

**On Gentrification:
Commercial Businesses and Cultural Institutions
in Old Oslo.**

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You can't go home again

Thomas Wolfe.

Abstract.

The process of gentrification is a process where both the commercial and cultural forces play a big part. In this master thesis I will look at the development of culture and business in Old Oslo the last decade in order to reveal features of gentrification in these two areas. The superior goal will be to analyze how economic and cultural, and hence also social forces, construct and define the urban landscape. Old Oslo is what can be describes as a typical inner city area, located east in Oslo. The area is a former working class area; today it is the area with the highest amount of immigrants in Oslo. Old Oslo has up until now been a city part associated with social clients and run down residencies, but it seem as this picture is about to change as there are so many new establishments there these days.

The main question asked in this thesis will be to what extent and in which ways can one recognize gentrification processes in Old Oslo?

My findings indicate that among the proprietors of Old Oslo there is a lot of optimism concerning the future of the city part. This is grounded in a belief that Old Oslo is the new place for the innovators and the cool. The authenticity of the area is mentioned as an important factor in why the area is interesting and so is the fact that Old Oslo most likely will be heavily influenced by the construction of the New National Opera and the area around it, Bjørvika. In analyzing the development of culture and business there can be seen an interaction between the two: The cultural institutions are using business strategies and “selling” themselves whereas culture is more and more becoming the business and the base of the city. This is reflected not only in the use of commonly known cultural activities, it is also reflected in the design and architecture of Old Oslo. The new and refurbished architecture of Old Oslo are displaying many signs gentrification. The design of the new establishments can be divided into three: authentic, ethnic and new which all three can be related to gentrification. I discuss the impact gentrified architecture can have on a city: how architecture of this kind can send out signals and creating distinctions in a city.

The last section of the thesis is devoted to the actors in the city. Here I identify three main influences in Old Oslo: the internal influence, which mainly is the small actors, the external influence, which can be identified as the big entrepreneurs and the state which is the creator behind Bjørvika and therefore will be a major actor in Old Oslo in the years to come. I further suggest that Old Oslo is not only experiencing one type of

gentrification, but two. The first type of gentrification is the “normal” one going which I have analyzed through looking at the business and cultural development of Old Oslo, the other gentrification process taking place in Bjørvika, once a deserted harbor area, now about to change into a whole new city part with the New National Opera as its landmark. I compare Bjørvika and the development in Old Oslo to two other cities which have undergone the same development as Old Oslo is about to undergo: The prime example of a town gentrified through a cultural spectacle; Bilbao and Gothenburg where abandoned harbor areas have been converted into the opera of Gothenburg with surrounding residencies and shops. I find that the development and the gentrification, and hence also the future of such cities are hard to predict.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>ABSTRACT.....</u>	<u>V</u>
<u>FOREWORD.....</u>	<u>IX</u>
<u>1. INTRODUCTION.....</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>1.1 THE HISTORY OF OLD OSLO.....</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>2. THE RESEARCH.....</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>2.1. RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>2.2. OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS.....</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>3. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES.....</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>3.1. DEFINING GENTRIFICATION.....</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>3.2. EXPLAINING GENTRIFICATION.....</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>3.2.1. MARXIST ECONOMIC EXPLANATION OF GENTRIFICATION/ PRODUCTION.....</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>3.2.2. POSTMODERNIST CULTURAL EXPLANATIONS OF GENTRIFICATION/ CONSUMPTION.....</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>3.2.3. CONTEMPORARY EXPLANATIONS OF GENTRIFICATION.....</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>3.2.4. POST-RECESSION GENTRIFICATION.....</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>3.3. BUSINESS AND CULTURE.....</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>3.4 CONSUME AND DISTINCTIONS.....</u>	<u>16</u>
<u>4. METHODS.....</u>	<u>19</u>
<u>4.1. WHAT IS QUALITATIVE KNOWLEDGE?.....</u>	<u>20</u>
<u>4.2. CASE STUDY.....</u>	<u>20</u>
<u>4.3. WHAT IS A QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW?.....</u>	<u>21</u>
<u>4. 4. DATA QUALITY.....</u>	<u>22</u>
<u>4.5. ETHICS.....</u>	<u>23</u>
<u>4.6. THE FIELDWORK.....</u>	<u>24</u>
<u>5. ANALYSIS.....</u>	<u>28</u>
<u>5.1 INTRODUCTION.....</u>	<u>28</u>
<u>6. CULTURAL INFLUENCE ON OLD OSLO.....</u>	<u>30</u>
<u>6.1. THE EASTSIDE AND CULTURE.....</u>	<u>32</u>
<u>6.2. THE FLAGSHIP AND CULTURE.....</u>	<u>34</u>
<u>6.3. THE AUDIENCE AND CULTURE.....</u>	<u>36</u>
<u>6.4. DISTINCTION AND CULTURE.....</u>	<u>39</u>

<u>7. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT IN OLD OSLO.</u>	<u>44</u>
<u>7.1. EXPECTATIONS.</u>	<u>46</u>
<u>7.2. LOCALIZATION.</u>	<u>48</u>
<u>7.3. DANGER AND DIVERSITY.</u>	<u>51</u>
<u>7.4. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND GENTRIFICATION.</u>	<u>55</u>
<u>8. A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE CULTURE AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT IN OLD OSLO.</u>	<u>60</u>
<u>8.1. THE CULTURAL BUSINESS AND THE COMMERCIALIZATION OF CULTURE.</u>	<u>60</u>
<u>8.2. AESTHETICAL CAPITAL VERSUS CULTURAL CAPITAL.</u>	<u>65</u>
<u>8.3. CULTURAL BUSINESS STRATEGIES AND THE STATE.</u>	<u>66</u>
<u>8.4. A TENTATIVE CONCLUSION ON BUSINESS AND CULTURE.</u>	<u>67</u>
<u>9. STYLE, ARCHITECTURE AND AUTHENTICITY.</u>	<u>68</u>
<u>9.1. THE AUTHENTIC AND THE NEW.</u>	<u>69</u>
<u>9.2.1. “THE AUTHENTIC OLD”</u>	<u>71</u>
<u>9.2.2. “THE AUTHENTIC ETHNIC”</u>	<u>74</u>
<u>9.2.3. “THE NEW”</u>	<u>76</u>
<u>9.3. THE NEW NATIONAL OPERA.</u>	<u>79</u>
<u>9.4. THE IMPACT OF GENTRIFIED ARCHITECTURE.</u>	<u>79</u>
<u>10. INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL INFLUENCE AND STATE INTERVENTION.</u>	<u>82</u>
<u>10.1. IMPORTANT CONCEPTS.</u>	<u>83</u>
<u>10.2. INTERNAL INFLUENCE.</u>	<u>85</u>
<u>10.3. EXTERNAL INFLUENCE.</u>	<u>87</u>
<u>10.4. STATE INTERVENTION: THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW NATIONAL OPERA.</u>	<u>91</u>
.....	
<u>10.5. INTERTWINED INFLUENCES?</u>	<u>93</u>
<u>11. CONFLICT OR EQUILIBRIUM?</u>	<u>96</u>
<u>11.1. CAN WE BLAME IT ON THE OPERA?</u>	<u>97</u>
<u>11.2. CONFLICT AND EQUILIBRIUM REVISITED.</u>	<u>102</u>
<u>12. CONCLUSION.</u>	<u>106</u>
<u>13. LITTERATURE.</u>	<u>110</u>
<u>13.1. OTHER SOURCES.</u>	<u>116</u>
<u>APPENDIX 1: MAP.</u>	<u>117</u>

Foreword

This master thesis has been a part of a research project, *Gentrification processes in Old Oslo*¹. The project was initiated by sociologist Oddrun Sæter, which also has been the leader of the research, and my advisor in connection with writing the thesis. The project has been a project concerning gentrification in Old Oslo in relation to political strategies in the city development the last five years. My assignment in relation to the project has been to gather data concerning the development of commercial businesses and cultural institutions in Old Oslo. There have been several persons connected to the project, whom I have had the pleasure of working with: Ethnologist Marit Ekne Ruud who has worked part time, and three students: Geir Atle Bringedal (social economy) Heidi Bergsli (human geography) and myself.

Although this thesis has been an individual journey I have had good companionships during the work with it:

I owe a great acknowledgement to my advisor Dr. Oddrun Sæter. Firstly, I am grateful for her acceptance of my application for joining the project on gentrification in Old Oslo. I also owe her a great acknowledgement for guiding and helping me through the journey of writing this thesis.

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Kristine Høglund Solgaard.

¹ In Norwegian: Gentrifisering på norsk? Planlegging og utvikling i et byområde i Oslo indre øst.

1. Introduction.

In the beginning of the work with my thesis I decided to invite my parents to Old Oslo to go for a walk there. My mother grew up at Enerhaugen in Old Oslo. Enerhaugen, once a working class area with small wooden houses, is today an area with high-rise buildings. It built in the years after the Second World War in order to meet the need for housing in the capitol. Both of my grandparents on my mother's side grew up in Old Oslo and met there in the spring of 1924 in the sports club of Brage, once co-founded by my grandfather. My grandparents got married in 1929 and the natural choice of place to live was of course Enerhaugen as my grandmother was from Grønland and my grandfather from Enerhaugen. They lived at Enerhaugen until the city council decided to demolish the main parts of the low-density area with the two- and three story buildings and replaced them with high-rise buildings.

Growing up in what might be characterized as a typical middleclass family outside of Oslo my roots do not feel as if they are in Old Oslo. But my mother, on the other hand, is very connected to this area of Oslo, having spent time of her childhood here. During this Sunday walk my mother told me stories about growing up at Grønland during the 50s. She showed me on which iron fence she had got the scar on her arm, where she used to buy ice cream and candy, and where the children in her street used to go sledging during the winter. It was a cold and windy autumn day so we decided to go and have dinner at Lyst, a newly opened restaurant my mother had heard of, located just in between where she used to live as a child and her old school. She was impressed by the fountain put up in front of Lyst telling me that the appearance of the area had improved greatly since she was a child.

At the time we arrived at the restaurant, a place I had visited many times before, I realized that something had changed. My mother did not feel secure anymore; she acted like she did not fit in. And that was exactly what she did not do. The interior of Lyst is quite 70s (an era within home decoration my parents still refuse to admit that they have any knowledge of).

Surrounding us were not people in their fifties, but rather people my age sitting there with their sleek white laptops, playing with their digital cameras. My mother did not fit in; neither did my father.

During dinner I realized that what was once my mother's childhood memories had been taken away from her after many years in a middle class exile outside of Oslo. The neighborhood where all my mother's childhood memories once were embedded was not hers anymore, it was mine. It belonged to the students and the newly educated people with jobs in the creative business. The place where she had felt so secure as a child was taken over by people like myself. For the first time I saw what is termed gentrification in practice.

1.1 The History of Old Oslo.

The part of the city called Old Oslo is located east of the city center of Oslo. The name Old Oslo refers to the fact that this is the part of Oslo where the city center was located in the Middle age. The area where the Middle age city was located was called Oslo through the years of 1624-1925 when the city was named Christiania. After the city took back its old name, Oslo, in 1925, the Middle age area took the name Old Oslo (Oslo Byleksikon, 2000) Old Oslo is typical inner east city and can be characterized as classical east end together with two other parts of the city; Grünerløkka-Sofienberg and Sagene-Torshov (Barstad 1997, 36). Historically, the inner city has been the zone of older and affordable housing adjacent to the central business district, the point of arrival for consecutive waves of working class immigrants. It has been home to a population who often walked to work in factories and warehouses around the principal railway and port facilities, or undertook construction work and a range of laboring jobs associated with the growth and infrastructure development of the emergent metropolis. (Ley 1996, 17)

Oslo is physically segregated into east and west by the old border of Akers Elva, the river that runs from Maridalsvannet, through the whole city and ends in the Oslo fjord, just where the new national opera is going to be situated. The river serves as a segregator, not only geographically, but also socio-economically. The division between east and west in Oslo found its shape in around 1860 to 1870. In this period a proletarianization of the areas of Grønland took place. Government officials and businessmen started moving west in the city. The further segregation of the then

named Christiania, later Oslo, was helped by the discrepancy between the prices in east and west, clauses when selling property and the establishment of factories in the east that made the areas less attractive for the upper classes (Barstad 1997, 42). Already in 1875 there was a clear division in Oslo when it came to east and west. Around 1900 a typical west side area, Frogner, the households there had 51% servants compared to only 3% of the households at Kampen, a typical east side area. (Myhre 1990, 450). This illustrates the differences between east and west in Oslo which have persisted up until today. A report from 1978 revealed the same distortions as at the turn of the century: The east side of Oslo had a lower living standard than the west side. The report established that there were an accumulation of residences with low standards in the east of Oslo, and among these residences a majority lacked basic sanitary equipment. The social composition of the east side revealed that the main part of the inhabitants had a low all-round education (87%) and there were also a great deal of low status occupations (80%) among the east side inhabitants (Ekne Ruud 2003, 47).

In Oslo there was a steady decline in the inhabitant rate of the inner city parts from 1951 to 1988. Still, there have been many construction projects going on in Old Oslo, specifically at Lower Tøyen and Grønland, which both have been the object of several construction sites and sanitation plans in order to meet the demand for housing and to heighten the living standards of the inhabitants (Ekne Ruud 2003, 46).

Today, the picture is different. Old Oslo had during the 1990s the highest inhabitant growth of all the city parts of Oslo. Between 1989 and 1999 the inhabitants of Old Oslo increased with 45,2% compared to the whole Oslo region where the inhabitant growth was 10, 3% (Oslo Byleksikon, 2000). In the late 1970s a big rehabilitation plan concerning the old and run down housing stocks in the inner city of Oslo was put into action, one of the reasons behind this was that the living standard among some of the dwellings in the inner city were so bad, run down, and hazardous for the health that it created “clients”. The urban renewal program which started in the 1970s and has been going on up until today (Ekne Ruud, 2003) should, most likely, receive part of the credit for the changes which today is evident in Old Oslo.

Even though there have been big changes in Old Oslo the city part still faces problems when it comes to living standards and inhabitants. Old Oslo is still the city part in Oslo with the highest amount of social clients and a relatively high unemployment

rate compared to the rest of Oslo. The part of immigrants is also at its highest level in Old Oslo with 36,2% (with 31,5% from non-western countries). But it is worth mentioning that the part of immigrants has decreased since 1999 after years with a continuous increase. In Oslo, as a whole, the proportion of immigrants is 20,2% (Statistisk årbok for Oslo, 2002).

This short historical introduction to my thesis is necessary in order to understand Old Oslo and the development there, which I am about to explore. Barstad (1997, 37) emphasizes that the tendency of increased inhabitant growth in the inner city in the late eighties and early nineties is a steady growing international trend; a reurbanization of the inner city and this is exactly what will be the topic for this thesis.

2. The Research.

2.1. Research Questions.

The thesis has as its main research goal to highlight gentrification processes in Old Oslo within the sectors of commercial businesses and cultural institutions. The superior goal will be to analyze how economic and cultural, and hence also social forces, construct and define the urban landscape.

My starting hypothesis is that a gentrification process in a commencing phase is taking place in Old Oslo today. *The main question for my research will be to what extent and in which ways can one recognize the gentrification processes in Old Oslo?*

As already mentioned this question will be answered with the business and cultural development of Old Oslo as the main focus. Why is it so that there have been so many new establishments of restaurants, cafes, art institutions, etc, in this area in recent years? Why do people in these industries find the area so interesting? What kind of potential does both the commercial and cultural business see in the area?

Another important question in connection with this research, is whether or not there is a mutual relationship between these two developmental tendencies of culture and business: In what ways do the cultural and commercial institutions use and influence each other?²

The first section of the thesis will be devoted to the above-mentioned set of questions. The second section of the thesis will examine closer some of the tendencies I have detected during my research period in Old Oslo.

Visually the process of gentrification can also be interesting. Can one detect the process of gentrification through architecture? An analysis of the interiors, the architecture and the facades of the new places in the city part is also an interesting approach to see whether or not such a process has taken place. I will ask the question:

² As for instance showed by Sharon Zukin (1982) in "Loft Living"

Is the process of gentrification visible through the architecture and design of Old Oslo?

There are signs of so-called gentrified architecture, not only in the heart of Old Oslo, but also in Bjørvika, as the New National Opera is about to be erected. The case of Old Oslo is an interesting one because of this forthcoming construction. This development will be focused upon in the thesis as I identify three main actors who are influencing the development of Old Oslo. The three types of actors will be identified as internal influence, external influence and state intervention. My focus will be on how they are affecting the gentrification process of Old Oslo in relation with culture and business and I will ask who is influencing the development of Old Oslo?

As will be explained in the next chapters I will argue that there is not only one type of gentrification going on in Old Oslo. Rather I will argue that two types of gentrification are taking place, both where the hybrid of culture and business are playing a large role. I will look at how these differently affect Old Oslo today and try to predict some of the future consequences of this by drawing on experiences in other countries.

2.2. Overview of the Thesis.

The thesis focus is on gentrification in relation to business and culture. In order to answer why a gentrification process is taking place in Old Oslo I will explain what gentrification is. This is done in chapter 3. Chapter 4 describes the methods I used during the data gathering and problems I ran into. In addition to this I will focus on the ethics around the collection and analysis of data. The analysis is divided into three main parts. In chapter 6, 7 and 8 I will look at tendencies within both the commercial businesses and the cultural institutions pointing towards a gentrification process going on in Old Oslo.

In chapter 9 I will look at the new and newly refurbished architecture of Old Oslo in order to reveal signs typical of gentrified areas.

Chapter 10 and 11 will be devoted to the different actors in Old Oslo and the different types of gentrification I mean having detected through my research in Old Oslo. Chapter 12 will sum up the conclusions of the thesis.

3. Theoretical Perspectives.

In this chapter I will place my research in a theoretical frame by first looking at definitions of gentrification, then different explanations of gentrification as a phenomenon. The definition of gentrification is necessary in order to understand what I am trying to describe in my research, namely the development in Old Oslo the last five years. I will look at theories of gentrification when it comes to business and culture. I will also look at possible outcomes of gentrification, not in order to try to predict the future of Old Oslo, but rather in order to detect the gentrification processes that already have taken place.

3.1. Defining Gentrification.

Etymologically, the concept of city can be traced to two different sources. On the one hand to *urb*, which is referring to the built city and on the other hand to *civitas*, which refers to feelings, rituals and convictions that characterize urban life (Sennett 1990,11).

The relationship between these two components of the city is the relationship between the physical space and the social space in the city. The process of gentrification can be looked upon as a process where both of these dimensions of the city are being affected.

Searching through literature about the city one will find many definitions of the process of gentrification. One of the first definitions of gentrification comes from British sociologist Ruth Glass (1963):

One by one, many of the working class quarters of London have been invaded by the middle classes- upper and lower. Shabby, modest mews and cottages, two rooms up and two rooms down- have been taken over, when their leases have expired and have become elegant, expensive residences. Larger Victorian houses, downgraded in an earlier or recent period-, which were used as lodging houses or where otherwise in multiple occupation- have been upgraded again... Once this process of “gentrification“ starts in a district it goes on rapidly until all or most of the original working class occupiers are displaced and the whole social character of the district is changed.

Another definition of gentrification by Chris Hamnett:

Simultaneously a physical, economic, social and cultural phenomenon, gentrification commonly involves the invasion by middle-class or higher-income groups of previously working-class neighborhoods or multi-occupied 'twilight areas' and the replacement or displacement of many of the original occupants. (Hamnett, 1984)

Sharon Zukin has the following explanation of gentrification:

Gentrification typically occurs when a higher class of people move into a neighborhood, makes improvements to property that causes market prices and tax assessments to rise, and so drives out the previous, lower-class residents. (Zukin 1982, 5)

As mentioned above the definitions of gentrification are many, but it seems to me that one concept unites the definitions; class. The main focus is to understand gentrification as a process that brings changes to an area or a neighborhood and these changes involve changes in the composition of the inhabitants of the area as well as visual changes. Gentrification is a highly visual process, it makes a place different from what it used to be, not only in the obvious class sense of the word i.e. the composition of the inhabitants change, but also when it comes to exterior, architecture and interior of the area in question. What started as a somewhat shabby working-class neighborhood ends up as a polished bourgeois area with expensive restaurants and delicatessen stores on every corner. Gentrification is no longer about a narrow or quixotic oddity in the housing market but has become the leading residential edge of a much larger endeavor: the class remake of the central urban landscape. (Smith 1996, 39)

Savage, Warde and Ward (2003) sums up the four processes, which can be identified as gentrification:

1. Resettlement and social concentration entailing the displacement of one group of residents with another of higher social status;
2. Transformation in the built environment exhibiting some distinctive aesthetic features and the emergence of new local services;
3. The gathering together of persons with a putatively shared culture and lifestyle, or at least with shared class-related, consumer preferences.

