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MILITARY TOURISM IN UKRAINE: UTILIZING MILITARY HERITAGE FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND STRENGTHENING TERRITORIAL RESILIENCE OF THE REGIONS

Abstract

The article provides a theoretical and methodological substantiation of the development of military tourism in Ukraine as a specialized area of tourism activity and a promising instrument for socio-economic recovery and strengthening the territorial resilience of regions affected by the Russian-Ukrainian war.

It is substantiated that the transformation of the tourism sector under the impact of the war is accompanied not only by the destruction of tourism infrastructure and a decline in traditional tourist flows but also by the formation of a new complex of tangible and intangible military heritage sites, which constitutes an important resource base for the development of military tourism.

The content and interrelationship of the concepts of «military tourism», «military-historical tourism», «memory tourism», and «dark tourism» are examined, and the specific characteristics of military tourism are identified as a form of tourism activity based on the use and interpretation of military and military-historical heritage sites, places of remembrance, areas of military hostilities, fortifications, museums, memorial complexes, as well as tangible and intangible evidence of contemporary warfare. The resource potential of military tourism in Ukraine is systematized, and promising areas for the development of tourism products are identified, including military-historical and memorial routes, museum and memorial complexes, thematic tourism clusters, as well as digital and virtual formats.

A SWOT analysis of military tourism development is conducted, identifying the principal internal and external factors influencing its development, including security conditions, the state of tourism infrastructure, human-resource capacity, institutional coordination, preservation of authenticity, and compliance with ethical principles in the interpretation of military heritage.

A differentiated regional approach to the development of military tourism is proposed, taking into account the nature and intensity of war-related impacts, the resource potential, the state of infrastructure, and the security conditions of individual territories.

The socio-economic impact mechanism of military tourism is substantiated, whereby the preservation, interpretation, and tourism use of military heritage contribute to the generation of tourist demand, increased entrepreneurial activity, job creation, investment attraction, higher public revenues, the restoration of tourism and related infrastructure, and the economic revitalization of war-affected territories. The necessity of integrating military tourism development into public policy in the fields of tourism, culture, national memory preservation, regional development, and post-war recovery is demonstrated. The importance of ensuring

security, historical accuracy, authenticity, and memorial responsibility in the tourism use of military heritage is emphasized, along with the need to prevent the commercialization of human tragedy.

It is substantiated that, subject to appropriate public regulation and cross-sectoral cooperation, military tourism can serve not only as a means of preserving and promoting military heritage but also as an effective instrument of territorial recovery, social cohesion, national memory formation, and strengthening the territorial resilience of Ukraine's regions.

Keywords: military tourism, military heritage, military-historical tourism, memory tourism, tourism product, territorial resilience, socio-economic recovery, regional development, post-war recovery, memorial routes, tourism policy, national memory.

Problem statement. The full-scale russian-ukrainian war has fundamentally transformed the operating conditions of ukraine's tourism market. The destruction of tourism-related infrastructure, the closure of Ukrainian airspace, and heightened security risks have effectively brought traditional forms of recreational and international tourism to a standstill.

At the same time, contemporary events are generating a new and extensive layer of tangible and intangible historical and cultural heritage, including sites of military hostilities, memorials, and destroyed cities that have become symbols of resistance. These sites require systematic documentation, musealization, preservation, and integration into public life.

This situation has given rise to an objective contradiction within both the academic and practical domains. On the one hand, there is an urgent need to restore war-affected regions and preserve national historical memory; on the other hand, there is a lack of a systematic conceptual framework, an appropriate regulatory and legal framework, adequate infrastructure, and clearly defined

ethical standards for the development of tourism and memory tourism, without the risk of inappropriate commercialization of human tragedy.

The above-mentioned challenges necessitate a transition from the spontaneous development of individual tourism and excursion products towards a scientifically grounded and comprehensive state model for the transformation of ukraine's tourism system.

The aim of the study is to provide a theoretical substantiation of the concept of military tourism development in Ukraine as a comprehensive specialized tourism sector and a mechanism for promoting socio-economic recovery and strengthening the territorial resilience of war-affected regions.

