Preserving the heritage of humanity? Obtaining world heritage status and the Impacts of listing
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Chapter 3
Nominating world heritage sites

Which sites are nominated for the world heritage list largely depends upon who takes the initiative. As to the question ‘Who has initiated the nominations for the world heritage list?’; the answer differs by country, over time as well as according to the kind of site. The differences between countries are most apparent when sites are centrally selected – the initiative for a nomination is taken at the national level – during the initial period after signing the convention. Decentralised nominations replace central ones over time. And actors in the field of natural heritage have always been less interested in the convention than those involved in the field of cultural heritage.

3.1 Different national selection approaches
The outcome of the central selection in each country largely depends upon its specific historical, cultural, or political domestic circumstances. National selection mechanisms can be classified according to three trajectories. The first trajectory concerns nominations by a central organisation, possibly assisted by an advisory council, which focuses on (a certain part of) a historical core of its country. Poland and the Netherlands follow this trajectory. The second trajectory concerns countries with a central selection organisation that attempts to represent the diversity of cultures within the country. Two countries in the New World, Mexico and the United States of America, adopt this trajectory. The third trajectory includes selections by more than one organisation and by people from different parts of the country who take sites from all (political) regions into consideration. Spain and the United Kingdom conform to this trajectory.

3.1.1 Trajectory one – Central, highlighting one historical core
1) Poland
Poland has been an active partner in the world heritage convention from the outset. It nominated five sites during the first session of the World Heritage Committee in 1978 and all these sites were listed by 1980. These sites were centrally selected and highlight a political-historical core of Poland, while less typically Polish sites were excluded until the 1990s.

Centrally selected
The leading person behind the Polish world heritage nominations was Krzysztof Pawłowski, the acting conservator of monuments at the Polish Ministry of Culture in
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Warszawa (Warsaw), the vice-president of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and member of the World Heritage Committee in 1978. Pawłowski’s personal background influenced the selection of Polish sites. His wartime experience while growing up in Warszawa during the Second World War made a lasting impact on him and it may have affected his choice of Warszawa and Auschwitz (Interview 78). Later on, Pawłowski became an expert in the field of architecture, which influenced his choice of Kraków (Cracow). And the world heritage nomination of the Wieliczka salt mine was facilitated by the personal bond between Pawłowski and its director Antoni Jodłowski (Interview 81).

Spatial concentration in Poland’s political-historic core
The Poles nominated different kinds of sites to show the World Heritage Committee both the heterogeneous character of a world heritage site and the different ways of interpreting the defined criteria (Pawłowski 1999: 15). This is evident from the nomination of the concentration camp of Auschwitz – still one of the few world heritage sites associated with war and atrocity, Wieliczka salt mine which was the only industrial world heritage site until the listing of Ironbridge in 1986 and the old centre of Warszawa – inscribed for its meticulous reconstruction. The selected sites, however, are rather homogeneous from a geographical perspective. All cultural sites nominated before the end of communism (1989) are located in a confined area (figure 3-1).

Figure 3-1: World heritage sites in Poland.

Listed, year of listing
1 Kraków’s historic centre, 1978
2 Wieliczka salt mine, 1978
3 Białowieża forest, 1979
4 Auschwitz concentration camp, 1979
5 Historic centre of Warszawa, 1980
6 Old city of Zamość, 1992
7 Medieval town of Toruń, 1997
8 Castle of the Teutonic Order in Malbork, 1997
9 Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, 1999
10 Churches of peace in Jawor and Świdnica, 2001
11 Wooden churches of Southern Little Poland, 2003

Rejected, year of rejection
12 Monastery of Jasna Góra, 1991
13 Tatra National Park, 1992
14 Gdańsk, 1997
15 The valley of Pradnik River in Ojcow National Park, 2003

Sources: UNESCO (2004a) and Państowa służba geodezyjna i kartograficzna (1993, map 13.1 and 13.5), adapted data.
The historic core of Poland is the overlap between the Polish territory at the beginning of the Kingdom under the Piast dynasty and the Kingdom of Poland at the start of the twentieth century. The historic core has almost always been in Polish hands except for about two decades after 1795. During its Golden Age, Poland extended to the east up to Dnepr River, including the present world heritage sites of Lwów (Ukraine), Vilnius (Lithuania), and Mir Castle (Belarus).

The concentration of sites in the Polish historic core around Kraków is justified on the grounds that it mirrors the geographical reach of Polish history (Interview 78). The Piast dynasty was the first line of kings that created the Kingdom of Poland between the tenth and fourteenth century. The royal capital city of Kraków was the seat of the Polish King, Casimir the Great, where he founded the University of Kraków in 1364. From 1251 onwards, the salt-producing mines of Bochnia and Wieliczka financed much of the welfare of this kingdom (Lukowski and Zawadzki 2001: 28).

The Polish communist regime resisted German imperial claims, like the Piast empire did in the past (Davies 2001: 286). Consequently, the Polish communist regime regarded the accent on the Piast regime as unproblematic. However, Pawłowski did not solely focus on the Piast dynasty. Such a strategy would also have included the nomination of more Western places from where the Piast regime originated. This could have included cities like Gniezno or Poznań or the archaeological site of Biskupin that shows relics of human occupation since the seventh century BC (Chrzanowski and Zygulski 2001: 130-139).

Exclusion of not typically Polish sites
Sites without distinct Polish roots were excluded for a long time. German sites that lie in present-day Poland – such as the cities of Gdańsk (Danzig) and Toruń (Thorn), the castle of the Teutonic Order at Malbork (Marienburg) and the Church of Peace in Jawor (Jauer) as well as Świdnica (Schweidnitz) – could only be nominated when the Cold War was over. Polish historians are generally keen to emphasise historical bonds with former German areas (Vos 2000: 19), but the Polish did not attempt to include these originally non-Polish sites into their patrimony by nominating former German sites. Nominating German sites would be too contested. In the early nineteenth century, under German sovereignty these “towns were predominantly German… while the restoration of Marienburg castle, begun in the 1820s, was intended to express the ‘idea’ of the Teutonic Order and of German Prussia” (Lukowski and Zawadzki 2001: 128-129).

A good illustration of conflicting ascription of Polish identity is the castle in Malbork – arguably the most impressive fortress in Poland (Lukowski and Zawadzki 2001: 28). Gruszeccki (1984) stated that the castle “has been Polish for a longer time than it was German [and], does not strike us as a symbol of the Prussian ‘Drang nach Osten’, despite the Prussian endeavours to this end in the 19th century” (p. 46). According to Pawłowski (1984: 4), “The effective preservation of complexes of fortifications erected by the occupying countries carries an element of conflict between the time-honoured value of the relics, and the emotions they evoke. Being originally directed against the Poles, they are likely to be viewed with animosity. The Malbork castle is an example of higher-rank reasons gaining the upper hand of emotions” (p. 4). A respondent also alludes this contestation:
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“[During] communism in Poland… a certain attitude applied to this place… All the time you pretended that it was very Polish… So probably, nominating this place on the list in the 1970s or 1980s was somehow too early, because then some things had to be revealed too much to the public… It was a very big obstacle, I think, in the process of nominating this castle. Probably the thinking was as follows. We have so many beautiful, typical Polish objects that this German-Polish object should wait a while.”

