



# Alpine Heritage in Slovenia: Between Authorisation and Imagination

# 22

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## Abstract

The chapter analyses the official registers of heritage institutions in Slovenia. It localises the heritage units, i.e. natural values—sites, areas, and caves, immovable cultural heritage, museums, and intangible cultural heritage by macroregion—Alpine, Pannonian, Dinaric, and Mediterranean. It discusses possible correlations between historic contexts, national imaginaries, and the eventual outstanding position of the officially registered heritage in the Alpine macroregion. It concludes on the micro- and macroscale—on overlappings and discrepancies between national registers and local heritage-making, and on some supranational heritage initiatives enabling alternative heritage futures.

## Keywords

Geography · Heritage · Museums · Heritage registers · National imaginaries · Mountain identity · Mountain landscape

## 22.1 Introduction

Slovenia lies at the crossroads of the Alps, the Pannonian Basin, the Dinaric Alps, and the Mediterranean. The Alps, following the landscape typology (Perko 1998; Perko et al. 2021), cover about two-fifths of the Slovenian territory. Therefore, Alpine imagery is largely embedded in the representations and identifications of the Slovenes. All children in Slovenia know the Alpine mythical creatures such as the Golden Horn (*Zlatorog*), *Krivopete* (a wild woman with her feet turned backwards), the Wild Hunter and *Pehla* (a female mythical being of an ambivalent nature), as well as the young folk hero *Kekec* (a trickster-like boy, whose cleverness defeats the big and wicked villain) (Kropej 2012). Lively popular folk music can be heard at village festivals and mass events. And there is a proverb that says that every “true Slovene” must climb the highest Slovenian mountain Triglav (2,864 m) in the Julian Alps. Its stylised depiction is the central element of the Slovenian coat of arms (Mikša 2018). Following various authors (Šaver 2005; Velikonja 2018), the ideological self-construction

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and self-perception of Slovenes are believed to focus on the Alpineness.

In this context, the chapter assesses the share of the heritage in/of the Alps. It examines the authorised heritage as it can be found in the official registers of natural values and cultural, tangible and intangible heritage, and museums. It discusses possible connections between historic contexts, national imaginaries and the eventual outstanding position of the officially registered heritage in the Alpine macroregion. It concludes on the micro- and macroscale, on overlapping and discrepancies between national registers, on Alpine heritage and local heritage-making in Alpine communities, as well as some supranational initiatives.

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## 22.2 Terminological and Methodological Prologue

The mountain landscape, village centres, hayracks, the Bovec dumplings (*krafi*), and the Slovene folk-pop music are Alpine elements, classified as heritage in the various heritage registers. Heritage is actually not something per se; landscape, objects, and practices have yet to be recognised, i.e. identified, defined, registered, or otherwise designated as heritage. To roughly summarise conventions, legislation, and various professional definitions (e.g. Smith 2006; Harrison 2013; Slavec Gradišnik 2014; Adell et al. 2015; Harrison et al. 2020; Heriskop 2020), heritage is any natural or cultural, movable or immovable, tangible or intangible element from an arbitrarily defined past, *recognised* as heritage. It is this recognition, this perception in the light of heritage, that revalues an element. Heritage is therefore a strategic set of elements from the past with implications for the present and future relations in different spheres. Due to the distinctions that individuals ascribe to the elements and, consequently, to the incredibly loose and inclusive definitions in conventions and legislation, the control over the defining of and evaluating what is and what is not heritage is in the hands of authorised institutions. These oversee heritage and heritagisation through administrative apparatuses

and with the support of experts from different disciplines (Smith 2006). At the global level, such authorised institutions include UNESCO, ICOMOS, ICCROM, IUCN, Europa Nostra, and the Council of Europe. In Slovenia, there are authorised museums, archives, the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia, and the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation. The latter two used to be one institution until 1999, but have since been operating under the auspices of two different ministries, the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of the of Natural Resources and Spatial Planning (former Ministry of the Environment, Climate and Energy, and before Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning), in seven regional branches. Various associations, regional development agencies, tourism operators and cultural workers are also involved in heritage-making. Initiatives and entries in the register are usually prepared by the professionals who manage the registers, although an element can be proposed as heritage by anyone (Zakon o varstvu kulturne ... 2008). Heritage cannot “*exist independently of a process of categorising, ordering, listing, and subsequently conserving and/or archiving it*” (Harrison 2013:6). “*Categorisation is integral to the definition and management of heritage [...] and we see this manifested in the many and varied modes of ordering that have been established to facilitate the collection, categorisation, preservation, and management of heritage objects, sites and practices in the modern world*” (Harrison 2013:33). The mainstream discourse is still influenced by authorised heritage discourse and conventional understandings in which heritage is thought of as a series of valued objects, places, or practices that are gathered together in a museum or on a list, register, or catalogue of some form.

In the analysis of the Alpine heritage in Slovenia, we focused on the “official” registers of heritage institutions (Fig. 22.1). Data were obtained from national registers. We included all natural values, namely, *sites* and *areas* from the Register of Natural Values, identified as a natural heritage in Slovenia under the Nature Conservation Act (Zakon o ohranjanju ... 1999). Cultural heritage units were drawn from the Register of

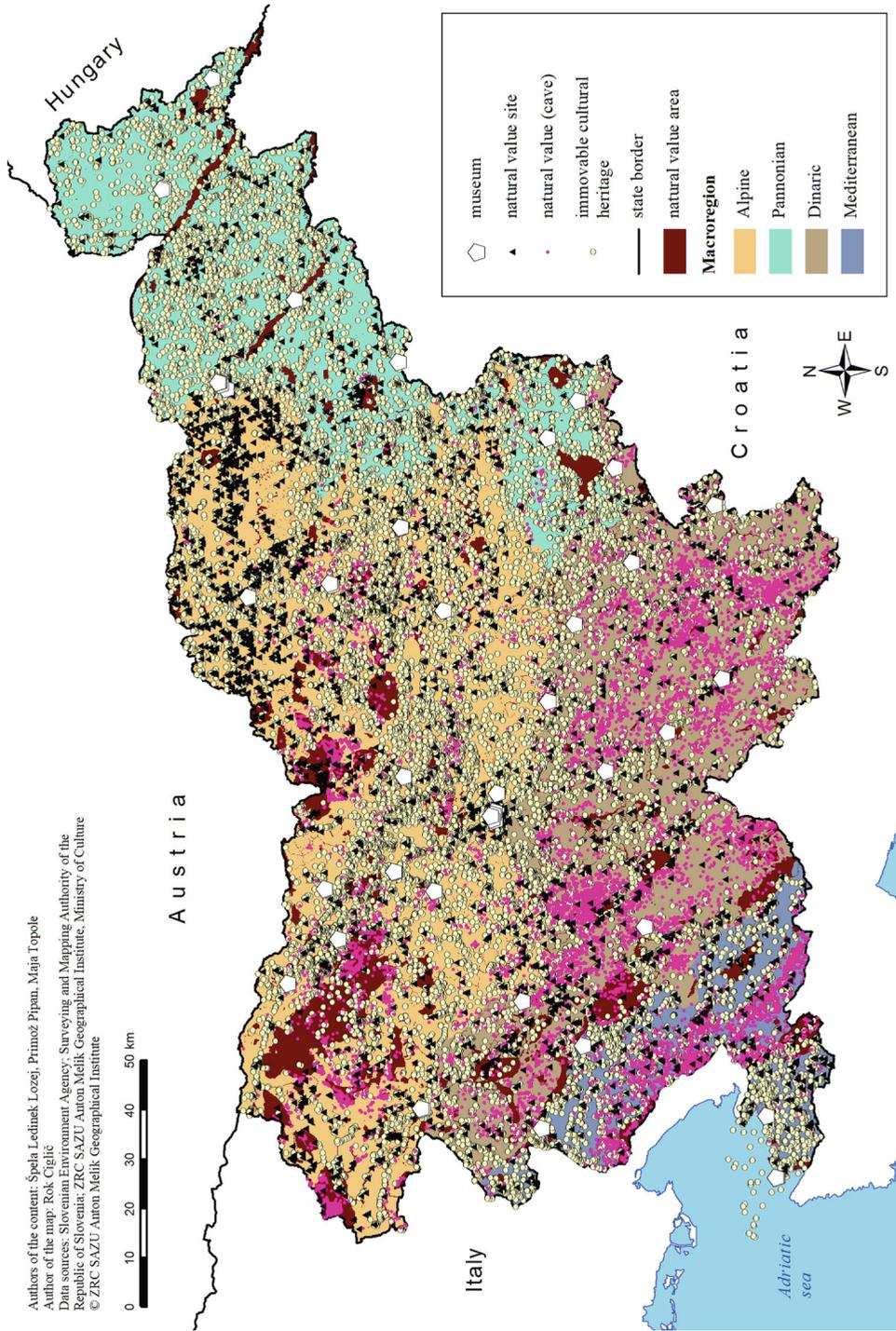


Fig. 22.1 Map of registered heritage in Slovenia (2021)

