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# Neolithic – Iron Age in Northern Finland: Landscape and resilience

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## Résumé

This paper uses a resilience framework to examine the temporal and spatial scale of shifting social practices in Northern Finland from the Neolithic to the Iron Age, largely in response to ecological changes and increased social complexity. According to the traditional point of view, at the end of the Neolithic, there was a clear shift in population concentration from the east towards the southern and western coastal areas, leaving the south-eastern and northern parts of Finland with a more nomadic population. The demographic shift has been attributed, in part, to ecological changes brought about by borealisation, the gradual spread of Norway spruce (*Picea abies*) from the east, and the resulting change from temperate, deciduous forests to forests dominated by spruce. This borealisation had a major impact on the forest system, climate, and food resources for the hunter-gatherers. Although the Bronze Age, in particular, has traditionally been characterised as a period with a relative lack of permanent settlement, evidence presented here suggests there may have been, in fact, a more stable occupation over the *longue durée* as the hunter-gatherer communities adapted to the Neolithisation and the advent of metal within this ecosystem, and interacted with populations across a broad area of Fennoscandia. The authors consider from a resilience perspective: 1) Archaeological indications of continuity of site-use and landscapes of northern rock art sites from the Late Neolithic to the Early Bronze Age; 2) Continuity on the Bothnian Bay coast from 5000 BCE to 500 CE; and 3) Iron Age burial sites and their contexts.

**Mots-Clés:** Bothnian Bay, Resilience, Hunter, gatherers, rock art, Finland

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