(Interview 87)

Similarly, Gdańsk – the German ‘free city of Danzig’ between the two world wars – does not represent a Polish nationalist identity (Ashworth and Tunbridge 1999: 113-114). And the nomination of the protestant Church of Peace in Świdnica as well as Jawor was difficult to achieve under the communist regime, as religion was prohibited until 1989. The association with Germany and the German heritage sites became less contested after the end of the Cold War, exemplified by the Polish-German treaty of friendship in June 1991 (Lukowski and Zawadzki 2001: 281), after which the nomination of the Castle of the Teutonic Order in Malbork, the cities of Gdańsk and Toruń and the two churches of peace became less contested.

Before 1989, Polish nominations for the world heritage list highlighted Poland’s politico-historical core. Today’s spatial distribution more closely reflects Poland’s economic core, being the area around the River Wisła (Weichsel). In total, seven world heritage sites lie on the banks or in the vicinity of this river.

Photo 3-1: The world heritage nomination of the Auschwitz concentration camp was less contested than the Castle of the Teutonic Order in Malbork in communist Poland.

2) The Netherlands

In the Netherlands, the responsibility for nominating natural and cultural sites lies with the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, OCW). Two of its organisations and another ministry have been appointed to select sites (figure 3-2). These are two executive agencies for cultural heritage – the Dutch State Agency for the Preservation of Monuments (Rijksdienst Monumentenzorg, RDMZ) and the Dutch State Service for Archaeological Investigations (Rijksdienst Oudheidkundig Bodemonderzoek, ROB) – as well as the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (Ministerie van Landbouw, Natuur en Voedselkwaliteit, LNV) for natural sites. LNV has not selected any site to
date. Actors from the first two agencies have put the most emphasis on a single aspect of Dutch history, the battle against water. This focus has led to a geographical concentration of sites.

**Figure 3-2: Organisations involved in nominating world heritage sites in the Netherlands.**

![Organisations involved in nominating world heritage sites](image)

**Core as narrative: Battle against water**

Three groups advised RDMZ in the selection of monuments in 1993: the Dutch branch of ICOMOS, the Dutch Council for Culture (*Raad voor Cultuur*) and a provisional Project Group for Industrial Heritage (*Projectgroep Industrieel Erfgoed, PIE*) (De Jong 1996: 15). These advisory bodies compiled a list of about thirty sites, without much consultation or consideration about the criteria that nominated sites should meet (Chouchena and Van Rossum 1999: 7; Interview 15). Experts from the modern architecture movement supported, by the then Minister of Culture, Hedy D’Ancona, lobbied for the inclusion of buildings that are prominent exemplars of an architectural movement known as ‘The Style’.

One person from RDMZ, Rob de Jong – who had more than twenty years of experience in making recommendations on Dutch heritage sites – made the final selection. This selection was based on the criterion that potential sites for nomination should be unique on a global level (Interview 15). The Amsterdam City Hall and the St. Jans Cathedral in ’s-Hertogenbosch were removed from the shortlist, as better examples of these types of heritage could be found abroad. At the same time the Wouda steam pumping station in Lemmer was nominated because of its uniqueness in that it is the largest, still working, steam-driven pumping station in the world (UNESCO 2004a). The ten sites could be grouped under three headings: the Dutch battle against redundant water, the Golden Age (that lasted about fifty to hundred years from the mid-sixteenth century onwards) and the modern architecture of the twentieth century.

**Photo 3-2: ‘The Dutch battle against water’: Wouda pumping station and Kinderdijk.**
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The ROB had already selected eight archaeological sites for the Dutch tentative list in 1993 according to its own professional evaluation (Interview 16). All its tentatively selected sites lie below sea level, as archaeological remains are better preserved when they are immersed in water (Hagers 1998: 6). Schokland, a symbol of the struggle against water, is the only archaeological site that has been submitted until May 2004.

Spatially concentrated in area below sea level

All listed sites (figure 3-3) and almost all tentatively selected sites lie in the western part of the Netherlands, which is below sea level. This spatial distribution of world heritage sites shares a common feature with the spatial distribution of national monuments, which are also concentrated in the western part of the Netherlands (Van Gorp and Renes 2003: 73). This area can be characterised as the historical, economic and political core of the Netherlands (Van der Aa et al. 2002: 59). The most important cities from the Dutch Golden Age, such as Amsterdam, Delft and Leiden, the commercial centre of Rotterdam and The Hague as political centre all lie in this region. Farjon et al. (2001: 13-14) have stressed that the man-made character and the role of water distinguish the Dutch landscape on a European level. More than half of the total Northwest European surface area of low peat cultivation, ancient reclaimed lands and old sea clay polders lies within the low-lying part of the Netherlands. However, internationally important landscapes that lie above sea level – such as sand drifts and high moorlands (Farjon et al. 2001: 14) – are excluded from the tentative list by virtue of the theme ‘battle against water’. The thematic approach toward the landscape has led to a spatial concentration of sites in the Netherlands.

![Figure 3-3: World heritage sites in the Netherlands.](image)


The stress on unique sites has led to a collection of sites that shows a part of the Dutch identity (Van Gorp and Renes 2003: 74). Participation in the world heritage convention seems to bring what the Netherlands was looking for – articulating its identity in an era of increasing globalisation (Chouchena and Van Rossum 1999: 5; RLG 1999: 21).
3.1.2 Trajectory two – Central, highlighting various histories

The second trajectory is characterised by a selection of sites by a central organisation that highlights a diversity of histories. Mexico and the United States of America are the case countries that follow this trajectory.

1) Mexico

Three distinct periods can be discerned in Mexican history, each with its own identity and own dominant group (see also Brading 2001). Until the arrival of the Spaniards in Central America, various Indian civilisations were dominant. Between 1500 and independence from Spain in 1810, the Spanish were the governing population group. And since the early nineteenth century onwards the population mix of Spanish and Indians, the mestizo, has become increasingly important. These three groups are still present in the Mexico of today, making it a multi-ethnic country (Smith 1990: 11), wherein “an encompassing common identity covering the various ethnic groups can be a necessary condition for endowing... [them] with legitimacy and functioning capability (Tägil 1995: 22). Within the context of (world) heritage, legitimacy has been given to all these groups. It took, however, some time before the Mexicans became aware of the importance of their post-colonial heritage.

Centrally selected

The responsibility for the selection of world heritage sites lies with the Mexican Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO (Comisión Mexicana de Cooperación con la UNESCO, CONALMEX), which falls under the Mexican Ministry of Education (Secretaría de Educación Pública, SEP) (figure 3-4). This commission has created the Comité para Patrimonio Mundial which includes representatives from cultural heritage organisations, such as ICOMOS Mexico, the Mexican National Institute of Anthropology and History (Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, INAH) and, since the 1990s, the Mexican National Institute of Fine Arts (Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, INBA). The Mexican National Institute of Ecology (Instituto National de Ecología, INE) is the only natural heritage organisation involved.

