Zooming in

Introduction

Interrelations between architecture, ways of life and societal development are complex and dynamic. Urban landscapes transform in various ways. There are many different ways of understanding and investigating such complex interrelations and forces of urban transformation. And different approaches give different points of entry to analyze and discuss the various aspects of processes involved.

The idea behind this PhD-project stems from my experiences with urban analysis. Both academically and in my professional practice as an urban planner and consultant I’ve been working with issues of urban transformation and urban development: Through more than a ten-year involvement in urban analysis I gradually became interested in the intriguing issue of how to investigate and understand *socio-architectural interplay* in current processes of urban transformation.

The way that analyses of social as well as architectural aspects of urban situations in general are carried out today, seldom provides more than partial knowledge that to a little extent can be combined to inform our understanding of socio-architectural interrelations: In professional planning practice, the architectural analyses of urban situations, landscapes and their transformation do not seem to contribute very much to the urban analyses of social scientists. To the extent that architectural analyses address issues of architectural affect related to urban social life, the claims that are made of socio-architectural interrelations are by social scientists in general seen as based on a too narrow and rudimentary theoretical understanding of social dynamics. Thus the analyses are often dismissed. The architectural analyses that people of my profession produce do therefore very rarely work as basis for other readings of urban situations, for instance as carried out by social scientists. But it also works the other way around: as long as urban social analyses have as their main focus (which they for a long time have had) to investigate aspects of urban space, urban social life and urban dynamics as phenomena that can be treated separate from architectural features and characteristics, they do not contribute very much to the architectural discourse on urban analyses. In our professional practice, as architects and urban planners, we are of course mainly interested in understanding aspects of urban social life that can be related to aspects of architecture.

In recent years there has been a growing academic and public interest for (changes in) urban life, urban social qualities, urban architecture, urban dynamics and urban transformation. Quite many architects and social scientists that have urban research and urban analyses of various kinds as their specialty are today inspired by urban theories on dynamics in socio-spatial interplay, as discussed by urban theorist such as among others Henri Lefebvre. The recently much discussed “spatial turn” within the social sciences has though, as far as I can see, to a little extent brought about increased attention towards architectural aspects of processes of social change. There are however exceptions, among others represented by the Norwegian sociologist Dag Østerberg. But it still stands out as a great challenge to set up ways of doing urban analyses in which social and architectural issues not only are merged, but more thoroughly combined so that it can inform our understanding of socio-architectural interrelations.

My aim with this thesis is therefore to explore ways of investigating socio-architectural dynamics, both theoretically and empirically: To search for a way of combining architectural and social analyses in order to investigate socio-architectural interplay in current processes of urban transformation.

Point of departure: the city seen as architecture

My point of departure into urban analyses and investigations of socio-spatial interrelations is as mentioned through architectural analysis of urban dynamics. I come from an academic tradition of urban analysis in which a basic point of view is that urban landscapes can be studied as architecture. The underlying belief is that architectural analyses of urban transformations provide interesting and useful insights on urban dynamics – not only for architects. Architecture can be seen both a precondition for, an agent in, and also as a product of, socio-spatial practices of everyday urban life. Architecture should also be understood as a tool in societal development, i.e. as an instrument for organizing space for different activities, and as means for return on investment. Thus one can say that processes of architectural transformation of urban landscapes are related both to structural forces and prevailing power relations as well as to aspects of individual socio-spatial practices in terms individual judgments, experiences and choices in everyday situations.

Different kinds of architectural analysis are used for investigating different kinds of connections between architecture and ways of life more specifically and between architecture and societal change in general. It is however fair to say that urban dynamics related to social life and individual ways of thinking and acting to a very little extent are issues that have been included into urban analyses. On the other hand, as already touched upon, social analyses of processes related to urban change, in general do not take into consideration that everyday social life takes place in physical environments with architectural characteristics. Thus one does not seem to take seriously that architectural issues may modulate socio-spatial practices in different ways.