4. Economic reordering of property values, a commercial opportunity for the construction industry, and often an extension of the system of the private ownership of domestic property (Warde, 1991 in Savage et al. 2003; 88)

The reason for why going through the definition of gentrification to this extent is of course because one of the main goals of my thesis is to describe the processes of gentrification that I have detected during the research period.

3.2. Explaining Gentrification

The most plausible explanation for the variety in definitions of gentrification is most likely due to different understandings of how and why gentrification takes place. The earliest analysis of gentrification had in it a tension between what those theoreticians who were interested in the production side argument of gentrification and those who stressed culture and individual choice, consumption and consumer demands. (Smith 1996, 39)

Traditionally the two main divisions that normally have been used when it comes to describing and explaining gentrification are the Marxist economic explanations or the production approach and postmodernist cultural explanations or consumption approach (Lees, 1994).

3.2.1. Marxist Economic Explanation of Gentrification/ Production.

Neil Smith is considered one of the earliest geographers to explain gentrification through an economic point of view. Smith viewed gentrification as taking a leading role in the process of the uneven development of urban space under the capitalist mode of production. After World War II the low ground rents of the urban periphery triggered the continuous movement of capital to develop “suburban, industrial, residential, commercial and recreational activity” (Smith 1996, 23). This caused a devaluation of capital in the inner areas of the city and this led in turn to decay and neglect and fall in the price of the inner-city property compared to the rising prices of the suburbs. Smith viewed his rent-gap theory as a necessary centerpiece in any gentrification theory. He argued that when the gap was wide enough landowners and land developers would realize the potential for rehabilitating inner-city property and preparing them for new inhabitants. Smith argued that gentrification would take place when capital finds its place in the inner city again. This theory has received a massive

amount of critique mainly for not taking the gentrifiers into account. Gentrification does not only involve the flow of capital, it also involves people. Without the people the inner city would have been empty.

3.2.2. Postmodernist Cultural Explanations of Gentrification/ Consumption.

The other side of the gentrification argument is linked to the consumption side of the argument and views the characteristics of the gentrifiers as the main source of gentrification. There are several arguments about how the characteristics actually do affect gentrification.

The emergence of the service class as a trend in the western world has been emphasized as one of the reasons for gentrification processes taking place in cities. The service class, and in particular the private part of the service class, have a relative high income and a consumption oriented lifestyle and they also have a desire to save time on commutes to their workplace and they place a considerable demand on the housing market for inner-city properties.

Demographic changes are also pointed out as one reason for why gentrification takes place. For example is the “baby boom generation” maturing and this leads to a growing percentage of 25-35 year olds who has a tremendous demand on housing supply.

3.2.3. Contemporary Explanations of Gentrification.

Today it is agreed that the explanation of gentrification requires sustained consideration of explanations. One attempt to overcome this economic/culture division of gentrification has been made by Sharon Zukin in her book “Loft Living” (1982) Loretta Lees argues that “the urban landscape is formed by, and a mirror of country’s political economy, its culture and its society. When you bring these two kinds of analysis together you can consider economy, culture and society together”. (Lees 1994,148). Zukin is also highlighting this point “...there is a close connection, in late industrial capitalism, between accumulation and cultural consumption” (Zukin 1982, 177). In her book Zukin describes a gentrification process that took place in New York’s SoHo from the 1960s and up to the 1980s and shows how the forces of

culture and capital work together and how artists created a basis for the capital to later move in to SoHo, today an archetype of a gentrified area.

Lees is interested in the duality of economic determinism and cultural determinism. She is trying to show how the contradictions between Marxist economic thought and postmodern cultural thought can be transcended in such a way that as to improve our understanding of gentrification. The most important feature found in the juxtaposition is that spatially, but not necessarily temporally, economic capital mirrors cultural capital. (Lees 1994).

In exploring the gentrification processes of Old Oslo I do not attempt to imply that one theoretical position could offer complete explanation to the processes happening there, but rather try to show how the gentrification process is unique to every city and so is its connection to fundamental processes of urban planning, economy and culture.

3.2.4. Post-Recession Gentrification.

Hackworth describes gentrification as the production of urban space for progressively more affluent users. When the early 1990s recession strangled gentrification in many cities, several researchers began to debate whether the process was ever worthy of all the attention it had gotten in the first place (Hackworth 2002, 815). In retrospect, the early 1990s recession was a turning point for gentrification. Current literature suggests that the early 1990s recession facilitated a restructuring of the concept of gentrification. An agreement is now developing that gentrification now operates differently than before.

The post-recession gentrification has some salient features, according to Hackworth (2002, 818), which he identifies. Firstly, the process is initiated by corporate developers more often than before because of restructuring in the real estate industry. Secondly, local and federal government intervention in the process has become more open and assertive than before. Also opposition movements to urban redevelopment and gentrification appear more marginal than earlier and gentrification has diffused into more remote neighborhoods and intensified the pressure on ungentrified tracts of land closer to the urban core, altering the land economies that produced earlier waves of the process.

3.3. Business and Culture.

The city center is not the center for the industrial age paradigm of high rises or massive factories anymore. Rather the de-industrialized role of cities is as centers for the arts, entertainment and face-to-face trading, and in providing highly specialized goods and services (Kotkin 1999, 4). One way of looking at an urban society is to look at it through the prism of arts and popular culture. The arts reflect to one degree or another, the social, political and economic conditions of the urban cultures that gave birth to them (LeGates/Stout 2000, 131).

When gentrification takes place in a city the landscape of the city changes. Landscape is a key term in order to understand spatial transformation. The traditional meaning of the word normally referred to a genre of painting, today's use of landscape is less likely to refer to a form of painting than a sociological image. Sharon Zukin refers to landscape as an ensemble of material and social practices and their symbolic representation. (Zukin 1991, 16)

Dag Østerberg's approach to what he calls socio-materia is quite similar to Zukin's approach to landscape:

A socio- material rapprochement emphasizes the human life as a material existence in material surroundings; the material activities transform the surroundings, as tracks or signs or as tools and other expedient forms. The material- called "nature" when it does not carry traces of human activities- becomes marked by the social life, it becomes socio-materia. The surroundings appear as a socio-material field of action, where the socio-materia in a way directs itself towards the human beings within the field, who respond through their way of acting." (Østerberg 1998, 27, Nylund's translation in Nylund, 2001)

The physical or material space and the social space in a city are tightly knit together. A gentrification process is highly visible in the area of the city where it is taking place: there is a structural change of the landscape; the architecture and exterior of the landscape changes. This structural change is both material and symbolic. The gentrified landscape has certain visual traits and these traits are well read and understood by the middle class. Sharon Zukin develops the concept of a city's symbolic economy. Building a city depends on how people combine the traditional economic factors of land, labor and capital, but it also depends on how the inhabitants manipulate symbolic languages of exclusion and entitlement (Zukin 1995, 133). This

is related to both the physical and the social space of the city and how people manages and interprets this. Gentrification fills the landscape with meaning but people with a certain amount of cultural capital can best understand it.

The look and feel of cities reflect decisions about what- and who- should be visible and what should not, on concepts of order and disorder, and on uses of aesthetic power. In this primal sense, the city has always had a symbolic economy. (Zukin 1995, 133)

The modern city has also a second more abstract symbolic economy. One that is devised by what she calls “place entrepreneurs”. This is officials and investors whose ability to deal with the symbols of growth yields “real” results in real estate development, new businesses, and jobs. (Zukin 1995, 133)

There is also a third, traditional symbolic economy, which consists of city advocates, and business elites who build the majestic art museums, parks, and architectural complexes that represent a world- class.

The symbolic economy has changed over the years and today the characteristic of it is its symbiosis of image and product, the scope and scale of selling images on a national level and even a global level, and the role of the symbolic economy in speaking for, or representing, the city. (Zukin 1995, 134)

As mentioned above a characteristic of the city today is the move-out or disappearance of traditional industry. With the deindustrialization of the city and the disappearance of local manufacturing the urban economy has taken a new turn towards service, recreation and consumption. (Smith 1996, 17)

Zukin argues that this change in the urban landscape has led culture to be more and more the business of cities. Culture is the basis of cities tourist attractions and their unique competitive edge. The growth of cultural consumption (which she sees not only in the traditional sense of the word, but as consumption of both art, food, fashion, music and tourism) and the industries that cater to it fuels the city’s symbolic economy; it’s visibility to produce both symbols and space (Zukin 1995, 2).

Nylund (2001) points out that the city center represents the city’s image and that this is still the place for commercial property, hotels, congress centers and corporate headquarters. Further, she says that to enhance a city’s attraction, highbrow cultural institutions are established targeting an international audience. There are several

contemporary examples of this, the most spectacular one being the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao. The case of Bilbao is a good example of how cities use high culture, both when it comes to architecture and the art itself as an economic base building a signal building that becomes the city's and it also exemplifies what many cities have tried to do after Bilbao. Oslo is now comparing their new National Opera, not yet built, to the Opera in Sydney (KOP, 2002); this is also a part of the gentrification process. New public spaces are being constructed: Spectacular architecturally designed buildings with surrounding parks or piazzas, often with sculptures or public art by famous artists. What do these new spaces mean for the inhabitants of the city?

Today's upscale, pseudo-public spaces- sumptuary malls, office centers, culture acropolises, and so on- are full of invisible signs warning off the underclass "Other." Although architectural critics are usually oblivious to how the built environment contributes to segregation, pariah groups- whether poor Latino families, young Black men, or elderly homeless white females- read the meaning immediately. (Davis 1990, 195)

The signs Mike Davis is writing about are signs found in areas of gentrification. Viewing the city as a landscape; the signs of the city, either it is an architectural sign, or a neon-sign in front of a store it is a good indication of whether or not gentrification has found its way to a part of the city. To dominate a place implies to be able to determine the norms for its social life (Nylund 2001, 225) and by choosing the right signs, not the obvious ones, but rather to use signs as hints to defend the lifestyle of the gentrifiers and their right to be represented in the socio-spatial space. Cultural activities are supposed to lift us out of the regularity of our everyday life and into the sacred spaces of ritualized pleasures. But culture can also be a means of controlling the city; as a source of images and memories, it symbolizes "who belongs" in specific places. (Zukin 1995, 1)

Nylund points to this developmental trend in the cities. She sees two parallel trends: One the one hand there is a homogenization of the city going on. On the other hand, segregation is taking place within the individual cities to the effect that the differences between different blocks and districts are increasing. (Nylund 2001, 225)

The homogenization of the city is partly a response to globalization. The city's identity and specific character are faded out in an international comparison. More and more cities are building spectacular museums, or have plans when it comes to building one, because of the economical growth they have seen that these museums can bring. But with growth in the cultural sector and the service sector comes also a growth in the low paid service sector. This can lead to an even wider polarization of the inhabitants of the city, with both high and low paid labor in the respective sectors. There are no indications to suggest that economic growth benefits the surrounding regions. (Nylund 2001, 224)

The segregation can be considered as a response to the gentrification of the city and Mike Davis' point; that the lower classes, the unwanted ones, can see that these new, designed places are not for them:

(...) The fortress effect emerges, not as an inadvertent failure of design, but as deliberate socio-spatial strategy. (...) As a result, redevelopment massively reproduced spatial apartheid. (Davis 1990, 197)

It is interesting to note that while there are several explanations for why gentrification takes place there are also several types of gentrification out there and one explanation for the plurality of theories might just be this fact.

One, out of two main variants of gentrification, is a type of gentrification where earlier industrial areas or areas of so-called wasteland are converted into a new part of a city from a ground zero. With new architecture, (semi) public spaces and shopping malls the once unattractive area becomes attractive and profitable.

Aker Brygge is an example of this main variant of gentrification. Gentrification-projects of this type have as one of its main features that it is invested a large amount of so called cultural capital into the project. A large selection of aesthetical, architectural and historical elements are being used in order to create a frame for the urban functions that it is supposed to fill (Aspen 1997, 367) Aker Brygge is an example of a city development strategy that one can see more and more often in cities; an attempt to integrate more city functions into a small area. Both a recreational area- it is close to the Oslo fjord- offices, shopping malls and entertainment in one package. (Aspen 1997, 367)

Another form for gentrification is gentrification that takes place in an already existing neighborhood, not an artificially built environment, as one might consider the former type of gentrification. This type of gentrification modifies old neighborhoods, for instance working class areas or neighborhoods where foreigners live, into upgraded middleclass neighborhoods. This tendency in cities is well documented by many authors (Butler 1997, Zukin 1982). A good example in Oslo is Grünerløkka. Grünerløkka is one of the areas in Oslo where gentrification is most visible with the area's polished and newly decorated facades, a 'French' bistro here and a 'Japanese' sushi place there, all followed by a rise in the prices both when it comes to renting and buying places.

3.4 Consume and Distinctions.

Another point I want to highlight in relation with gentrification is modern consume. Gentrification would not have existed without consume. Thrift and Glennie (1993) have five perspectives on modern consume. I will here present three of them, which will be in accordance with the gentrification perspective:

The first of these perspectives is the growth in reflexivity, with that it is meant the ability humans have to reflect over their existence societal conditions. Earlier this reflectivity was mainly cognitive and normative, but today it is increasingly aesthetical as well. As an example of this aesthetical reflexivity Thrift and Glennie are claiming that one today judges the aesthetical value of the social and physical environments that one is surrounded by and that this especially is expressed by the contemporary fascination of history as a source for evaluating contemporary landscapes. (Thrift and Glennie 1993) Another consume process is the cultivation of individuality. There are a lot of reasons for why this individuality trend has taken place, but one of the consequences of this postmodern identity is that a person's identity is tightly related to lifestyles, which are containing normative, cognitive and aesthetical choices. Thrift and Glennie's conclusion is that the individual identity is not only broader, but also deeper (Ibid, 1993). A process that follows this one is the production of new spaces both for consume and for the many discourses of consume. The development of new city- and shopping centers can be viewed upon as a more general project: to reorganize the city as a tightly knitted informational network in

order for the individuals to establish an identity when comparing oneself to the others. (Thrift and Glennie, 1993)

The processes of consume are, in my opinion, closely related to Bourdieu and his concept of distinction and hence also to the symbolic economy of the city. I do not get the impression that Bourdieu (1993) specifically had gentrification in mind when writing the article “The significance of place” (Effects de Lieu) but still the processes of gentrification are visible throughout the whole article in the form of concepts like distinction and capital and the similarities with the kind of urban sociology presented here are many.

In this chapter I have presented the main theoretical perspectives of my thesis which will be used during the analysis of the thesis. I have found it necessary to go through the theory of gentrification in such detail as it is the main basis of the thesis. In the next chapter I will present the methods used in order to gather information about the gentrification processes in Old Oslo before the next chapters will be devoted to the analysis of the cultural and commercial development of Old Oslo.

4. Methods.

In this chapter I will present the different types of methods used in order to collect the empirical material which is being presented in my thesis, problems I ran into and meditations I did during the process of writing the thesis.

A long-term stay in Chicago as an exchange student and several trips to New York City made me curious about the “cool” areas in these cities. Why was I so attracted to these areas? What made Lolita in New York and Bucktown in Chicago so tempting? Approaching the field of city development and urbanism my main interest became gentrification. The term gentrification is a part of the every day vocabulary of an average American. In a Norwegian connection it is only known in the academic circles³. Back in Norway again, I luckily managed to get in touch with an interdisciplinary project concerning gentrification in Old Oslo, which I since have been a part of, where my assignment was to collect data about the commercial and cultural institutions in Old Oslo. My path was, method wise, lied out for me: The project leaders were interested in qualitative interviews with businesses and cultural institutions in Old Oslo. The data acquired from the interviews I did for the project is forming the main source of empirical material used in the thesis.

To collect the data was a fairly easy step in the process of writing the thesis. How to use the empirical findings in a way which creates interesting and new information and samples “the real life” was experienced as a more difficult step; I had found so many interesting things I wanted to follow up on absolutely everything. Of course, I realized I could not do this and from that point of realization I focused on the cultural and business aspects of my data, as initially planned. In the history of painting, a landscape includes both real scenes and the perspective from which we view them. This suggests the sociologist’s problem of how to describe the real social world from a convincing point of view. Because no single view can include all the variety of changes a sociological approach must sample the spectrum and produce a composite picture that respects differences (Zukin 1991, 23).

³ Conducting the interviews I quickly discovered that almost all of the interviewees knew what it was but they did not have the academic term for it.

The study of any social phenomenon brings with it a series of methodological considerations and questions. A central question in this connection is the question about what knowledge is?

4.1. What is Qualitative Knowledge?

Qualitative knowledge implies choice; choices about what to emphasize and choices about what not to emphasize. It also implies reflection and critical thought in order to be able to cover what is meant to be covered. The qualitative knowledge is not mainly representative, but analytical in nature:

Most fundamentally, analysis is about the representation or reconstruction of social phenomena. We do not simply “collect” data; we fashion them out of our transactions with other men and women. Likewise, we do not merely report what we find; we create accounts of social life, and in doing so we construct versions of the social worlds and the social actors that we observe. It is therefore inescapable that analysis implies representation (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; 108)

According to Pierce (in Bernstein 1971, 175) scientific investigation is a social, self-corrective process which has no absolute beginning or end points, and new ideas do not come from any form of deduction or induction, but from abduction, an ability to connect known facts with known points of views and at the same time produce something new. A metaphor used by Kvale (1997) in order to give a description of how qualitative knowledge can be understood as a scientific journey where the goal is to present at arrival what has happened during the time of travel. What the traveler sees and experiences will be qualitatively described and told at the end of the journey. The journey should also be reflected upon after arrival and in this way give the traveler a new insight when it comes to the content of the journey.

My goal has therefore been to “travel” and “abduct” in order to contribute somewhat to an understanding of the phenomenon of gentrification when it comes to business and culture in the special settings of Old Oslo.

4.2. Case Study.

The interviews done for the project I have been involved in forms the main empirical material in this thesis, but several other methods have also been used in addition to

qualitative interviewing. Yin (2003) argues for the case study as a research strategy as the selection of methods should follow the theme of the study. According to Yin the case study contributes uniquely to our knowledge of individual, organizational, social and political phenomena and the need for such a research method arises from the desire to understand these complex phenomena.

A need for a research method like this arises from a desire to understand these complex phenomena. Yin (2003, 85) mentions six sources of evidence most commonly used in a case study: Documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation, and physical artifacts. My main source of evidence has been interviews. Twelve interviews have been conducted; eight of them have covered the business part of the thesis, three have been with cultural institutions in Old Oslo and in addition to this I did an interview with the leader of the cultural department of Old Oslo. In addition to the interviews several other qualitative methods have been used in order to back up the findings in the interviews. I have looked at governmental documents concerning the development of Old Oslo. I photographed scenes from Old Oslo in order to document, not only the architecture of Old Oslo, but also in an attempt to capture the vibes and energy in a part of the city in constant development. I have had dozens of informal conversations with people working for the City Council of Old Oslo and people who are living in the city part and attended meetings in different local associations in Old Oslo in order to get an impression of what Old Oslo is like these days. In addition to this I have done own observations in order to cover most the transformations I have seen in the best way possible and in order to obtain a picture as extensive as possible.

4.3. What is a Qualitative Interview?

The qualitative interview is based upon a common, daily face-to-face conversation. Still, it should be a conversation based upon professional principles. The interview will appear to be guided conversations rather than structured queries (Yin 2003, 89) and the main goal is to collect descriptions of the interviewee's understanding and to interpret the described phenomena (Kvale 1997, 12).

Qualitative interviewers listen to people as they describe how they understand the worlds in which they live and work (Rubin & Rubin, 1995), but the role the interviewer has is not only that of a conversational partner. What makes a qualitative

interview so special is that the researcher follows up on what the interviewee is saying and which can shed light upon the interviewee's understanding of the themes being touched upon during the interview (Widerberg 2001, 16).

4. 4. Data Quality.

Social understanding is created through interaction with other people. The relationship between the interviewee and the interviewer is an important matter of critical reflection.

The quality of my data material has possibly been polluted by several sources. My preconception of the field I have studied might have affected the way I asked some of the questions during the interviews.

To a certain extent some of the interviews sometimes turned more out like ads for the businesses than a qualitative interview. I quickly learnt that telling the interviewee I had been to her/his place many times before and liked the place relaxed the "advertising campaign". I guess that since I am female and at the time the interviews were done I was 27 years old I was in the targeting group of many of the bars I was interviewing and this was probably the main reason for why they were so interested in telling me how good their businesses were. I was interviewing "salespersons" and of course they were interested in selling their places to me as a potential customer.