To achieve this aim, the study addresses the following objectives: to distinguish between the concepts of «military tourism», «military-historical tourism», «memory tourism», and «dark tourism»; to conduct a SWOT analysis of the factors influencing the formation of military tourism products under martial law and in the post-war period; to identify the structure of potential war tourism products, including excursion-based, memorial, digital, and virtual routes; to propose a differentiated regional model of tourism development based on the specific characteristics and security status of territories; and to substantiate the logic of the socio-economic effects resulting from the integration of war-related heritage into the territorial recovery system of local communities.

Analysis of recent research and publications. The study of military history, the preservation of collective memory of geopolitical and local conflicts, and the development of specialized forms of tourism have long been the focus of considerable scholarly attention among both international and ukrainian researchers.

The theoretical and methodological foundations for the study of travel to sites associated with tragedies, death, and mass suffering are rooted in the seminal works of scholars advocating the concepts of dark tourism and thanatourism.

Among the researchers who have made significant contributions to the development of these conceptual approaches are I. S. Berehova, Ye. Koroliova, O. Hladkyi, M. Hashimov, and others [8, 10, 13, 14, 27].

Within the ukrainian scholarly discourse, the issues of the classification and development of military-historical tourism, including the study of fortifications, sites associated with cossack military heritage, and battlefields of the first and second world wars, have been examined extensively in the works of such researchers as O. O. Beidyk, I. A. Arsenenko, I. A. Donets, M. Hamkalo, M. Kadnichanskyi, H. A. Zaiachkovska, A. O. Sikula, M. V. Lushchyk, N. Nekrasova, S. Syrovets, S. Ulihanets, L. V. Melnyk, O. O. Liubitseva, M. Rutynskyi, and others [1-7, 15, 17, 19, 20, 23, 26]. These scholars have established a substantial scholarly foundation for understanding military heritage as an important resource for educational excursions and patriotic education.

However, the onset of the full-scale russian-ukrainian war in 2022 created entirely new precedents and challenges that have transformed the conventional understanding of the tourism sector. Contemporary approaches to documenting war-related destruction, developing «memory routes», and digitizing the military heritage of conflict-affected hotspots, including the Kyiv, Chernihiv, Sumy, and Kharkiv regions, among others, are currently being actively explored in analytical reports and materials produced by the State agency for tourism development of Ukraine (SATD), as well as in publications by contemporary ukrainian geographers, economists, historians, and tourism scholars whose research focuses on territorial resilience [22].

Identification of previously unresolved aspects of the general problem. Despite the substantial body of theoretical research, the comprehensive study of military tourism remains insufficiently addressed. In particular, war tourism has yet to be fully conceptualized not merely as a form of tourism consumption or a branch of «dark tourism», but as a systemic instrument for the post-war socio-

economic recovery of depressed and war-damaged regions. At present, there is a lack of clearly differentiated regional models of military tourism development, as well as a substantiated understanding of the organizational and economic mechanisms capable of balancing the ethical (memorial) and commercial dimensions in the formation of a national tourism product.

Presentation of the main material of the study. Tourism constitutes an important component of the socio-economic development of territories, as it contributes to income generation, job creation, the development of transport, accommodation, catering, and cultural infrastructure, the stimulation of entrepreneurial activity, and the strengthening of interregional and international ties. Prior to the outbreak of the full-scale russian-ukrainian war, ukraine's tourism sector represented a dynamic component of the national economy and stimulated the development of related economic activities. The conditions underlying its functioning were determined by a combination of historical and cultural, natural, geographical, socio-demographic, and economic factors [1, 2, 3, 11, 16].

Since 2022, the full-scale war in Ukraine has fundamentally transformed the traditional model of tourism activity. Under wartime conditions, tourist mobility has largely been transformed into internal population displacement, while international tourist flows have been virtually suspended.