In traditional structuralist studies issues of architecture and ways of life were understood and analyzed as closely interwoven aspects of the investigated societal structures: as integrated socio-spatial, socio-material, socio-symbolic and socio-cultural systems of social as well as architectural forms. The function and meaning of each architectural element and its related social practices was thus understood in relation to the other elements of the system. This perspective provides understanding of architectural elements as integrated socio-material tools for socio-spatial practices related to certain ways of life: each architectural element can as such be understood as an element of an environmental tool kit and be defined in relation to other elements of the morphological system (understood as a closed system of architectural forms as well as social forms). In a number of acknowledged example-studies of “primitive” societies, mainly carried out by ethnologists but also by architects and researchers from other disciplines, one gets the impression of a “perfect fit” between architecture and ways of life. In such models of a “perfect fit” there is however no room neither for change and development, nor for individual initiative: Structuralist studies as these illustrate in nice ways how patterns in individual practices can be said to maintain morphological systems, but such studies are not able to explain or reveal how patterns in individual ways of thinking and acting can emerge and transform the system.

My understanding of how to analyze urban forms and urban structures has developed from the analytic perspectives of “Realistic urban analysis”[[1]](#footnote-1) and “Urban structural analysis”.[[2]](#footnote-2) These two methodological approaches were developed in Norway in the 1990’s as attempts to combine and make operative elements from a long French/Italian tradition of studies of the relation between development of societies and their landscapes. The overall intention was to provide practitioners with analytic tools for discussion of architectural strategies in urban development. The discussions of how we can conceptualize the city as architecture, as reflected in Aldo Rossi’s famous book *The Architecture of the City,* were essential for the development of these methods. I was as introduced to these methods as a student, and they’ve had great importance for my later professional and academic work with urban analyses.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Typological, morphological and structural studies of modern (complex and dynamic) urban landscapes can be said to have epistemological kinship with the more static structuralist analyses. In order to incorporate perspectives on change and development in such analyses one has focused on architectural elements seen as *products* of societal development, rather than as elements of more integrated socio-spatial, socio-material, socio-symbolic or socio-cultural systems of both social *and* architectural forms.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Within structural and morphological studies of dynamic relations between societies and their architectural landscapes, two different perspectives, traditions or lines of explanatory systems can be outlined:[[5]](#footnote-5) Both of these two different approaches to urban structures and their development can reveal orderliness in urban architecture that are related to societal development. If they are combined, the two approaches can reveal more complex regularities in the development of urban landscapes.

*The first perspective* seeks the causes and the laws of urban development within the city itself. The city is compared with an organism, which both in periods of growth and stagnation, is sensitive to changes in its environment (exogenous factors), while the development follows an intrinsic logic of the city itself, in the same way as for living organisms. This perspective implies a focus on continuity in processes of historical development, and investigate how local particularities in the socio-material landscape condition development of the urban structure.[[6]](#footnote-6) This usually includes analyses of ‘permanences’ in dynamic relations between major structural elements or ensembles in the urban landscape (and their transformation) and the development of the urban landscape as a whole. By this, site specific dynamic and relational issues of function, role and meanings related to central elements of the urban structure can be identified.

*The second perspective* seeks causes of urban transformation more directly in historical and social changes. Urban forms are placed in the historical situation in which they originated, which leads to an identification of historically produced sets of architectural products constituting the city of today. In such analyses historical development of the urban landscape is explained as a product of succeeding societal forms (economical and cultural systems) and investigated as different historical ‘sedimentary layers’ of adjustment of the environmental tool set (the built urban landscape) following the logics of shifting modes of production, ways of life and power relations.[[7]](#footnote-7) By investigating the current architectural landscape as a gradually developed patchwork of different ‘archaeological’ layers of architectural tool kits – each related to different historical situations and distinct ways of life – qualitative architectural characteristics related to intended functionality can be discerned.

Both these approaches are based on an overall structural model of relations between architecture, ways of life and societal development in which structural societal changes recess into the urban landscape and produce differences for individuals’ lived life. Social and cultural dynamics related to development of new patterns in individual ways of thinking and acting are in such analyses treated as implicit background factors that only are incorporated when already aggregated into power producing architectural transformation.

