



How geoarchaeology and landscape archaeology contribute to Human Niche Construction Theory (HNC)

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A review is given of examples of geoarchaeological and landscape archaeological research from various locations throughout Europe. Water as example of small (and large) scale use of the natural landscape and/or topography is discussed with implications for HNC and how research in the future makes a better contribution to HNC: 1) scales of landscape research and the importance of landscape gradients, 2) are landscape gradients the starting points where organisms (humans) are altering own selective environment (inceptive change)? 3) is it the lack of landscape gradients that initiate humans to respond to a (deteriorated) selective environment (counteractive change)? Examples of landscape gradients are: elevation/altitude, sand/clay, freshwater/seawater, land/water, loam-rich soil/loam poor soil etc. Case-studies from the North Sea coastal zone in the Netherlands and the Eastern Mediterranean are presented to illustrate the potential of geoarchaeology and landscape archaeology to HNC. Unintended consequences of human impact on large scale natural processes will be considered. In the discussion a gradient driven occupation pattern will be presented, as well as transitions of high to low attractiveness of sites of human occupation.