**Table 22.1** Overview of data capture

Heritage types	Institution	Register	Description	Source (see References)
Natural values–sites; 2,660 units	Ministry of the Environment, Climate and Energy, Slovenian Environment Agency	Register of natural values	Under the Nature Conservation Act (Zakon o ohranjanju ... 1999), a natural value is not only a rare, precious, or remarkable natural phenomenon, but any other valuable phenomenon, component, or part of living or non-living nature, a natural area or part of a natural area, an ecosystem, a landscape, or a designed natural feature. The following are considered to be sites and areas of natural value: geological phenomena, minerals and fossils and their deposits, surface and sub-surface karst phenomena, underground caves, gorges and ravines, and other geomorphological phenomena, glaciers and forms of glacial action, springs, waterfalls, rapids, lakes, marshes, streams, and rivers with their banks, the seashore, flora and fauna, their outstanding specimen and their habitats, ecosystems, landscapes, and designed natural features According to the Underground Cave Protection Act (Zakon o varstvu podzemnih ... 2004), every cave automatically has the status of a natural value of national importance. Caves are the only natural value with this protection status in Slovenia. The location of the cave is the location of the entrance to the cave	Atlas okolja
Natural values–areas; 5,929 units				
Natural values–caves; 12,146 units				
Immovable cultural heritage; 30,442 units	Ministry of Culture, Cultural Heritage Directorate	Register of the immovable cultural heritage	Immovable cultural heritage is immovable property or parts of it with heritage value. It consists of archaeological sites, buildings, parks and gardens, memorial buildings and sites, other facilities and installations, settlements and parts thereof, and cultural landscapes	Kulturna dediščina
Movable cultural heritage; 57 units		List of Museums (for 2019)	A register of movable heritage is not yet in place, therefore we have considered the List of Museums. It includes museums that meet the space, financial, and staffing requirements for the preserving and protecting of the heritage. It includes museums that provide a national public service and other museums that ensure public access to the collections	Razvid muzejev
Intangible cultural heritage; 95 units		Register of the intangible cultural heritage	Intangible cultural heritage is “practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills ... that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage” (Convention for Safeguarding ... 2003). The Register of the Intangible Cultural Heritage has 95 units (June 2021). 28 units were excluded from the analysis because they cannot be localised; they refer either to the whole or several different areas in Slovenia, or they are listed in the Register by the location of the address of the association that registered them	Nesnovna dediščina

Immovable Cultural Heritage and the Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage. A register of movable heritage, which by law also includes legally defined categories of heritage such as “national treasures”, has not yet been established.

We have therefore considered the List of Museums instead. Archive and library material has not been taken into account in the present heritage analysis. The data capture is presented in more detail in Table 22.1.

In our analysis, we considered the geographical regionalisation, according to which there are four macroregions in Slovenia—Alpine, Pannonian, Dinaric, and Mediterranean, and within these nine landscape types—Alpine mountains, Alpine hills, Alpine plains, Pannonian low hills, Pannonian plains, Dinaric plateaus, Dinaric lowlands, Mediterranean low hills, and Mediterranean plateaus. The focus is on the Alpine macroregion, which covers 42.1% of Slovenia. Characteristic of it is the Alpine direction of ridges and valleys running from west to east. The Alps are divided into three landscape types: Alpine mountains (35.8%), Alpine hills (54.6%), and Alpine plains (9.6%). To the east they drop in elevation and gradually change into Pannonian landscapes, to the south they change into Dinaric landscapes, and in the Soča Valley to the southwest, they come close to Mediterranean landscapes (Perko et al. 2021). A statistical analysis of the heritage types was carried out. We determined the average absolute and relative values of each phenomenon (proportions within Slovenia, within macroregions and landscape types) and, to facilitate the comparison of individual types, we calculated their concentration indices, i.e. the ratio between the proportion in Slovenia and the proportion within each region or landscape type.

In continuation, we drew from historical, geographical, cultural, and ethnological literature on the role of mountains in the nation-building. We examined the relationship between the registered heritage in Alpine areas and Alpine imaginaries. We are aware that this is a preliminary attempt to contextualise the quantitative analysis of heritage registers, which does not (yet) provide comprehensive answers, but raises questions and opens directions for further study. We indicated it in the final discussion, which introduces and builds on some (unauthorised) grassroots heritage initiatives on the microscale, and on the participation of Slovenia in some Alpine-wide heritage initiatives and their international recognition and authorisation.

### 22.3 Examination of Official Heritage Registers

The following types of natural and cultural heritage were considered in the context of nationally registered heritage: 57 museums, 5,929 natural value areas, and 2,660 natural value sites (geological, geomorphological, hydrological, botanical, zoological, tree and ecosystem types, and designed natural features), 12,146 caves, 30,442 units of immovable cultural heritage (archaeological sites, cultural landscapes, settlements and their parts, parks and gardens, memorial sites and places, buildings, buildings with parks and gardens), and 67 units of intangible cultural heritage (knowledges and practices, oral traditions and expressions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, and festive events)—a total of 51,301 heritage units (see Tables 22.1 and 22.2 and Fig. 22.1).

Table 22.2 shows absolute and relative data on natural and cultural heritage types by the four macroregions of Slovenia and by the nine landscape types within them. They can be seen in relation to the surface area and population of each unit. The structure of individual heritage types can be better seen in Figs. 22.2 and 22.3 (within macroregions) and in Fig. 22.4 (within landscape types).

The Alpine landscapes, which cover 42.1% of Slovenia's surface area and are home to 47.1% of its population, are of above-average importance in Slovenia, especially in terms of the number of sites of natural value (56.7%), the number of museums (56.1%), and the surface area of sites of natural value (50.9%). The proportion of immovable and intangible cultural heritage is slightly above average in terms of area, and almost in line with the proportion of the population, which is 47.1% (47.8% in both cases). The Alps have the lowest proportion of caves (29.7%); in this area, they are understandably outnumbered by the Dinaric landscapes (52.8%), due to their greater degree of karstification (Fig. 22.3).

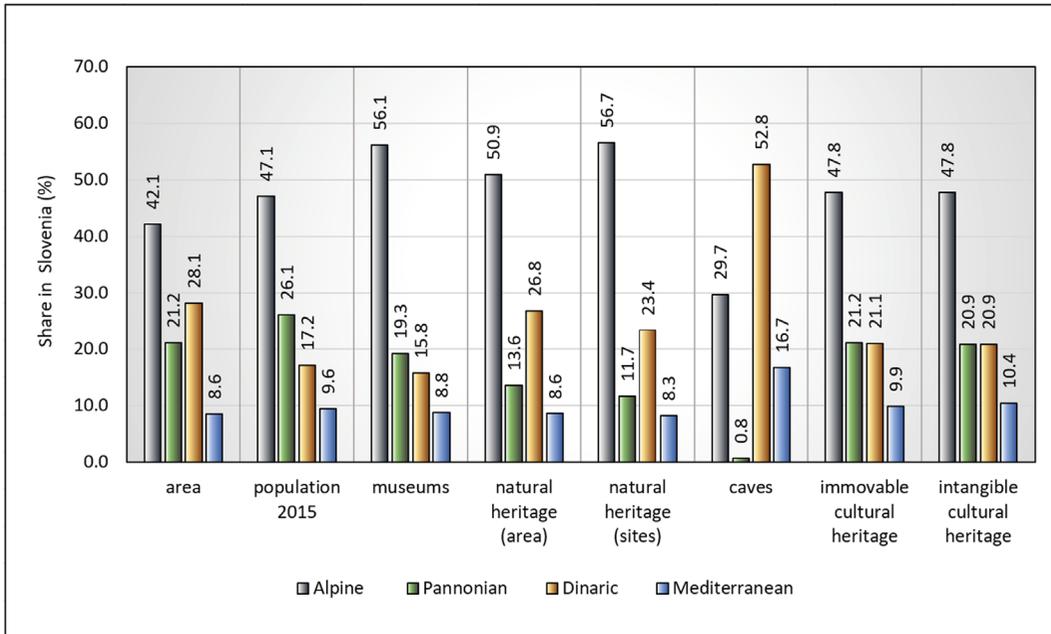
**Table 22.2** Macroregions of Slovenia and their landscape types in numbers, including the associated heritage elements