Generally speaking, we can assume that the morphological characteristics of new patterns in urban architecture in general (but not necessarily always) support and correspond with at least some aspects of the expectations of a desired way of life, at least for a certain number of its new users and inhabitants (not necessarily all). By uses of morphological analyses we can identify systematic differences in how the architecture of different urban areas is accommodated for different ways of life. As preferences and conducts develop over time, we can then also assume that the architectural environments of many, maybe even most, urban housing areas are slightly “out of phase” with the societal situations and ways of life they were designed to serve. In current processes of urban transformation, related to for instance processes of immigration and gentrification, we can observe how new patterns of urban practices emerge within the existing architectural landscape by social groups and activities lumping together, transforming the image, function and role of urban areas. Traditional structuralist studies of “primitive” societies reveal symmetries between social and architectural patterns in relatively static and stable morphological systems. The social and architectural patterns of complex and dynamic urban landscapes are however not self-grown, time-honored and “stable”. Thus we cannot expect to find similar kinds of symmetry between architectural and social patterns. The scope of morphological architectural analyses of complex modern urban landscapes is then to analyze how structural elements and morphological patterns in the architectural structure interrelate, and how they relate to the societal conditions they are both products of and produced for. Analyses of different morphological systems in a modern urban landscape are not set out as a description of a patchwork of stable socio-architectural systems, but as systems of relations within architectural products. These systems of relations can be seen as produced by dynamic discrepancies between aggregated architectural as well as social patterns.

Morphological patterns in the environmental production of different historical periods are often analyzed as architectural manifestations of ideas and intentions among those with political, economical and professional power to influence the architectural production. The architectural characteristics can thus be related to certain ways of understanding the societal situation and what the main challenges and potentials for development are, in addition to giving an understanding of how to accommodate for specific kinds of societal development, including a prescription environmental tools that can support and bring about a desired development. By this, we can identify aspects of intended functionality embedded in different patterns of architectural characteristics. When societal development is analyzed through successive sequences of architectural production, some essential aspects of the interrelated dynamics between architecture, ways of life and societal development elude analysis: Somewhere between those historical situations where new patterns in architectural production can be observed as architectural manifestations of societal development, changes in ways of life develop within the urban landscape by way of changing patterns in individual ways of thinking, choosing and acting. Without bringing about a change the actual architecture, individuals can for instance move to another place, they can seek activities and places outside their neighbourhood, they can use architectural environmental facilities in their neighbourhood in other ways than they were designed for, and they can express their dissatisfaction or preferences in numerous other ways. This brings us to an overall important question: *in what ways are aspects of the tangible, architectural environments involved in socio-cultural processes of change?*

Architecture and analyses of socio-cultural urban transformation

In current urban theories that are based on empirical studies of processes of urban socio-cultural or socio-economic transformation, the processes of are in general understood and investigated as something taking place almost independent of architectural space. One example of this is the quite comprehensive literature on gentrification. Here two main explanatory models have been applied in studies of how previously run down working class areas in many European and North American cities, have changed function, role and image related to new inhabitants, users and activities:

In the rent-gap model the architecture of the areas in which new patterns in urban ways of life emerge are in general treated as an almost arbitrary backdrop: The areas in which these phenomena appear “happens to” have certain architectural characteristics since they were built at a certain time, and the many synchronized processes of gentrification going on are explained by a long time suffer from disinvestment, representing a “rent gap” in relation to their central location in the urban landscape.

In the life style-preference model the observable architectural changes related to gentrification is treated as a product or reflection of the life style preferences (i.e. aesthetical preferences, consumer preferences and preferred conducts and practices) of the new middle class inhabitants and users of the areas. The recognizable architectural “symptoms” of gentrification are related to a globalized culture and economy, and the architectural transformation is described and understood as an imprint or a product of new ways of life that have entered into the areas – almost as some kind of extra-terrestrial invasion of flocks of individuals with pre-programmed sets of preferences and conducts in addition of power to pursue them.