At the same time, the war not only destroys existing tourism resources and infrastructure but also generates a new layer of historical and cultural heritage associated with contemporary events. Battlefields, defensive structures, memorials, military museums, territories that have become symbols of the ukrainian people's heroic resistance, as well as sites documenting the consequences of Russian aggression, should, in the long term, be integrated into the system of tourism development and use.

In this context, military tourism is becoming increasingly relevant as a specialized area of tourism activity. In the scholarly literature, war tourism lies at

the intersection of the concepts of military tourism, military-historical tourism, memory tourism, dark tourism, and specialized tourism. Therefore, a clear conceptual distinction between these categories is of fundamental importance [22].

Within the framework of this study, war tourism is regarded as a broader and comprehensive concept encompassing tourism activities associated with war-related events, military heritage, and their representation in collective memory. Military-historical tourism constitutes a component of military tourism and is primarily oriented towards gaining knowledge about the history of wars and military events, fortifications, museums, and other sites of military-historical heritage. Memory tourism focuses on the preservation, interpretation, and transmission of collective memory of war, its participants, and its victims, and is manifested through visits to memorials, sites of remembrance, museums, and territories associated with tragic events. Dark tourism, and in some cases thanatourism, has a broader cross-cutting character and is associated with visits to sites of death, tragedy, disasters, and mass human suffering. Consequently, it should not be equated with military tourism, although certain sites of war-related heritage may simultaneously constitute dark tourism attractions.

Military tourism should be regarded as a specialized form of tourism activity associated with visits to territories, sites, and locations directly connected with wars, armed conflicts, military history, remembrance of those who lost their lives, and contemporary military events. The resource base of military tourism comprises both sites of military-historical heritage from previous historical periods and new sites that have emerged as a result of the contemporary russian-ukrainian war.

The principal attractions of this type of tourism include defensive structures dating from different historical periods; battlefields and sites associated with significant military events; military-historical museums; memorials and monuments commemorating fallen soldiers; military training grounds; military

infrastructure facilities; military-historical festivals; historical reenactment clubs; patriotic organizations; and other thematic locations [14, 15, 19, 25, 20].

Importantly, military tourism should not be equated exclusively with visits to sites of tragedy. Tourism products may incorporate educational, memorial, historical-cultural, patriotic, integrative, and emotional dimensions. In this understanding, military tourism is not merely a form of tourism consumption but also a mechanism for shaping collective memory, transmitting historical experience, and communicating ukraine's historical narrative to the international community.

Particular importance should be attached to the concept of memory tourism, which is oriented towards preserving collective memory of war and its victims. This form of tourism may include visits to memorials, museums, battlefields, destroyed settlements, burial sites, and cultural heritage sites associated with war-related events. We argue that memory tourism should be regarded as one of the key components of the future system of war tourism in Ukraine.

Furthermore, the organization of military tourism and the development of military tourism products should draw upon relevant international experience and promote memory tourism as an instrument for preserving collective memory of war and its victims. Such an approach may contribute to the responsible interpretation of war-related heritage, strengthen historical awareness, and ensure the integration of memorial practices into the broader processes of post-war territorial recovery and social cohesion.

Thus, conceptually, military tourism in Ukraine should be regarded as a comprehensive specialized area of tourism that integrates military-historical heritage, a memorial function, educational and interpretive activities, contemporary military history, and the tourism development and use of territories associated with war-related events.

War as a driver of transformation of ukraine's tourism system. War has a predominantly destructive impact on the tourism sector. Massive missile and artillery attacks, the destruction of tourism attractions, transport infrastructure and accommodation facilities, landmining, threats to the lives and health of tourists, restricted access to certain territories, and the suspension of air transport have created a fundamentally new environment not only for the functioning of tourism but also for the development of new approaches to the formation of military tourism products. [1, 4, 5, 11, 26].

