The Morphology of Post-War Territory as a Research Object

Laboratory of Military Ecotones

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PROBLEM

Diversity and comparison

Wars differ in scale, duration and historical context

Territories differ in environment and culture

Comparison needs common questions and local explanations

PROBLEM

The scope of post-war territory

Consequences of war continue to shape territorial organisation

Intensive fighting may end while displacement and division persist

Each study specifies its period and continuing military effects

A morphological approach

Forms: settlements, fields, roads and water infrastructure

Functions: what these forms actually do

Relations: how territorial elements connect

Maintenance: who keeps them functioning

Comparable descriptions in different settings

Historical maps and records establish earlier configurations

Field observation and imagery document present forms

Local evidence establishes use, access and maintenance

Cultural and geographic conditions explain differences

Settlement and depopulation

Disappearance, merger and emergence of settlements

Population displacement and replacement

Changes in services for surrounding settlements

Crimea illustrates the distinction between survival and continuity

Territorial presence

Residence and institutions can sustain territorial presence

Routes and access shape the organisation of enclaves

Schools and healthcare connect settlements with wider centres

Kosovo illustrates questions requiring local investigation

RESEARCH DIRECTION 3

Material memory of territory

Cemeteries, buildings and inscriptions preserve material traces

Names connect present maps with historical records

Physical survival can coexist with separation from a community

Mapping traces reveals the historical legibility of territory

RESEARCH DIRECTION 4

Land use and landscape maintenance

Regular work sustains fields, roads and canals

Population loss can interrupt maintenance without direct destruction

Vegetation change needs evidence about use and access

Economic abandonment and ecological change require separate assessment

RESEARCH DIRECTION 5

Soil and managed water systems

Soil measurements need spatial and land-use context

Water structures may survive without maintenance

A pond’s presence does not establish a functioning water system

Soil and water connect habitation with agricultural activity

Object survival and functional continuity

A surviving village may lose its service role

An intact canal may cease to supply water

A standing house may leave the working agricultural system

Function and connections reveal changes beyond recorded destruction

Different geographies within one territory

Ownership, residence and actual use have different spatial patterns

Administrative boundaries may differ from limits of access

Water connects land across jurisdictions

Their mismatches become specific research objects

Microgeography and territorial processes

A village, field or pond provides a concrete unit of investigation

Local histories expose changes hidden in regional statistics

Common questions make observations comparable

Additional cases test the conditions under which explanations hold

The theory of military ecotones

A developing theory of natural and human systems altered by war

Changed functions, relations and boundaries define the research object

Contamination constitutes one aspect of the system

Research on post-war territory is one task of this theory

A programme for comparative research

Morphology makes post-war territorial organisation open to investigation

Five directions connect settlement with land, memory, soil and water

Common questions accommodate different local conditions

The programme remains open to empirical testing and revision

Conceptual sources

After War: Territory, Rural Settlement, Memory, Soil and Water
Working conceptual text supplied for this presentation

Nikolaenko D. The Paradigm of the Military Ecotone (2026)
DOI: 10.66659/nhzds093

Nikolaenko D. Protocol for the Development of the Theory of Military Ecotones. Version 1.2 (2026)
DOI: 10.66659/nm7g2h26