Macroregion	Alpine			Pannonian		Dinaric		Mediterranean		Sea	Slovenia
Macroregion area (ha)	854,095			429,151		570,625		173,429		37	2,027,300
Macroregion area (%)	42.1			21.2		28.1		8.6		0.1	100.0
Landscape type	Alpine mountains	Alpine hills	Alpine plains	Pannonian low hills	Pannonian plains	Dinaric plateaus	Dinaric lowlands	Mediterranean low hills	Mediterranean plateaus	Sea	Slovenia
Landscape type - area (ha)	306,177	465,997	81,921	299,452	129,699	380,932	189,693	106,102	67,327		2,027,300
Landscape type - area (%)	15.1	23.0	4.0	14.8	6.4	18.8	9.4	5.2	3.3		100.0
Population (No. in 2017)	90,549	382,819	497,846	270,278	268,314	74,025	281,239	170,161	26,846		2,062,077
Population (% in 2017)	4.4	18.6	24.1	13.1	13.0	3.6	13.6	8.3	1.3		100.0
Museums (No. in 2019)	4	7	21	2	9	2	7	5	0		57
Museums (% in 2019)	7.0	12.3	36.8	3.5	15.8	3.5	12.3	8.8	0.0		100.0
Natural heritage - area (ha)	100,181.6	25,345.3	10,745.5	12,839.1	23,625.2	51,629.7	19,999.7	14,092.0	8,957.7		267,680.3
Natural heritage - area (%)	37.4	9.5	4.0	4.8	8.8	19.3	7.5	5.3	3.3		100.0
Natural heritage sites (No.)	477	874	156	226	84	358	264	143	78		2,660
Natural heritage sites (%)	17.9	32.9	5.9	8.5	3.2	13.5	9.9	5.4	2.9		100.0
Caves (No. in 2019)	2,779	719	113	92	2	4,447	1,963	187	1,846		12,148
Caves (% in 2019)	22.9	5.9	0.9	0.8	0.0	36.6	16.2	1.5	15.2		100.0
Immovable cultural heritage (No. in 2021)	2,978	6,829	4,736	4,046	2,400	2,607	3,802	2,199	807	37	30,441
Immovable cultural heritage (% in 2021)	9.8	22.4	15.6	13.3	7.9	8.6	12.5	7.2	2.7	0.1	100.0
Intangible cultural heritage (No. in 2021)	16	10	6	2	12	6	8	4	3		67
Intangible cultural heritage (% in 2021)	23.9	14.9	9.0	3.0	17.9	9.0	11.9	6.0	4.5		100.0

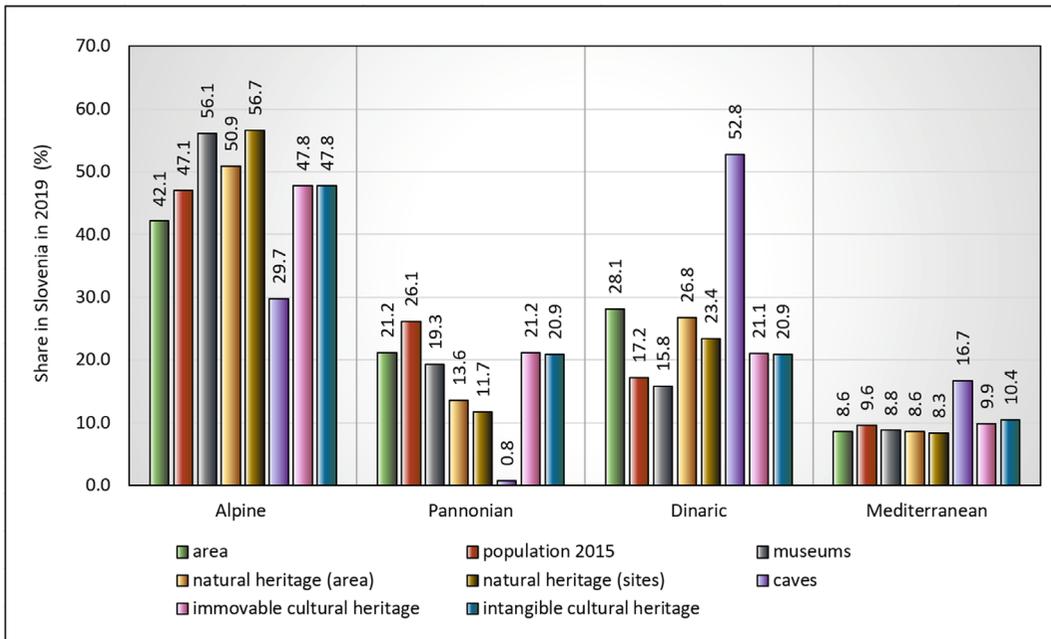
For illustrative purposes, the proportions of areas within Slovenia in each of the nine landscape types are shown in common graphs, which allow for a comparison between macroregions and landscape types according to each heritage type, based on the surface of each area and the number of inhabitants in that area in 2017 (Figs. 22.5, 22.6, and 22.7).

In Slovenia, there are 28 museums per 1 million inhabitants, with the largest number of them (33) in the Alps, 44 in the Alpine mountains, and 42 on the Alpine plains (Fig. 22.5a). There is 130 ha of protected area per 1000 inhabitants in Slovenia. The large surface of the protected area includes as many as 1106 ha in the Alpine

mountains and 697 ha per 1000 inhabitants on the Dinaric Plateaus (Fig. 22.5b). There are 13 natural heritage sites per 10,000 inhabitants in Slovenia, 53 in the Alpine Mountains, and 48 on the Dinaric Plateaus. There are less than 10 per 10,000 inhabitants in the areas of plains and hills (Fig. 22.5c). Caves are the most frequent among the natural value sites. As they are associated with karstified areas, densities are highest in the case of the Mediterranean (688) and the Dinaric Plateaus (601). The Alpine mountains have 307 caves; Slovenia has 59 caves per 10,000 inhabitants (Fig. 22.5d). In terms of the number of immovable cultural heritage sites per 1000 inhabitants, the Dinaric Plateaus have the highest number



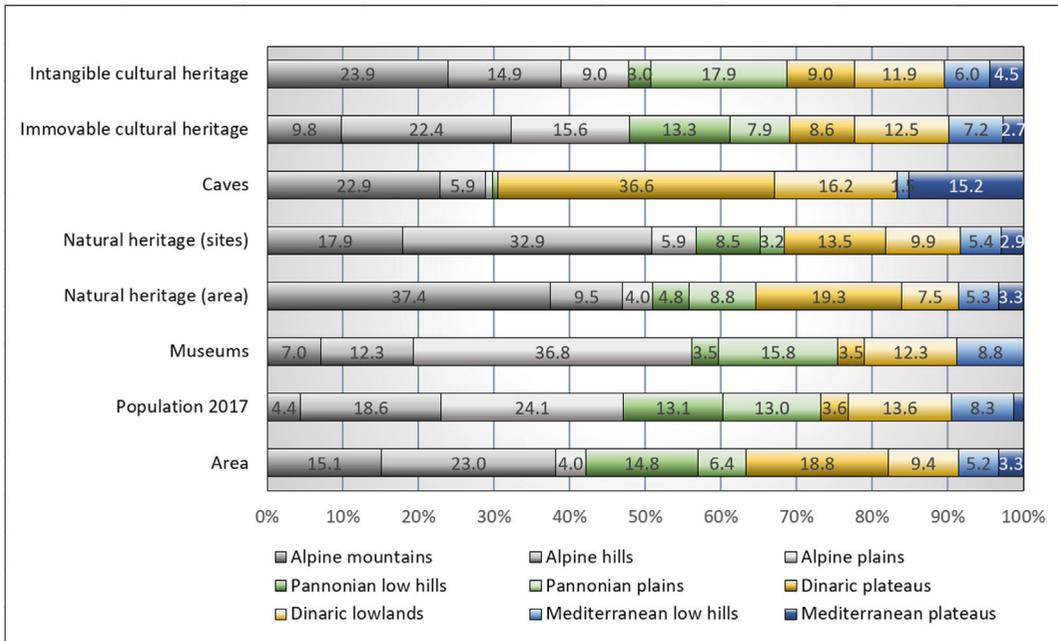
**Fig. 22.2** Data from heritage registers in 2019 and macroregions in Slovenia



**Fig. 22.3** Macroregions in Slovenia and heritage types in 2019

of them (40), followed by the Alpine Mountains (33) and the Mediterranean Plateaus (32). The figure for Slovenia is 15 immovable cultural heritage sites per 1000 inhabitants (Fig. 22.5e).