Figure 3-4: Organisations involved in nominating world heritage sites in Mexico.

![Diagram showing organisations involved in nominating world heritage sites in Mexico.](image)

The world heritage sites in Mexico do not highlight a specific part of Mexican history, because of Mexicans’ continual struggle with their national identity. The Mexican concept of cultural heritage is a combination of indigenous and Spanish aspects (Churchill 2000: 6). The sensitivity of Mexican identity also played a role in the creation of the structure of INAH, the leading organisation in selecting cultural sites. In the 1980s, the organisation was divided into two sections, the Office of Pre-Hispanic Monuments and the Office of Colonial Monuments (Van der Aa 2005).
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Ambivalence is evident in what Mexico has nominated for the world heritage list. The histories of all three population groups are reflected in the list, albeit this has not led to an even spatial distribution of sites (figure 3-5).

Figure 3-5: World heritage sites in Mexico.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Listed cultural site</th>
<th>Rejected cultural site</th>
<th>Listed natural site</th>
<th>Rejected natural site</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 Historic monuments zone of Querétaro, 1996</td>
<td></td>
<td>17 Historic centre of Mexico City and Xochimilco, 1987</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UNESCO (2004a), adapted data.

Both indigenous and colonial heritage

Since 1987, twenty-three Mexican sites have entered the world heritage list. The large majority – twenty-one sites – is cultural in character. Ten ‘Indian’ and ten ‘Spanish’ sites are listed, as well as one post-colonial site. Over the years the number of listed
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‘Indian’ sites has become as high as the number of ‘Spanish’ sites (Van der Aa 2005). The equal rise in both types of sites is according to one source:

“the outcome of our consciousness that we are composed of two parts, the Indian part and the Spanish part, together one whole... The whole discord is held together by a backbone that we call ‘Mexican culture’. It is true that many Mexicans do not feel associated with ‘Indian Mexico’. Even though we are all mestizo, the ones in the North are different from the ones in the South. In spite of these differences, the Mexican culture, whatever it is, keeps us together. So, we have reckoned with the various regions that make up the nation when we chose the sites that could be nominated.”

(Interview 57, translated)

The equal treatment of sites from the pre-Hispanic and colonial periods is illustrated by two dual nominations. The pre-Hispanic archaeological site of Monte Albán is combined with the nearby colonial inner city of Oaxaca. And the floating gardens of Xochimilco at the edge of Mexico City are amalgamated with the inner city. These sites are listed under one heading, even though the managers at the pre-Hispanic sites would prefer a separate listing (Interview 62 and 67). In contrast, the historic city of Querétero and the Franciscan missionaries surrounding the city of Querétero – that show more similarities in character, location and construction period – are not listed under one heading.

Later recognition of Mexico’s post-colonial heritage
Post-colonial heritage is promoted by INBA, the organisation responsible for Mexico’s nineteenth and twentieth century heritage. This organisation was established in 1946, but it has only been involved in the selection process for world heritage sites since the mid-1990s. In 1997 Hospicio Cabañas in Guadalajara, which has also some colonial elements in its design, was inscribed.

Photo 3-3: Pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial heritage in Mexico: Chichén-Itzá, Puebla, and the home study museum of Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo.
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The number of mestizo heritage sites is likely to increase, as seven of the twenty-one sites on Mexico’s last tentative list (2002) concern post-colonial heritage (Van der Aa 2005). The importance of mestizo heritage has been enhanced by the works of Diego Rivera, Frida Kahlo, and Luis Barragán in Mexico City which are “a reflection of what happened in this time-era, in this case the twentieth century” (Interview 57, translated). The shift is supported by UNESCO’s heightened interest in ‘young’ heritage.

2) United States of America

The second case country that practices a centralised selection system that leads to a representation of various histories is the United States of America. In this country, the decision what to nominate has been taken by a small number of people.

‘Best judgement’ at the federal scale-level

The Department of Interior is the responsible organisation for the world heritage convention in the United States of America. Its National Park Service (NPS) deals with the practical implementation of the convention. The NPS is also the responsible organisation for designating both national historic and natural landmarks. This combination is unique among the case countries.

Between 1978 and 1981 the NPS nominated sites such as Yellowstone, Edison National Historic Site (West Orange, New Jersey) and Independence Hall (Philadelphia) “on an administrative basis… They were basically pulled out of the air” (Interview 42). Detailed procedural regulations came into force in May 1982, as recorded in the Federal Register (Department of Interior 1997). It states that the NPS will be advised by nine organisations, both cultural and natural, that meet in the Federal Interagency Panel for World Heritage (Department of Interior 1997: 375). The national branch of ICOMOS, which in many countries is influential in what is selected in the first couple of years, only has observer status in the United States of America (Morton 1987: 3). A small number of people, however, decided on the final content of the tentative list:

“There was so much confusion and debate and discussion and dissension and disagreement over what ought to be nominated, that the only way in which it could be organised was to take the list of 275 cultural sites, reduce it to what seems in somebody’s judgement the most important sites, send them in and then continue going on from there.”

(Interview 42)

Jim Charleton and Earnest Connally from the National Register of Historic Places brought the list of cultural sites down to about fifty. Sites without a national historic landmark or without national park status were excluded (Charleton 1989: 15). The personal background of Earnest Connally, a professor in architecture and architectural history, influenced the inclusion of seventeen sites that relate to architecture – divided into three themes, early United States, modern and Wright school architecture. At the same time, two persons in the field of natural heritage selected about forty natural sites (Charleton 1989: 15).

The tentative list was meant to be an open-ended one (Charleton 1987: 17). Any individual or organisation was able to make suggestions for the list, as long as it was
Substantiated by evidence to prove that the site meets the criterion of outstanding universal value. The tentative list, however, has hardly been altered since its first publication in 1982 (Charleton 2000). This method has not led to the best possible list, but it is a list that one could work with. As Charleton (2000) describes it, “Essentially, it is a best judgement list… [and] it was understood at the time that there were gaps.”

Highlighting several histories
The United States of America has twelve natural and eight cultural sites on the world heritage list. There are four cultural sites from the pre-colonial as well as the colonial periods, and later additions to the world heritage list have numerically increased at the same rate over time. The pre-colonial sites – Mesa Verde, Cahokia Mounds, Chaco Culture and Pueblo de Taos – emphasise the indigenous cultures of the Indian populations, predominantly in the present state of New Mexico. Most sites from after independence – Independence Hall, La Fortaleza (Puerto Rico), Statue of Liberty and Monticello – refer to the establishment of a new society that values the principles of freedom, democracy, and independence (see UNESCO 2004a).

Photo 3-4: American cultural world heritage sites show pre-colonial and colonial sites: Mesa Verde and Monticello.

The world heritage sites are not evenly distributed throughout the various states:

“The world heritage list is an attempt to try to categorise very extraordinary, different sites in a single system and to apply strict geographical or subject matters… really is not practical… The states in the United States are units of government, but they are actually the product of accidents of history and geography…. It is our task to identify them [potential world heritage sites] regardless of where they happen to be located.”