Concerning the *external validity*, the problem of knowing whether a study's findings are generalizable beyond the immediate case study (Yin 2003, 37), I will argue that even though the area studied is a small one and the findings are quite specific for that area they are still, to a large extent, in accordance with other findings when it comes to gentrification in other cities around the world. Critics often state that single cases offer a poor basis for generalizing. The external validity problem has been a major barrier in doing case studies, but an analogy to samples and universes is incorrect when dealing with case studies (Yin 2003, 37). Case studies are dealing with analytical generalization, not statistical generalization and herein lie the difference: a qualitative research strategy like a case study, rely on *analytical* generalization. In analytical generalization the researcher is striving to generalize a particular set of results to some broader theory (Yin 2003, 38)

Despite the above mentioned concerns I do believe that the quality of my empirical material is at a level which makes it credible for an analysis.

The selection of the institutions I should interview was made on the basis of the tables in chapter 6. The tables were made in cooperation with the Old Oslo City Council which is in charge of approving both changes and alcohol permits. I received a great amount of help from the Old Oslo City Council they provided me with my own office during the period when I collected the data concerning alcohol and building licenses. I picked the informants out on the basis of the applications, but I also based my decisions on own judgments in relation with what I considered being the most visible businesses in Old Oslo. Out of 42 institutions I interviewed 12. However, I must state that to my knowledge the tables in chapter 7 are unfortunately not complete. I believe that this might be due to an extensive move of the archives of Old Oslo. Still, I believe, that the numbers speak for themselves, as I have *not added* data, I just have *not found* them: There has been an increase in the number of applications for both alcohol and building licenses. As I have used a multiple amount of methods in order to approach the development in Old Oslo I feel that this has backed up my main source of empirical material, the interviews. The photos show signs of development, refurbishing and revitalization, the informal conversations I have had with inhabitants of the area also supports my assumptions, so does the conversations I have had with the people working for the council of Old Oslo. My quantitative findings also points in the direction of a development towards a gentrification process in Old Oslo. As such I am quite confident that my empirical findings are representable.

4.5. Ethics.

The topics for my thesis, urban development and gentrification, are not very sensitive topics. Still, I am aware of the role I have as a researcher when it comes to protecting the interviewees, not giving out information about them which in any way will feel unpleasant. The interviews were as a norm anonymous, but of course, as the reader will see, the institutions and businesses interviewed, are presented in the text. All the interviewed persons were informed about my connection to the University of Oslo, that I was a master student there and my relation to the project I have been a part of and their right to be anonymous. None of the informants explicitly stated a need for being anonymous. I mean that the type of interviews I have been doing are not personal interviews where sensitive information have been revealed and therefore I do not feel that this is a big problem when it comes to the ethics of the thesis. On the

other hand, when sensitive or unpleasant information have been given to me, like for example how the economies of some of the establishments are, I have not mentioned any names of the establishments and avoided going into details. Here, as in all aspects of life, I have used the best of my judgment.

4.6. The Fieldwork.

The interview situation was never experienced in a negative way on my behalf and the comments I got from my interviewees were positive, and I felt that they all were genuinely interested in the topic. On the other hand I did not feel very comfortable with approaching the interviewees. I felt I was intruding, as I had to call them and ask if they were interested in participating in the interview, but no one refused. Reflecting upon this the interview process took a while for me to complete because of this shyness I experienced. In addition to this most of my interviewees were conducted during spring and as most of the people interviewed worked in the places they were running I sometimes had to wait for days before they actually could do the interview because of large amounts of customers. This was in another vein positive because I then had the chance to sit down and observe the life of Old Oslo. I have spent many hours in cafes and on benches around in Old Oslo waiting for the interviewees to have time for me.

Of course, you experience awkward situations, but for me this was normally not discovered until I listen to myself during the time of transcription. I must admit to hear myself both being a bit aggressive and giggling like a teenager during interviews without being aware of this at the time the interview was done. At the same time it must be said that I felt that there was a positive development: I sounded more professional during the last interviews than during the first ones. This was not only a function of me being more experienced in the interview situation. I also believe that as I did more interviews I reached a point where I “knew” which answers I normally would get. Because of the reach of this mild saturation point I think I was better to deal with follow up questions as I was not very surprised by the answers given.

Another thing I discovered during my research period in Old Oslo is that the field of gentrification is undergoing constant development. It has, to a certain extent, been difficult to be updated on the changes going on in Old Oslo. Most noticeable is the fact that during the time of writing there has been a fast development in the area. I

have spent quite a lot of time there, also for recreational purposes, and every time it stroke me that something had changed. In the winter of 2003 with only two weeks intervals a foreign-run clothing and fabric store had been closed down, the whole building had been refurbished, and a 7-11 convenience store had opened. These changes have been difficult to capture photographically and would probably have contributed, even more, to what I am interested in proving in the thesis, but this is the problem every researcher faces: you are not always at the right place to the right time. At the same time this development, which sometimes have gone too fast for me, is supporting my thesis, the gentrification process of Old Oslo is most likely blooming if looking at the speed of the development and redevelopment of the area.

5. Analysis.

5.1. Introduction.

Start your Sunday afternoon walk at the corner of Christian Kroghs gate and Brugata. The first thing that catches your eye is Café con Bar, a relatively new café and bar (as the name implies!) located in the outskirts of Old Oslo. Walk down Grønlandsleiret. On the left side of the street you will find a fancy hairdresser, an old bakery and the newly established coffee bar, Evita. Next to Evita, a former import shop, now turned into a brand new real estate agent. On your right, Vaterland Park, designed with no grass, only benches to sit on, concrete and stone. Next to the park is a house mainly build of glass, once the residency of many rather seedy nightclubs, now it is Riverside project, a multicultural concept for youth between 13 and 18. On the opposite side of the street, located on the Vaterland bridge which is crossing the Akers River: Star Gate, a popular beer place both for the locals and the young people looking for a place to have their pre-parties before going on to a more hip bar with expensive drinks. Star Gate is known for it's cheap beer and long opening hours. From Star Gate you can throw a pebble to another cheap watering hole at Grønland: Bob's. Further down the street, the hip two floor club and restaurant: Dattera til Hagen. McDonalds is of course there and so is a more local tinted place; the ever existing shoe shop, Familieskomakeren.

Walk further into Grønland and you will find exotic jewelry stores and stores specializing in saris on your right. On the left: the two year old rock club, Gloria Flames, so crowded in the weekends you have to prepare yourself for at least 30 minutes of queuing. If you are interested in a snack after a long night of partying you will have a variety to choose from in Old Oslo. The newly opened American inspired Deli Deluca with a wide range of both Japanese, Italian and American food or you can choose to go to a local kebab shop or have some Indian or Pakistani food as your late night snack.

If you are interested in more upscale dining Old Oslo is the place as well. Oslo Spiseforretning serves you a Norwegian / French inspired a la Carte menu. So does the restaurant Baltazar, and here you can order live opera together with your five-course meal.

Maybe you want to take a walk down to the fjord? There is not much to see there yet other than construction workers and big yellow machines, but just wait a couple of years and you can visit a whole new city part; Bjørvika. Bjørvika will contain the most outstanding of Norwegian architecture displayed through the construction of the New National Opera. In 2008 it will be a beautiful part of the city greeting all the ships sailing in the Oslo fjord.

What is the point of this description of Old Oslo? It is not an ad for the city part I have spent so much time in the last year, even though it could have been that because I truly mean that it is a nice part of Oslo. Rather I am trying to give a picture of the city part as an area where old and new, authentic, ethnic, fashionable, fake and cool are merging. This is, according to my data, what is making Old Oslo so popular and interesting among the visitors and the proprietors of the area. In the next chapters of my thesis I will analyze the culture and business activities of Old Oslo in a gentrification perspective and attempt to answer why it seems to be the site for a gentrification process.

6. Cultural Influence on Old Oslo.

In this chapter I will look at some aspects of the cultural development in Old Oslo. I will try to reveal how the cultural specter of Old Oslo has changed and developed according to some of the cultural institutions of Old Oslo and why it seems as if Old Oslo is more attractive for cultural institutions now than earlier. In addition I will discuss the impact culture can have on a society in relation to gentrification.

Culture is a word often used and seldom defined. In this chapter culture will refer to the fine and performing arts, which is the common usage of the word. Culture in this sense is often referred to as high culture as opposed to popular culture, mass culture or folk culture (Griswold 1994, 4).

Culture plays a great part in a city's life today. The growing value of art is related to several factors: the urban forms that grow up around it, the activity of doing it and the status of consuming it (Zukin 1982, 177). I will in the following present the three factors mentioned by Zukin; I will look at some of the cultural institutions of Old Oslo and the people using them.

In Oslo culture and cultural activities have for a long time been associated with the center of the city. The cultural institutions of Oslo have been located around Kvadraturen and the area around the parade street of Oslo, Karl Johan Street. There are several relatively big cultural institutions in Old Oslo, but Old Oslo might not be very well known for these institutions. In looking at the cultural development in Old Oslo I have focused on three major cultural institutions in addition to having had a conversation with the leader of the Cultural Department of Old Oslo. The institutions represented are: The International Cultural Museum, Young Artist's Society and The Open Theater.

In addition to these three institutions you will also find the Munch Museum as an important cultural institution of Old Oslo. The Munch Museum opened in 1963 and was built to house all the remaining works of Munch. Still, since I emphasize the recent development of Old Oslo I have chosen not to include this cultural institution

in my thesis. I do not underestimate the power of such an institution, and I am aware of the signal effect it might have on the area today as well as when it was built.

The International Culture Museum (Internasjonalt Kultur Museum/IKM).

IKM is an international cultural center and museum founded in 1990. It has as its main focus to promote understanding and respect for cultural plurality. The exhibitions focus on immigration history and cultural changes in Norway. IKM is situated in Grønland Cultural station, the former police station of Old Oslo where they both have exhibition rooms, a gallery, cultural workshops, concert hall and conference center. IKM has a clear profile. The museum is the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture and is pr. definition a national museum

Young Artists' Society (Unge Kunstneres Samfund/UKS).

UKS, represented in my thesis by chairwoman of the board, Tone Hansen, has existed since 1921. UKS has been a society working to secure the rights of young artists. In later years the struggle for the recognition of new forms of artistic expression has been a major issue⁴. UKS has its own gallery with regular exhibitions and is also the initializer of the UKS biennale. UKS has after 67 years moved out from what can best be described as the little yellow cottage located west in Oslo, in a business and shopping district where many of the cultural institutions of Oslo are located. UKS has moved to Lakkegata at Grønland in Old Oslo into an old, converted industrial space.

The Open Theater (Det Åpne Teater).

The Open Theater is a theater having their focus on new play writing, new writers and contemporary plays. The theater was founded in 1986 by Anne May Nilsen and is situated in a refurbished red brick factory and forge at Grønland. .

The background for choosing these institutions is the general impression that it is these institutions that have been most visible in the part of the city the last few years for several reasons. The institutions are all relatively newly established; conscious about the development of Old Oslo and aware of the role they might play in the cultural landscape of the area.

⁴ www.uks.no

6.1. The Eastside and Culture.

The east side of Oslo has in the last few years experienced what can be seen as revitalization when it comes to the institutions of culture. Especially has the Akersriver functioned as a kind of *cultural slope*. The National Academy of Fine Arts has for a long time had studios on the east side of Oslo, namely at Grünerløkka in what is called Seilduksfabrikken. The last year Seilduksfabrikken has been reconstructed and today it hosts several of the departments of The Oslo National College of the Arts. It was inaugurated in December 2003. In addition to the National Art College another art school is also present here; the Einar Granum College of Arts. A bridge crossing the Akers river connects the National College of the Arts with the newly moved Oslo School of Architecture, located as close to the Akers river as possible, even though on the ‘wrong’ side, it is still defined as located east. Walking along the riverside from Grünerløkka, one will find Blå, an internationally celebrated jazz club located in an old industrial building. Next to Blå is Strykejernet, a fine arts school preparing students for higher art education. Further down is the Cultural Church Jacob and The Photo Gallery (Fotogalleriet) located in Møllergata. The two design and architectural fora, Norsk Form and Norsk Designråd, are in October 2004 moving into the former buildings of Oslo Energi close to Church Jacob. If one then follows the river one will end up in Old Oslo and walk past UKS before ending up at the construction site of Bjørvika. The Akers river functions as a sort of cultural line or slope and it can be used as a guide to see cultural institutions located east in Oslo.

It is obvious that all the activities taking place alongside the river is because it is attractive, but what makes this area so attractive?

Traditionally the Akers river was the driving force behind the industries of the east of Oslo. Today most of them are closed down and the big, empty spaces left behind is one of the things that makes it interesting for cultural institutions to move towards the Akers river and the east of Oslo. As the leader of UKS explained:

It is interesting to see because along the Akers river there are a lot of old industrial buildings and a lot of those buildings have been turned into commercial bureaus and design offices, photo studios and so on. It is clear that the creative branch wishes for these types of spaces.

The most classical gentrification example of this kind must be Sharon Zukin’s book “*Loft living. Culture and Capital in Urban Change*”(1982). The development of

artists' move in and (underground) cultural activities are often emphasized as one of the main characteristics when it comes to describing the beginning process of gentrification. Why is this so?

The nature of the artist's economical situation often forces the artist, and especially the newly established ones, to seek out alternative spaces to live and work in. Zukin (1982) describes this tendency in her book: SoHo, once a rather shabby working class area in New York City, with its many manufacturing lofts and industrial production sites is today the ideal type of a gentrified area. With its designer stores, expensive chic restaurants, and sky-high real estate prices it is the crown example of what can happen to an area if the process of gentrification really sets in. In SoHo the artists found cheap lofts and industrial buildings, which they could use, both as a work- and living space. SoHo is an extreme case when it comes to gentrification, but used as a prototype one might pick up features which have similarities with the development of Old Oslo. A main point made by Zukin (1982) is that the artist often functions as a gentrifier and that this is a product of the artistic mode of production: Artists move into old, shabby neighborhoods because of the possibility of getting large spaces to a relatively low rent. The cultural attractiveness of Old Oslo is not new; artists have lived there for a long time. And according to the leader at UKS, Tone Hansen, there are living more artists east than west in Oslo. An example of this is the many artist studios in Old Oslo. Both in Gamlebyen (Borgen) and at Kampen (the Trafo building) you can find old industrial buildings containing artists' studios.

Ley (1996) has referred to this tendency as a sequential gentrification. Artists starts the process because of a need for cheap housing and then other groups possessing the same "habitus" as the artists follow. In other words, it might not always be the richest people moving into a newly gentrified part of the city, but people with relatively high amounts of cultural capital, and this should definitively be of high interest to the cultural institutions.

As described, the east side of Oslo is attractive for cultural institutions, but what make the three institutions mentioned above interested in Old Oslo as a place to settle down?

Among the representative for the institutions interviewed they all saw the positive sides of being located in Old Oslo. UKS explained the reason for why they moved to Old Oslo this way:

Pretty early in the moving process we were aware of the fact that we wanted to move east because it is here the interesting city development takes place today.

As for IKM, they also wanted to be located in Old Oslo because of the museum's background and the history of Old Oslo. It was almost a presupposition because of the themes and the general position of the museum. There is a consolidation going on with all the museums in Oslo and the representative for IKM underlines that they will fight hard not to be relocated from Grønland.

The Open Theater has also realized the potential of Old Oslo, even though it was not their favorite location in the beginning. The building had been deserted for a long time and it was offered to them by the city council. The informational secretary from the Open Theater explains the following:

I don't think it was Grønland in itself that made us move in there, more the fact that there was a space available. So, the city part wasn't special in the first place, but it has become more and more special for us in a way. We are the only theater in Oslo who does contemporary theater and only that!

The Open Theater arrived pretty early in Old Oslo and one might draw the conclusion that the area feels more special for the theater now because Old Oslo is more attractive these days than in 1986 when the theatre was established.

The reasons for wanting to be established in Old Oslo are different, but all of the institutions interviewed have at some point seen a potential in Old Oslo. Either they have seen it from the start or they have found something valuable there after a while.

6.2. The Flagship and Culture.

Another interesting question is of course if the construction of the opera and the new city part of Bjørvika makes Old Oslo more attractive in relation to the cultural institutions there. When IKM and The Open Theater were established in Old Oslo there were no certainty about where to locate the National Opera, whereas UKS knew about the construction of Bjørvika. The assumption should be that the cultural sector has a positive view towards the construction of the National Opera because of the effect it might have on the cultural development. In the documents concerning the

construction and development of Bjørvika culture and cultural development are the words that are being repeated again and again:

Culture will be an important element in succeeding with the construction of Bjørvika. A strong cultural profile will contribute to economical sustainability on a project level and be able to strengthen the label of Oslo and give positive effects in the whole region (KOP 2002, 30).

The planners of Bjørvika have obviously not overlooked the aspect of culture: The plan is operating with culturally intensive zones and of the total area there is an amount of the space that is reserved for cultural activities. Other typical and well-proven ingredients for a successful city planning strategy are also incorporated into the documents: Bjørvika as a label, availability, portal and meeting place, Bjørvika as history. In addition to this they claim to embrace the whole genre of the concept culture: From high culture to popular culture and subculture. The whole thing being in accordance with the city planner's recipe for a successful urban core. Most people agree that entertainment facilities, pubs, cafes, boutiques, and so on, in a fine grained mixture, do contribute to the vitality of an urban core, as do variety of pedestrian flow, the inclusion of nature, and an architectural diversity reflecting the urban heritage (Code, 1992; 335).

To a certain extent it is surprisingly that the already established cultural institutions of Old Oslo express a rather ambiguous attitude towards the National Opera and the Bjørvika plans because one would believe that the attention Old Oslo most likely will get because of such a landmark would only be positive for the cultural institutions located there. On one hand, they are aware of the signal effect the opera will have, i.e. it might draw more attention to Old Oslo, which again will result in more attention to the cultural institution in question and this is positive. On the other hand they are to a greater extent than the people in the business sector, which will be examined in chapter 7, aware of the problems Old Oslo might face in the future:

I think the prices here will increase; there will be more 'fashion', new shops, more pioneers and more people who want to establish themselves down here. I think the offers when it comes to culture will be greater and this again will lead the city part to be even more attractive to certain people. At the same time I am afraid that the plurality we have here today will disappear. I'm very anxious about this and I think many here are aware of this danger so

maybe it won't happen, but I think it is really sad if it happens and I am afraid that that is exactly what will happen.

The institution, which, in my opinion surprisingly, expresses the most positive attitude towards the building of the opera, is The Open Theater:

I know that there have been plans about making some sort of a cultural center here with The Open Theater and the Opera and that the part of the city is going to be some sort of a cultural city part. There has, among other things, been suggested a bridge between The Open Theater and over to the Opera. So the idea is that we are going to cooperate.

The Open Theater believes in the cooperation between “the small one” and “the big one”. This is interesting because one should believe that regular opera goers also are interested in theater and this might just turn out good for The Open Theater. The interviewee do not think that The Open Theater it will be run over by a larger cultural institution, instead she claims that they will benefit from the construction of Bjørvika because there will be more people coming.

6.3. The Audience and Culture.

The regular art crowd is described by Bourdieu as a rather homogeneous group, usually middle-class, relatively highly educated and often with more cultural than economic capital (Bourdieu 1995). To define an elite culture when it comes to the arts creates a safe haven for the higher classes who can rely on their association with high cultural goods to legitimize their class position (Strom 2002, 13). I will in the following look at who the visitors of the cultural institutions of Old Oslo are according to the people I interviewed at the art institutions. The three institutions represented are interesting because they should appeal to different audiences as they are having different profiles.

According to IKM the greatest audience group of the museum is also their main target group:

Our audience is mainly pupils. In contradiction to the other museums, which often experience a massive amount of visitors during the summer, we are experiencing a negative curve in the summer months (...) the traditional ‘happy museum visitor’ who takes his or her Sunday walk to view exhibitions is not the type of person who mainly visits us. But it has changes and slowly we are getting higher and higher numbers of visitors on Sundays as well.

Still, there is a visible change in the art audience at IKM. IKM has lately focused on the more traditional art audience by using well-known Norwegian curators/artists like Ina Blom and Pierre Leonel Matte in IKM's work with exhibitions (Billedkunst 2004). The change in audience is visible at IKM these days and the change is contributed to a varied exhibition program:

We are reaching out to different audiences with different exhibitions, but we wish to be a museum that the environment around us uses, both as a meeting place and uses our facilities like the café.

Another thing that might have changed the audience at IKM is the cooperation with other art institutions of Oslo. The latest cooperation is with the National Gallery:

This year we are going to cooperate with the National Gallery about Grieg. "Grieg on Grønland", we have called the project and that would have been rather unthinkable two years ago. Then we have to think about how to get the Highbrows from the West end to move down on Grønland and that is a big barrier for a lot of people. I must say that in this cooperation we have been pursuing a lot of people in order to convince them that it is not dangerous to go down here.

In other words there has been a change in the audience groups of IKM. The core audience is still being pupils, but cooperation with other institutions seems to change this and IKM has a broader appeal these days than what seemed to be the case earlier.