At the same time, armed conflict induces a structural transformation of the tourism system. Traditional forms of tourism focused on recreation, beach holidays, cultural and educational travel, and international tourist flows lose part of their potential under wartime conditions. Conversely, the importance of domestic tourism, specialized travel, volunteer-related journeys, memorial practices, and new forms of digital tourism communication is increasing. In this context, war creates a distinctive paradox. On the one hand, it acts as a factor contributing to the destruction of tourism potential and a substantial decline in ukraine's tourism attractiveness. On the other hand, it generates a new body of tangible and intangible assets that may become part of the country's tourism heritage in the future. Therefore, military tourism should not be regarded merely as an outcome that automatically emerges after the cessation of hostilities; rather, it should be conceptualized as one of the directions of the long-term transformation of the national tourism system.

It is particularly important to take into account the temporal dynamics of the development of this area of tourism. In our view, three stages in the formation of military tourism can be conditionally distinguished.

The first stage − the pre-war period − is associated with the military-historical heritage of previous historical periods, the operation of military-

historical museums and fortifications, the preservation and interpretation of battlefields, thematic festivals, and historical reenactments.

The second stage − the wartime period − is characterized by restricted access to most contemporary war-related sites due to security requirements. At the same time, new practices of documenting war-related events, digitally representing territories, developing museum exhibitions, creating memorial concepts, and establishing memory routes are emerging.

The third stage − the post-war period − will involve the potential integration of selected territories and sites into tourism routes, museum complexes, memorial spaces, and international tourism programmes, provided that adequate security conditions are ensured.

Thus, the prospects for military tourism should be associated not only with the cessation of hostilities but also with the gradual development of a comprehensive system for the preservation, interpretation, and responsible tourism use of war-related heritage.

Resource potential of military tourism in Ukraine. Ukraine has significant potential for the development of military tourism products. The specific feature of this potential lies in the formation of a military tourism product that, in addition to providing core tourism services associated with visits to tourism attractions, combines ukraine’s centuries-old military history with the unique experience of contemporary warfare.

The traditional component of this potential is represented by historical fortifications, battlefields, military museums, memorials, monuments, military cemeteries, military architectural sites, and other elements of historical and cultural heritage. Alongside these established resources, a fundamentally new layer of sites associated with the russian-ukrainian war is emerging [3, 16, 19, 23, 27].

Potential tourism attractions may include territories and settlements that have become symbols of ukrainian resistance; defensive structures; sites of heroic battles; memorial spaces; museums dedicated to the contemporary war; sites of mass crimes against the civilian population; as well as selected surviving elements of destroyed infrastructure (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Ukrainian cities destroyed by russian forces [9, 8, 21].

The material presented identifies the cities of Irpin, Bucha, Mariupol, Melitopol, Kherson, Mykolaiv, Chernihiv, Kramatorsk, Chornobaivka, Kyiv, Kharkiv, and other territories that have become symbols of the resilience of the Ukrainian people as potential locations for future military tourism routes.

However, the tourism use of these territories must fundamentally differ from conventional approaches to tourism development. The objective should not be the commercialization of tragedy, but rather the establishment of a system for the responsible representation of historical truth, the preservation of collective memory, and the promotion of international understanding of the scale and consequences of russian aggression.

Therefore, the functioning and further development of museum and memorial infrastructure will be of particular importance. The study proposes the further development of specialized museums, including interactive memorials commemorating fallen ukrainian soldiers in Bucha and Hostomel, dedicated to documenting and commemorating the crimes committed by the russian armed forces against the civilian population, as well as the «Na shchyti» memorial in Irpin, dedicated to the memory of the heroes who lost their lives in the russian-ukrainian war [9, 8, 21].

Such sites may serve as focal points for thematic tourism clusters, around which tourism routes, accommodation and catering facilities, information centres, transport connections, guided-tour services, and other elements of tourism infrastructure can be developed.

Contemporary forms and potential military tourism products. The development of military tourism entails the creation of a differentiated system of military tourism products, the structure of which should correspond to the diverse motivations of potential tourists, ranging from historical and educational and memorial interests to educational and research-oriented purposes.