(Interview 42)

The spatial distribution of the world heritage sites in the United States of America shows a pattern that resembles the distribution of 387 – natural and cultural – national parks (figure 3-6). Large natural areas are predominantly located in the west of the country, while most cultural sites – such as battlefields, cemeteries, monuments, historic parks – are located along the east coast and in New Mexico. The geographical distribution of world heritage sites is alike. The middle of the United States of America has comparatively fewer national and international heritage sites.
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Figure 3.6: World heritage sites in the United States of America.

Listed, year of listing
1 Mesa Verde National Park, 1978
2 Yellowstone National Park, 1978
3 Grand Canyon National Park, 1979
4 Everglades National Park, 1979
5 Independence Hall NHP, 1979
6 Kluane/Wrangell-St. Elias/Glacier Bay/Tatshenshini-Alsek, 1979
7 Redwood National Park, 1980
8 Mammoth Cave National Park, 1981
9 Olympic National Park, 1981
10 Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site, 1982
11 Great Smoky Mountains National Park, 1983
12 La Fortaleza and San Juan Historic Site in Puerto Rico, 1983
13 Yosemite National Park, 1984
14 Statue of Liberty National Monument, 1984
15 Monticello and the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, 1987
16 Chaco Culture NHP, 1987
17 Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, 1987
18 Pueblo de Taos, 1992
19 Carlsbad Caverns National Park, 1995
20 Waterton Glacier International Peace Park, 1995
21 Edison State Historic Site, 1979
22 Pu`uhonua o`Honaunau NHP, 1987
23 Taliesin and Taliesin West, 1991, two locations
24 Savannah City Plan, 1995

Rejected, year of rejection
11 Great Smoky Mountains National Park, 1983
12 La Fortaleza and San Juan Historic Site in Puerto Rico, 1983
13 Yosemite National Park, 1984
21 Edison State Historic Site, 1979
22 Pu`uhonua o`Honaunau NHP, 1987
23 Taliesin and Taliesin West, 1991, two locations
24 Savannah City Plan, 1995

Sources: UNESCO (2004a) and NPS (2002a), adapted data.
3.1.3 Trajectory three – Decentralised, highlighting various histories

The third trajectory is characterised by the input of decision makers from all regions, which ultimately leads to a rather neat spatial distribution of world heritage sites. Spain and the United Kingdom are the two case countries in this trajectory and Spain constitutes a classical example.

1) Spain

In Spain the main responsibility for selecting world heritage sites lies with the Council of Historic Heritage (Consejo del Patrimonio Histórico), which is directed by the Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport (Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte, MECD). The council is formed by the directors of the heritage departments of all seventeen autonomous communities, while people with a juridical background run the world heritage convention at the national level (Interview 104).

The council meets three or four times a year. Most power is handed over to the regions in Spain, a reflection of how Spanish society is organised since the early 1980s. Franco’s totalitarian regime, which lasted until 1975, sought to erase cultural differences – especially in the supposedly ‘separatist’ regions of Euskadi (Basque country) and Catalunya – and forbade any other religion than Roman Catholicism (Elorza 1995: 332; Moreras 2002: 132). After Franco’s death many affairs, including cultural matters such as heritage, were decentralised to the regional level (Faucompret 2001: 330-331).

Highlighting Spain’s various regional identities

The vast amount of power entrusted to Spain’s autonomous regions has ensured that most of Spain’s regional identities are represented on the world heritage list as well as an even distribution of sites over the country’s territory (figure 3-7). All culturally distinct regions with their own identity – such as Galicia, Catalunya, Andalucía and Castilla y León – have had at least one site on the world heritage list from the beginning in 1984. Many sites show the respective region’s identity. The works of Antoni Gaudí (Parque Güell, Palacio Güell and Casa Mila, Barcelona) and Lluís Domènech i Montaner (The Palau de la Música Catalana and the hospital de Sant Pau, Barcelona) in Catalunya are regarded as masterpieces of the Catalan architectural school Modernista that “focused on finding a regional identity” (Coad 1995: 58). These architectural ensembles are the offspring of the broader Renaixença movement, “the cultural rebirth that recuperated and vindicated Catalan language and culture” (Baker 2000: 163).

The government of Andalucía has nominated sites that show the Muslim presence in this part of Spain for seven centuries – the Mezquita Mosque in Córdoba and the Alhambra in Granada. The nomination of these Muslim-oriented sites is uncontested thanks to the Spaniards’ “tolerant and open attitude to the contemporary Muslim presence in Spanish society” (Moreras 2002: 130). The city of Santiago de Compostela “represents not Spain but the region” of Galicia (Ashworth and Graham 1997: 382).

And in the autonomous region of Aragón, the Mudejar of Teruel – Teruel is a province in the autonomous region of Aragón – was listed as a world heritage site in 1986. In 2000, the world heritage site was renamed Mudejar de Aragón, “clearly stating the region” (Interview 104).
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Figure 3-7: World heritage sites in Spain.

Listed, year of listing
1 Historic centre of Córdoba, 1984
2 Alhambra, Generalife and Albayzin, Granada, 1984
3 Burgos Cathedral, 1984
4 Monastery and site of the Escorial, Madrid, 1984
5 Parque Güell, Palacio Güell and Casa Mila, Barcelona, 1984
6 Altamira cave, 1985
7 Old town of Segovia and its aqueduct, 1985
8 Monuments of Oviedo and the Kingdom of the Asturias, 1985
9 Santiago de Compostela, 1985
10 Old town of Ávila, with its extra-muros churches, 1985
11 Mudéjar architecture of Aragón, 1986
12 Historic city of Toledo, 1986
13 Garajonay National Park, 1986
14 Old town of Cáceres, 1986
15 Cathedral, Alcazar and Archivo de Indias, Sevilla, 1987
16 Old city of Salamanca, 1988
17 Poblet Monastery, 1991
18 Archaeological ensemble Mérida, 1993
19 Royal monastery of Santa Maria de Guadalupe, 1993
20 Route of Santiago de Compostela, 1993
21 Doñana National Park, 1994
22 Historic walled town of Cuenca, 1996
23 La lonja de la seda de Valencia, 1996
24 Las Médulas, 1997
25 The palau de la música Catalana and The hospital de Sant Pau, 1997
26 San Millán Yuso and Suso monasteries, 1997
27 Monte Perdido National Park, 1997
28 University and historic precinct of Alcalá de Henares, 1998
29 Rock-art of the Mediterranean basin on the Iberian Peninsula, 1998
(727 sites; 6 regions)
30 Ibiza, biodiversity and culture, 1999
31 San Cristóbal de la Laguna, 1999
32 Archaeological ensemble of Tarraco, 2000
33 Catalan romanesque churches of the Vall de Boi, 2000
34 Palmeral of Elche, 2000
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Figure 3-7: World heritage sites in Spain, continued.

35 Roman walls of Lugo, 2000
36 Archaeological site of Atapuerca, 2000
37 Aranjuez cultural landscape, 2001
38 Renaissance monumental ensembles of Úbeda and Baeza, 2003
39 Canonical Church of Sant Vicenç de Cardona, Barcelona, 1989
39 Monastery of Pere de Rodes, 1989
41 Girona, 1989

Source: UNESCO (2004a), adapted data.