UKS is what I would describe as the counterpart of IKM; of course they are difficult to compare, as UKS is mainly a gallery and an organization for young artists, whereas IKM is a museum and an activity center, but with a gallery. So, both are displaying art, but with different intentions. IKM is concerned with the milieu around them and a broader understanding of the multi-culturalization of our society. UKS has a goal to present art and represent the young contemporary art scene. UKS, maybe the most traditional art institution of the three represented, aims at a particular segment of the population:

Well, it must be the kind of audience that actually buys art then, and of course the people who live here.

The consumers of art are the audience that is wanted as audience. In other words UKS aim for the traditional museum visitor in the sense being described above.⁵ In addition UKS wants the people who live in Old Oslo to come and visit them. This is an interesting mix of people: The people who buy art mixed with the people who do not have the economical means to buy art. Barstad uses the amount of social help cases as an indicator on how many people in Oslo that have severe economical problems. The east side of the inner city of Oslo is the part of Oslo where one can find most users of social aid. The number of social aid cases shows that almost one out of four between ages 20 to 40 living in Old Oslo received social help/aid in 1993 (Barstad 1997, 57). It is difficult to see a mix like this in a gallery.

The Open Theater is experiencing some struggle with their audience. In the last years they have focused more strongly on the immigrant population of Old Oslo, but not with the success they had hoped for. For instance, they have had plays focusing on immigration and the problems immigrants may face followed up by discussions. The information secretary explains how it ended:

We had been hoping for more immigrants to come and take part in the debate after the play, but that was not as easy as we had hoped for. Much fewer than what we had planned for showed up. We're hoping to do something with this now and to reach out to more people in Old Oslo. We are also showing plays for children and also here we are thinking about the multicultural children, that they feel that we are involving them to a much larger extend. It is important that the children, for example in Kindergarten feel that we have things that are made especially for them. We want the theater to be more international. That being said, we happen to be an international theater. Many groups from other countries come and show plays at the open theater. And then the thought is that maybe we can get the immigrant families of Old Oslo to come and visit us.

It is not as easy to target the exhibitions or performances to a special segment of the population as one would expect. UKS is interested in getting the people who actually buys art and the people who lives in Old Oslo to come to the gallery. IKM is struggling with convincing the people from the west side of Oslo that Grønland is not a place filled with robbers and social clients whereas The Open Theater is working on

⁵ For a thorough discussion on the museum visitor of today (especially in the US) see Strom, 2002.

with their proposal to the inhabitants of Old Oslo and then especially the immigrant population. A gentrification process would presuppose that the middle-class, and especially what can be referred to as the cultural middle-class, is present as visitors at the cultural institutions. The typical gentrifier is described as middle and upper-middle-class, single or if a couple: they are young couples, normally childless; not suburbanites returning to the city but rather city dwellers remaining within the city (Butler 1997, 37). This type of people is already represented at the cultural institutions of Old Oslo at both UKS and The Open Theater, and is wished for to a larger extent at IKM.

6.4. Distinction and Culture.

Elizabeth Strom (2000) argues that art and culture are, in fact, often used to help revitalize and improve the economies of inner cities, suburbs and rural areas. Art and culture are also successfully used to help achieve educational goals and ameliorate some of societies most pressing problems. Strom's first argument is an argument often seen in theories about gentrification (See for example Zukin, 1982) and city revitalization. The second argument she is making is harder to accept, but IKM and the services they are providing in the surrounding environment might be a representative for Strom's arguments about using culture as a mean to solve problems that Old Oslo is experiencing especially problems that has to do with the minorities living in Old Oslo. UKS, on the other hand, might represent the more gentrifying aspects of a city's development whereas The Open Theater might be viewed upon as standing in some sort of an in-between position where the goal is both to work with the local inhabitants and be a theater with national appeal. In one study, focusing on Philadelphia, the presence of cultural institutions was found to make a neighborhood less likely to deteriorate, better able to rebound from economic decline and more likely to remain stable while accommodating an ethnically and diverse population (Strom 2000). This study can be seen in relation to Nylund (2001) and her description of the increasing multi-culturalization of the city where to an increasing extent ethnically mixed cultures are coming into the city because of increasing globalization. This can end up going two ways: it can either lead to a greater tolerance and understanding or it can lead to an even further segregation. To argue, as Strom does, that the representation of culture and art in a city part most likely will lead to a stable, tolerant and vibrant milieu in the area in addition to helping the area not to deteriorate

and to withstand economic problems might be to just look at one side of the case and ignore the fact that if gentrification sets in it is not necessarily a positive event for the people living in the area where the high culture is being “placed” among them.

Strom (2002) writes about the earlier eras where many of the planners of cultural buildings were as unconcerned about making their facilities physically accessible to a non-elite public as were the curators and programmers about sharing the contents showcased in these institutions. Some 19th century institutions even placed themselves in remote parts of the city, in part to take advantage of park-like settings and in part to control access to them to the working class. This is not the case today, as seen in several western cities today, culture is deliberately used as a mean to revitalize the poorer parts of the city, but one might ask whether or not the effects might be the same?

Poverty and stratification in a society are not eradicated by a new building. Luxurious buildings with a view of the sea do not solve any social problems; it only covers them up and/or moves them to another place. Culture is a powerful mean when it comes to control. As a source of images and memories it symbolized “who belongs” and who doesn’t in specific places (Zukin, 1995). The problem here is of course what kind of change maker the art institution is?

As many art institutions, UKS is aware of the problem of distinction and the signal effect a gallery is sending out and the leader of the organization is aware of the problem with attracting a new and different audience:

Until now the art institution has been so autonomous, it has it’s audience and people are now criticizing us because we are moving away from Rådhusgata because it is situated in the middle of the “museum slope” and therefore we will loose all the regular visitors who normally go for their Sunday art walk. This means that it is a very closed environment with strict codes, which is hard to get through and to understand. I think it is a challenge to draw other types of audience than the usual art crowd.

UKS is probably the institution with the most traditional cultural, middleclass audience, but even this institution has another audience than that of a more traditional gallery because it is a gallery with focus on young artists and their work.

All three of the institutions interviewed explicitly wish for a more diverse audience than they have. Said in another way, they all wish for what they have not got. In relation to this I would like to pay closer attention to UKS which is an interesting example when it comes to audience groups: On one hand UKS is moving out of the “white living room” and moving into the “white cube”.

Is this a strategy for attracting audience outside of the regular art crowd? One can hardly say so. On the other hand they are wishing for a more local audience in addition to the regular art crowd. It is hard to change an already established image and it will probably take more than moving to another part of the city to change it.

The signals a gallery of the UKS-kind sends out can only be described as a making of a distinction between “us” and “them”. The leader of UKS is aware of this problem; the fact that the art museum and the art gallery have its regular crowd that visits, consumes and uses the art institution is present:

I'm afraid there won't be any change. The regular art audience will come to UKS. To get the ordinary man to come in from the street? I don't think so.

To get the cultural capital acquired to read the signs and the symbols an art exhibition or a performance is, is according to Bourdieu a lifelong process. The ability to see (voir) is a function of knowledge (savoir); ‘homo aestheticus’ is a role, which only the privileged ones manages (Andersen et.al 2000). In this way the arts and culture will be a participant in the system of social distinctions, which again makes the poor groups poorer and the privileged one more privileged. (Bourdieu, 1995).

Doing the interviews I asked whether or not the cultural institutions believed they could have an impact on Old Oslo. UKS responded this way:

It is very interesting to think about the fact that a cultural institution can have an impact upon changes in a city because it is very untraditional to think that it can have an impact at all. We do definitively think about that.

The regular art institution might not think of itself as a change maker, but this is proven to be a wrong assumption according to experiences in a lot of cities art and culture can have an effect on a city's development. Neil Smith describes it like this:

For the real estate industry, art tamed the neighborhood, refracting back a mock pretense of exotic but benign danger. It depicted the East Village as rising from low life to highbrow. Art donates a salable neighborhood 'personality,' packaged the area as a real estate commodity and established demand. (Smith 1996, 19)

The cultural development in Old Oslo the last five years reveals that cultural institutions find Old Oslo interesting in many respects. The development of a 'cultural east side' and a redevelopment of old industrial spaces on the east side of Oslo, close to the Akers river is a noticeable feature in this development. The audience of the cultural institutions of Old Oslo seems to a great extent to be the regular art audience more than the inhabitants of Old Oslo. But what does this culturalization of Old Oslo mean for the city part?

To follow the argumentation of gentrification it looks like art tames the neighborhood, but not in the sense that Strom argues that art can change a neighborhood. LeGates and Hartman (in Butler 1996, 39) has, as so many before, found that gentrification of this kind frequently produces racial and class conflicts and there is no evidence that it will necessarily lead to integration. The establishment of galleries and cultural institutions in Old Oslo might contribute to segregation in the city.

In this chapter I have argued that culture can have a strong effect on the development of the city which I have demonstrated by looking at the change of the eastside of Oslo and the cultural institutions established there. The cultural specter of Old Oslo has developed positively in the sense that is has been established more cultural institutions there the last five years. The audience has changed partly due to strategies from the institutions in Old Oslo. The tendency is that a more highbrow audience is present now than earlier. This is especially visible at IKM which have started cooperating with other art institutions like the National Gallery. I have also discussed the general impact culture has on a society or an area and the evidence points to a negative development in the sense that culture, especially when it comes to the arts because of the distinction it normally creates. Culture can be a weapon in the battle of who is in

control of an area and the product of the use of culture if one look at experiences from other cities, like New York, seems to be that of a gentrification process.

7. Business Development in Old Oslo.

In this chapter I will try to reveal some general trends in the business development in Old Oslo the last five years. Based on interviews with the business owners I will present some of the reasons for why this area has become popular.

The statistical tendency is clear: there has been an increase in the establishment of new businesses in Old Oslo the last six years, but one can not say that such a development alone is a tendency towards gentrification.

Applications for changes in use of business spaces have had a steady increase since 1996 up to 2002, from 3 changes in 1996 up to 16 changes in 2002. The main area of interest however is what there has been applied for when it comes to changing the spaces. The main tendency is a change of use from grocery shops and storage spaces to cafes and restaurants with license to serve alcoholic beverages.

Table 1: Changes in use of space from 1996 to 2002 in Old Oslo⁶⁷:

1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
3 changes	4 changes	1 change	6 changes	6 changes	8 changes	16 changes
1 café	3 cafes	1 café	4 cafes	5 cafes	6 cafes	14 cafes

During the time span analyzed the applications for alcohol licenses also increased, but not as steadily and evenly as the changes of spaces. Still it shows that 2002 was the year with the highest amount of licenses given and this suggests that there has been a development towards a more service based business in Old Oslo when it comes to cafes, bars, restaurants and clubs compared to what it used to be five years ago when most of what today is restaurants and cafes used to be grocery shops and storages.

⁶ As mentioned in chapter 4 this table is most likely not complete, but still it shows a certain development in the direction of more and more businesses being established in Old Oslo.

⁷ Also see appendix for a map illustration these changes.

Table 2: Alcohol licenses issued from 1997 to 2002 in Old Oslo⁸:

1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
10 licenses given	1 license given	8 licenses given	9 licenses given	6 licenses given	15 licenses given
1 rejection	2 rejections	2 rejections	No rejections	3 rejections	No rejections

As the tables above show the establishment of new eating and drinking places in Old Oslo have increased the last five years. A survey referred to in Aftenposten (2004) reveals that Old Oslo is the area in Oslo which are experiencing the fastest inhabitant growth and will within 10 years be the most populous part of Oslo. This shows that Old Oslo has become a very popular city part. The investments in the real estate business are many, ranging from new constructions of whole blocks like the Stiklestadquarter⁹ which is supposed to house 850 new families, to shopping malls with integrated apartments and penthouses where the planned Grønland's Bazaar¹⁰ is a prime example. The constant construction and building processes of Old Oslo indicates that the area is a popular one. It seems like Old Oslo has become more attractive, still the question remains why?

During my interviews I detected three main themes for why business developers were interested in Old Oslo. As mentioned earlier, the fact that there has been an increase in new establishments in Old Oslo is not in itself a sign of gentrification, but as I will try to reveal in the following there are certain features concerning this development which indicate that one can view the business development of Old Oslo as a gentrification process. In the following I will present both the general development, as described by the proprietors, as well as highlight the gentrifying aspects of this development.

⁸ As mentioned in chapter 4 this table is most likely not complete, but still it displays a development where more and more alcohol licences are being applied for.

⁹ www.eiendoms-og-byfornyelsesetaten.oslo.kommune.no

¹⁰ www.olavthon.no/eiendom

7.1. Expectations.

The business development in Old Oslo the last five years shows a rather big increase in the openings of cafes, bars and restaurants. The selection of places to eat and drink also seems to be more in variation now than a decade ago when the 'traditional places' dominated the area. The owner of a rather upscale restaurant in Old Oslo describes the development of the place before he took over like this:

This place just got worse and worse and was one of the 'brownest' and most horrible places that existed in Oslo in the mid- nineties and up until the millennium. This whole part of the city had that type of aura before new people started to enter the area.

A main tendency in Old Oslo is a shift towards a more service-based business. This indicates that the people visiting the new places in Old Oslo is a wealthier group than what used to be the case earlier, when other businesses than the cafes and bars dominated the landscape of Old Oslo. The educated labor tends to demand an urban lifestyle and has a strong purchasing power (Nylund 2001, 224). As the owner of two coffee shops located in Grønland explained about why she wanted to establish her business in Old Oslo:

I thought that there were very few coffee shops down here at Grønland and I'm thinking ahead, I have future plans and I had this good feeling about that this was going to be a popular area.

This is a tendency that one can see quite clearly; businesses are established because the people behind the establishments somehow have a feeling about a positive economic development in Old Oslo. An owner of a bar and club predicts this about the future of Old Oslo:

In a couple of years I think that this street (Grønlandsleiret) will look like Bogstadveien (a street located west in Oslo, my remark) with lots of Narvesen kiosks and things like that (...) for the people with the money there is almost nothing left to buy on the west side of Oslo so they have to move on.

Doing the interviews two main reasons for why there was a general understanding of the fact that Old Oslo was an interesting place to establish businesses were revealed:

the development seen in a neighboring city part, Grünerløkka, and the construction of Bjørvika and the National Opera.

It is interesting to notice that while presenting the topic for my thesis to the interviewees, many of them, without me mentioning it, compared the development of Old Oslo to the recent development at Grünerløkka, another area located east in Oslo, quite close to Old Oslo. Grünerløkka has in the past decade gone through a major revitalization and one can clearly see the signs of gentrification there (see e.g. Sæter 1999 and Hougen 1997). As the owner of a coffee shop at Grønland explains as one of the reasons for why she was interested in opening up a coffee shop in Old Oslo:

It had started to become very popular at Grünerløkka, that was one of the hottest parts of the city and many people had started opening up coffee shops there.

In this quotation there is a comparison with Grünerløkka as something worth stretching after, a good example to follow up on, so to speak, and at the same time an expectation about that the development comparable to the one in Old Oslo, only at an earlier stage.

To say whether or not Grünerløkka has had an effect on the recent development in Old Oslo is not able within the limits of this thesis, but earlier research indicates that gentrification in one area will send signals to other areas (see e.g. Smith 1996). The fact that almost all of the interviewees mentioned Grünerløkka and often compared that area and the development there to the development in Old Oslo might indicate that Grünerløkka has had some effect on the development one now can see in Old Oslo. It is also worth noticing that all of the owners of the businesses that I interviewed were still running or had run places at Grünerløkka. This might indicate that they see the potential in Old Oslo because of the trend at Grünerløkka.

Bjørvika and the construction of the National Opera also seem to have an impact on the expectations the interviewees have in relation to the development in Old Oslo. Naturally, when such a big scale project as constructing an area of the city which will not only contain the National Opera but also a massive amount of business space and space for cultural purposes in addition to this there are of course planned new

apartments and apartment complexes. As a bar owner, who would be interested in opening up something in Bjørvika, if he had the opportunity, explained:

There will be a lot of new apartments, new shops, in a way a whole new city part so it's hard to actually imagine what will happen. But there will be a lot more people and it will open up for a whole new market for the people like me, who run bars and shops and things like that. It will be crazy! Let's just hope it won't become an over-commercialized thing because that would be a bit wrong here.

The opportunities Bjørvika opens up for are many, according to the interviewees. Many of them mentioned that they would be interested in starting businesses in Bjørvika if they had the chance, but for the businesses it is Bjørvika which is interesting, not the construction of the Opera. Bjørvika is viewed upon as important because the construction of a new city part will most likely lead to even better conditions for the proprietors of Old Oslo.

7.2. Localization.

Old Oslo is located in the inner city of Oslo. It is close to the Central Station of Oslo, it has a well functioning collective transportation system with both busses and subway stops. It is also a historical site with ruins, which originates back to the Middle age.

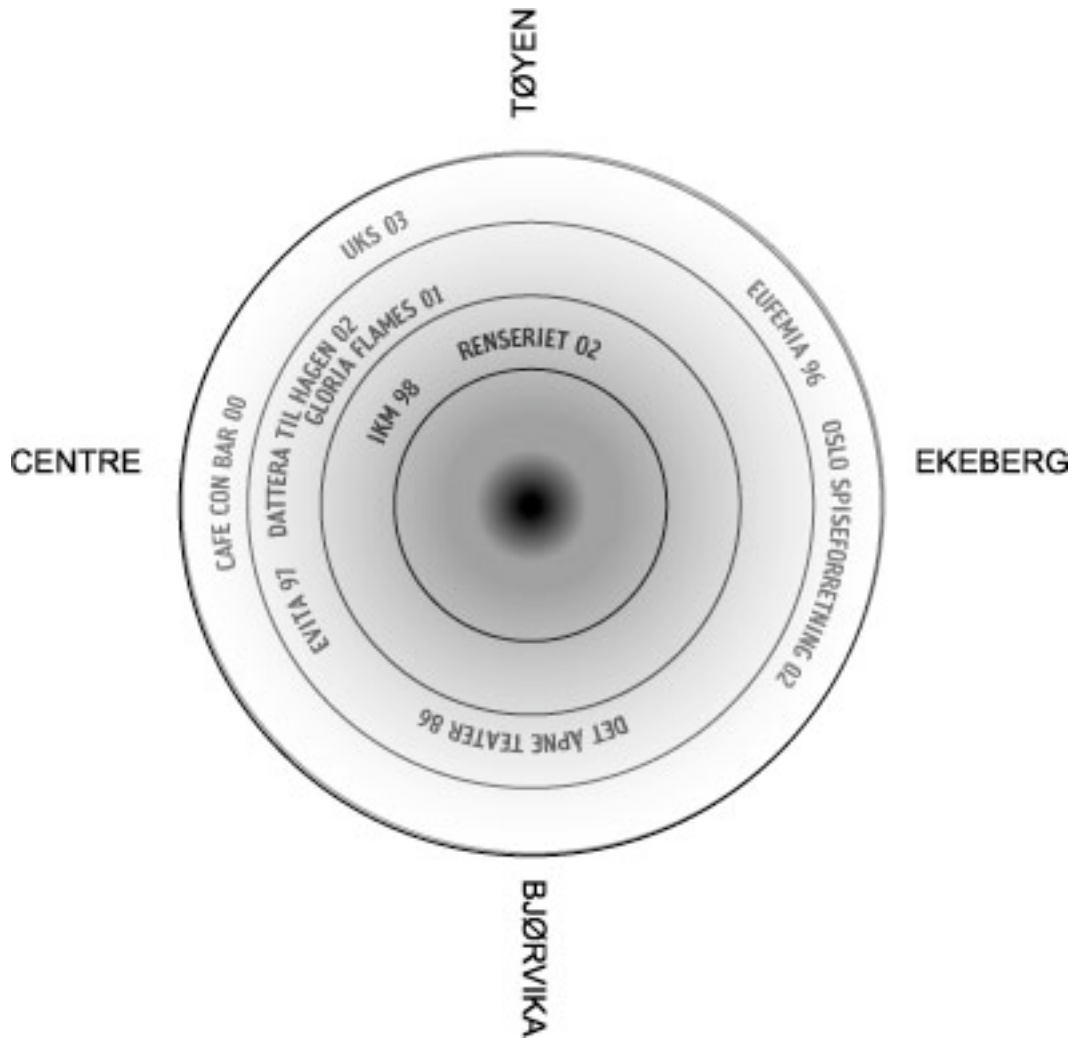
Smith (1996) emphasizes that the in a process of gentrification the businesses who establish themselves in a potential gentrifiable area do not look after the worst area in order to settle down there, rather it is the periphery of a slum area which is the target of the first signs of gentrification. In other words proprietors do not approach the toughest frontiers at first opportunity. The area of this study is the three parts of Old Oslo called Grønland, Gamlebyen and Tøyen and the “under development” area Bjørvika. If one supposes that where these four areas meet can be characterized as the heart of Old Oslo, or at least the heart, maybe the dark heart is a better word, of the area of study I would assume that this heart lies in the cross of Platous gate and Grønlandsleiret where, according to my observations, the “slum”¹¹ is present; there are no new establishments in this area, only closed down businesses or shops which have been there for a long time. The new establishments of Old Oslo are located, in accordance with Smith, in the outskirts of this area or in the periphery of the area. As

¹¹ The slum of Old Oslo might not be comparable to the slum in bigger cities with more poverty and stratification than Oslo.

shown in figure 1 the businesses and the cultural institutions have been established closer to the respective neighboring parts of Old Oslo rather than in the center. This is ungentrified spaces closer to the core. Hackworth is also emphasizing that there are more commonly ungentrified spaces closer to the core of a gentrified area than in the outskirts of it (Hackworth 2002, 825). Now, it must be emphasized that the area of study is not a big one; so quite close to the “dark heart” there are new establishments. On the other hand, and in accordance with my argumentation, there have been built a sort of recreational space out of concrete and stone right in what I have named the dark heart of Old Oslo. This space can be read as a strategy for improving the area through making it more aesthetical appealing for the people in the area, but this has not worked out as it is too close to the core of Old Oslo and not ripe for gentrification yet. Berry (in Hackworth, 2002) claims that gentrified places often can be viewed upon as islands of renewal in seas of decay. When it comes to the business establishments of Old Oslo this might at the time of writing be true. There are still big “holes” in Old Oslo, but if the business development keeps up in the pace that is showed in table 1 the development might end up vice versa: Islands of decay in a sea of renewal. One interviewee thinks that Grønland will be a prolonging of the city center in a few years:

First and foremost we were interested in this place because it is located at Grønland. I think that Oslo will be bigger and bigger and that after a while Grønland will be a part of the city center.