As for Slovenian intangible heritage with merely 67 examples, there are only three units per 1000 inhabitants. The Alpine Mountains boast the



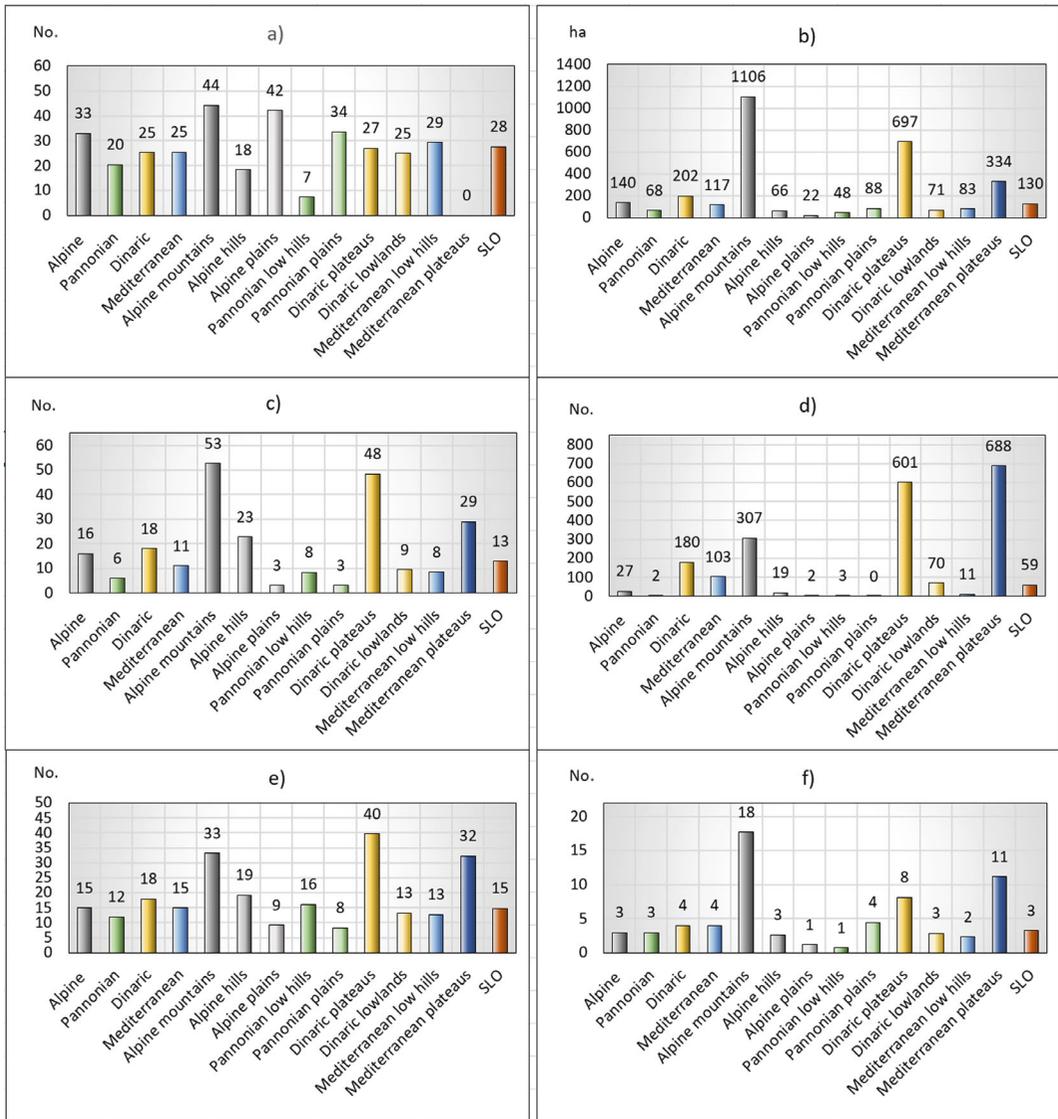
**Fig. 22.4** Landscape types and heritage in Slovenia

highest number (18), followed by the Mediterranean (11) and the Dinaric Plateaus (8 per 1000 inhabitants) (Fig. 22.5f). See also Fig. 22.1 for the distribution of all types in Slovenia.

Slovenia has an average of 2.8 museums per 1000 km<sup>2</sup> (Fig. 22.6a). The highest number of museums per km<sup>2</sup> is in the plains—25.6 in the Alpine and 6.9 in the Pannonian Plains, while the number is lower everywhere else. In Slovenia, 13.2% of the land is protected, compared with 16% in the Alps. The largest area of protected land is in the Alpine Mountains (32.7%), followed by the Pannonian Plains with 18.2% (Fig. 22.6b). There are 13.1 natural value units per 1 ha in Slovenia. In the Alps, there are 17.6 (Alpine Plains 19, Alpine Hills 18.8, and Alpine Mountains 15.6 per ha) (Fig. 22.6c). In 2019, there were, on average, 60 known underground caves per km<sup>2</sup> in Slovenia. Mediterranean plateaus come first with 274 caves, followed by Dinaric Plateaus (117) and Alpine Mountains (91) (Fig. 22.6d). The density of immovable cultural heritage sites is highest (5.8 per km<sup>2</sup>) on the Alpine Plains (Fig. 22.6e). Intangible cultural heritage is most frequently protected on the plains (Pannonian 9.3,

Alpine 7.3), the figure for Slovenia being 3.3 per 1000 km<sup>2</sup> (Fig. 22.6f). See also Fig. 22.1 for the distribution of types.

Concentration indices are important indicators of the outlying phenomena. They show the ratio between the proportion of the area under consideration (macroregion or sub-macroregion) and the proportion of the region or country as a whole. The concentration index of 100 applies to Slovenia, a region with an index above 100 has an above-average concentration of a given phenomenon, while a region below 100 has a below-average concentration. Thus, the number of museums per surface unit in the Alpine Plains is nine times the Slovenian average (Fig. 22.7a). If the proportion of protected land is compared with the proportion of the population, the Alpine Mountains, the Dinaric Plateaus, and the Mediterranean Plateaus stand out (11, 7, and 3 times the average, respectively) (Fig. 22.7b). The same landscapes are also above average in terms of the number of protected sites of natural value (Alpine Mountains 4 times more, Dinaric Plateaus 3.7 times more, and Mediterranean Plateaus 2.2 times more than average) (Fig. 22.7c). The Mediterranean Plateaus