On a general level the historical development of urban landscapes of European cities have much in common, and for the last century even some American cities follows the same broad patterns of historically ‘layered’ architecture, concentric growth and periods of architectural production related to developments in means of production and ways of life. An alternative way to investigate observable results of the seemingly “synchronized extra-terrestrial invasions” could be to investigate more closely how such observable patterns actually have developed, and from what kinds of tensions and dynamics between architecture and ways of life they spring out. By focusing on interplay between architecture and ways of life an alternative explanatory model could for instance be that the affinity for potential environmental qualities that one can find in gentrifying areas, has developed as a reaction against missing environmental qualities in other urban areas in which newcomers to the area previously resided. And furthermore, that the urban conducts and the architectural transformation of gentrified areas both are enabled and limited by the range of potential use qualities embedded in the architecture of these areas. Such an approach raises questions such as: How can patterns in individual ways of thinking and acting be related to specific aspects of architecture? How do patterns in individual dispositions and practices interact with patterns in architectural transformation? To investigate how such patterns emerge within urban landscapes as a result of interplay between architecture and ways of life, requires a more thorough theoretical understanding of how architecture and ways of life interrelate.

On treasure hunting in epistemological gaps

The different academic traditions that focus on socio-spatial interrelations can be said to operate with analytical concepts that seem to function well within the premises of each tradition. But such concepts are not easy to transfer or translate from one tradition to another: Homophonic key concepts such as “space”, “place”, “form”, “practice”, etc. are understood and discussed quite differently within different disciplines and traditions. Also the general theoretical models of which interrelations that are most important vary very much. Both the tradition of urban (social) theory with its related empirical studies of urban social change, and the tradition of urban (architectural) theory with its related empirical studies of urban architectural development are established academic traditions. In general, each of these two traditions seems to omit those aspects of socio-architectural interrelations that are focused by the other tradition. But this does not imply that those aspects of interrelations that are missed out in analyses in one of the traditions, is covered by the analyses carried out in the other tradition. Thus the lacunas between different analytic approaches to urban dynamics represent a main challenge for conceptualizing socio-architectural interrelations:

There are gaps between approaches that either see the socio-spatial environment as a pure social construct or see the urban landscapes as pure architecture.

There are also gaps between structural approaches to processes of societal change and approaches focusing on patterns in individual socio-spatial practices. This makes it difficult to see dynamic interrelations between structural aspects of urban environments and developments of multiple patterns in individual practices.

My research strategy

The intricate and dynamic nature of the study object (socio-architectural interplay) implies that it is not possible to find one overall analytic model that can be used to explain all observable phenomena in relation to each other. The ambition of this thesis-project is therefore not to find a way of filling the abovementioned gaps, but to explore a way of maneuvering within them, by making partial analyses that are more specifically tailored to inform other.

One way of doing this could have been to make a more specific theoretical review of different kinds of analyses of current urban transformation.[[8]](#footnote-8) Discussions of what different analytical approaches can do and not, and how different analytic concepts are used and understood differently within different traditions, are in general interesting and useful. I am, however, even more interested in figuring out how to combine elements of different approaches to socio-architectural dynamics, and, furthermore, to try out what such a combined empirical analysis can reveal of socio-architectural interplay in concrete case studies.

On this background my aim is to develop an architectural analysis that can be combined with an analysis of social practices, in order to carry out an empirical investigation of which aspects of socio-architectural interplay such a combined analysis can reveal. Therefore I have in this project chosen to explore ways of investigating socio-architectural interplay along two different paths: one theoretical and one empirical.

With the purpose of making a combined empirical analysis of social variables in architecture and architectural variables in social life, the architectural analysis as well as the analysis of socio-spatial dispositions must come out of a theoretically informed understanding of important dimensions in socio-architectural interrelations. Post-structural (urban) theories address issues of interplay and interrelated dynamics that cannot be grasped by the structurally based theories and their analytic models on transformation of respectively architectural or social structures. Contrary to structurally based theories and methods, however, these are analytic theories that don’t provide analytic methods or models for empirical investigation. I believe that post-structural (urban) theories on interplay, differences and dynamic interrelation can sensitivize our use and ways of combining aspects of different structurally based methods for empirical investigation of urban transformation. And furthermore, that this also can help us reveal aspects of socio-architectural interplay that we are not able to see neither with structurally based analyses alone nor totally without them.