Fig.1. Localization of the new establishments in Old Oslo



The centrality of Old Oslo is important. Another feature about Old Oslo and its localization is the property Old Oslo has a historical area. As described in the introduction to the thesis the history of Old Oslo goes far back and the prints this has placed upon Old Oslo are many. Thrift and Glennie (1993) write about modern consume and say that one characteristic of modern consume is aesthetical reflectivity; for instance do a person nowadays judge the different social and physical surroundings by it's aesthetical value. Most strikingly this is reflected in a fascination for history as a "source" for the value of contemporary landscapes.

Most of the people I interviewed, I will argue, have seen the aesthetical value of Old Oslo. Whereas this reflectivity earlier, according to Thrift and Glennie, was mostly of a cognitive and normative kind it is now mostly aesthetically rooted. One might understand that to the point that Old Oslo is interesting because of it's history, because of it's authenticity and with its historical roots as the old city center along

with its long history as a working class area and today the variation in people, architecture and shops makes it attractive with an aesthetic of its own. This history and this aesthetical value, which Old Oslo apparently has, make it attractive for businesses to start up here. The historical roots of Old Oslo have also been important for many of the businesses that have been established. This is described by the owner of a designer store in Gamlebyen (The Old City):

I still have the Middle age effects and books about the Middle aged in my store. I'm located in the middle of the Middle age ruins and of course I want to keep that image so I still have goods and clothes that are made of natural materials such as linen.

The historical and cultural values associated with Old Oslo seem to have an effect on why businesses have become interested in Old Oslo as a place for establishing new businesses, but of course this might not be the whole truth.

7.3. Danger and Diversity.

Oslo is a city cleft along the oldest border of industrialization, the Akers river, which runs into Bjørvika. Oslo has traditionally been a polarized city: Working-class people located east of the river, the bourgeoisie on the west side. (Schmidt, 2001) As the immigration of multicultural immigrants started in the 1960s and the decline in traditional industry took place, the identity of the city part started to change. What once was the city part for the working class slowly turned into an immigrant area represented by many nationalities and Old Oslo has one of the highest rates of non-western immigrants in Oslo (Barstad, 2000). This is also the way most people perceive Old Oslo today. As a café owner explains:

It's important not to generalize and talk about Eastside and Westside places. I know that some of the Westside people reacts a bit like "Grønland, oh, my God!" Then I tell them that it is not more dangerous to walk around on Grønland than it is on Majorstuen. I think that this is a relation that goes far back in time. Back then you didn't go further than to a certain point, there was the border but I think that people are moving away from that now. I therefore think that it is important when people ask where my cafés are located that I answer Grønland. The reactions can sometimes be a little bit like (rolling her eyes), but what's so wrong with that? That's how I think; whether it is east or west or where I am I think that it is the fact that you are feeling ok that is important.

The tendency to look with skepticism towards the unknown, the feeling of being afraid of the things you are not used to, places you have not visited before is well known (Giddens 1990). When one talks about ghettos or city parts with (social) problems it is common not to relate to the realities, but instead let emotions take over and listen to the sensational stories (Bourdieu 1993, 149). One of the employees at the Cultural Department of Old Oslo told me the following:

Some friends of mine took a taxi from the central Station up to Cafékontoret in Schweigaardsgate (a café and bar, my remark) in order to avoid walking through Grønland during the night. I think that young people are especially drawn to this part of the city, but at the same time they find the atmosphere here a bit scary.

Neil Smith formulates this process in a rather observant way as he describes the gentrification process of East Village NYC takes place:

Block by block, building by building, the area was converted to a landscape of glamour and chic spiced with just a hint of danger. The rawness of the neighborhood has in fact been part of the appeal. (Smith 1996, 18)

The hint of danger might be appealing to the Westside inhabitants and those who often are, by the interviewees, referred to as the hip crowd. According to the owners of the shops and restaurants this type of people are showing more and more interest in Old Oslo and the things you can experience there. Many of the owners of the businesses in Old Oslo refer to this. People are a bit afraid of what is going on “down there”, but according to the frequency of the visitors, especially during the weekends, people still take the change. As one of the restaurant owners explained:

It’s a bit exotic here, undiscovered in a way. ‘ Do you dare to go out here at night?’ but it is so much safer here than for example at Grünerløkka.

The audience of Old Oslo is a rather heterogeneous group, a mixed crowd, at least according to the owners of the clubs, bars and restaurants in the city part. I will suggest that the understanding of a heterogeneous audience contributes to the feeling, not only of diversity, but also of danger. As the owner of a café explains about the clientele:

I think it is important that it is sort of urban here. It is multinational and multicultural here. Everyone, from Africans to Norwegians, is here and I believe that this contributes to the vibe you find at my places. It's not so straight and you can feel the energy when you come in to one of the coffee shops, it's relaxed here.

Wanting to be a part of what is viewed upon as the authentic Old Oslo where minority groups mingle with businessmen and students, is a common view among the owners of the businesses interviewed; a picture where all the inhabitants of Oslo are living peaceful coexistence, as one of the bar owners explained:

We have as priority number one to be including. Inclusion is a word for us. To not exclude under any circumstances. Everyone is welcome here.

One of the bar owners even contributed the interior in the café to this blend of people living in the area:

In a way we have built this place out of respect for the city part thinking about interior and things like that (...) In Old Oslo there are living a lot of different people and the architecture in this part of the city is also very diverse; It's a bit chaotic here [in Old Oslo] and this is why we have a lot of different styles down on the ground floor; a mixture of wallpapers, fabrics, wood and steel. It's a bit of a variation and you cannot tell whether it is a 50s, 60s or 70s style down there. It's sort of "fucked up", it's chaotic and it's done on purpose.

Still, it looks like the main clientele that are frequenting the bars and restaurants in Old Oslo are people all over Oslo and not mainly the people living within the borders of the city part:

During the weekends it is filled with taxis around here and when I go home at night I ask the cabdrivers if they have driven people to "Dattera" and they normally answer: "yes, a lot of people and especially people coming from the west side of the city".

Diversity is crucially linked with polarization and divisions. Diversity, in the meaning difference, implies a hierarchy of power by which some people are excluded and marginalized and others are not. (Bridge & Watson, 2000). But difference might also be constructed more positively: Individuals of different genders, age, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and so on, will usually value their specificity and not necessarily want to be subsumed under some homogenized notion of community for which certain urban

policies, for example urban regeneration policies, are devised. The question then becomes both how and what are the crucial factors which marginalize and exclude a group or individual on the one hand and empower them on the other (Bridge & Watson, 2000).

Nylund operates with two simultaneous developmental trends when it comes to revitalization and an aesthetization of the city: On one hand a homogenization is going on where the city's identity and specific character are faded out in an international comparison, while on the other hand a segregation is taking place so that the differences between different blocks and districts are increasing (Nylund 2001, 225). As a concluding remark to this paragraph I think Nylund's observation is interesting in relation to the new businesses growing up in Old Oslo and the trendier clientele frequenting these places. As the gentrification process of Old Oslo moves forward both of these processes seem to take place; on one hand the "Westside" takes over Old Oslo and one can see traces of what Nylund refers to as homogenization of the city. With this it is not meant in I am not indicating here that the west side of Oslo represent a sort of homogeneous "world culture", but rather that homogenization is taking place because the values often associated with the more upscale spaces in a city is now also "haunting" Old Oslo. This can also be understood in another way; namely as a coming together of east and west in Oslo into a more homogeneous culture, where the different inhabitants of Oslo meet each other. One bar owner described what he daily observes in his bar:

I think it's a bit weird that we have been labeled as a hip place because here there are so many different people. There can be one table with Vietnamese people, one table with a hip crowd and yet another table with just ordinary people and I like that. I think it is nice when I get in here and see that there are a lot of different people here because that is sort of representing this part of the city.

It is likely that the revitalization in relation to the service related businesses will result in a further segregation between east and west in Oslo. As this development, which one now most likely can name the gentrification of Old Oslo proceeds it is likely to

believe that the segregation between east and west will be maintained¹², but that the borders will be both removed and moved; there will be other areas where the underprivileged will be living and the inner city will be taken over by the more affluent.

In Old Oslo, according to the interviewees, it looks like the tendency is that there are more and more people from outside the city part that is visiting Old Oslo's restaurants, cafes, bars and shops. A restaurant that attracts social elites, celebrities, or industry leaders in any field gains glamour. Restaurants also contribute to the production of a city's visual style (Zukin 1995, 156). What Zukin here describes is in a way a trend one can see in Old Oslo when it comes to the composition of the audience that are visiting both the shops and especially the eating places in the area. One of the restaurant owners describes his customers in this way:

We have managed to get into the right circles, so to speak; pharmaceutical companies, government and politics. We also have some other big companies that are using us.

A café owner has also noticed that the audience has changed since she first started up:

It has become more trendy here the last couple of years. You can see that on the people visiting these days.

On one hand, then, Old Oslo, is regarded as being "blessed" with a hint of danger and an exotic vibe because of the associations with the area as multicultural. On the other hand it is popular, not only with in the trendy circles, which one would expect would find the rawness of the area appealing, but also with the more affluent, the "right circles".

7.4. Business Development and Gentrification.

Going through reasons for why Old Oslo has become a popular place for starting up businesses there are three main features which is striking:

- There is expectancy among the proprietors that this is an area which is about to "boom".

¹² The definitions of gentrification are, as shown in chapter 3, emphasizing replacement as one of the outcomes of a gentrification process.

- The localization of Old Oslo is attractive because it is a very central area in the city with strong historical roots and with a neighbor, Bjørvika, which is very attractive.
- The diversity in the population makes Old Oslo an attractive place because it is “authentic, unique and real”.

The expectancy of a booming and blooming area seems to be true, but why is it true?

One suggestion is that this is a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy in the sense that the proprietors have had an expectancy of a blooming of the area and therefore they are interested in investing in Old Oslo. The owner of one of the first coffee shops in the area explains what happened when she opened:

When I started this place other people became curious as well. “Wow, if she can make it maybe it will be even better if we open up a place here as well!”

The fact that one pioneer dare to start up a business, as this café owner did, might contribute to others doing the same. Hackworth (2002, 820) suggests that the pioneer metaphor is difficult to use in the area of post-recession gentrification because the “hearty individual” is less a part of the gentrification process now than before. One might conclude with the fact that the hearty individual still exist in Old Oslo as shown above. This will also be emphasized in chapter 11. The small-scale business owner is both present and visible in Old Oslo and has been the major part in the development.

The media also plays a part in the expectancy about Old Oslo. The public imagery about cities is itself in part constituted by media representations as much as by lived practices (Bridge& Watson, 2000; 3) Natt & Dag¹³ ranked Café con Bar the best club in Oslo in 2001. This contributed, according to one of the owners, to a labeling of the place as “ultrahip”. Other proprietors interviewed have also experienced that Old Oslo, and especially Grønland, have been described in the press as the new and cool area of Oslo and suggests that this can have had an effect on the success of the business in particular and Old Oslo in general.

¹³ Natt & Dag (transl. Night & Day) is a monthly free newspaper for Oslo and other big Norwegian cities who normally has been considered having a good knowledge about what’s in and out in Oslo (see e.g. Samtiden, 2003 # 3, *Nachspiel for Natt&Dag* by Aslak Nore).

I will suggest that the understanding of Old Oslo can be seen as a form of collective imagination. Memory also plays a part in how cities are imagined (Bridge & Watson, 2000; 13). The collective memory of Old Oslo, can be understood as a former working class area with contemporary multicultural features as its main asset of today. This can be interpreted to that the collective memory of Old Oslo is about Old Oslo as a working class area, the collective imagination about Old Oslo today is the multi-culturality of Old Oslo. With this it is not meant that there are no immigrants in Old Oslo. As I have pointed out earlier Old Oslo are still a part of the city with a lot of immigrants, but my suggestion is that whereas they are visible in the cityscape of Old Oslo they are not necessarily present to the extent described by the interviewees at the bars and cafes. It is interesting to notice that owners of the newly established bars are emphasizing the variation in the audience whereas at the same time it seems as if the variation is exaggerated. Rørvik (2004, forthcoming) has done research on the audience groups at the jazz club Blå, located at Grünerløkka: The owners of the club describe the audience as diverse and reject any form of exclusion. Rørvik's survey reveals that among 122 respondents 93% have a Norwegian family background and 74% have a college or university degree. In other words: a rather homogeneous audience (Rørvik 2004, 35). There is no reason for not expecting the same trend in Old Oslo even though to a lesser extent. The development has not yet reached the same level because the gentrification process of Old Oslo started later than on Grünerløkka (Sæter 1999, 11). It seems that my interviewees were all very concerned about conserving Old Oslo and keep it the way it is today because this is what makes the area so attractive, this is what gives Old Oslo its distinctive character at the same time many of them claim that Old Oslo is lacking something that they want to provide it with. The paradox here is of course that by giving Old Oslo what it 'needs' they might end up removing some of the elements that made Old Oslo so attractive in the first place.

In this chapter I have described the development of Old Oslo in regards to business. I have showed that the businesses established in Old Oslo are increasing in number and that the ones that have been established the last five years are qualitatively different from the ones that are the more traditional businesses in Old Oslo, especially when it comes to bars, cafes and restaurants. I have suggested reasons for why Old Oslo has

become attractive for businesses and indicated that the main reason for the blooming of the area is sort of a hype which both the businesses in question, the audience and the media is a part of. I have also suggested that the gentrification, when it comes to businesses, of Old Oslo can be understood in terms of Smith's theory about frontiers and gentrification. In addition to this I have tried to reveal that some of the beliefs of Old Oslo might not be true and suggested that the ideology of Old Oslo is a reason for why it is considered so popular.

8. A Comparison Between the Culture and Business Development in Old Oslo.

In the earlier sections of this thesis the development of culture and business have been described, but one striking feature has not yet been dealt with: the effect these two have on each other. Comparing the two developments of culture and business in Old Oslo, described in chapter 6 and 7, it looks like the main trends of the two developments are quite similar. The main pattern found is one where both entrepreneurs of the commercial and cultural businesses seem to be more and more interested in Old Oslo as a place for their establishments. Old Oslo has a central location when it comes to public transportation and it is close to the city center. In addition to this it is a historical site. The diversity also seems to be part of the attraction for the area. All of the interviewees are fighting against the prejudices people have about the east of Oslo especially when it comes to the pre-assumed “danger” of going there at night. But this “danger” also seems to be something emphasized as important when it comes to why the area is so attractive and why they became interested in Old Oslo. In other words there seem to be an agreement between the two types of businesses on what makes Old Oslo interesting and attractive. The differences between the two types of establishments are expressed most clearly when looking at how they are reflecting upon the future of Old Oslo. Whereas the commercial businesses welcome a development such as the one a gentrification process will produce, the cultural institutions are more skeptical and concerned about the future of Old Oslo. Given the nature of the two types of establishments this difference is not very surprising; commercial businesses are to a larger extent than cultural ones dependent upon making money.

In the previous chapters I have treated business and culture as two separate entities. In this chapter I will look at the interaction between these two types of development in Old Oslo. I will look at in what ways do the cultural institutions and commercial businesses use and affect each other?

8.1. The Cultural Business and the Commercialization of Culture.

The division between the arts and commercialization is one which commonly have been acknowledged as constitutive within most modern social science. Commonly

this is seen as the division between things' irrationality and emotional aspects, on one hand, and rationality and utility aspects on the other. (Langdalen, 2003). On the surface this is also the general picture of Old Oslo and the art institutions there versus the commercial businesses established in recent years. However, conducting the interviews, the borders between these two types of establishments became less clear. Not only because they are similar, but also because in many respects, they have the same goals. One of the main goals, as described previously, seems to be the wish for a high amount of visitors with diverse backgrounds.

In chapter 6 the concept of culture was used in a restricted way, only including what commonly is known as high culture e.g. the fine arts. In the following sections it will be used more liberally and include the more popular aspects of culture in order to show that commercial businesses also take culture into account.

Even though not always commonly acknowledged, today the arts and business are intrinsically linked with each other in the era of the cultural industry. The cultural industry, originally coined so by Horkheimer and Adorno (1991), is not a targeted concept or phenomenon in this thesis, but still worth mentioning because the synergy effects the commercial businesses and the art institutions produce today might be viewed upon as a sort of follow up of the cultural industry; a subspecies of what Horkheimer and Adorno once termed the cultural industry. It is not that the commercialization of art or vice versa is ideology, but rather a tendency when it comes to the phenomenon of gentrification. In the following I will look at some of the empirical findings done during my fieldwork in order to reveal the impact the two different scenes have on each other.

One of the clearest examples of the use of culture in a business relation I detected during the interviews was the real estate company which is renting out space to the newly moved Young Artists' Society (UKS). A tendency today in the real estate-business is that money is spent by entrepreneurs in order to get the art institutions in their portfolio with the intention that art will give something valuable back to the business. UKS has moved into a building which they never had been able to afford if the real estate firm had not been interested in UKS as a vesicant. As a gallery the

requirements are quite strict when it comes to how the space should look and requirements in terms of light, temperature and so on. The real estate company, renting out the space, has refurbished the whole space according to UKS specifications, a refurbishing which has been very expensive for the real estate company. The leader of UKS explains that the real estate company is refurbishing the gallery after UKS' demands and that this has cost the real estate company 900.000 Nkr. In other words, the real estate business does not even make any money out of their vesicant. But this is a direct consequence of the real estate company renting out space to UKS. The consequences of the relationship can also be seen differently: The real estate company uses UKS in marketing and in that way they are making the neighborhood more salable. Smith (1996, 19) writes about East Village and how art and galleries changed the neighborhood of this New York village. Art donates a salable neighborhood "personality" packaged the area as a real estate commodity and established demand. Culture is, in other words, an important tool in the making and selling of property and, as is pointed out by the leader of UKS, Tone Hansen, the leaving of a public contract to a private one is a strong signal when it comes to the privatizing of what for a long time was considered a task for the city council of Oslo:

We're leaving a communal contract and this might be the strongest signal we are sending: The fact that we are changing the contract from a public owner to a private one. It has to be said that the city council has never been especially interested refurbishing or maintaining the house we have been located in.

In other words, the arts step into a more market oriented and commercial sphere than what can be considered normal for a gallery like UKS which is sponsored by the city council of Oslo. The transition from a communal rented space into a commercial one is a signal which can be interpreted as a commercialization of the arts where the artists have sold themselves to the commercial forces, but more likely it is a synergy effect here. As emphasized, the real estate company does not even make money out of the move in of UKS. UKS is a mean in the making and marketing of Old Oslo as an attractive place for other businesses. Even though one might argue that UKS can be viewed upon as being misused since they are a part of a marketing stunt from the real estate company's side one can see it from another point of view as well: UKS has

gotten the locales it wanted to a price it would have been hard to achieve if it had not had the effect it has as a cultural institution.

The effect art institutions have upon the neighborhood of Old Oslo might not be so apparent at first sight. It is also difficult for the institutions to actually understand that they might have a direct effect on Old Oslo. The indirect effects might be more visible. The cooperation between IKM and the National Gallery is an example of such an effect. One might assume that the audience group of the National Gallery is slightly different from the IKM audience. This is also emphasized by the interviewee from IKM who now are seeing a change in the audience of IKM as more and more of the “traditional Sunday museum visitor” is observed at IKM.