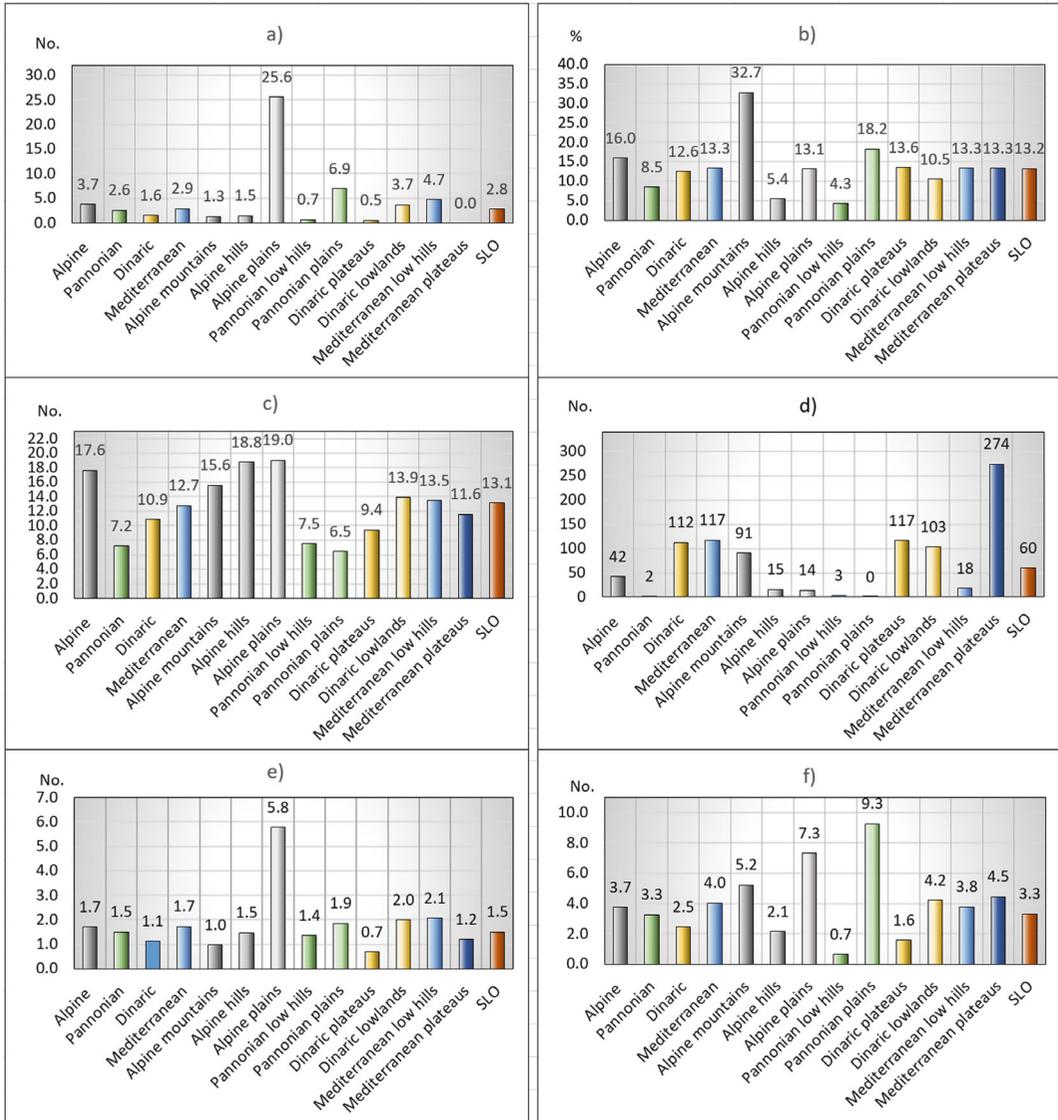
**Fig. 22.5** Density of heritage units in relation to population: **a** the number of museums per million inhabitants, **b** natural heritage area per 1000 inhabitants, **c** the number of natural heritage sites per 10,000 inhabitants, **d** the

number of caves per 10,000 inhabitants, **e** the number of immovable cultural heritage sites per 1000 inhabitants, **f** the number of intangible cultural heritage units per 100,000 inhabitants

have the highest cave density (11.7 times), followed by the Dinaric Plateaus (10.2 times) and the Alpine Mountains, 5.2 times more than the Slovenian average (Fig. 22.7d). In terms of the concentration of immovable cultural heritage within a given area, the Alpine Plains stand out (3.9 times), followed by the Dinaric Plateaus (2.7 times more), the Alpine Mountains, and the Mediterranean Plateaus (both 2.2 times more)

compared to the number of inhabitants (Fig. 22.7e). In terms of intangible cultural heritage, the Alpine Mountains are a special case, with 5.4 times more protected intangible cultural heritage compared to the population (Figs. 22.7f).

As immovable cultural heritage is largely diversified, we have further developed the analysis of this type (Fig. 22.8, 22.9 and 22.10).

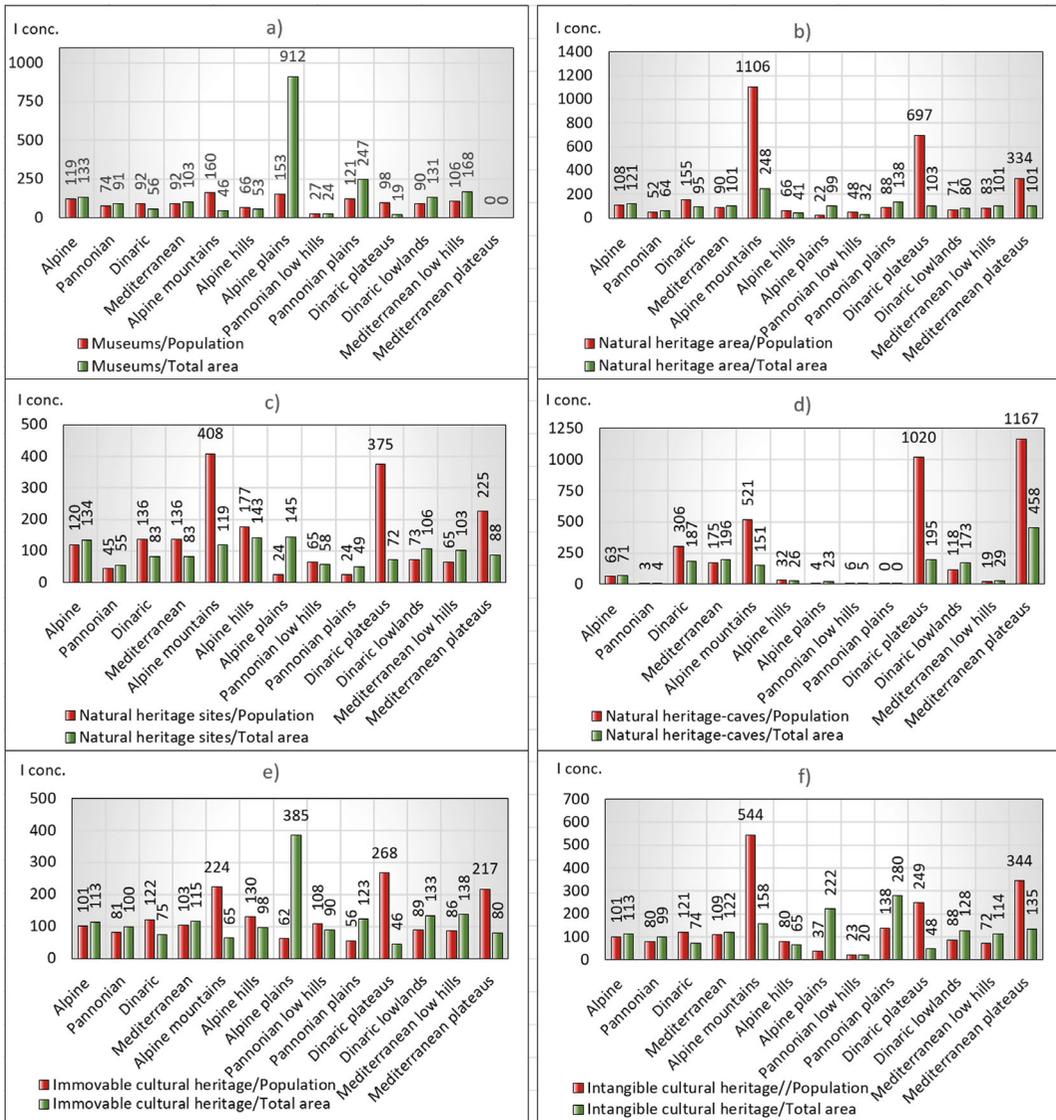


**Fig. 22.6** Density of heritage units per area: **a** the number of museums per 1000 km<sup>2</sup>, **b** natural heritage area (share/% of the whole territory), **c** the number of natural heritage

sites per ha, **d** the number of caves per km<sup>2</sup>, **e** the number of immovable cultural heritage units per km<sup>2</sup>, **f** the number of intangible cultural heritage units per 1000 km<sup>2</sup>

While Alpine landscape types have an absolute predominance in terms of the number of immovable cultural heritage sites, we should look at them with regard to their surface area and population. Concerning the surface area (Fig. 22.11), the concentration indices show that the Alpine Plains stand out, with an above-average representation of all types. They are followed by the Mediterranean Hills and Plateaus—both of which

are largely characterised by settlements and parts of settlements, and finally the Dinaric Lowlands and Plains, and the Pannonian Plains. In the Alpine Mountains, only the cultural landscape is represented above average. In terms of population (Fig. 22.12), the Alpine Mountains and Mediterranean Plateaus stand out the most due to their lower population density. They are followed by the Dinaric Plateaus and the Mediterranean



**Fig. 22.7** Concentration of heritage units compared with the number of inhabitants and the area. Concentration indices for: **a** museums, **b** natural heritage areas, **c** natural

heritage sites, **d** caves, **e** immovable cultural heritage, **f** intangible cultural heritage

Low Hills. Within these, two types in particular are worth mentioning: the settlements and parts of settlements are 8.8 times more common than average within the Mediterranean Plateaus, and the cultural landscape is 8 times more common than average in the Alpine Mountains.