One of the basic tourism products may comprise military-historical excursion routes focused on visits to museums, fortifications, memorials, and sites of historical battles. The second area involves memory routes dedicated to the events of the russian-ukrainian war. Their primary purpose is to document and interpret historical events, preserve the memory of those who lost their lives, and

demonstrate the consequences of the war. The third area may involve museum and memorial tourism complexes combining exhibition activities, educational programmes, multimedia technologies, research centres, and excursion services. The fourth area is military-patriotic tourism, which may include historical reenactments, thematic festivals, educational programmes, and other forms of engagement with military history. The fifth area is digital and virtual military tourism, the importance of which is increasing in circumstances where physical access to certain territories is dangerous or impossible. This form involves the use of virtual formats to document, interpret, and promote sites associated with military hostilities and war-related events.

Such an approach makes it possible to create digital reconstructions of historical events, 3D models of destroyed sites, virtual museums, interactive maps of military hostilities, and digital routes. In the long term, these tools may provide international audiences with access to ukraine's war-related heritage even before the full physical restoration of the respective territories has been completed.

A separate segment comprises specialized military tourism products designed for individuals interested in military history, military equipment, historical reenactment, and thematic events. However, any tourism products related to military activities must be developed and implemented strictly within the framework of applicable legislation, with the safety of visitors and local communities treated as an unconditional priority [1, 2, 4-6, 11, 12].

The prospects for the development of military tourism are determined by a combination of internal strengths and constraints, as well as external opportunities and threats. The SWOT analysis conducted in this study demonstrates significant potential while simultaneously revealing the systemic barriers to the development of military tourism in Ukraine (Table 1).

Key threats include the continuation of missile and artillery attacks, a high level of security risks, the absence of a coordinated system for promoting military tourism, as well as gaps and inconsistencies in the regulatory and legal framework.

The principal opportunities include the restoration of tourism infrastructure, the creation of new employment opportunities, the attraction of investment, and the use of tourism activities to shape ukraine's international image as a state that defends its independence and territorial integrity.

Table 1

SWOT analysis of military tourism development in Ukraine

Strengths (S)	**Weaknesses (W)**
Significant military-historical potential of Ukraine	Destruction of tourism infrastructure
Formation of unique war-related heritage associated with the contemporary war	High security risks
Availability of sites associated with heroic resistance	Insufficient number of specialized professionals
Established museum and memorial infrastructure	Insufficient coordination among tourism market stakeholders
Significant public interest in military history	Insufficient marketing and promotion of military tourism products
Opportunities (O)	**Threats (T)**
Development of memory routes	Continuation of hostilities
Development of domestic and international tourism in the post-war period	Missile and artillery attacks
Attraction of investment	Mine and unexploded ordnance hazards
Territorial recovery through tourism	Risk of inappropriate commercialization of human tragedy
Development of digital and virtual tourism	Lack of a coordinated national tourism policy

The systematization of these factors makes it possible to identify a fundamental characteristic of military tourism development: its prospects depend not so much on the availability of tourism resources as on the capacity of the state and territorial communities to ensure safety, preserve relevant sites, provide high-quality historical interpretation, maintain transport accessibility, ensure adequate human resources, and implement effective marketing positioning.

Key challenges in the development of military tourism. One of the key challenges remains the security situation. As hostilities continue, a significant proportion of potential tourism sites cannot be used for mass tourist visitation. Landmines, the threat of renewed attacks, unexploded ordnance, and other risks make safety the determining criterion for the tourism development and use of affected territories.

The second challenge is the destruction of tourism infrastructure. Damage to transport networks, accommodation and catering facilities, cultural institutions, and tourism attractions limits the capacity to develop a comprehensive tourism product.

The third challenge is insufficient funding. The restoration and conservation of military heritage sites, the establishment of museums and memorials, the development of tourism routes, and the creation of tourism information infrastructure will require substantial financial resources.

The fourth challenge concerns human resources. The specialized nature of military tourism requires the training of guides and other professionals who possess, simultaneously, sound historical knowledge, excursion and interpretation skills, the ability to communicate with diverse audiences, and an understanding of the principles of working with traumatic historical information.