Another example of connections between the cultural institutions of Old Oslo and businesses there is the project The Open Theater started in the spring of 2003. The Open Theater started an internet site in relation with their own internet site where they offered the businesses in Old Oslo, especially the restaurants and places which could be used in connection with a visit to the theater, space to present their business. This was a way of promoting businesses in Old Oslo like restaurants and shops close to The Open Theater, but also an attempt to show the audience of The Open Theater the things theater sees as valuable in the part of the city.

Another aspect in the development of Old Oslo and the businesses there is the interest the cafes and bars show in cultural activities. This might indicate that cultural activities, whether it is in the form of theater, concerts or display of paintings and other forms of art are in some way attractive to the audience of the businesses of Old Oslo. As one of the owners of Dattera til Hagen explains:

Culture is important these days. Every Tuesday we are having this theater sport thing here on the first floor and one can see that people are interested in it. People are not only interested in getting drunk; they also want to experience things when they are going out.

This highlights the fact that commercial businesses find culture, either in the popular form or the more highbrow form, important. In the example above the club uses theater as a way of attracting more people. Concerts are also an important feature in

the nightlife of Old Oslo and both the cafes and bars are contributing here. The owner of Café con Bar explains how he views concerts arranged by his bar:

We are even so extreme that when we are having concerts here they are normally free because we don't want to take money because we then might end up excluding some people. In a way it is our problem if we choose to have a concert so then the people who are here will only get a bonus. So, on Saturday Number Seven Deli (at the point of the interview Number Seven Deli was a semi well known band, today they are bigger, my comment) will play here and it is free of charge to get in.

Gloria Flames is in addition to being a club a concert scene well known for its concerts and release parties for both well -known and not so well - known bands.

The cultural activities arranged by the different businesses in Old Oslo are not only purely entertaining ones. Renseriet is arranging discussion forums on a regular basis. The latest addition at Renseriet is the discussion forum of the newly established branch of the Norwegian division of Le Monde Diplomatique. Up until now every edition of Le Monde Diplomatique is complemented by a talk or discussion at Renseriet. Renseriet also arranges concerts and is especially focusing on ethnic musical groups.

Another feature when it comes to using culture is the walls of the cafes in Old Oslo. On a regular basis these walls serve as a gallery or sales departments for more or less established artists.

So, as a sum up one could say that the cultural institutions of Old Oslo are not only the traditional galleries and the theater, but also the more commercial institutions of Old Oslo are also contributing to the cultural environment of Old Oslo. The "culture is important" quotation has something in it, whether it is popular culture or a "higher" form of culture, culture is deliberately used in order to attract more people to the city part. This can be divided into two: You have the neighborhood effecting in a relatively large scale where one of the examples I have given is the cooperation between a real estate company and UKS. A more small-scale neighborhood effect can be seen in the cafes and bars where culture deliberately is used in order to get more people to the businesses and to make them more attractive.

8.2. Aesthetical Capital versus Cultural Capital.

Another interesting feature when it comes to the new establishments of Old Oslo, which I will argue can be put into the category "the use of culture", is the design of some of the places in Old Oslo. The interior and architecture of the establishments of Old Oslo will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. Here the focus will be on design and the effect this has as a cultural statement.

Gran (2003) operates with a capital concept she calls *aesthetical capital*. This type of capital is described as what can be sensed or experienced, it is what is beautiful and stylish. Aesthetical capital sees a value in the creative and in what is new. The aesthetical capital is also focused on the perfection of objects. To manage the aesthetical dimension is important whether it is concerning a product, the arts or a lifestyle. Aesthetical understanding, or capital, is an important resource in today's society (Danielsen 2003, 67) and this can clearly be seen in the restaurants and bars in Old Oslo. Aesthetization happens in many respects and one of the most capturing ways is the frequent use and meaning of design (Gran, 2003). The use of symbols in the businesses interviewed is obvious. One thing is to arrange theater evenings or put art up on the walls. Quite another is to design places in a certain way; all the places described in this thesis can be considered stylish and contemporary modern. Many of them have used interior designers to design the places, the furniture and the crockery. Even small things as the toilets are objects designed by internationally known designers such as Phillippe Starck and Marc Newson. If this is not the case it is the other way around: foreign exotic design and objects are used. The connection between the design and these objects is that only a certain audience can recognize the signs or signals they are sending out.

Now, the aesthetical capital clearly has links to Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital (1995). Gran argues that it is not the same because in Bourdieu's case it is never the objects' qualities which gives them the position they possess. It is only their position in relation to other objects that gives them certain qualities (Gran 2003, 116). Maybe the relation between cultural capital and aesthetical capital can be viewed upon as not mutually excluding but, rather, in order to appreciate aesthetical capital one has to acquire or be in possession of a certain amount of cultural capital. In this way one can say that an architecturally successful Opera building is possessing both a high amount

of cultural capital aesthetic capital as opera and ballet per. definition is high cultural. Whereas a newly designed coffee shop with the right design elements are in possession of a high degree of aesthetic capital, but not necessarily a high amount of cultural capital. The desired position for such institutions would, accordingly, be to have a certain amount of both aesthetic and cultural capital and this is what is being sought after in the course of using culture in promoting themselves.

8.3. Cultural Business Strategies and the State.

As shown in the previous sections it looks like culture plays a relatively big part in the development of Old Oslo. Interestingly, it is not only the small-scale businesses which is using culture as a tool to facilitate a certain wanted development. In Old Oslo it has also become a national matter. Culturally this is expressed with the erection of the New National Opera, commercially it is expressed by the construction of Bjørvika. The state intervention when it comes to city development is a more and more well-known phenomenon in order to transform deprived areas. The intervention of a city government in order to facilitate gentrification (see for example Zukin, 1982) is not a new strategy. It has during the 90s become a more direct involvement from the government than in the 1980s (Hackworth, 2002).

Old Oslo has been the object of state intervention before. The Miljøby Gamle Oslo project (MGO), roughly translated into the Environmental City Old Oslo, is an example of the city council trying to affect development in the “right way”. The intention behind the project was to improve the living standard of the inhabitants of Old Oslo. The MGO project had as an expressed goal to improve physical living standards through city revitalization and a beautification of the environment (Pløger 1995, 55). In other words the MGO plan and the use of culture has been an important aspect in order to get the living standard of Old Oslo to rise, and it looks like this strategy might have been successful if one sees to the fact that it looks like both commercial and cultural institutions these days find Old Oslo and the east side of Oslo an interesting place to establish themselves. State intervention emerges on different levels, the clearest example being at the national level with the construction of the National Opera. Again culture is used as a tool in order to, not only facilitate development, but also in order to ignite the economical growth in the area. Cities have in the past been identified with their major corporate headquarters, factories or

sporting venues and clubs (Evans 2003, 420). Now, it is time for the cities to be identified as cultural havens.

8.4. A tentative conclusion on business and culture.

As I have demonstrated above the use of culture is highly present in the commercial businesses in Old Oslo. Not only is it present through art displays or concert performances, but also it is subtler in its expression: the design and the architecture also plays a role in the cultural life of Old Oslo. Zukin (1982) has tried to demonstrate that cultural values can be a useful hiding place in what might actually be more financial motives. To produce hybrid messages is one of the most sophisticated and subtle strategies in marketing (Gran, 2003), and this looks like is important for the businesses of Old Oslo. Not only are the restaurants and bars interested in using culture as a way of attracting more people to the businesses. The cultural institutions also seem to be more interested in the business side than what normally is acknowledged among these types of institutions. Last, but not least, on a state level the use of culture also seems to gain importance in order to facilitate economical growth.

9. Style, Architecture and Authenticity.

In this chapter I will reveal how the physical environment of Old Oslo can be seen in relation with the gentrification of the area. I will look at different types of architecture and design and show how these features have certain characteristics which can be seen in relation with the gentrified cityscape.

A landscape refers to the physical surroundings of a place. It is an ensemble of material and social practices and their symbolic representation. In a narrow sense a landscape represents the architecture of social class, gender, and race relations imposed by powerful institutions. In a broader sense it connotes the entire panorama that we see; both the landscapes of the powerful; cathedrals, factories and skyscrapers and the subordinate, resistant or vernacular of the powerless (Zukin, 1991). Zukin claims that we own the clearest cultural map of structural change, not to novelists or literary critics, but to architects and designers. The products of architects and designers and their social role as cultural producers create shifting landscapes in the most material sense:

As both objects of desire and structural forms, their work bridges space and time. It also directly mediates economic power by both conforming to and structuring norms of market driven investment, production and consumption. (Zukin 1991, 39)

Zukin's understanding of landscape is comparable to Østerberg's (1998) concept of the socio-material. His socio-material approach to society lies close to Lefebvre's approach; Lefebvre focused on the relation between space and the social (socio-spatial) and how space produces the social relations (Østerberg, 1998; 25) Østerberg's approach focuses more on the *material aspects* of space than space in itself. Space projects an understanding of moving from one place to another, whereas the material makes you think about the resistance of the surroundings or the ground beneath you feet, or the matter which our operations forms and transforms and also other types of matter (Østerberg, 1998; 26) With this approach Østerberg emphasize the duality of the city; not only do we affect the city, the city also affects us in different ways. With

the socio material landscape of the city in mind, I will in the following describe some features of the landscape of Old Oslo.

The landscape of Old Oslo can be seen as a collection of vast and varied architecture. The history of Old Oslo goes back to year 1000 where one is assuming that there where attempts of building a city because of the centrality of the area and the right circumstances in order to build a harbor (Oslo Byleksikon, 2000). Some local patriots call Gamlebyen the Pompeii of the North referring to all the ruins buried under the streets of Gamlebyen. Here you can find more ruins from the Middle age than anywhere in Scandinavia (Senje, 1993). Grønland and Tøyen are both areas with a mixture of old and new architecture: Some of the old buildings are conserved, others, like the old Enerhaugen area, is demolished and high rise buildings have dominated the area since the 1960s as an answer to the post-world war II baby boom. The plan for Old Oslo is to have 8000 new apartments ready within a period of 10 years. The construction of new buildings has not yet started in a large scale, but numerous projects are on the planning stage. Gentrification is often defined by its physical manifestations for example ‘Brownstoning’ in New York or ‘Whitepainting’ in Toronto (Butler, 1997; 38). In comparison, in Old Oslo, the tendency is more leaning towards colorful facades.

9.1. The Authentic and the New.

In the following I will focus on three trends within Old Oslo. These three trends were described in the magazine, “Obosmagasinet”, which is a magazine sent out to the members of Obos, the biggest house building cooperative in the Oslo region. The magazine had an article about Old Oslo, promoting new apartments at Grønland. In the article there where focus on three trends, opposite trends at first sight, but at the same time a prime example of gentrification. The article describes Old Oslo as the trendiest area in Oslo; an area where you can mix with locals, buy your groceries at the corner and eat Indian food for lunch. Old Oslo is an urban oasis: Between kebab shops and grocery stores the trendy cafes and clothes stores are located. Spices, herbs and overfilled grocery stores are attracting more and more people to Grønland. (Obosmagasin, 2002, 15)

But the real estate magazine also focus on another part of the development in Old Oslo; the change:

A rather bad reputation tells the story about unsafe living conditions. A walk through the area tells another story. This part of the city has become a place for people from all nations. This is the place where everyone who finds Grünerløkka 'so last season' and boring now are hanging out. This is Grønland. (Obosmagasin, 2002, 15, my translation)

The three concepts which can be drawn out from this article are as follows:

- The multicultural environment and the history of Old Oslo, in other words the old, or maybe more precisely and in accordance with gentrification theory: *the authentic*.
- The authentic, as described in the magazine, can again be divided into two: "*the old*" and "*the ethnic*". The ethnic feel the city part has is also a part of the authenticity, but not as nostalgic as the old working class understandings about Old Oslo. Rather this is a flirt with what used to be, and still, is Old Oslo. It is a flirt with the exotic and exciting sides of the multicultural milieu.
- The last focus is on *the new* side of Old Oslo; the new architecture, Old Oslo as a trendsetter.

The old, the new and the ethnic, when it comes to the interiors and exteriors of the businesses in Old Oslo, are, as will be presented in the following, distinctions which to a certain extent are overlapping each other. Zukin suggests that in a mass produced and mass distributed culture, a taste for "the real thing" becomes a strategy of social differentiation. But it is important to notice that the real thing refers to two quite different sorts of goods; it refers to goods that offer the authenticity of the past and those that suggest the uniqueness of new design (Zukin, 1991; 203).

9.2.1. “The Authentic Old”

Schiefloe describes the city as something unnatural, something human beings do not want to be acquainted with:

[The city is] something that the societal development forces upon human beings that should be able to live happily in the countryside. Nostalgia and longing after the lost idyll is a main trait (Schiefloe, 1994; 17).

Schiefloe describes the people of the city as longing after the lost world. Are the gentrifiers attracted to old buildings and restoring these types of areas in a city because they long back to what once was and is not anymore?

It has been argued that gentrifiers are inhabitants who have chosen their environment as a “social and architectural complement to their own identity” and hence history becomes a commodity in the search to find an expression for individualism in the society of mass production and consumption (Butler 1997, 45).

Why is it so that there are mostly old working class neighborhoods that are objects for gentrification? It can be seen as a compensatory strategy by the middle classes for their contradictory position within the social structure (Butler 1997, 45). The architecture of old working class neighborhoods recalls an era associated with social stability. Architecture is then a statement about social status and the ability to do something with the material of history (Butler 1997, 45).

Robbins (1995) claims that universalism and homogeneousness are associated with a crisis in urbanism. The postmodern city will be about trying to *re-imagine*. How is this re-imagination going to take place? The strategies for what Robbins call a *postmodern wiederzauberung, a re-spellment*, can take many forms. One of these forms can be a sort of a new romanticism. This can go as far as waking up a sort of pre-modern feeling of place and tradition. The re-spellment of the city can be related to aesthetical reflexivity (Thrift and Glennie, 1995) since this reflexivity is especially expressed by a fascination of history in order to evaluate the contemporary landscape. According to many of the interviewees this re-spellment has taken several forms in Old Oslo both when it comes to the authentic and the new.

A restaurant that is found in Gamlebyen, Oslo Spiseforretning, has tried to follow up on what the owner describes as “the historical part” of the building. The building where the restaurant is located originates from 1872 and has been the host for numerous pubs and bars throughout the years. In 1925 the architect Lars Backer, best known for the Ekeberg restaurant, was hired to redecorate the place and the owner of the restaurant today explains how they have tried to capture the history of the restaurant in the new architecture:

[The architect] redecorated the place and today colors, the sectioning of the wall and so on are things that we have taken back from that time with almost identical colors that we found on the walls while rehabilitating the place (...) there is a style here, the ground floor and the first floor are almost identical with old times while the second floor is taken back to, call it a 1900 apartment, a little modified of course, but that is the idea behind it. It must be cozy, nice, in a way.



Oslo Spiseforretning: a totally rehabilitated restaurant in Gamlebyen, backyard and inside

Another example of the re-spellment in connection with the authentic/old is that the new restaurants are being named in accordance with old names of the places in Old Oslo or the names give associations to a lost world. Oslo Spiseforretning¹⁴ is one example of this. Renseriet has its name from the old dry cleaner (Norwegian: renseriet) that used to be located there and still the name, Renseriet, is painted on the chimney of the building, so the name came naturally to the owner of the place.

Another way of relating to the old is by going even further back in history and use the Middle age as a reference. This can be seen in a shop located close to the Middle-age

¹⁴ This name is hard to give an English translation of, but the associations, in Norwegian, wanders to a lost world/time, where eating out only happened on big occasions. A tentative suggestion for a translation would be The Oslo Food Company or The Oslo Eatery.

Park. The owner's intention at was at first to base her sales on costumes from the Middle age mixed with designer clothes made in natural fibers. The concept did not work out exactly how she had planned, but still the Middle age is a theme in the store:

The concept has turned out a little bit different than first planned. I still have the Middle age effects and the books about the middle ages and since I am located in the middle of the [Middle-age] ruins I would like to keep them. Also, I still have clothes made out of natural fibers, linen etc, but it is design clothes that are the main concept now. That's the reason for my survival. So, the strong influence from the Middle age with costumes has come more in the background that what was first the intention.

Despite the fact that many new cafes, restaurants and bars have been opened in Old Oslo the last few years there are still some of the old traditional restaurants left in Old Oslo. One example of this is Olympen, locally known as "Lompa". Olympen has big original paintings on the walls painted by the son of renowned artist Harriet Backer. At the same time as being grand it is so well used and in many other ways run down with a rather seedy reputation it falls on the side of local, old restaurant with soul, but without a great appeal to the gentrifiers. There is a contrasting difference between the new restaurants and the old ones in Old Oslo. "Lompa" could be referred to as a cafeteria during the day, were the regular black coffee is being served. At for example Oslo Spiseforretning cappuccino and cortado are being served to the guests. Bourdieu is emphasizing the history of a place as something, which is important when it comes to making a distinction between "us and them" (1996; 152). These opposites are part of symbolizing of distinction. This means that the old, high ranked establishments are distinguished from the more unassuming establishments. This distinction can also be seen in Old Oslo, but it has taken a slightly different form: The old is mostly appreciated if redecorated, put back to its "origin", but with a continental (and modern) touch, of course. The description of the menu at Oslo Spiseforretning can be seen as a reflection of the interior and architecture:

The kitchen is not supposed to be a historical museum, but a place where tradition and innovation meet. Traditional food can quickly become a cliché. With modern techniques and presentation we will procure the best from Norwegian food tradition¹⁵

¹⁵ www.markveien.no/oslosp/start/default.asp

Aesthetical reflexivity is shining through; old establishments are being redecorated back to its former glory, but with modern techniques and an international feeling reflected both in exterior, interior and in what is being served.

The building housing Oslo Spiseforretning has a long history as a restaurant and this is emphasized in the redecoration of the place. Another form the aesthetical reflexivity can morph into is by keeping the architecture intact, but change the use of space. IKM is situated in the old police station at Grønland. The police station closed down in 1978 and in 1998 IKM moved in and today the function of the police station is as a gallery, café, museum and workshop for various artistic groups. The banner hanging outside of IKM is a reminder of the old use of the building and at the same time it focuses on the use of today: Grønland Culture Station (as opposed to the old name Grønland Police Station). This building is weaving the two concepts of old and ethnic together: The exterior or form is from a working-class era; the function of the building is that of a promoter for the ethnic diversity of Old Oslo.

9.2.2. “The Authentic Ethnic”

Old Oslo is a city part with strong working class traditions, but since the 1970s immigration has been more and more the main association with the area and today it is the area with most non-western immigrants in Oslo. Naturally, this has shaped the characteristics of Old Oslo. The multi-cultural vibe of Old Oslo is also, as described earlier, one of features and appreciations that are being focused upon from the interviewees’ side.

As shown earlier in this chapter the restaurants connected to the authentic old approach has used the names of the restaurants as a way of expressing the identity of the place. Another way of using the name as an identity for the place is to relate to the more exotic qualities of Old Oslo. The use of the name is still related to the history of Old Oslo, but uses the recent immigration history instead of the “old world” aesthetics. Names like Café con Bar and Evita give us associations to Latin America. Mokka Mekka, a coffee shop, plays with the fact that there are a lot of Muslim immigrants in Old Oslo.

Not only are names important in the identity making of the authentic ethnic. The architecture is also important in order to signal the identity of a business. Architects and interior designers diffuse global trends and adapt them into local styles (Zukin, 1995) The owner of Café con Bar explains why the interior there is like it is:

In a way we have built this place out of respect for the city part thinking about interior and things like that” (...) In Old Oslo there are living a lot of different people and the architecture in this part of the city is also very diverse; It’s a bit chaotic here [in Old Oslo] and this is why we have a lot of different styles down on the ground floor; a mixture of wallpapers, fabrics, wood and steel. It’s a bit of a variation and you cannot tell whether it is a 50s, 60s or 70s style down there. It’s sort of “fucked up”, it’s chaotic and it’s done on purpose.



The exterior and logo of café con bar, a mixture of 1970s and a new modern look.

As with the authentic old the authentic ethnic is reflected in the food the restaurants which have their focus on this certain image:

The concept here is the same [as at Grünerløkka], with a kitchen which represents the Middle East, the Mediterranean, not to forget India and Thailand. It’s a cosmopolitan place both when

it comes to food and interior and with the discussion nights where we are discussing a lot of things, especially things of current interest.

Zukin suggests that this is not just a shift in taste, but a shift in the way taste is produced which again accounts for the rise of reflexive consumption. (1991; 203). One way of describing this interplay between many types of cultures is the “orientalization of the world”, which has been referred to as a distinct global process in western countries (Featherstone, 1995) The foreign foods and menus presented in many of the restaurants and cafes¹⁶ in Old Oslo is most likely a response to the gentrifiers demand. There is a world where people read to eat and are preoccupied by new means of consumption and also new anxieties about how to choose between them (Zukin, 1991; 202). If compared to the “authentic old” one can see the same functions in the “authentic ethnic”. It is the refurbished, more expensive restaurants with hints of ethnicity which are the most popular among the new crowd of Old Oslo and with numerous exotic dishes to choose from.