In the *theoretical part 1* I will present a ‘conceptual tool box’ for investigations of socio-architectural interplay that in different ways can work as a basis for my empirical analyses in part 2. The discussions throughout the three chapters (chapter 1-3) are meant to constitute:

* A basis for programming the *architectural analysis*, by discussion of which aspects of what kinds of interplay the architectural analysis shall be designed to grasp – and, furthermore, to discuss what kinds of methodological implications this leads to seen in relation to other kinds of empirical approaches (such as for instance the structural-morphological tradition and Dag Østerberg’s socio-material analysis).
* A programmatic basis for the analysis of *socio-spatial practices*, by discussions of what kinds of socio-architectural interrelations the analysis shall be designed to grasp – in relation to Bourdieu’s and Lefebvre’s complimentary theories on social space production.
* An analytic basis for *interpreting interrelatedness* within socio-architectural patterns of various kinds that are to be investigated in the empirical analysis.

When I talk about putting together and presenting a ‘conceptual tool box’ the intention is to use discussions of different analytic approaches on aspects of socio-architectural interplay as a kind of ‘clearing up-operation’ when it comes to how we can understand and investigate various aspects of socio-architectural interplay. When doing so I will make use of different theoretical texts for different purposes:

Some of the theoretical texts will be used to find both analytic concepts and an interpretative framework for how to investigate and understand complex and dynamic socio-spatial interplay: My discussions of texts by Lefebvre, De Certeau and Bourdieu will in different ways be used to provide insights of important dimensions in processes of socio-spatial interplay, and, furthermore, to clarify the interpretative framework and strategies that will form the basis for empirical investigations.

As mentioned earlier, Aldo Rossi has for a long time been quite central for my theoretical understanding of urban landscapes and their dynamics. By discussing Rossi in relation to theoretical perspectives on complex and dynamic socio-spatial *interplay* the intention is to explore analytic limitations and potentials in using aspects of Rossi’s approach in a more combined analysis of socio-architectural interplay.

Some other of the texts are mainly used as inspiring ways of thinking in terms of ideas and perspectives that can help me out in the ‘clearing up-operations’. This particularly goes for the analytic theories of Deleuze and Guattari, but partly also for De Certeau and Lefebvre: Their manner of post-structural criticism of theoretical foundations, for instance as the ones (i.e. structuralism and Marxism) one can find in Rossi’s (and in Østerberg’s) analytical approaches to urban landscapes, address ways of understanding complex dynamics related to interrelatedness and interplay between different kinds of human spatial agency.

Other theorists will be used to exemplify and clarify aspects of discussions of analytic concepts and issues related to interpretative strategies or framework (for instance Mayol et al., Choay, Panerai et al.).

I will also present theoretical perspectives that first of all will be used to clarify how analytical approaches that seek to merge social and architectural issues of urban landscapes (for example Østerberg), to a little extent can inform investigations of socio-architectural interplay, although they provide other useful insights.

In the *empirical part 2* I will carry out case studies in three specific study areas in Oslo. The overall focus will be on relational patterns in architectural transformation (structural elements, morphological systems, morphological, micro-morphological and iconographical transformation) as well as on patterns in individual socio-spatial dispositions and practices. By combining different part-studies I intend to investigate how different observable socio-spatial patterns interrelate.

With my academic and professional background, I found it natural to take architectural analyses as a starting point. Therefore the focus in methodological discussions will be how to develop an architectural analysis that can work as basis for carrying out part-studies of socio-architectural interplay. This of course also reflects that my theoretical training and practical experience first of all is related to the traditions of architectural urban analyses. But if I had had a background as a social scientist, I would probably have started in quite another end.

Since this PhD-thesis has been a part of a larger interdisciplinary research project (I will soon come back to this), the project plan of the latter gave me some conditions for the succession and design of different part studies. Time consuming data-collection, especially related to our prospect of analyzing individual social practices (cf. the interview survey that I soon will come back to), had to be started relatively early in the project period. The other researchers in the project group, with academic background from social sciences, were responsible for the design of the interview guide. My method for analyzing this data material was therefore to come out of the interview material I had at hand, in relation to both the theoretical discussions of how socio-architectural interplay can be conceptualized and the architectural analysis.

The structure of the thesis

This thesis is organized in two parts, one theoretical (chapter 1-3) and one empirical (chapter 4-6). My use of diverse literature in the theoretical discussion in the first three chapters, and my use of empirical data material (architectural surveys and interviews) in the last three chapters, is to be understood as interrelated and equally important paths for investigating socio-architectural interplay in urban transformation.

