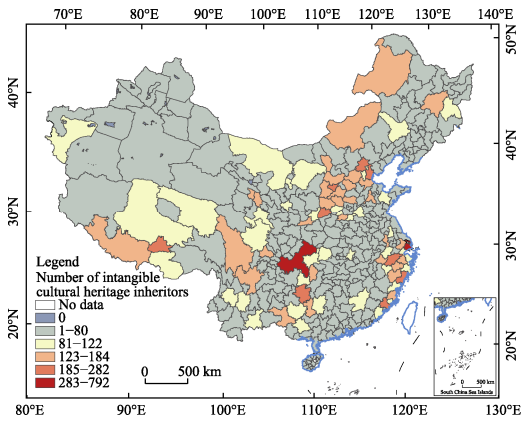


Figure 4 Spatial distribution map of the number of provincial ICH inheritors by municipality

5 Conclusion

Comprehensively understanding the spatial distribution of representative provincial ICH projects and inheritors in China is of considerable significance to the formulation of relevant policies, such as ICH protection and cultural industry development. The dataset uses the

city-level administrative region as the basic unit to count the representative national and provincial ICH projects and inheritors. Through the analysis of the spatial distribution characteristics of the representative provincial ICH projects and inheritors, this study finds that the representative provincial ICH projects and inheritors are concentrated in the Yangtze River Delta and Beijing–Tianjin–Hebei regions and in the southwestern ethnic minority areas.

The dataset contains 20,924 representative provincial ICT project subitems and 22,361 representative provincial ICH inheritor subitems identified by the cultural and tourism departments of provincial-level administrative regions (excluding Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan) from 2005 to 2024. Moreover, the dataset consists of information such as the representative provincial ICH project category, project name, name, time of announcement, batch, provincial-level administrative region and municipal-level administrative region. The dataset also records the attribute information of the representative provincial ICH projects and inheritors in detail and thus can provide data support and serve as a reference for the in-depth exploration and analysis of the internal laws of related fields.

Author Contributions

Zhang, Y., Liu, X. H., Liu, B. J., Bi, F. S. designed the algorithms of dataset. Luo, X. R., Wang, X., Huang, C. Y., Peng, J. Z., Liu, Y. L., Tang, B., Ye, W. Z., Zhao, C. W. collected and processed data on ICHs at the national and provincial levels. Liu, X. H., Liu, B. J., Bi, F. S. wrote the data paper. Zhang, Y. reviewed the data paper.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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