

Urban culture strategies don't work in rural areas

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This study was conducted by **Jørn Cruickshank** at the **University of Agder, Norway**

Summary

This study examined two villages in the Søndre Land region of Norway (Bykle and Valle) and describes the outcomes of the different cultural planning strategies used in both areas. Bykle has experienced remarkably stronger demographic and economic growth than Valle and the paper explores how cultural policy may have played a role in these divergent outcomes. The main argument of the paper is that culture-led redevelopment as a strategy for economic revival is mainly relevant in urban settings.

The study used interviews, information from planning and media documents and local historical sources

Matters of diversity and traditional culture have been explored positively in Bykle and conflicts about them are suppressed. Here, a few stakeholders have acted as change agents (such as small tourism and culture sector businesses) in coping with rural challenges, and the town has focused on the 'destination' approach to cultural policy. Culture here is nature – the landscape – and the tourism it brings.

In Valle, culture is defined as cultural heritage. There has been an unresolved 15-year struggle over where to locate a state-funded cultural centre. There is also conflict between traditional and local vs modern and consumption-based cultures, with resistance to commercialisation of their heritage. The implementation of cultural planning approaches in its strategy has proven ineffective in fulfilling community regeneration goals.

Cultural planning is overly optimistic

Culture is a potential resource for planners, and advocates of cultural planning seem to envision few limits as to what can be achieved in the form of environmental, economic and social benefits. This leads the author to conclude that most cultural plans are overly optimistic.

This summary is by **Sheridan Humphreys, King's Knowledge Exchange Associate**

Keywords

rural **place** **norway** **tourism** **regeneration**

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