The study also identifies among the major barriers the insufficient availability of accommodation and catering facilities, damage to transport infrastructure, the absence of a systematic promotion strategy for military tourism products, and an insufficient number of specialized guides.

The fifth challenge is insufficient coordination among government authorities, local self-government bodies, tourism businesses, cultural institutions, civil society organizations, and military structures.

Therefore, the development of military tourism requires an intersectoral approach in which tourism policy is integrated with policies in the fields of

culture, regional development, recovery, national memory, education, and security.

Socio-economic significance of military tourism for territorial recovery. The economic potential of military tourism is associated with its capacity to generate additional flows of tourist expenditure, stimulate the development of small and medium-sized enterprises, increase employment, and expand tax revenues.

The development of tourism routes centered on memorial and museum sites generates a multiplier effect for territories. Tourist flows create demand not only for excursion and interpretation services but also for transport, catering, accommodation, souvenirs, cultural events, and other services.

Thus, the development of military tourism has the potential to become a mechanism for territorial recovery and the reintegration of affected areas into active socio-economic life. This is particularly relevant for regions of Ukraine that have suffered extensive destruction as a result of the war.

The study identifies several expected economic effects, including increased budget revenues, the development of domestic and international tourism, attraction of investment, improvement of infrastructure, and the creation of new tourism destinations.

However, economic impact should not be the sole criterion for evaluating this form of tourism. In the case of war-related and memorial heritage, priority should be given to social value, historical authenticity, ethical interpretation, and the preservation of collective memory.

Therefore, it is appropriate to conceptualize military tourism as a socio-economic model in which economic outcomes are combined with memorial, educational, and broader societal functions.

The logic of this mechanism can be represented as follows: war-related heritage → preservation and interpretation → military tourism product → tourist demand → tourist expenditure → business revenues → employment → tax

revenues → territorial recovery → strengthening of social and territorial resilience.

In our view, the conceptual system of indicators for assessing the economic impact should include the following groups of indicators: economic indicators − tourist expenditure, business revenues, employment, and tax revenues; infrastructure indicators − the number of restored facilities and transport accessibility; social indicators − employment of the local population and community engagement; memorial indicators − the number of preserved and musealized sites; tourism indicators − the number of visitors, length of stay, and tourism-related revenues.

The latter component is of particular importance for post-war Ukraine. In this context, tourism becomes not merely a sphere of consumption but a mechanism for territorial recovery and the reintegration of affected areas into active socio-economic life.

Organizational mechanisms and state policy priorities. The development of military tourism requires a systematic state policy. Therefore, in our view, it would be appropriate to establish a dedicated public authority or institutional coordination mechanism responsible for coordinating the development of this area, developing specialized tourism routes and programmes, conducting promotional campaigns, and providing specialized professional training.

We believe that the institutional model should not involve the establishment of an isolated organizational structure but rather the coordination of the activities of existing government authorities, local self-government bodies, tourism businesses, museums, educational institutions, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders.

The priority areas of state policy should include: establishing a system for the identification and registration of war-related heritage sites; ensuring their conservation, protection, and, where necessary, restoration; establishing a national

network of memory routes; developing museum and memorial infrastructure; training specialized professionals; developing quality and safety standards for tourism services; developing digital forms of presenting and interpreting war-related heritage; developing an international marketing strategy.

Transport accessibility is of particular importance. Without the restoration of roads, railway connections, local transport networks, and tourism infrastructure, even the most valuable sites will not be able to become fully functional components of a military tourism product. Particular emphasis should therefore be placed on ensuring high-quality transport access to newly established museum and memorial sites.

Regional dimension of military tourism development. Military tourism has considerable potential as a mechanism for regional development. The territories of Ukraine differ substantially in terms of the nature of war-related events, the scale of destruction, the availability of historical and cultural resources, the condition of infrastructure, and the prospects for safe tourism use.