In the first part (chapter 1-3) I will discuss analytical concepts and interpretative frames for investigation and understanding different interacting aspects of socio-architectural dynamics.

1. In chapter one I will explore *different theoretical perspectives on socio-spatial interplay.* The main focus in this chapter is to examine more overall approaches for understanding the transforming power of urban life, seen as aggregated patterns of individual practices that, somehow, are dynamically related to production of patterns in architectural landscapes.
2. In chapter two I will, on the basis of the more general discussions in chapter one, establish and discuss an approach for *analysis of social space production* that incorporates ways in which architecture plays an important role.
3. In chapter three I will, on the basis of the approach discussed in chapter two, establish an analytical method for *analysis of architectural characteristics* that can function as a basis for investigations of social patterns and socio-architectural interrelatedness.

In the second part (chapter 4-6) I will carry out case studies of socio-architectural patterns and interplay in the three study areas. The analysis is divided into three parts, which build upon each other. Each of the three part-analyses investigates different kinds of interrelated socio-spatial patterns:

1. In chapter four I will investigate how the general architectural characteristics of the three study areas historically have been developed in relation to the transforming urban landscape of Oslo. I will here focus on aspects of how architectural systems and elements are designed to work as socio-spatial tools-kits for urban life.
2. In chapter five, that builds on chapter four, I will investigate recent patterns of architectural and iconographical developments and characteristics in the three study areas. I will here focus on how new and established architectural forms and patterns interrelate.
3. In chapter six, I will investigate patterns of practices and experiences as described in the interview material. I will here focus on how these patterns relate to or play upon architectural forms and features examined in chapter four and five.

In the final discussion called “Zooming out” I will present some more concluding reflections on the outcomes of these two parallel investigations.

A thesis-project related to the larger research project: Immigentri

My thesis-project has been related to a larger research project at Oslo school of architecture and design (AHO), financed by the Norwegian Research Council (NFR) during the period 2001-2005: *Urban transformation: urban form, gentrification and immigration – Oslo as an example of European city development* (“Immigentri”).[[9]](#footnote-9) The overall aim of the Immigentri-project was to investigate the relations between physical urban form and socio-cultural practices by case study analysis in three study areas in Oslo.

The main purpose of the Immigentri-project was to examine the interrelationship between physical transformation and processes of gentrification and immigration. Instead of focusing on structural causes of gentrification and immigration, the project focused on the effects these processes have on the physical fabric of the city, and vice versa, what kinds of effects the physical fabric could be said to have on the processes of immigration and gentrification. Another central issue was to see these processes together: To develop a theoretical approach for understanding the interaction and interrelation of gentrification and immigration and their effect on the physical fabric of the postmodern city.

The project was summarized in a final research report to NFR in December 2005. Central findings and issues were also discussed in articles by the different project group-members, in Jonny Aspen (ed.) 2005: *By og byliv i endring. Studier av byrom og handlingsrom i Oslo,* Oslo, Scandinavian Academic Press.

Both during the project period and thereafter I was given more or less full liberty to define and design my own PhD-project in relation to the Immigentri-project. The leader of the research project, professor Ed Robbins, who also was my main adviser during the project period, encouraged me to follow my own curiosities rather than worrying about how my thesis-project, as it developed, would provide outputs that matched the Immigentri-project’s initial description. As a member of the project group I was also able to influence the profile of the data that were to be collected. Thus I’ve had great benefits from having access to a wide range of collected data.

The data material feeding the empirical analyses

The data material that is to be used in the empirical analyses (chapter 4-6) consists of historical data and a number of new registrations in addition to secondary sources that will be referenced. As mentioned above, being associated with the larger research project – representing resources to hire student research assistants to carry out a number of quite time-consuming registrations – I’ve had the privilege to be able to be quite extravagant in my uses of data material. The most important historical data that will be used in the empirical analysis are historical city maps (listed at end of the bibliography), architectural drawings of different types of buildings in the study areas,[[10]](#footnote-10) historical photos (from Oslo City Archives) and historical registers of businesses and enterprises. Of the material that was gathered in the Immigentri-project, I will first of all make use of the following:

*Regular surveys* in all three study areas: [[11]](#footnote-11)

* Systematic and yearly photographic registrations of façades, signs and shop-windows in five key streets,
* Photographic registrations of a large selection of space interiors in all five key streets,
* Photographic registration of streetscapes, street-life, park life, furniture in public space, signs, shop windows, backyards and open shared spaces in all three study areas.