World heritage sites in most autonomous regions

Spain’s various identities come to the fore on the world heritage list. However, one of its culturally most distinct regions, Euskadi, is the only autonomous region that has no world heritage site. Ethnic groups can use their heritage to stress and preserve their cultural identity (Graham et al. 2000: 188). The Basques do so by using the Guggenheim museum in Bilbao (Richards 2000: 13), but it hardly ever participates in the Council of Historic Heritage as “the Basque prepare everything so that the move to independence will be less problematic… It is more of a political thing. But in the end, what happens is that they are out of the game” (Interview 104). Officials at MECD are keen on nominating Vizcaya bridge, Las Arenas (Euskadi) for the list, as it “is a pity that Basque country does not have a world heritage site yet” (Interview 104). The wish for a reasonable spatial distribution is a preconceived aim, analogous to what UNESCO tries to achieve at the global level with the ‘global strategy’:

“We are in a democracy and we have… to keep the technical, scientific and political interests in mind at the same time… We have to deal with territorial equilibriums… If we have two sites that fulfil the criterion and one is from a community that has not too many representations on the list and the other community does, we will put forward the one that is in the community that doesn’t have many sites… It is the same thing as UNESCO wants. Why does UNESCO want every country to ratify the convention and have at least one site? Why? … It is a political argument, you want all countries included, it is like the Olympics. You want all countries to be present even if they do not have the capabilities.”

(Interview 104)

The wish for spatial equilibrium is also visible in Spain’s tentative list, which contained twenty-three sites in December 2003. All seventeen autonomous regions – including Euskadi, and the two Spanish towns of Ceuta and Melilla on the African continent – have at least one site on the tentative list.

Nominating serial sites – sites that are located at different places – is popular in Spain, as several autonomous regions can be represented in one nomination. The route to Santiago de Compostela, which runs through five regions, was the first serial site in 1993. Twelve out of twenty-three sites on the tentative list concern a serial nomination, such as the mining routes (four regions), the extension of the works of Antoni Gaudí (four), the dinosaur footsteps (six) and the cultural wine route (twelve). A region like Castilla y León, which has two ‘own’ sites on the tentative list, is represented in seven other tentatively listed serial sites whose nomination is prepared by other regions.
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Serial nominations allow the discussions in the Council of Historic Heritage to reach political outcomes with which all regions are content while qualitatively less outstanding sites can join more impressive ones:

“When we discuss nominations in the Council of Historic Heritage it is easier [to settle] for serial nominations… If we ever have to vote, we have more votes… we reach easier equilibrium by giving something to each autonomous region, you know. For example, for the nomination of the dinosaur footsteps there are two, three communities that have very important footsteps. The other three have normal types, but we will keep them in the nomination.”

(Interview 104)

Especially federal countries follow the third trajectory that highlights various histories. In Germany, the sixteen states (Bundesländer) are responsible for the nomination of world heritage sites (Kuipers 1998: 62). The nomination of the monastic island of Reichenau, for instance, was the initiative of the state Baden-Württemberg (Overlack 2001: 64). In May 2004, twelve out of sixteen states had a world heritage site. The two cities of Hamburg and Bremen as well as the two former East German states of Brandenburg and Sachsen (Saxony) had none. In 1995 only two out of six former East German states had a site, a ‘bias’ that had to be repaired: “Auswärtiges Amt und Kulturministerkonferenz haben sich darauf geeinigt, in den kommenden Jahren den neuen Ländern den Vortritt zu lassen, um dieses Ungleichgewicht abzubauen” (Caspary 1995: 365).

The situation in Spain and Germany supports the thesis that federally organised countries “have difficulty managing balanced representation of the different territorial components of the state party” (Pressouyre 1993: 35). The situation in the United States of America, however, shows that not all federally organised countries have an even spatial distribution of world heritage sites. The degree of spatial distribution of world heritage sites depends on whether the various regions have access to nominating sites. This is affirmed by the situation in the United Kingdom. It has less federal characteristics than the United States of America, but still shows a rather even distribution of world heritage sites.

2) United Kingdom

World heritage nominations by the United Kingdom have taken place in two separate periods, the second half of the 1980s and from the late 1990s onwards. In both periods, experts from heritage organisations in the five parts that constitute this country – England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the overseas territories – executed the selection (Interview 32; DCMS 1999: 7-8). ICOMOS UK assisted them (Leask and Fyall 2001: 58). This decentralist approach has led to nominations from all parts of the country but with fewer opportunities to nominate culturally distinct sites than in Spain.

Decentralised selection procedures

The final responsibility for nominating sites in the United Kingdom lay with the Department of Environment in the 1980s and its successor Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in the 1990s. Representatives from the countries that make up
Nominating world heritage sites

the United Kingdom formed a working group to draw up a tentative list. For example, the input for nominations from Wales came from Welsh Historic Monuments (CADW). It, in turn, consulted the Ancient Monuments Board for Wales – that gave advice on monuments, castles, abbeys and industrial monuments – and the Historic Buildings Council for Wales – that gave advice on historic buildings (Interview 32).

The first seven nominated sites in 1986 are evenly spatially distributed, with one site in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales as well as two in Northern, one in Central and one in Southern England (see figure 3-8). Geographical equality was not a set aim, but the consequence of seeking advice from actors from all over the United Kingdom:

“The list would not necessarily... have one site from Scotland, one site from Northern Ireland, and one site from Wales. It would be a list that drew together all the suggestions, but it was not necessary to have one site from each constitutionary country... We looked at the sites that were the best in the entire United Kingdom.”

(Interview 32)

Photo 3-5: United Kingdom’s nominations are spread throughout the country: Giant’s Causeway, Fountains Abbey, Blenheim Palace and Canterbury Cathedral.

A new tentative list was drawn up in the late 1990s. The English Review Committee focused on themes that were not yet well represented by the United Kingdom. A review of already listed sites showed that sites related to Christian origins, planned landscapes and gardens, Industrial Revolution and British global influence would be most liable for inclusion in the world heritage list (Tentative List Review Committee 1998: 11).
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Figure 3-8: World heritage sites in the United Kingdom.

Listed, year of listing
1 Giant’s Causeway and Causeway Coast, 1986
2 Durham Castle and Cathedral, 1986
3 Ironbridge Gorge, 1986
4 Studley Royal Park, including the ruins of Fountains Abbey, 1986
5 Stonehenge, Avebury, and associated sites, 1986
6 Castles and town walls of King Edward in Gwynedd, 1986
7 St. Kilda, 1986
8 Blenheim Palace, 1987
9 City of Bath, 1987
10 Hadrian’s Wall, 1987
11 Westminster Palace, Westminster Abbey, Saint Margaret’s Church, 1987
12 Tower of London, 1988
13 Canterbury Cathedral, St. Augustine’s Abbey and St. Martin’s Church, 1988
14 Old and New Town of Edinburgh, 1995
15 Maritime Greenwich, 1997
16 Heart of neolithic Orkney, 1999
17 Blaenavon industrial landscape, 2000
18 Dorset and East Devon Coast, 2001
19 Derwent Valley Mills, 2001
20 New Lanark, 2001
21 Saltaire, 2001
22 Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, 2003

Listed, not portrayed, year of listing
23 Henderson Island, 1988
24 Gough Island Wildlife Reserve, 1995
25 Historic town of St. George and related fortifications, Bermuda, 2000

Rejected, year of rejection
26 Ecclesiastical sites of Lough Erne, 1987
28 St. Davids Close and Bishops Palace, 1987
29 Menai and Conway suspension bridges, 1988
30 Navan fort, 1988
31 SS ‘Great Britain’, 1988
32 Cambridge Colleges and the backs, 1989
33 Diana’s peak and high peak, St. Helena, 1987

Source: UNESCO (2004a), adapted data.