Therefore, a uniform model of war tourism development for all regions would be ineffective. We consider it appropriate to differentiate regional models of military tourism development within Ukraine’s tourism destinations, with clearly defined priority areas and corresponding military tourism products (Table 2).

For regions directly affected by hostilities, memory tourism and memorial tourism may become priority areas.

For regions with significant military-historical heritage, military-historical tourism should be prioritized.

For regions with a well-developed museum network, the museum and educational tourism sector may constitute a priority area.

Table 2

Differentiation of regional models of military tourism development in Ukraine

Type of territory	**Priority area**	**Main military tourism product**
Regions directly affected by hostilities	Memory tourism	Memory routes
Regions associated with historical military events	Military-historical tourism	Historical routes
Regions with a well-developed museum network	Museum tourism	Museum and educational tours
Regions with well-developed infrastructure	Integrated tourism	Thematic tourism clusters
Regions with restricted access	Digital tourism	Virtual military tourism

For regions with sufficient tourism infrastructure, integrated thematic routes combining war-related heritage with natural, cultural, and recreational resources may be developed.

Such a differentiated approach makes it possible to integrate military tourism into the broader system of territorial tourism planning.

Territorial communities may play a particularly important role in this process. It is at the community level that a substantial proportion of cultural heritage, museum sites, local infrastructure, and tourism products are managed directly. Therefore, communities should not be passive recipients of government support but active stakeholders in the formulation and implementation of tourism policy.

Given the leading role of local self-government in post-war reconstruction, we propose that territorial communities in Ukraine − including local self-government bodies, departments and offices responsible for culture and tourism, and regional development agencies − implement a set of practical measures when developing local strategies for military tourism and memory tourism:

1. Conducting an initial audit and inventory of local war-related heritage. Communities should initiate the establishment of registers of tangible heritage sites (battlefields, defensive structures, and preserved elements of destroyed

infrastructure) and intangible heritage (oral histories and chronicles of resistance) associated with the contemporary war, with a view to their subsequent conservation or musealization.

2. Developing a differentiated security profile for the tourism destination. In cooperation with units of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine, the Armed Forces of Ukraine, and law enforcement agencies, a comprehensive assessment of potential excursion sites should be conducted. These sites should be demined and appropriately marked, and clear boundaries should be established for areas that are fully safe for visitors.

3. Integrating military tourism into territorial community development strategies. It is recommended that local thematic clusters be established around future memorials or museums, involving local small and medium-sized enterprises − including accommodation facilities, catering establishments, and logistics providers − in the development of an integrated military tourism product with a high multiplier effect.

4. Implementing digital tools for heritage documentation and presentation. For communities subject to ongoing security restrictions or limited physical access, priority should be given to the creation of 3D models of destroyed or restored sites, virtual tours, interactive maps, and audio guides. This approach will make it possible to engage international audiences remotely even before the full physical restoration of infrastructure has been completed.

5. Ethical oversight and prevention of the exploitative commercialization of tragedy. Local self-government bodies should develop a «Community code of ethics for military tourism». The organization of memory routes should be based exclusively on the principles of historical accuracy and respect for the memory of victims, and should be coordinated with representatives of local families of those who died and veterans.

6. Human resources and specialized training. Training programmes for local guides and tour guides should be organized through local development centres or municipal institutions, with the involvement of psychologists and historians. Particular emphasis should be placed on methods for working with traumatic historical information and on effective communication with different types of excursion groups.

7. Development of intersectoral partnerships. Communities should establish continuous coordination with the state tourism development agency of Ukraine (DART), the ukrainian institute of national memory, military authorities, and relevant civil society organizations in order to integrate local routes into a nationwide network of «Memory routes».

Prospects for post-war development. Following the end of the active phase of the war, Ukraine will possess a distinctive set of tourism resources formed as a result of the contemporary war. In terms of scale, content, and societal significance, these resources will differ substantially from the traditional resources of military-historical tourism found in many other countries around the world. Their foundation will consist not only of military history but also of the documented history of ukrainian society’s contemporary resistance.