## 22.4 Alpineness Between Registers and Imaginaries

The statistical analysis of the official heritage, which clearly illustrated a higher proportion of registered heritage units in the Alpine areas, was placed in the broader socio-historical context of the Alpine imaginaries. The analysis of visual representations of Slovenian landscapes showed

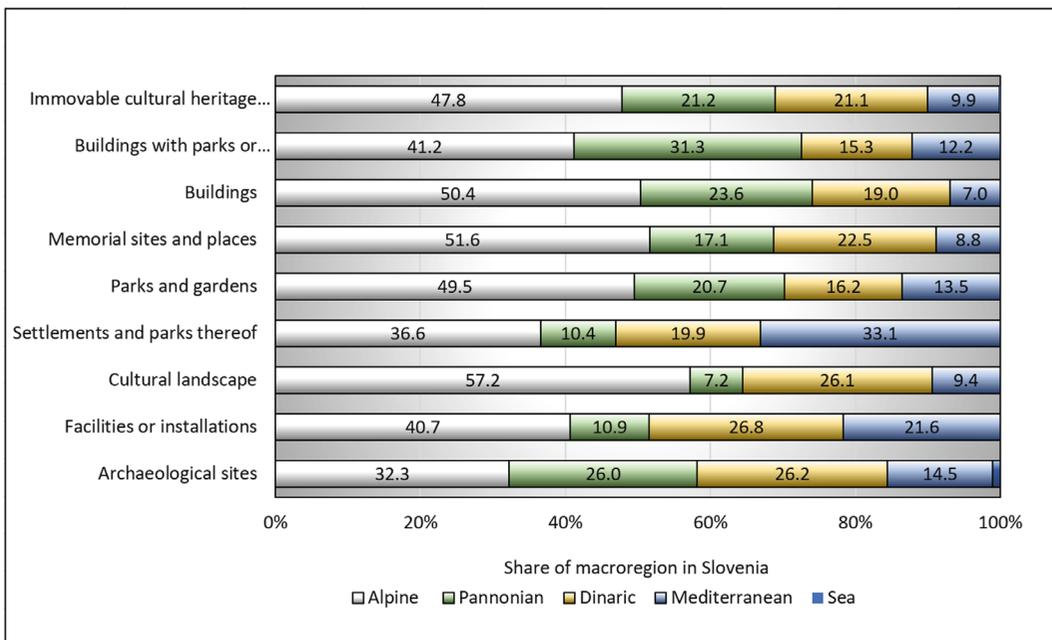


Fig. 22.8 Macroregions and immovable cultural heritage

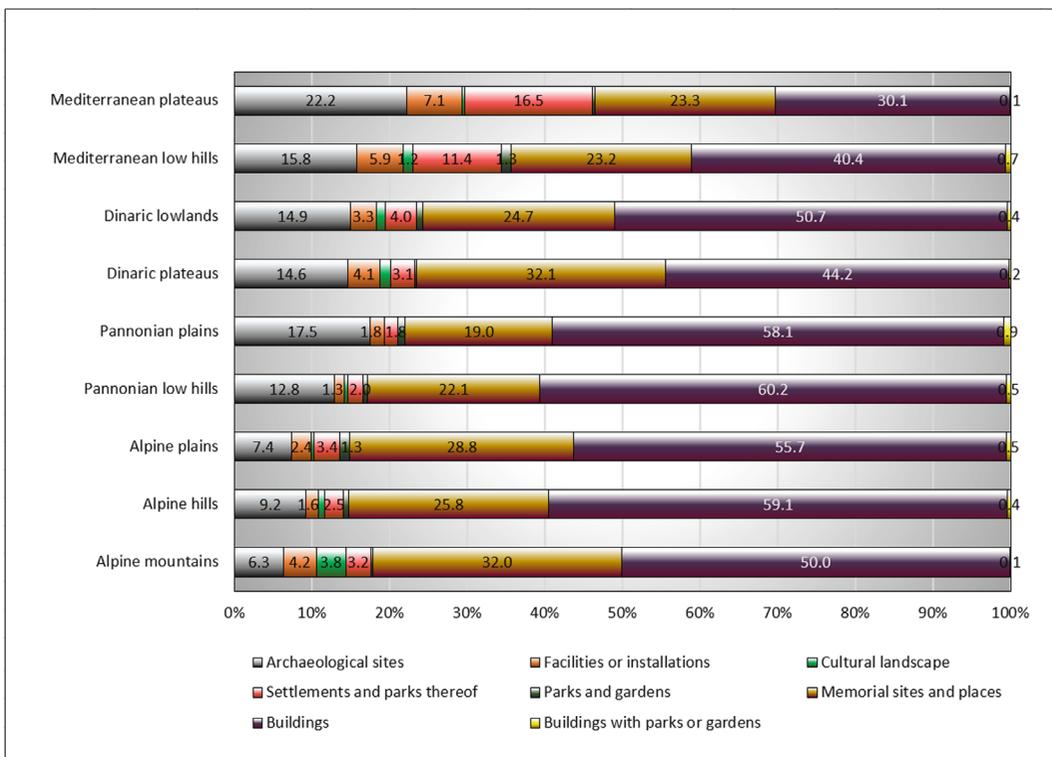


Fig. 22.9 Immovable cultural heritage per landscape types

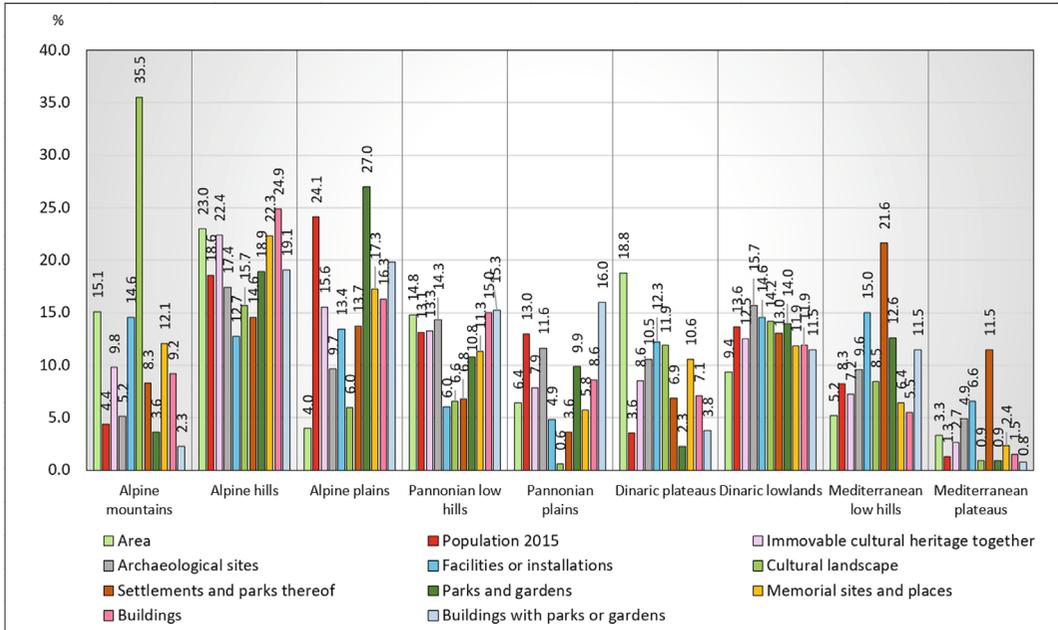


Fig. 22.10 Landscape types and immovable cultural heritage

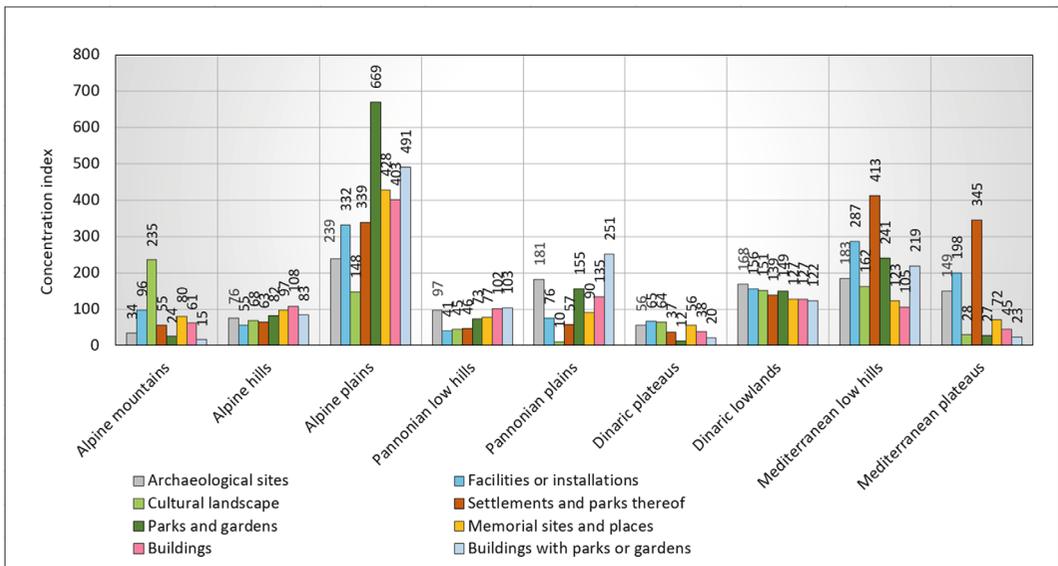
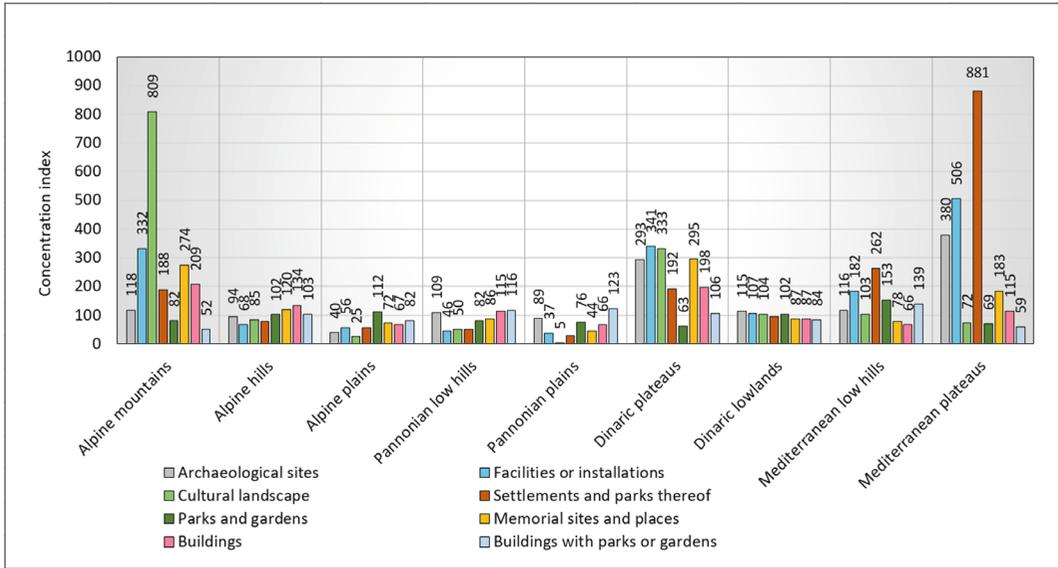


Fig. 22.11 Concentration of immovable cultural heritage per area of landscape types (Slovenia = 100)

an above-average representation of the Alpine landscape elements in the identifications of Slovenians (Kučan 1998). What is the relationship between the “official”, i.e. registered heritage and the historically documented overlaps between Alpine and national imaginaries? The overlap has

led many writers to designate mountains, especially Triglav, as a Slovenian national symbol (see, e.g. Strojín 1980; Šaver 2004, 2005; Mikša 2018), an inseparable element of Slovenian identity (Mikša et al. 2018), individual landscape elements as “symbols of national identity” (Kučan



**Fig. 22.12** Concentration of immovable cultural heritage per population of landscape types (Slovenia = 100)

1998:108), and their mutual interplay as “the Alpine culture of Slovenianness” (Šaver 2005), which constitutes “the mountain identity of Slovenians” (Mikša et al. 2018) or even “the pinnacle of the ideology of Slovene identity” (Velikonja 2018). According to Boštjan Šaver, the multiplicity of Alpine representations of national heritage stems from the fact that the Slovenian Alps are the most north-western Slovenian region and thus a geographical and symbolic bridge to the European world, in contrast to the Balkans to the south. According to Šaver, Slovenians “have always looked to our northern and western neighbours, and in the period of the awakening of nations, we formed similar (Alpine) national symbols” and a “historically petrified and insightful Alpine mythology” (Šaver 2005:271). In the twentieth century and the modern state, the latter has become the dominant Slovenian collective idea and ideology at the same time.

Authors who shed light on the naturalisation of the Alpineness, also co-create it. To what extent is heritagisation also involved in the naturalisation of the Alpineness? Can the fact that heritage in the Alpine region has more entries in the official registers than the one in the Mediterranean, Pannonian, and Dinaric regions be linked to the “historically

petrified Alpine mythology” (Šaver 2005:271) and the “mountain identity of Slovenians” (Mikša et al. 2018:157)? An unambiguous answer cannot be given, of course. That is mainly because the number of registered heritage units depends not only on the “heritage view”, which has been changing, but also on purely practical circumstances, such as the range of a regional unit of the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia or the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation, the number of staff, their expertise and possible priorities.