Regional differences
All countries in the United Kingdom have given input for a common United Kingdom tentative list. However, the working method has been rather different between Wales
and England on the one hand and Scotland and Northern Ireland on the other hand. For example, in 1997 English decision-makers sought the views of experts on 122 sites by consulting over 500 organisations and individuals, of whom more than 420 responded (DCMS 2000). These consultations, however, only had a small impact on the final selection. Thirteen out of the fifteen sites recommended by the review committee also ended up on the final tentative list. Only Saltaire and Shakespeare’s Stratford replaced Stowe Gardens, Buckingham, and Boxgrove early man site, Chichester (Sussex).

In Scotland there was no system to select potential sites. A broad list was reduced continuously when a small group of Historic Scotland officials discussed the subject during coffee break until a couple of sites remained (Interview 5). This process excluded Scottish NGOs from suggesting sites and prevented the nomination of potential sites (Williams 2003: 175-176).

The Scottish put their tentative list together in isolation from the rest of the United Kingdom, which led to the nomination of some sites that did not fit within the identified themes. The dry stone tower at Mousa Broch (Shetland Islands) and Stirling Castle and the upper town of Stirling were not included in the final tentative list for this reason (see also Gillon and McAfee 1999: 36). Another ‘typical’ Scottish site that was suggested by the Scottish – the Dallas dhu malt whiskey distillery in Forres – was not included in the final United Kingdom tentative list. It seems harder for the regions of the United Kingdom to show their distinct identity than their Spanish counterparts.

3.2 Patterns in world heritage nominations

The different selection mechanisms in the six case countries lead to various outcomes in kind, quality and spatial distribution of sites. Besides, two non-country specific patterns can be identified. Local initiatives replace the national selection over time. And natural heritage stakeholders have always been least interested in the convention.

3.2.1 Pattern one – Different approaches over time

The idea for a nomination during the country’s first years of participation in the convention often originates centrally, from actors at national heritage departments or the national ICOMOS branch. In the United Kingdom, these actors went “for the very obvious ones, these were the big frontrunners… Stonehenge, Westminster, Bath” (Interview 32). Two exceptions to this pattern, involving earlier-listed sites whose idea for nomination came from organisations from below the national level, are Córdoba and Santiago de Compostela (Spain). The nomination of both sites was suggested by their municipality. These two sites are considered as decentralised nominations.

This research also includes sixteen decentrally (or non-central) nominated sites that were listed during the latter phase of a country’s participation: Blaenavon (United Kingdom), Cahokia Mounds and Pueblo de Taos (United States of America), Morelia and Zacatecas (Mexico), Zamosć, the Castle of the Teutonic Order in Malbork, Toruń and Kalwaria Zebrzydowska (Poland), and Las Médulas, Monte Perdido, Tárraco, the Catalan romanesque churches of the Vall de Boí, Roman walls of Lugo, Aranjuez and Baeza (Spain).

The world heritage convention often becomes better known in a country after the first central nominations. Local and regional governments, Members of Parliament and people liaising with different kinds of heritage NGOs become more aware of the
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Countries which are more tourism-oriented such as Poland, Mexico and Spain account for the biggest number of decentralised requests. There have also been local requests in the United States of America, “but the vast majority of them do not qualify for technical reasons” (Interview 42). In the last couple of years, the anti-United Nations sentiments in the United States of America have not furthered new requests. The number of decentralised requests is low in the Netherlands, as the convention is still relatively unknown as well as the fact that this country harbours fewer ambitions to develop tourism than other countries (Renes 2004: 12).

Local actors apply for listing, as the status should either bring more visitors or enhance the preservation of a heritage site or a category of sites (Smith 2003: 109). In tourism-oriented countries most decentralised requests come from mayors who want to attract more visitors (see also Evans 2002b: 4). Local requests for world heritage nominations to improve the protection of the site come from actors that are not directly involved in the site’s management, but interested in the site. The initiative for a world heritage nomination to improve a site’s preservation through increased international recognition may also come from a particular heritage NGO.

The move towards decentralised nominations has led to a world heritage list comprising not only national icons but also a list that reflects more than one identity. Pride resulting from listing decreases at the expense of the desire to use the listing to attract visitors or preserve the site. Decentralised nomination leads to a shift in location of world heritage sites away from the country’s centre towards its periphery.

Attracting tourists

INAH’s Dirección de patrimonio mundial in Mexico has received about five nomination documents and another twenty suggestions, mainly from cities, in the last two years (Interview 56). The inclusion of the churches in the Zoque province of Chiapas in Mexico’s tentative list, for instance, is part of the Zoque Province Project whose goal “is to offer leisure and cultural tours of the area… in order to reactivate the economy of the region and improve its inhabitants’ quality of life” (INAH 2002: 155-156).

In Poland about fifteen requests have been received from mayors in 2003, often supported by Members of Parliament, in the hope of turning certain areas into tourist attractions (Interview 86). In Spain MECID receives a phone call for a nomination every two weeks, primarily from mayors (Interview 104). One example is the mayor of Tarragona who pursued the designation to attract more visitors to the archaeological ensemble of Tàrraco. The municipality was rewarded for its determination to obtain the status. Its nomination was rejected two years before it made it to the list in 2000.

In the United Kingdom, local requests are submitted once in a while, but this does not solely concern heritage cities which are nominated by mayors. The nomination of industrial heritage sites, such as the Blaenavon industrial landscape (Taylor 2001: 22; Jones and Munday 2001: 585) and Derwent Valley Mills (Smith 2000a: 409-413) started locally, albeit TICCIH had already identified both industrial sites in a comparative study. At Blaenavon, the local Torfaen county borough was keen on a nomination for its potential economic benefits:

“The local council, the Torfaen county borough, was very enthusiastic… They see world heritage as something that can help the regeneration in the area… It
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was mainly driven by the chief officer and an officer below him...Certainly initially, they saw the economic benefits first. They said: ‘We clearly see some economic benefits, is this a world heritage site and can we get it on the list?’”

(Imterview 34)

In the United Kingdom most tourism stakeholders only become dominant after a world heritage designation, such as at the Dorset and East Devon Coast, where the nomination “was most driven by the scientists. Now it is on the world heritage list, the people who are most active are the people who are involved on the tourism side” (Interview 36).