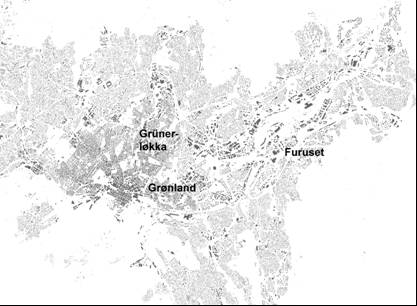
(Totally this represents a photo-database of approximately 30,000 pictures.)

*Interviews* in all three study areas:[[12]](#footnote-12)

* Home-interviews with 104 inhabitants focusing on dispositions, practices and experiences related to living in and using the different study areas.
* Interviews with 66 shopkeepers in key streets focusing on commercial and architectural strategies.

The three study areas: Grønland, Grünerløkka and Furuset

The three study areas have different development histories, locations in the urban structure and architecture:



The three study areas in the urban landscape of Oslo (figure-ground-map highlighting the shape of buildings)

*Grønland* is located near the city’s historical and current transport junction and has architectural fragments from all of the city’s historical development phases. *Grünerløkka* is a uniformly planned classical urban area that was developed in the period of industrial urban growth from the 1870s and onwards. *Furuset* is a modernist satellite-town from the post-war welfare state urban growth period, as a “third generation” satellite town, Furuset was planned and realized after, an as a response to the massive critique of modernist urban planning in Oslo.

All three areas are in different ways involved in socio-cultural processes of change, which among other issues implies that they are put to use in other ways and by other social groups than previously. All three areas are currently experiencing significant gentrification and/or immigration, but in relatively different ways. The ways that these areas are involved in the processes of gentrification and immigration, will make it possible to study some of the more important mechanisms of urban development in contemporary Oslo: Grünerløkka is today associated with gentrification, while Grønland is associated with ethnic diversity. Population statistics from SSB[[13]](#footnote-13) show that the immigrant population from both Western and non-Western countries is gradually increasing in Oslo. From 1997-99 the non-Western immigrant population has increased in most of Oslo’s 25 districts, apart from in more homogenous western districts of the city. Of districts with the highest percentage of immigrants, there in the inner districts is some decrease in Grünerløkka-Sofienberg and some increase in Grønland/Gamle Oslo, while the satellite towns of Furuset, Stovner and Søndre Nordstrand are about to develop as Oslo’s new immigrant districts, whereas the ‘older’ immigrant areas in inner parts of the city are becoming more and more gentrified. Both Grünerløkka and Grønland, as previously run down and working class dominated areas, have in recent times received significant public investments through urban renewal programs, increased commercial activity related to “urban recreation”, and an increased number of relatively young, ethnic Norwegian inhabitants. Like many other suburban satellite towns in Oslo, Furuset has in the last ten years received an increasing number of non-Western immigrants, both from central urban areas like Grønland and Grünerløkka, from abroad, and from other places in Norway. Simultaneously, the commercial businesses at the satellite town centre are suffering from competition from both regional shopping centres and central urban areas – such as Grønland.