Whereas the old authentic architecture and design can be seen as a response to a romanticizing of the old, of the working class aesthetics and the social democracy, the authentic ethnic can be seen as a response to a romanticizing of the multi-cultural aspect of Old Oslo.

9.2.3. “The New”

The contradiction in relation with my divisions in authentic and new is of course that what has in the earlier paragraphs been described as “the old” is just as new as “the new”, but in terms of architectural style one might refer to the styles as old and new. A collective term for the architecture as a whole might be postmodern architecture (See e.g. McLeod, 1989).

“The new” takes several forms in Old Oslo. You can find the small-scale businesses which have emphasized a contemporary style when decorating. The owner of one of the coffee shops that opened quite early (1997) at Grønland describes the development of the decorations in her café as the following:

¹⁶ the cafes and restaurants I interviewed, the ones considered gentrified.

I think that earlier it was more bohemian. I was the one who did the decoration, the painting and everything and when you don't have much money you have to do the best out of what you've got. It's more thought trough now, more consistent, in a way.

This change in decoration is co-happening with what the café owner describes as following:

It has become trendier over the last few years; you can see that on the people coming here.

The landscape of Old Oslo is changing and the postmodern signs of a city (see for example Robbins 1995 and Thrift and Glennie 1995) can be observed. The piazza and the gallery are the physical containers for this new spirit of urban public life (Robbins, 1995). The block in Schweigaardsgate under is an example of Robbins "piazza and gallery" city. This block consists of a newly opened gallery, a trendy hairdresser, a coffee shop, Mokka Mekka, and a studio where three female clothes designers are located. On the opposite side of the street there is a big piazza built in concrete and stone with benches, trees and flowers.



From left: gallery, hairdresser and café.

The gallery manifests itself in other forms as well, not only in the sense of the small idealistically run galleries, but also bigger galleries have showed interest in Old Oslo. Unge Kunstneres Samfund (UKS) is the latest exhibition space that has showed interest in Old Oslo and opened its first exhibition in a totally renovated space in the autumn of 2003. The exhibition space is a part of an old production hall. The company Brødrene Sundt has produced parts to the offshore industry there. This is attractive space for what can be labeled the creative branch and this type of conversion of old production spaces into art galleries and studios is a trend mainly associated with gentrification of areas. The leader of UKS talks about this trend:

It's interesting to see what has happened along the Akersriver. There are lots of old industrial buildings there and many of them have been turned into design offices, photo studios and other related types of businesses. It is obvious that there are the creative businesses that are interested in this type of spaces.



UKS, interior, opening of Transaction.

9.3. The New National Opera.

Speaking of the architecture in Old Oslo there is one change about to come into this landscape which cannot be overlooked: The building of the National Opera.

A well known mechanism in, and perhaps even a defining characteristic of, the construction of contemporary art buildings (whether it is containing paintings and sculptures or opera and ballet), is that a famous architect (or a firm) is hired to build a spectacular building which intention is to make the city in which it is built more attractive. Now, it must be said that the competition for the National Opera was an anonymous one, but still the famous architectural firm Snøhetta won the competition. Snøhetta is best known for its library in Alexandria. Snøhetta's winning National Opera design has been characterized by the jury as: "a poetic and concrete response to a demanding assignment. The design takes from the city and gives back to the city; it directs, but is nevertheless subservient and puts people and the magic and power of the Opera House at the center of the place. It creates an unexpected dynamic both externally and internally to the benefit of lovers of opera and ballet, the city of Oslo and the international community."¹⁷

The Bilbao effect; the revitalizing effect an architectural spectacle can have on a city's economy, is a well established fact of today, and will be discussed in more detail in chapter 11. In the next paragraphs I will focus on the impact gentrified architecture can have on an environment in terms of inclusion and exclusion.

9.4. The Impact of Gentrified Architecture.

As shown above there I have identified three types of gentrified architecture and styles in Old Oslo. These types of architecture have different outcomes for the city in terms of gentrification. The old is a modification of an already existing neighborhood whereas the new architecture, in this case, the National Opera, transforms a whole area. This leads us to two types of gentrification which will be discussed in detail in chapter 10. For now I will focus on the architecture and how it changes the landscape and the perception of place. The two cultural products that most directly map the landscape are architecture and urban form. Because they shape both the city and our perception of it they are material as well as symbolic. (Zukin, 1991; 42). The

¹⁷ www.snoarc.no

perception of Old Oslo has changed from being a part of Oslo where you normally did not go if you did not have to (and you never went there after dark) to become a place where it is normal to go for dinner, to go out in the weekends, not to forget a place where you get your daily café latte. Architecture is not only responsible for shaping collective memories but it also provides a cultural potential for the expression of new identities (Delanty & Jones, 2002; 464). The identity of Old Oslo has changed from being strongly associated with the working class to being a multi-cultural city part and is today taking its first steps into yet another identity. This has coincided with the rehabilitation and changes in the architecture of Old Oslo. But in Old Oslo's case it does not seem to end up in an identity crisis. Rather, it looks like the transformation process goes on smoothly as Old Oslo enters the identity of being, according to the ObosMagasin, the place for "the innovators and the cool". Without neglecting the part played by architecture and design it is also important to emphasize how markets influence place. A new crowd demands a new style, a new interior and a new exterior.) The typical gentrifier is described as middle and upper-middle-class, single or if a couple: they are young couples, normally childless; not suburbanites returning to the city but rather city dwellers remaining within the city (Butler 1997, 37). According to Smith (1996) the consumption pattern of the gentrifier is easier to detect than to pinpoint personal characteristics. Gentrification takes cities into a new organization of consumption based on cultural capital. One of the aspects of this organization is that it is spatially specific: Consumption markets are attached to places that are unique (Zukin, 1991; 202)

This is a feature especially visible in Old Oslo: Restaurants base their identity on some of the uniqueness of Old Oslo. Either they sell themselves as a cosmopolitan place where people from all over the world meet in an international setting or they base their identity on the ruins of the Middle age.

As I have tried to show in the previous gentrification manifests itself in different ways physically in the landscape. Architectural critics are usually oblivious to how the built environment contributes to segregation, but pariah groups read the meaning immediately (Davis, 1990;195). As the landscape changes the segregation accelerates, we start talking about "us and them", the hint of danger is important in maintaining

the authenticity of the area, but only up to the point where there is no actual contact between the ‘revitalizers’ and the “revitalized”, the ‘habilitators’ and the ‘originators’: The piazza, the gallery and the fancy menu become the weapons that the cafe latte drinkers use in their overtaking of the city. The values and the interests, which are articulated in this new urban landscape is above all the values and the interests of the middle-class: Today’s upscale architecture are full of invisible signs warning off the underclass “Other.” (Davis 1990, 195)

Why should not construction and renovation of buildings be considered city conservation and a way of making the city more attractive to its inhabitants? On one side the restoration and redecoration of formerly run down buildings give a city part something, which can be considered positive for the area. It becomes more beautiful and therefore also more attractive. But, as pointed out by both Zukin (1991, 1995) and Davis (1990), the interest that businesses and art institutions have shown Old Oslo can be seen not only as a physical transformation but also as a social transformation of space and place. This shows how art and architecture work in a social distinction process. The social transformation of space via external development can be seen not only on the exterior of a building or a place, but it can also be understood as a change in the composition of people. Fear of reducing the distance between “us” and “them,” between security guards and criminals, between elites and ethnic groups, makes culture a crucial weapon in reasserting order (Zukin 1995, 142).

Gentrification portends a class conquest of the city. The new urban pioneers seek to scrub the city clean of working class history, and if keeping it, romanticizing its features seem to be the goal.

10. Internal and External Influence and State Intervention.

This chapter is about Old Oslo and the proprietors there. My assumption is that there are mainly two developments and, accordingly, two types of people running businesses in Old Oslo. Two processes I mean having detected during my research on Old Oslo I have named internal and external influences. In addition to this I will also focus on another influence visible in Old Oslo, namely state intervention.

This needs further explanation:

Internal influence refers to development initiated by people living in the city or city part or by people genuinely interested in the place in question. In most what they consider the real spirit of the city part and it's inhabitants and who has an interest in conserving the city part as it is.

External influence, on the other hand, refers to the larger business actors on the city scene: Here profit and money counts more than conservation and the welfare of the people. Examples include big entrepreneurs, hotel chains, shopping centers and so on, but it also includes the businesses that target for customers and audiences outside the borders of the neighborhood and city part.

These distinctions are not absolute, as I will try to show in this chapter, but still I think they are useful as tools in order to understand the city part and the development in Old Oslo

In addition to these two influences I will also look at the phenomenon of state intervention as this is highly actualized by the construction of the New National Opera and Bjørvika. State intervention seems to be a feature in what I named post-recession gentrification in chapter three. Both local and federal government intervention has become more open and assertive now than before in gentrification processes (Hackworth 2002, 818) and this, as I will reveal in the following, also seem to be the case with Old Oslo.

In this chapter I will first present some concepts I consider important in relation with the influences I am about to describe and then use these concept in a discussion on the influences of Old Oslo as I am asking who is influencing the development of Old Oslo?

10.1. Important Concepts.

Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft.

A distinction that quickly comes to mind in relation internal and external influence is the distinction between the two types of society *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft*. (Tonnies 1912) The distinction between *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft* is often characterized as the division between the real, organized life versus the artificial social arrangement based on conflict or egoistic wills. In other words these concepts are giving us a dichotomy to work with, as is the case with the two concepts of internal and external influence. The distinction between the concepts is also often understood as the difference between the rural and the urban. I will argue that there is a connection between Tonnies *gemeinschaft* and my concept of internal influence and the two concepts *gesellschaft* and external influence. According to Tonnies *gemeinschaft* is characteristic for the internal bonding between people where they are united through a common language, custom and faith, so is the case with the concept of internal influence. The internal influence of Old Oslo is united in a common “faith” about what is best for Old Oslo. They have a common understanding about how Old Oslo should be and before profit, they put the inhabitants well being.

The *gesellschaft*, on the other hand is characteristic of the outer form of bonding, which comes into action when people meet consciously aware of their roles as partners you have an interest in or as trading partners. (Andersen et.al. 2001, 68) and this can be compared to the external influence which is present in Old Oslo where trade and profit are in focus.

Global and local.

The globalization of society is a point often highlighted when discussing city development. But what does this mean? It is not a coincidence that Grünerløkka has been described as the Greenwich Village of Oslo. Due to modern technology time and space have been compressed, the world has in many respects shrunk and the impulses we are getting from other countries and other parts of the world are increasing in amount and strength. In short, this is globalization. At the same time it is important to remember that our experience is not that we live in a global village where an all encompassing, technology-based super society replaces outdated and unwanted local social systems and cultures (Lull 1995, 41). Homogenizing forces affect us, but they

always interact with the local conditions. We can identify global cultural processes, especially those who involve a cultural homogenization: McDonalds and the Coca-Cola Company are often used as examples of this. But even such products find their own local expression. McDonalds adapts the interiors of their restaurants to the different locations. This can for example be seen in Oslo where the McDonalds near the two big cinemas in Oslo (Saga and Klingenberg) has a cinematic interior theme. The Coca-Cola of Marrakech tastes different from the Coca Cola of Oslo, intended or not, and the Coca Cola Company runs different commercials in different countries. If globalization means a unitary world culture we are a long way from such a scenario (Barker, 1997). But at the same time the influences are there as the stream of information increases through for example the media and through traveling. So within the global there are locally formed products as a response to the increasing globalization.

Homogenization and heterogenization.

The growing globalization can also be related to the concept of homogenization. The tendency of globalization can be followed by a multi-culturalization of the city, where, to an increasing extent, previously hegemonic, unitary cultures are replaced by ethnically mixed groups (Nylund 2001, 225). The development has been seen in Old Oslo, and especially at Grønland and Tøyen, locally often referred to as “Little Pakistan”. This tendency can be seen in many countries and cities that now seek to project the plurality of ethnic immigrants often re-label their ethnic quarters and ethnoscares (Appadurai 1990) like Greektown and Little Italy are formed (Evans 2003, 421).

The tendency towards a more globalized society can also take another form; the culture of the city is a question of being able to defend different lifestyles and ways of life as well as the right to represent the space (Nylund 2001, 225): The tendency towards segregation of the city, where different groups dominate different areas of the city can be seen in gentrified areas. Nylund operates with two simultaneous developmental trends when it comes to revitalization and an aesthetization of the city: On one hand a homogenization is going on where the city’s identity and specific character are faded out in an international comparison while on the other hand a

segregation is taking place so that the differences between different blocks and districts are increasing. (Nylund 2001, 225).

10.2. Internal Influence.

A community is traditionally defined, sociologically, as a particular form of social organization based on small groups, such as neighborhoods, the small town, or a spatially bounded locality (Delanty 2003, 2). A common deduction is that the internal influence in Old Oslo will come from the local community i.e. the people within the boundaries of Old Oslo who are running establishments there. An owner of a designer store which focus on the Middle age history of Old Oslo explains that Old Oslo has meant much to her:

I feel very strongly that Old Oslo and its history has been very interesting for me. I feel very close to Gamlebyen and I think I have become a sort of patriot.

In this context the local history plays an important role in the shaping of the image and the identity of the designer store. It is used as a base for the identity as the store is “located in the middle of all the [middle age] ruins”. As a business owner she welcomes these new businesses because most likely they mean increased profit for her store and she would like to see “the streets in Old Oslo shine”.

In this connection it is interesting to take notice of what is described by one of the bar owners as the distinctiveness of Old Oslo:

Grønland is cosmopolitan. There are so many different people living here. I like that. It's very ethnic here in a way. Different types of people live here and I like that.

The interviewee stresses the global feeling you get when you enter Old Oslo. In this case *the local is the global*: The multicultural businesses in Old Oslo are in majority compared to other city parts of Oslo. Old Oslo has also, as mentioned earlier, the highest rate of nonwestern immigrants (Barstad, 1997). The current situation of the local has been greatly transformed by globalization (Delanty, 2003). In accordance with Tönnies concepts of *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft* one would think that this multi-culturality should produce a feeling of a *gesellschaft* society as the impact of the multicultural is great and out of this one would conclude that the heterogeneity would lead to a greater distance between people for example because of all the different languages spoken in Old Oslo. As mentioned, Tönnies is emphasizing the common

language, customs and common faith as features of a *gemeinschaft* milieu and one should then assume that because of the multiculturalism of Old Oslo a *gemeinschaft* would not be possible, but the opposite seem to be true: It looks like this is one of the features that actually creates the feeling of locality and *gemeinschaft*. The businesses are emphasizing the plurality of BGO as an important aspect in the production of a feeling of place and a *gemeinschaft* feeling:

This café is a part of Old Oslo because we want the regular guests to feel at home here and we're always treating them well. At the same time we have to be open for everybody and therefore we're also an Oslo restaurant, but we're working as a local café, which is what we want. That we recognize the people coming, that we can talk to them and things like that.

In other words, the internal influence is still there, but maybe in another way than originally thought and maybe not one hundred percent in accordance with Tonnies concepts. It is tempting to use Robertson's concept of *glocality* (Robertson, 1995) to describe what the runners of establishments in Old Oslo are talking about when they tell about the feelings they have towards Old Oslo. According to Robertson *the glocal* is held to be at the heart of contemporary globalization. We are not living in a global village, but in customized cottages globally produced and locally distributed (Castells 1996, 341)

The proprietors described above have an internal approach to the area, but at the same time their heart is close to the metropolitan global city, the city where borders are being crossed and the international influence is high.

The "realness" the owners of some of the new establishments are expressing towards Old Oslo can of course not be taken for anything else than real emotions. One will have to believe the proprietors when they are expressing a concern for the area, but at the same time these establishments are dependent of a certain amount of visitors and the locals of Old Oslo are most likely not in a number to match the amount of visitors the newly opened establishments need in order to get profitable. It is likely to believe that the thoughts behind the places go further than to just establishing a good, old 'brown' café on the corner, where the local patriot Mr. Nielsen can have his daily beer. This takes us further into the problem of internal influence:

Still, there are local pubs, as shown in earlier in the chapter about the architecture of Old Oslo which not seem to be influenced by the increasing globalization and

therefore, in accordance with the reasoning in these paragraphs, are not gentrified¹⁸. A simple indicator of this is the beer prices of these local pubs and bars. Looking at a beer price measurement of Oslo¹⁹, one can see that out of the bars operating with the lowest beer prices 4 out of 5 are located in Old Oslo. These are not bars which I took into consideration when I was conducting interviews exactly because I did not consider them to be a part of the gentrification process of Old Oslo (either because they were not relatively newly established or simply because I did not consider them a part of the typical developmental trend in Old Oslo). Worth noticing is also that among the 10 most expensive places to buy beer 6 are located west in Oslo and 2 of the 10 places are places I picked out as “worthy candidates” for my research in Old Oslo. Here one can understand the low beer prices (and of course also prices on food) as an indicator of internal influence. The places selling their beer cheap can be a mean in order to counteract the gentrification of Old Oslo progressing even further and they are most likely places attracting the local inhabitants. Unfortunately, this might not be the entire picture: On one hand, the cheap local places are an internal influence because of their local embeddedness, but on the other hand they can be seen as means of enhancing the authenticity of the area and hence contribute to gentrification and therefore be viewed upon as a mean for the external influences of Old Oslo²⁰.

10.3. External Influence.

The external defines itself as detached from community because of the interest in capital and profit above other regards. There are at least two types of external influence in Old Oslo:

- The international chains and franchises where surplus is the main goal and the logo of the business is the main focus. The easiest observable types of this kind are McDonalds and Seven Eleven, both well established at Grønland in Old Oslo.

¹⁸ This is not to be understood as globalization is equal to gentrification, but rather due to an increasing globalization the tendency of gentrification can be seen.

¹⁹ www.ungioslo.com/oelbarometer.htm

²⁰ There are other indications of internal influence of Old Oslo, but these are on a level I have chosen not to focus upon in my research. Inhabitants of Old Oslo are fighting against the big entrepreneurs and private investments of Old Oslo. In this case resistance on a grass root level towards the external influence is the issue and I will leave this research to others.

- Businesses, which are interested in getting visitors from the whole of Oslo where the economic function of the neighborhood supersedes the social function, it has. These types of places are much more “personal” in their focus than the international chains.

These two types of external influence do to a certain extent overlap each other, but I will in the following focus on the last type of external influence as this is of a main interest in relation to gentrification and the type of businesses my research have focused on. This type of business is illustrated well by one of the owners of such a business:

Everyone involved in this project is thinking very long term (...) this place is not built around only the people living in this area. No matter where you open a restaurant like this you have to have a much larger impact area, greater circle of customers and then you have to address yourself to the center.

The interviewee here is emphasizing time as an important aspect in the planning of an economic success. They have started out early in order to create a name and a reputation before what they regard as “the boom” of Old Oslo sets in. Some of the business owners do believe that a change will take place to a greater extent in Old Oslo than what it already has. The entry of world-wide chains as McDonalds and Seven Eleven are clear signs of an external influence. This in itself might not be an indication of a gentrification process taking place, but the fact that these types of chains are being placed in areas where the population density is high is at least an indication of Old Oslo as an inner city area where there are living a lot of people and that again might indicate that the area is a popular one. As one of the business owners explains:

I didn't think about establishing my business here at all. That was a very distant thought to me. I thought more about Frogner and Briskeby and places like that.

Another approach when it comes to external influence is admittance from the proprietor about being a business for all of the inhabitants of Oslo, but coincidentally located in Old Oslo:

I guess this is an Oslo place located at Grønland. There are people coming here from all over the city.

In this case the business in itself might be seen as a business whose function is an internal one until the inhabitants of Oslo discover it. Then it turns into an external influence because of the people attracted to the business. There are a lot of examples of this in Old Oslo. Most of the bars and restaurants run in BGO have a non-advertising policy, only relying on the ‘jungle telegraph’. In this case the pioneers of the city finds them and give them the rather high status that some of these places have or have had in the past, or are expecting to get in the future. One bar owner tells about the overwhelming success his business experienced in the beginning:

We must have ‘captured something in the time’ because of the explosive influx in the beginning. There was no peace. I didn’t sleep the first month after the opening. I worked. I had an average of two hours of sleep every night. I didn’t have the time to eat. I ate coffee beans. I looked like a junkie and my co-worker started to squint. It was totally crazy, but we got through it because there was so much positivity going on at the same time. That gave us the adrenaline to keep going, but it wasn’t exactly about running the place. It did that by itself. We were just clinging to it and followed after it as best as we could.