Improving the site’s protection

The request for a world heritage nomination can also be attributed to the desire for more and better protection. Such requests often come from researchers and experts. The research team at Las Médulas (Spain) applied for the status in 1997 to secure another level of protection to the landscape. The researchers aimed for a listing under the convention, as UNESCO was the first organisation that recognised the value of cultural landscapes (Interview 98). Likewise, the idea of nominating the cultural landscape of Kalwarija Zebrzydowska (Poland) came from a professor at Kraków’s Polytechnic University and a member of the Polish Commission for UNESCO. Prestige resulting from a designation would improve the area’s protection (Interview 84). At Pueblo de Taos (United States of America), the Indian community was determined to obtain the label, as such listing would help them fight the planned extension of the nearby airport (Interview 43 and 48). And the state historic site of Cahokia Mounds (United States of America) applied for the status in 1982, as this would “make it easier… to get higher levels of support and protection that don’t apply for local heritage sites” (Interview 47).

Ballast and support for world heritage site designation are provided by heritage NGOs, especially those that deal with underrepresented kinds of heritage, for example TICCH for industrial heritage and DOCOMOMO for twentieth-century architecture. They have made their appearance on the scene (Clee 1998: 31-32). Other upcoming heritage NGOs are the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS) and IUCCH (underwater cultural heritage). Most heritage NGOs try to promote the preservation of ‘their’ heritage by raising the general awareness about this kind of heritage (Henket 2000: 6; Jester 1995: 28; Cowie and Wimbledon 1994: 72; and Grenier 2001: 232).

Most heritage NGOs regard the convention as a useful tool to preserve ‘their’ heritage more effectively: “World heritage is a reasonably well-financed, fully international convention for global geological recording and conservation, with a highly qualified, active and well-trained professional staff working in… the whole world: it is a convention which must be used” (Cowie and Wimbledon 1994: 72-73; see also Jacobs et al. 1997: 1101). Similarly, DOCOMOMO was invited by ICOMOS in the mid-1990s to develop a methodology to identify and make suggestions for potential sites (Jester 1995: 30; Henket 2000: 7). The listing of the Bauhaus buildings in Dessau and Weimar (Germany) in 1995 was regarded as “a strong moral support for DOCOMOMO’s effort to bring the significance of the Modern Movement to the attention of the authorities and the public at large” (Kuipers 1998: 55).
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From increased pride towards attracting visitors
The reason for wanting world heritage status has changed over time. A world heritage listing of a centrally nominated site was regarded as an honour by the site management, whereas a listing of a decentralised (or non-centrally) nominated site is viewed as a welcome tool to develop and preserve the site (table 3-1).

Table 3-1: Reasons at the local level to agree with or to initiate a world heritage nomination for centrally and non-centrally nominated sites (number of sites, N = 67).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for world heritage nomination</th>
<th>Pride</th>
<th>Better preservation</th>
<th>Attracting tourists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Centrally nominated</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-centrally nominated</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: P-value chi-square is 0.18.
Source: Own field study at various world heritage sites.

In the past, the National Heritage Department asked a potential site whether it would agree with a nomination. The site in question did not have much time to take a decision and ‘honour’ was the only reason to participate. The nomination process for the city of Bath, South West England exemplifies this. The Bath City Council received a letter from the Department of Environment, dated 6 September 1985, stating:

I have it in mind to include Bath… in the tentative list. I should be grateful if you would confirm that you see no objections to this inclusion. In order to fit in with the timetable of the World Heritage Committee I need to submit this list to them in October. It would therefore be most helpful if I could have your answer by, say, Monday 23 September… I should however explain that the inclusion of sites in either list in no way alters the application of UK legislation… [and] I would not want anyone to assume that inclusion in the list signaled any substantial financial benefit… Inclusion obviously implies considerable prestige. (Department of Environment 1985)

It was clear to the decision makers in Bath that they should not expect any substantial financial or legislative benefits, only prestige would accrue to the city of Bath. In contrast, local authorities ‘beg’ for a nomination at national heritage offices nowadays and they write impressive nomination documents to underline the importance of the site. The alleged benefits from a listing are sometimes so large that cities compete for a listing “even when they have not much left of their ancient glory” (Batissé 1992: 30).

Location of sites
Decentralised nominated sites exhibit a different geographical distribution than centrally nominated sites: away from the country’s capital and towards the periphery (table 3-2). The central sites lie near their country’s capital or near densely populated areas, while peripheral sites are located further away from these population centres. A country’s national icons are often located in or nearby the national capital – often in more densely populated areas – as cities have “always played the leading role in cultural productivity… there is a certain critical volume of human interaction occurring
in a spatially restricted area, and encouraged by aspects of urban form, that is crucial for the generation of aesthetic ideas” (Ashworth 2000: 26).

Table 3-2: Location of world heritage sites in case countries (number of sites, N = 67).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location of world heritage sites</th>
<th>Central location</th>
<th>Peripheral location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Centrally nominated</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-centrally nominated</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: P-value chi-square is 0.03.
Source: Own field study at various world heritage sites.

By 1993, twenty-three countries across the world had played “the capital’s card by obtaining inclusion in the world heritage list of either the city where the seat of political power is concentrated, or a part of this city, or of a monument or group of monuments symbolic of this city” (Pressouyre 1993: 35). Eighteen of these countries were located in Europe. In May 2004, twenty-five European countries had played the ‘capital card’. In addition, world heritage sites in a capital were nominated twenty-one times in the first year of the country’s participation. The capital has remained an important supplier of world heritage sites in some countries, such as in the United Kingdom (four sites in London), and Sweden, Spain and Italy (each with three sites in its capital), but nominations tend to become more distributed over the country with the passage of time. At the same time, heritage as a tool to attract tourists is especially sought after in the periphery (Vorlaufer 1996: 193; Robinson 1999: 25).

3.2.2 Pattern two – Different attitudes at natural and cultural sites
In most case countries, actors in the field of natural heritage turn to the world heritage convention much less than their cultural counterparts. When the first tentative list was drawn up in the United Kingdom in the mid-1980s “there was a stronger lobby… for the cultural areas than for the natural areas” (Interview 32). Both the participation of the Ministry of Environment and the number of decentralised requests for a listing are low, as the benefits of the international designation are perceived to be low. Nominating sites for the world heritage list is not a priority within the ministries responsible for natural areas, as the protection of natural sites is often already taken care of. Managers of natural areas, often national parks, hardly ever ask for a world heritage nomination, as these areas already fall under the responsibility of the national government, and they have no wish to receive more visitors (table 3-3).

Table 3-3: Reasons at the local level to agree with or to initiate a world heritage nomination for cultural and natural sites (number of sites, N = 67).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kind of site</th>
<th>Pride</th>
<th>Better preservation</th>
<th>Attracting tourists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: P-value chi-square is 0.23.
Source: Own field study at various world heritage sites.
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The Dorset and East Devon Coast (United Kingdom), the only natural site in six case countries whose nomination was originally made by organisations from below the national level, is also not a national park. Because of the low priority of the world heritage convention among actors involved in natural areas, cultural actors take the lead in selecting sites, including the natural sites.