In five points, we summarise the analysis of the registered heritage, outline the (re)construction and overlaps of the Alpine and national imaginaries, and indicate individual links and challenges. Instead of answers, we also raise separate new questions.

### 22.4.1 Establishing the View of the Mountains

The Alpine macroregion has the highest proportion of protected area—as much as 16% (Fig. 22.6b). The Alps stand out also in terms of the number of natural heritage sites per hectare

(Fig. 22.6c). The aestheticised and romantic view of “wild nature” and “pastoral bucolic” has been promoted and consolidated by Alpine explorers and mountaineers. Discovering and mapping the Alps and the mountain world became one of the central research interests of Enlightenment thinkers (Mikša and Zorn 2016). Later mountaineering, alpinism, and tourism, in turn, influenced the formation of a romanticised and aestheticised view of the mountain landscapes (Tschofen 1999; Fleming 2004; Hansen 2013; Debarbieux and Rudaz 2015; Smrekar et al. 2016). The juxtaposition of two mountain views—that of the *mountaineer-alpinist* and that of the *mountaineer-shepherd*—was vividly described by Josip Tominšek, the long-time editor of the *Planinski vestnik* alpine journal, in his memoirs of a conversation with a shepherd on the Korošica Alp in the Savinja Alps in 1889. When asked by the shepherd, why he keeps returning to the mountains, he replied, “The snow-capped mountains seem so close from our house; they invite me and tempt me to get to know them up close. They are, after all, the proudest part of Slovenian land”. The shepherd replied, “You find these steep, white rocks beautiful; but my eyes look down on your green meadows, colourful fields, misty woods, glittering rivers, colourful villages; and all this is Slovenian too, is it not?” Tominšek concludes, “So we have two heritages and two longings!” (Tominšek 1949:8).

### 22.4.2 Protected Areas

The first heritage actions on the territory of present-day Slovenia are linked to Alpine areas. As early as the end of the nineteenth century, the Carniola Regional Assembly protected the Savica and Peričnik waterfalls by a special decree (Šaver 2005). In 1906, the seismologist and natural scientist Albin Belar, while taking an inventory of the natural monuments of Carniola, prepared the first proposal for the protection of the Triglav Lakes Valley and some other areas. In 1908 (the year of most references), he set about implementing it. The implementation was prevented, probably due to the simultaneous promotion of

grazing in the mountains (Skoberne 2018) and the First World War. After the war, the protection efforts were resumed. In 1919, the Slovene Museum Society established the Department for the Protection of Nature and Natural Monuments, which in the following year submitted the memorandum *Spomenica* to the provincial Government of Slovenia. It specified the key requirements for nature protection in Slovenia, including the protection of the Triglav Lakes Valley in the Julian Alps. The protection regime and the Alpine Conservation Park in the Triglav Lakes Valley were established in 1924. Subsequently, there were proposals to extend and rename the conservation area. In 1961, the area was renamed Triglav National Park and in 1981 it was expanded to its present extent (Bajuk Senčar 2012; Zorn et al. 2015; Skoberne 2018; see also Chap. 26 in this volume).