1. Ellefsen, Karl Otto & Dag Tvilde 1991: *Realistisk Byanalyse*. Trondheim: Skriftserie Arkitektavdelingen NTH [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *Strukturanalyse* is an analytic strategy that first was developed by Dag Tvilde and Netten Østberg in a study of how different physical-functional sets of urban elements are related to different structural aspects of urban transformation, focusing on the urban structure of Drammen. Asplan Viak AS: *Strukturanalyse Drammen*, 1991. The study was a basis for impact assessment of reconfiguring the highway systems through the city. The analytic concepts were then further developed in three studies of the transport systems and urban development as basis for an impact-assessment for upgrading and reconfiguring the railroad system (in the towns of Fredrikstad, Moss, and Halden), 1992-93, by Østberg and Tvilde. The following year, the concepts were further developed through two other studies that discussed potentials for urban development with alternative railroad-, main road- and housing-strategies in the town Holmestrand (Asplan Viak AS 1994: *By- og strukturanalyse Holmestrand*, by Tvilde Hovland, Østberg & Haslum) and in a study of physical-functional sets of urban elements having affects on the potential for urban development related to alternative localizations of a new opera house in Oslo (Asplan Viak AS 1994: *Bystrukturelle sammenhenger – grunnlag for KU lokalisering av nytt operabygg i Oslo*, by Tvilde, Hovland, Østberg & Haslum). The analytic strategy, concepts, and preliminary experiences from the empirical studies were later presented in an unpublished report: Tvilde, Dag et al. 1997. *Steder i endring. Utkastnotat om bruk av strukturanalyse*. Oslo, Ministry of the Environment/Asplan Viak AS [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Although this theoretical base is not explicit in the published material related to these two analytic approaches, Tvilde and Ellefsen have been more than explicit on this in their teaching, as well as in later discussions: I have been a student of Ellefsen (basic course in urbanism 1988, master course 1990, master diploma 1993, post-graduate master in urbanism 2000, and he is also my adviser on this thesis project), and I have been working with Tvilde (my first year of professional practice was as Tvilde’s assistant, later we have occasionally co-authored urban studies – the most recent published spring 2006). Tvilde was a student of Rossi at ETH in the 1970s and both Ellefsen and Tvilde explicitly refer to Aldo Rossi’s *The Architecture of the City* and to his inspiration from structuralism and French-Italian discourses on urban studies in the 20th century. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. In typological, morphological and structural analyses of urban landscapes the city is investigated as:

   - an inventory of architectural types (which can be identified and classified),

   - a structural whole (of internally related elements, patterns and ensembles),

   - a structure of cultural expressions (like language), and

   - a result of historical processes. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. In books and overview-articles within the research field of *Urban Morphology* multiple other distinctions between schools and traditions are made. The reason why I here discern these two perspectives is that I find the different analytic approaches they represent useful for different purposes in my studies of urban transformation and the dynamic relation between societies and their landscapes in general, and more particularly in this project. The two Norwegian methods I just mentioned provides procedures and analytic concepts which seek to combine some elements of these two perspectives (although without discussion of or references to them), to produce a practical basis for discussions of potentials for, and consequences of, changes in the architectural landscape. Other studies, like the socio-spatial systems in the study of the transformation of the idea (or architectural model) of the urban block in Europe between 1850 and 1950 (Panerai et al. 1974), and the *décalages* in the well documented monograph on social and material morphology in Marseilles (Roncayolo: 1990 and 1996) demonstrates other fruitful ways of combining these two perspectives in more theoretical studies of urban transformation. (I will come back to them later on). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The French geographer Marcel Pöète and later the Italian architect Aldo Rossi can be related to this tradition. I will come back to them later on. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The French art historian Pierre Francastel, but also to a certain extent the Norwegian sociologist Dag Østerberg, which I soon will come back to, can both be related to this tradition. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Others have successfully produced various kinds of almost encyclopedic overviews and critiques on different analytic perspectives on related topics. Among others both Jens Tonboe and Pier Giorgio Gerosa provide interesting critiques of the existing academic discourse on respectively “social space” within sociology and cultural geography, and “urban space” within different traditions of urban analyses. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Project group (at department of urbanism, AHO): Professor Ed Robbins (project leader and anthropologist), Jonny Aspen (cultural historian), Elin Børrud (architect), and myself. Internal resource group: Karl Otto Ellefsen, Lars Haukeland and Gro Bonesmo (all architects). The project also had an international reference group: Prof. Eric Clark (Lund University), prof. Michael Keith (Goldsmiths College, London), prof. Arnaldo Bagnasco (University of Turin), prof. Carlo Trigilia (Univ. of Florence), prof. Neil Smith (Rutgers University), prof. Anne-Vernez Moudon (University of Washington), ass. Prof Rodolphe El-Khoury (University of Toronto), researcher John Pløger (NIBR). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Gathered from the archives of Oslo municipality, Plan- og bygningsetaten. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Carried out by architect-student research assistants in the summer of 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Carried out by ethnology-student research assistants 2002-2004. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Statistisk sentralbyrå (Statistics Norway). [↑](#footnote-ref-13)