Natural areas are already sufficiently protected

National park managers hardly ever apply for a world heritage listing, as their parks are already well protected, and certainly better than (cultural) monuments and landscapes (Anagnostopoulos 1994: 318). The protection is mostly well arranged, as national parks are zoned off from other spatial uses, not in the least supported by their often peripheral location.

The effectiveness of protecting sites under the world heritage convention is often assessed to be low or unclear. The Environment and Heritage Service of the Department of the Environment in Northern Ireland (DOENI) is more active in nominating sites for other international treaties, such as the 1971 International Treaty for the Preservation of Wetlands (RAMSAR), than for the world heritage list. Nominations for the RAMSAR list get priority, as “the RAMSAR obligations are strong and clear… whereas the world heritage designation hardly means any obligation and no legislation comes with it” (Interview 25). The Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (LNV) designates national parks in the Netherlands (Vries and Naaijen 2000: 103), but the nominations of natural sites for the world heritage list are not regarded as a main concern. A world heritage designation for natural sites may even lead to confusion due to the abundance of regulations (Interview 23). Similar reasons apply in the United Kingdom, as the following excerpt illustrates:

“The convention is a very small part of the nature conservation organisations. In the UK there are many other legislations, both national and European, and until five or six years ago the status was something people were not thinking about in this country, as they saw the protection come from UK law or from European law. This really comes down to the perception of what world heritage status can do for you… There are so many designations in the UK. When you look at the Dorset and East Devon Coast there are sites of special scientific interest, national nature reserves, it is an area of outstanding natural beauty, so why would you add another theme? What would it add to the site or would it only confuse? Having so many designations may confuse the landowners as the borders of each designation are different, and the regulations are different.”

(Interview 36)

Actors in the field of natural heritage are sometimes more concerned about the commitments that follow from a world heritage listing – the obligation to preserve the site after listing (UNESCO 2004a). The cultural organisation INAH included the Ahuehuete tree in Santa María del Tule, as a mixed site on Mexico’s tentative list while highlighting “that it is of utmost importance to draw legislation that will ensure its preservation” (INAH 2002: 170). The Mexican National Commission for Natural Protected Areas (Comisión Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas, CONANP) did not
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approve the nomination of the tree, as it “could not guarantee that the tree lives forever. When the tree dies, the site ends” (Interview 54).

Natural areas do not want to attract more visitors
Visitors partly justify the existence of national parks (Interview 50), but most managers of natural areas are not primarily interested in attracting more visitors. More visitors may threaten the quality of the environment, while the extra income from more visitors often flows into the national treasury.
There are more actors willing to promote a world heritage nomination for a cultural area than for a natural area. For example, in 2000 the Catalan Romanesque churches of Vall de Boí (Spain) were declared a world heritage site after intervention from the municipality and the Generalitat de Catalunya. At the same time, the nearby Aigües Tortes National Park has been excluded from this nomination as the regional politicians and mayors from villages surrounding the national park do not have any authority over the natural area (Interview 103).

Underrepresentation of actors of natural sites
The almost complete absence of stakeholders involved in natural heritage in the nomination process for world heritage sites has contributed to the low number of natural world heritage sites (see also Hales 1982: 746). From the beginning, UNESCO has recognised the importance of including stakeholders from the cultural and natural fields to guarantee equal representation of these sites, as formulated in the ‘operational guidelines’ which state that, “States parties to the convention should convene at regular intervals at the national level the joint meeting of those persons responsible for natural and cultural heritage” (UNESCO 2004a).
Meetings have been held in Mexico and the United Kingdom, but the number of people involved in natural sites is under-represented (box 3-1). Similar meetings have not been held in Poland, Spain and the Netherlands, as well as in most other countries (Leblanc 1984: 26). Only recently, cultural stakeholders in Poland have become aware of the importance to increase the collaboration with authorities in charge of natural heritage (Pawlowski 1999: 18; Interview 86).
Biased national selection committees propose instances of heritage that reflect their own perception rather than that of others. In the United Kingdom, “the perceived bias – twelve of the sites in fact can be considered wholly or partly archaeological – led one critic to suggest that the sites reveal more about the cultural background of the people who selected them than they reflect any real attempt to present human history as it was actually lived” (Pocock 1997b: 381).

Box 3-1: The composition of national selection committees.

| An analysis of the composition of English and Mexican selection committees shows that the selection is biased in favour of those with a cultural background, as well as from primarily a male-dominated perspective. The English selection committee, as set up for the 1997-1998 Review Committee, comprised nineteen members and six observers from outside England (Tentative List Review Committee 1998: 30). Only two members were female and four had a background in natural heritage. Furthermore, English Heritage had the most representatives, namely six. |
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This composition is rather similar to the Comité para el Patrimonio Mundial in Mexico in 2002 which consisted of twelve members: ten males, with nine of the members sharing a cultural background and five from INAH, including its chairman who was also the committee coordinator. In addition, the president of INE, which is responsible for the selection of natural sites, is also on the committee.

Cultural actors select natural sites
In Poland and Spain, cultural actors selected the natural sites while their respective ministries of environment were absent. The absence of any interference from the Polish Ministry of Environment in the 1970s resulted in a nomination of Białowieża Forest by the Ministry of Culture, an obvious choice for every Pole (Interview 78). This national park is at least as well known for its iconic, cultural value of a typical Polish landscape as its natural qualities (see Schama 1995: 37-74). In Spain the initiative to nominate natural sites was taken by cultural actors, as no stakeholder involved in natural sites was represented in the national selection committee. A respondent from the Spanish Independent National Parks Organisation (Organismo Autónomo Parques Nacionales, OAPN) stated that, “It is not in our commitment, our competence… an initiative has to pass through the ministers of culture of the autonomous regions, not through the ministers of environment” (Interview 103). The people with a cultural background, however, think that the present system is not rational as reflected by this comment: “I think the natural administration should have a similar council, or have at least some kind of meetings together” (Interview 104).

Important natural sites can be overlooked by cultural administrations and natural sites – which meet the criterion of outstanding universal value – may not be nominated. In the late 1980s, when the Netherlands had not yet ratified the convention, the then Dutch Council for Nature Conservancy (Natuurbeschermingsraad) identified six landscapes that could be nominated as a natural world heritage site (De Jong 1996: 18). To date, the low priority within LNV has forestalled a nomination of a Dutch landscape, while actors in the field of cultural heritage have not nominated natural sites.

3.3 Concluding remarks
Nominations for the world heritage list largely depend upon who takes the initiative. The answer to the question ‘Who has initiated the nominations for the world heritage list?’ varies among countries, over time and according to the kind of site. Countries use different selection methods, as demonstrated by the three described trajectories. One pattern which has emerged is that local actors and heritage NGOs both have replaced and finalised choices made by national selection committees over time. Another pattern is that actors in the field of cultural heritage have always been more interested in the world heritage convention than actors in the field of natural heritage.

The differences among countries, over time and according to kind of site imply that the world heritage list is a collection of sites of diverse and varying qualities. In addition, there are certain mechanisms within the world heritage convention that have influenced the composition of the list. These regulations are the subject of the next chapter.