### 22.4.3 Alpine Elements in National Iconography

In the 20th century, the images of Alpineness were reinforced in the wider national public through several visual media. The credit goes to landscape painters, the writers of the *Planinski vestnik* alpine journal, the first filmmakers, and postcard artists—photographic depictions of peaks, mountain outposts, mountain still-lives, the national motifs of the painter Maksim Gaspari, and later wall calendars with mountain vedutas. Alpine iconography was also reinforced in other branches of art, in the cultural industry, and popular culture. *Krst pri Savici* (The Baptism on the Savica, 1835), an epic-lyric poem by France Prešeren (1800–1849) set in the heart of the Alps, challenged many artists in the visual arts, drama, ballet, and other artistic fields (Juvan 2015). The legend of the Golden Horn has also been interpreted in various ways in literature and popular culture (Kropej 2012). The mountain tales about the folk hero Kekec by Josip Vandot are well known, as are their film versions and popular depictions (Hladnik 1980). *Kekec* (1951) was the third Slovenian feature film, the first Slovenian children’s film, and the first film to win an award at the

Venice Film Festival, in 1952. The sequel, *Srečno, Kekec!* (Good Luck, Kekec! 1963), was the first Slovenian colour film, followed in 1968 by the third film, *Kekčeve ukane* (Kekec's Tricks 1968). In addition to the Kekec trilogy, the film *Cvetje v jeseni* (Flowers in Autumn, 1973), based on the novel with the same title by Ivan Tavčar, plays an iconic role in the spreading and reinforcing of the Alpineness (Erjavec 1994; Kučan 1998; Zgonik 2002). An important role in the dissemination of Alpine imaginaries of Slovenianness in music was played by the popularisation of the accordion and the genre of popular folk music, which was introduced to the world public by the Avsenik Brothers Ensemble (Kovačič 2015).

The political and social dimensions of everyday life are strongly intertwined with the Triglav and the mountains. Triglav appears in the current state symbols, insurance, and food product names, on postcards, calendars, the name of a film production company; there is even the occasional fusion of Alpine and religious iconography (Šaver 2005; Mikša et al. 2018). However, mountains are often the centre of the world, the dwelling place of deities and beings with supernatural powers, the place of the sacred and spiritual in other mythologies, religions and ideologies (Eliade 1974; Šmitek 1998). “Alpine culture” (Šaver 2005) and “mountain identity” (Mikša et al. 2018) are therefore not nation-specific, since Alpine imaginaries can also be traced in Austrian and German lands during the nation-building in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Keller 2016) and even among non-Alpine nations; in addition to Austrian, German, and Slovenian mountaineers, the Czechs were also searching for “their own” Alps and mountain identity at the turn of the century. The Czech branch of the Slovenian Mountaineering Society built the Češka koča Mountain hut (the Czech hut) in the Kamnik-Savinja Alps at the end of the nineteenth century. In 2020, it was not only entered into the Slovenian National Register of the Intangible Cultural Heritage but also declared a cultural monument by the Jezersko Municipality (Roškar 2020).

#### 22.4.4 Alpine Museum and Collections

As recorded in the *Planinski vestnik* alpine journal, the Czechs had already called for the collection of material for an “Alpine museum” in the Slovenian Alps as early as 1901 (Anon 1901). The Triglav Museum Collection was established in 1984, however, the initiative was realised in 2010 when the new-build Slovenian Alpine Museum opened. The analysis showed that the Alpine areas have the highest number of authorised museums, both in terms of surface area and population (Figs. 22.5a and 22.6a). The number is above-average, since the Alpine macroregion also includes the capital Ljubljana, where most of the national museums are located. The role of tourism in the opening of museums and the establishing of museum collections should also not be neglected. The Slovenian Alpine Museum was one of the last new buildings and major public investments in museum infrastructure in rural Slovenia. The museum, which is managed by the Jesenice Upper Sava Museum (*Gornjesavski muzej Jesenice*), is the result of many years of efforts by the local Alpine Association, the municipality of Kranjska Gora, and the national Alpine Association of Slovenia.

In addition to the museum and municipal collections and the collections of the Triglav National Park Public Institute, museumized monuments are also common in the Alpine macroregion—the birthplace of the poet France Prešeren in Vrba is the first museumized monument in the country (Roškar 2021). The Alpine region is also incredibly lively in terms of private collectors and museums—e.g. the Kobarid Museum, a museum of the First World War; the museum collection *Od planine do Planike* (From Mountain Pasture to Planika Dairy), depicting the development of the mountain economy and dairy farming in the Soča Valley. Private collecting is intense in the Soča Valley, the area where the Soča/Isonzo Front took place during the First World War. The heritagisation of the Soča/Isonzo Front started in 1990 with the establishment of the Kobarid Museum by local enthusiasts. It greatly developed in the following decades in connection with the establishment and development of the

Walk of Peace trail and brand by the eponymous foundation, the Walk of Peace in the Soča Region Foundation (Kumer et al. 2020; Ledinek Lozej and Pisk 2021). Today, there are 19 private collections in the Soča Valley related to the relics of the First World War, open to the public. However, it is estimated that there are between 50 and 100 more that have not been inventoried by any public institution (Kofol 2015). Sometimes they are linked to more or less institutionalised initiatives and networks (Ledinek Lozej 2020). These bottom-up private collections are perceived with ambiguity. Sometimes as the initiatives of the awareness-raising on the importance of the Soča/Isonzo Front heritage. Sometimes as problematic in terms of the Cultural Heritage Protection Act (Zakon o varstvu kulturne ... 2008), which strictly forbids the collection of underground objects and the trade in these objects (Kofol 2015; Kravanja 2018).

#### 22.4.5 International Nominations and the Alps

The Walks of Peace in the Soča Region Foundation initiated and prepared the nomination for The Walk of Peace from the Alps to the Adriatic—Heritage of the First World War, which was submitted to the UNESCO Tentative List in 2016, during the First World War centenary (2014–2018). At the moment, it came to a halt because UNESCO formed an expert body that shall re-consider the nominations of difficult heritage, based on wars and conflicts. Nevertheless, the following sites, that are located in the Alpine macroregion, form part of the supranational heritage registers:

- two out of five Slovenian sites on the UNESCO World Heritage List (WHL): (1) Heritage of Mercury—a transnational nomination of Almadén, Spain, and Idrija, Slovenia (the latter lying actually on the border between the Alpine and Dinaric macroregions); (2) the most recent one, the Works of the architect Jože Plečnik in Ljubljana (the multilateral nomination Prehistoric Pile Dwellings around the Alps might be

added here; the Slovenian sites of this multinational nomination are located in the Ljubljana Marsh (*Ljubljansko barje*), hence already in the Dinaric macroregion);

- one out of five elements on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Heritage of Humanity (ICH RL)—The Škofja Loka Passion Play;
- and two out of three European Heritage Label sites—the Franja Partisan Hospital and the Javorca Church.

With such a number of heritage elements on international registers, it is surprising that Slovenia was not included in the multilateral nomination of alpinism on the UNESCO ICH RL, especially because of the documented popularity of mountaineering and alpinism in Slovenia, which has been heritagised since the beginning of the twentieth century and culminated in the above-mentioned recent Slovenian Alpine Museum. This “tactical rescaling” (Debarbieux et al. 2023:12) of the nomination of alpinism was carried out by the amateur alpinists and professional mountain guides of the Mont Blanc region from France, Italy, and Switzerland. The UNESCO multinational instrument is driven by a mixture of idealism, realism, opportunism, political concerns, and balancing between a nationalist and diplomatic strategy (Debarbieux and Munz 2019; Debarbieux et al. 2023), being at the same time the tool and the aim of regional and transnational cooperation. This is at least attempted in the emergent multilateral proposal on Alpine Food Heritage that builds on multilevel community participation from the whole Alpine arc (Godina Golija and Ledinek Lozej 2018). Alpine Food Heritage is defined as “an integrated system of knowledges, skills, practices, and values that are interconnected and linked to a shared natural capital by Alpine people, from France to Slovenia” (Toward ... 2021:11). Drawing on the Debarbieux et al. (2023:15) findings on the alpinism nomination case, we hope that it will enable a reflexive process on the Alpineness and build imaginaries that will go beyond the national.

## 22.5 Conclusion

In Slovenia, heritage has more entries in the official registers from the Alpine macroregion than from the Mediterranean, Pannonian, and Dinaric landscapes. The exploring of the mountain world in the Enlightenment and Romantic periods, and later mountaineering and alpinism, promoted an aestheticised view of the mountains. The first nature conservation proposals and the establishment of the Alpine Conservation Park, the forerunner of today's only national park in Slovenia, the Triglav National Park, are linked to the Alpine areas. The role of the mountains in the period of the nation-building and in contemporary everyday and ritual socio-political life is such that individual authors speak of the Alpine culture of Slovenianness and of the mountain identity of Slovenes. Based on the analysed material, we cannot deduce to what extent the authorised heritage discourse is a result and/or a co-creator of the naturalisation of the Alpinism—but we do point out some gaps that allow for alternative possibilities of heritage-making.

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