

Austvoll

Seaways to Complexity

A Study of Sociopolitical Organisation Along the Coast of Northwestern Scandinavia in the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age

This book focuses on the sociopolitical development and the organisational differences between societies in northwestern Scandinavia in the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age (2350-1100 BCE). Grounded in a political economy approach, the book presents a theoretical model that emphasises a dialectic negotiation between societies exercising coercive or cooperative strategies through processes of categorisation. Within this theoretical model the archaeological material is studied using a two-tiered approach. First, an extensive archaeological corpus, consisting of settlement and burial patterns, lithics, metal, and rock art is investigated comparatively for patterns of diachronic, regional and societal differences. Second, patterns from the first-tier are scrutinised and three case studies are selected, each expressing different organisational patterns based on local ecological advantages and/or restrictions. These aspects are then discussed on an interregional level, suggesting that utilisation of the seaway was one of the primary movers of increased complexity along the coast. The book presents the first big synthesis of the sociopolitical development in northwestern Scandinavia and outlines a theoretical model for concurrent but contrasting sociopolitical strategies that can be applied cross-culturally.

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Kundenservice Fachmedien Otto Schmidt

Neumannstraße 10, 40235 Düsseldorf | kundenservice@fachmedien.de | 0800 000-1637 (Inland)

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