In the long term, international tourists may be interested in visiting sites where key events of the war took place and in gaining the opportunity to directly engage with the history of the ukrainian people and the consequences of russian aggression.

However, the development of such war tourism products must be undertaken with the utmost responsibility. It is unacceptable to transform human tragedy into a superficial form of entertainment. Tourism interpretation should be grounded in historical accuracy, respect for the victims of war, adherence to ethical standards, and the preservation of national memory.

In this context, the concept of memory routes is particularly promising. Such routes could connect museums, memorials, preserved elements of destroyed settlements, sites of heroic resistance, and other relevant heritage sites. It should be noted that the State tourism development agency of Ukraine has already considered this concept and has developed several memory routes involving the preservation of selected destroyed sites for future generations [22].

Thus, post-war military tourism may simultaneously perform several functions, including economic, memorial, educational, cultural, diplomatic, and communicative functions.

Through tourism routes, Ukraine will be able not only to derive economic benefits but also to shape its own international narrative of the war, demonstrate the scale of destruction, document the crimes committed by the aggressor, and present to the world the history of Ukrainian resistance.

Conclusions. The full-scale russian-ukrainian war has caused a systemic transformation of ukraine's tourism sector, resulting in a sharp decline in international tourist flows, the destruction of tourism infrastructure, increased security risks, and changes in the nature of tourist mobility. At the same time, the war has generated a new layer of historical and cultural heritage that may, in the long term, serve as a resource base for a specialized tourism sector.

Military tourism may be defined as a specialized form of tourism associated with visits to historical and contemporary sites, territories, and locations connected with military events, military history, the memory of war, and military heritage. Its scope extends beyond purely recreational activities and encompasses educational, memorial, cultural, integrative, and civic-oriented functions.

The resource potential of military tourism in Ukraine is shaped by the combination of traditional military-historical heritage and new sites associated with the russian-ukrainian war. These include battlefields, fortifications, museums,

memorials, monuments, territories associated with heroic resistance, destroyed settlements, and other sites of historical and societal significance.

The prospects for the development of war tourism are determined not only by the availability of relevant resources but, above all, by the ability to ensure safety, preserve heritage sites, provide adequate infrastructure and accessibility, ensure high-quality historical interpretation, develop the necessary human resources, and implement effective governance.

An important finding of the study is the substantiation of the need to move from the spontaneous development of individual tourism offerings towards a systematic model of military tourism development. Such a model should encompass national and regional planning, the identification, registration, and preservation of war-related heritage sites, the development of memory routes, the establishment of museums and memorial complexes, the training of specialized professionals, the development of safety and quality standards for tourism services, the digitalization of tourism products, and the international promotion of Ukraine.

The socio-economic impact of military tourism may be manifested through job creation, the development of small and medium-sized enterprises, increased tax revenues, attraction of investment, infrastructure recovery, and the revitalization of tourism activity. Military tourism should become one of the instruments of economic reconstruction in war-affected territories.

At the same time, its economic function should not prevail over its memorial and societal functions. The tourism development and interpretation of sites associated with tragedy require adherence to the principles of historical accuracy, ethical responsibility, respect for the victims of war, and the prevention of the commercialization of human suffering.

In the post-war period, military tourism may evolve into an important mechanism for preserving national memory and strengthening ukraine’s

international communication. Tourism routes, museums, memorial complexes, and digital products can facilitate the transmission of historical experience to future generations while simultaneously contributing to a broader international understanding of the scale of russian aggression.

Therefore, military tourism in Ukraine should be regarded not as a narrowly specialized segment of the tourism market, but as a comprehensive mechanism of post-war socio-economic, cultural, and territorial transformation. Its further development should be based on the integration of tourism policy with policies aimed at territorial recovery, cultural heritage preservation, national memory, regional development, and international communication.

It is precisely through such an approach that military tourism can evolve from a reactive response of the tourism sector to the consequences of war into an active mechanism for territorial recovery, the formation of collective memory, local economic development, and the strengthening of Ukraine's international position.

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