The pioneer metaphor describing gentrifiers is now problematic not only for its cultural connotations (see Smith, 1996) but also increasingly because the “hearty individual” is less a part of the gentrification process than before. Corporate participation is not simply the “maturation” of gentrification in individual neighborhoods. Firms are increasingly the first to invest and redevelop property for more affluent users (Hackworth 2002, 820).

In the paragraphs about internal influence I used the beer prices of Old Oslo as an indicator of internal influence. The prices of a glass of beer can also be used as an example on the opposite; the external influence. Before the gentrification process of Old Oslo the beer prices of Old Oslo were on an average much lower than those of today’s Old Oslo.

One of the business owners describes the old bar located where he now runs his restaurant in:

This place was a kind of place with incredibly inexpensive beer and they were open almost around the clock!

Another example of the external influence of Old Oslo is the growing resistance against the new establishments of Old Oslo. Two of the highest profiled establishments of Old Oslo have experienced vandalism or threats about vandalism as a reaction to the ‘capitalists’ moving into Old Oslo. One of the proprietors experienced several episodes:

There are living, what can I call them, old Blitzers²¹ and there is a rather strong socialist sympathy around here. These people are doing their things and now they have started to have children and things like that now. I haven’t given that much thought. All I have thought about is the fact that this place is being refurbished and that we are establishing a nice place here. But, you know, that is understood as capitalism and ‘here comes the money and destroys our city part’. We had problems in the beginning with tags and vandalism and I ended up thinking: Fuck, do I have the guts to do this? [...] Last summer something rather serious happened. There were paint thrown up against all the walls and they damaged the building, but then I think it was discussed on the inside of this “movement’ that this was taking it too far.

The anti-gentrification movement that one has seen in other countries (see e.g. Hackworth 2002 and Smith 1996) might be read as a sign of external influences taking over what has been defined as internal influence. The earlier guests feel squeezed out, they feel that their “city” have been taken over by something foreign and they are not welcome anymore, not only because of the prices, but also because of the signals the refurbished building in itself sends out (Davis 1990).

²¹ Blitz is a loosely organized group consisting mainly of young people with anti-racist, anti-capitalist attitudes. For more information about this group see www.blitz.no.

10.4. State Intervention: The Construction of the New National Opera.

There are many reasons for why the changes of Old Oslo have taken place in the last decade. As discussed earlier one of the biggest physical changes that is about to happen in Old Oslo is the building of the opera in Bjørvika.

The Ministry of Culture (St.prp.#48) underlines the importance of how a cultural institution, like the National Opera, must serve a double function:

[The opera house] shall serve as a place for culture and a workplace for an artistic institution that is going to give the audience a quality cultural experience. The building must also through its localization and architecture illustrate the meaning of operatic art as a cultural utterance and also the nation's comprehension about itself as a nation of culture (My translation, st.prp #. 48, 1998-1999; 4)

Through this statement the Ministry of Culture has managed to capture both the function as a high culture institution for the city and the function the opera might have as a tourist attraction. Through being a place for culture the opera will be a cultural institution built for the sake of art and for the city in it self. The building of the opera in the scale that is planned is a certain sign of a globalization process reaching Oslo. Not only will the Opera give changes to Old Oslo and the surrounding areas, but also will it put Oslo on the map as a city of culture. Experiences from other counties and cities show that the city's symbolic economy often depends of the amount of cultural capital a city is able to show off. The designation of the cultural city and the use of the arts and entertainment as tools in urban regeneration is now considered a universal phenomenon which has accelerated in the era of the 'city of renewal' (Evans 2003, 417)

As emphasized by the Ministry of Culture, the localization of the opera in Bjørvika will include more than just the building of the opera; a more comprehensive process of city planning must also take place. The propositions (# 37 and 48) about the opera from the Ministry of Culture both emphasize what they are calling the "locomotive effect" of the building of a new Opera. With this it is meant that planning a big architectural project, such as an opera, will give maximal favorable effects to the surroundings of the area where the building is located. The locomotive effect can not be understood in any other way than as a cover up for gentrification. This is made even clearer as the example used as an illustration is the Pompidou-Centre in Paris

whose localization has given new life to the rather rundown part of Paris, the Marais (see also Evans 2003, 434).

The fact that opera and ballet do not have very strong traditions in Norway is an argument used by the Ministry of Culture in disfavor of the locomotive effect. On the other hand, the effect the erection of such an architectural landmark as the National Opera actually will be might indicate that it will turn out as a success. The Bilbao effect, which will be described later, indicate that it not necessarily the function of the building as much as its form that is important. The proposition #48 mentions in the same paragraph that opera has never been more popular in Norway than now, and one of the arguments for building a new opera is because of an increase in visitors to the existing opera in Folketeater quarter. The symbolic economy has changed over the years and today the characteristic of it is its symbiosis of image and product, the scope and scale of selling images on a national level and even a global level, and the role of the symbolic economy in speaking for, or representing, the city. (Zukin 1995, 134) The localization of the New National Opera House in Oslo has been discussed with the fact in mind that Bjørvika is not an area where people normally spend a lot of time, but rather it is an area for people going from one part of the city to another, just using Bjørvika as a transit place. What is not discussed in the proposition is the fact that even though the Opera is not going to be located exactly in Old Oslo it will be located so close and most likely in one way or another it will have an impact on the area.

The National Opera can, on one hand be described as an external influence of Old Oslo, but is also an external influence with the Ministry of Culture as the main backup. Therefore, on the other hand, it is not a typical external influence. Profit is not the main goal of constructing a New National Opera, even though it is lurking in the back. State intervention in a gentrification process has been observed in many other gentrified cities, but often to a lesser extent than in Oslo. In New York, the city government dropped the strict fire codes, decreased the support for the manufacturing industry, and provided incentives in order for artists to reside there (Zukin, 1982 in Hackworth, 2002). The symbolic economy of the city in the sense of the city advocates and business elites who build the majestic art museums, parks, and architectural complexes that represent a world- class (Zukin, 1995). In this sense the symbolic economy of the city is a great external influence, but this cannot be

accounted for in Norway in the same way as in for example the US. The state intervention (and responsibility) in Norway (and other European countries) is much more extensive and the public responsibility more strongly regulated than in the US and I will argue that the state must be considered an actor in the symbolic economy of Oslo. In the case of Old Oslo the state must therefore be considered an external influence of great importance.

The erection of the National Opera is difficult to discuss in relation with *gemeinschaft/ gesellschaft* distinction in mind, but as an extensive contributor to the increasing globalization of Oslo as a whole and as an external influence when it comes to Old Oslo it makes sense.

10.5. Intertwined Influences?

Above I have tried to argue for a division between internal and external influences in Old Oslo. The hardest part is of course to decide what can be counted for as internal influence and what is external influence if gentrification is the criteria. Business development of the external type can be disguised as internal influence because of the motives behind the establishing of a business. Utterances as *“I love this part of the city very much and hoped that we would be viewed upon as a sort of gift to Old Oslo”* is hard to think of as anything else than a real commitment to the city part in question, but at the same time one can see it as a form of gentrification because of the attention the new businesses and cultural institutions draw to BGO, not only because they are newly established, but because of their interior and exterior which is a type of architecture and interior design often viewed upon as typical for gentrification. It is not only architecture that reveals the external influencer, another salient feature is the fact (s)he has a long experience in for example the restaurant business in other parts of the city; the same proprietor referred to above also explains that he and his collaborators are running other businesses in Oslo as well:

We have more than only this place in Oslo, and we are running some places at Grünerløkka (...) Who knows, maybe we will open up some new places even further east in connection with Bjørvika if we find a good location.

The Olav Thon group has a shopping mall/apartment complex, on the planning stage at Grønland, the Grønland Bazaar. This is one of many projects by the Olav Thon group, which has big interests in the shopping mall and hotel business of Norway. The mall intended in Old Oslo is a mall built as an old fashioned bazaar with small shops. The mall will be located in a block at Grønland characterized by decay and most of the small wooden houses there are shut down and look like they are uninhabitable because they are so neglected and run down. One should not make the mistake give credit to the Thon group of being concerned with authenticity and architecture that blends in the neighborhood²². But in this specific situation it looks like the environment and the neighborhood have been taken into consideration. On this occasion, then, the external influence, which I believe the Thon group is a crown example of, is in a way pretending to be a part of the internal influence as they are trying to blend in and not only blend in because of the building, but also with what the building is going to contain. The bazaar architecture is flirting with the multi-cultural feeling of Old Oslo and when one hear about the bazaar plans of Thon the thoughts easily wander to the souks of Marrakech or the markets of Izmir. The owner of a bar close to the building site is enthusiastic about the plans:

Thon are having these plans of building these bazaar things here. The project was supposed to be finished during 2003, but I think they have been delayed. In the low-rise houses near the bingo he had plans for building a bazaar. A bazaar or something like that with small shops inside and I think it would be really good if he did that.

But the whole thing is an illusion from the engineers of the Thon group. The bazaar is not real, it is something constructed because of an understanding of what fits in and what is authentic for Old Oslo even though it has never been real. The wish for authenticity through a new and commercial building like this is a contradiction in terms because of the wish for authenticity which at the same time is a removal of authenticity and the real in the city with the arrival of something that comes from the outside, i.e. it is not real and it is an external influence, and influence from the commercial industry, not mainly concerned with people, but first and foremost with money and profit.

²² See for example Ski Storsenter.

At first sight it is easy to say that it is obvious that the forces coming from the outside of Old Oslo is the ones causing the changes whereas the local forces are the “good guys” with the right intentions leading to the right changes. The situation is that of an interwoven pattern of people and businesses that have interests that go both ways with even the state as an important actor. I think this is illustrated well by a phrase from one of the pioneers at Grønland, who opened up one of the first coffee bars in Old Oslo:

I feel that I have helped Grønland by starting my businesses here. They have become an attraction and have contributed to the environment down here, and I think that an environment is extremely important; to ‘create’ Grønland is also important. And I feel I have done just that.

The irony here is of course that what is given to Grønland is a business that makes Old Oslo more conform in the sense that now you can also get your café latte at Grønland. What might have been viewed upon as an internal influence, as *gemeinschaft*, in the sense of the local, turns out to be external, and if not global, at least international.

In this chapter I have documented how Old Oslo is characterized by two main intertwined developments, namely those of external and internal influence. The two types of development are related with the concepts of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* and they also give meaning to the discussion about local and global communities. The slogan go global, stay local (Evans 2003, 423) is a well- fitted slogan for Old Oslo and the tendencies one can observe there at the moment as the influences seem to be more interwoven than what can be first are being captured. This is mainly due to the many different agendas behind the businesses. In other words the external and internal influences are not intertwined in the sense that influences are going both ways. Instead, it seems if the external influences increasingly weakens the internal influences in Old Oslo. These are the ones that have been considered unique to Old Oslo and hence might have contributed to the gentrification.

11. Conflict or Equilibrium?

The broad definition of urban planning can be described as change: preventing undesirable changes and encouraging desirable changes. (Garvin 1996, 399)

In chapter 10 I described two outcomes of the gentrification of Old Oslo, namely internal and external development. In this chapter I will focus on a related set of problems. Whereas the internal and external influence of Old Oslo focused on competing strategies in the development of the city part, I will in this chapter look at the two types of gentrification which are taking place in Old Oslo. I will explain why I believe that the building of the National Opera and the construction of Bjørvika will have an impact on Old Oslo. To illustrate this further I will compare Old Oslo with two cities, Bilbao and Gothenburg, which have faced similar developments. The last section of the chapter will be devoted to a discussion on whether or not the gentrification processes taking place are in conflict with each other or in a state of equilibrium.

The reasons for gentrification might be a debate in a constant state of conflict (Smith, 1996) even though there is more and more agreement upon the fact that both of the main explanations of gentrification is valuable as I have shown in chapter 3. It is interesting to note that while there are several explanations for why gentrification takes place it is also several types of gentrification.

One out of two main variants of gentrification, is a type where earlier industrial areas or areas of so-called wasteland are converted into a part of the city. With new architecture, public spaces and shopping malls, the once unattractive and unavailable area becomes attractive and most likely also profitable.

Bjørvika is a new part of Oslo, still mainly on the planning stage, but as I am writing things have started to happen there. Bjørvika is formerly a harbor area on the east side of Oslo mainly containing storage spaces and containers ready to be shipped out. Now

the area is becoming the “Gate to the Capital of Norway” (KOP 2002, 6). It will contain two main cultural institutions: the New National Opera and the University Museum of Cultural History (UKM). The total area for business institutions is calculated to be 450.000m² of which 100.000m² is reserved for cultural- and recreational activities. A moderate expectation is that the area of Bjørvika will be able to serve as a place for 20.000 employees in 2015 (KOP, 2002; 179).

The second form of gentrification describe here takes place in an already existing neighborhood. This type of gentrification modifies old neighborhoods, for instance working class areas or other types of deprived neighborhoods, into upgraded middleclass neighborhoods. This is the type of gentrification seen in Old Oslo, as I described in chapter 6 and 7.

An interesting question is which of these types of gentrification took place first? Would one see the tendency towards a gentrification in Old Oslo if the decision to build the opera and Bjørvika had not taken place? Unfortunately, I cannot tell what would had happened if the opera for instance had been placed west in Oslo, but still I will try to reflect upon the two processes seeming to take place. So, the two questions to have in mind in this chapter will be:

- Would the development that one can trace in Old Oslo have taken place if the opera had been built somewhere else?

- Is there a conflict between the forthcoming development in Bjørvika and the development in Old Oslo or are the two gentrification processes in a state of equilibrium?

11.1. Can We Blame it on the Opera?

I believe that throughout the previous chapters I have established that there is a gentrification process going on in Old Oslo. In chapter 6 and 7 I revealed some of the reasons for why businesses, both the commercial and cultural ones, find Old Oslo interesting in relation to establishments. In this section I will focus on what I in chapter 6 described as gentrification expectancy. The emphasis on the proprietors’

behalf was mainly the blooming of Grünerløkka when they described what they experienced in Old Oslo. In this chapter the main focus will be on Bjørvika and the influence it has on Old Oslo.

Among the interviewees there seem to be two main opinions about the National Opera and the influence it will have on the development of Old Oslo: On one hand, the majority express a positive attitude towards the construction. On the other hand there are business owners claiming that Bjørvika is none of their interest because it will not influence them. They see the project as too big and ‘out of their range’ so it does not concern them. The leader of UKS explains why she does not think that the opera matters for the members of UKS:

When it comes to the opera in particular I don’t believe that the people going to UKS go in the opera. The members of Young Artists Association do definitively not go in the opera because it’s too expensive.

The conclusion of these two diverging opinions must be that, it looks like the opera has an effect on the development of Old Oslo, but not to a large extent yet. It seems to be other features of Old Oslo which attracts the establishers more than Bjørvika, as described in the previous chapters, but the tendency is there as shown in chapter 7; the majority of the proprietors interviewed in Old Oslo are welcoming the National Opera.

The use of culture is more and more the business of cities (Zukin, 1995). Oslo is no exception; the building of the National Opera is an example of the emphasize on culture, not only as a tribute to the fine art of opera and ballet, but as a landmark of Oslo. Culture is a powerful tool in order to make the different types of the city’s capital to grow. Experience from other cities show that the whole area around the architectural flagship benefit from the effect of the building. Comparing the development of Old Oslo to other cities where big cultural institutions are being built, often with no traditions for what one would name “high culture”, there is evidence that the environment around the building will be affected in a high degree.

The planners of Bjørvika and the National Opera ignore this fact by stating that the construction of the Bjørvika area is not considered in any way to directly influence cultural milieus north of Schweigaards street and on Grønland/ Lower Tøyen. (KOP

2002, 149). In other words it is denied that the construction of Bjørvika will affect Old Oslo. This is interesting in relation to the interviews I have conducted where Bjørvika frequently is mentioned as a positive contribution to Old Oslo. The use of culture as a way to fuel a city's economy can be seen in many western cities today. In the United States alone 600 new art museums have been built since the 1970s and during Mitterrand's presidency from 1981 to 1995, there have been built and renovated over 400 museums in France (Newhouse, 1998). The development does not seem to let up: a survey conducted by Art News (October, 2002) count more than 150 new art museums that are being built right now or are on the planning stage in Western Europe and North America.

A relevant and well-used European example, despite its short existence, is the construction of the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao²³. Bilbao is located in the Basque region of Spain about ten miles from the Bay of Biscay and has from a long time been a major port, a shipbuilding center and a place for iron and steel refining. The past fifteen years have not been good for these kind of industries and the economy of Bilbao, indeed of the whole Basque region, has suffered accordingly. Bilbao, formerly considered a typical post industrial town in severe financial and social difficulty, became revitalized through the building of the Guggenheim Museum and Gehry's building is now the undisputed emblem of a reinvigorated city. This titanium signature Gehry building became an overnight success and received an amount of media attention that was almost unprecedented both for the Guggenheim museum in itself and for Bilbao. Inspired by the initial success of the museum further changes are being made to the city of Bilbao and an ambitious urban renewal plan is being implemented. There are plans to restructure the port, the river by which the Guggenheim museum is located is being cleaned, the riverfront will include both the Guggenheim museum as well as a conference and concert hall, and operating since 1995 is one of the world's most elegant subway systems, built by the high-tech architect Sir Norman Foster (Newhouse, 1998)

Another, and maybe closer example in relation to the National Opera in Bjørvika, is the Opera of Gothenburg. Gothenburg is the second largest city in Sweden with

²³ I am here aware of the fact that a museum and an opera are not quite comparable because of the opening hours and the actual content and use of the building are different, but I will argue that the signal effect the building in itself has, as a grand architectural project, is the same.

471.000 inhabitants. The Gothenburg Opera is a rather new project finished in 1994. The opera is located in the outskirts of the city center of Gothenburg. The Gothenburg Opera is built on what formerly was a harbor area and much of this area is today still used for harbor purposes. But a big conversion of the waterfront area of Gothenburg has taken place.

The conversion of waterfront areas, seaside or riverside is a major feature of several European cities. As a result of economic and technological reforms over the last few years, city-center ports have disappeared, leaving behind the husk of an infrastructure in need of a new role (Mega, 2000). The conversion of the old harbor area in Gothenburg into a mixed-use area, after closing down of shipyards, transformed four kilometers of abandoned area between the two bridges Älvsborgsbridge and Göta Älvsbridge.

This area is today transformed into a multifunctional part of the city through a multiple partnership between the city, the architects, the former shipbuilding companies and the public. Large-scale industry is now being replaced by what is described as a “good town” where residential buildings are safely mixed with clean industry, where a varied service sector supports the inhabitants and those employed there, and where good communication is created. In addition a large number of old shipyard buildings will still survive and be given new life and house modern businesses.²⁴ The intentions behind this project were of course the best, but how do people actually perceive this new area in Gothenburg? Walking around in this neighborhood gives you a feeling of sterility, of artificiality. There are hotels there, theaters and restaurants, but what is missing is people. The local ferry, Älvsnabben, best reaches the area. The ferry is one of the main transportation devices in Gothenburg; so that the area is difficult to access should not be an excuse for not going there. To put cultural buildings, such as the new Gothenburg opera and theaters there together with apartment buildings, hotels and restaurants and also keeping some of the old buildings intact might be viewed upon as the perfect city planning, but why does it not work?

Most people agree that entertainment facilities, pubs, cafes, boutiques, and so on, in a fine grained mixture, do contribute to the vitality of an urban core, as do variety of pedestrian flow,

²⁴ www.statsbyggnad.gothenburg.se

the inclusion of nature, and an architectural diversity reflecting the urban heritage (Code 1992, 335).

This is the recipe for good city planning and I will argue that the former harbor area of Gothenburg has followed this step by step, but still it is not working very well.²⁵ Why is it so that this area is being perceived as an empty area without the normal pace as one would like to experience in a city area with theaters, restaurants, hotels and shops?

The harbor area has no history as a part of the city where people used to spend time. It is an area of the city not normally considered a place to go. Maybe over time one can see the development of a blooming city life, but as today it can be argued that this part of the city is too new for the inhabitants of Gothenburg to be perceived as a part of the city where one actually spends time. This sort of development might be described as gentrification of a renewed area. There is no help in constructing a new and beautiful part of the city surrounding the Opera if no one is using it apart from when they are going to and from visits in the Opera. The Gothenburg Opera has experienced a doubling in visitors since its new opening so the Opera as an attraction in itself cannot explain why the surroundings of the opera is perceived as empty and without the regular city pace. Where memory or the sense of a place is effectively absent, and where a place is to be created massive capital investment and revenue is likely to be required and success still cannot be guaranteed (Evans 2003, 433)

What do these two cases tell us when it comes to the development of the Bjørvika area and the impact this has on Old Oslo? The leader of the Cultural Department in Old Oslo has reflected upon this:

On the cultural sector there has happened quite a lot here the last few years. I think that the opera has a psychological effect on the big entrepreneurs here but we haven't seen the huge changes because of the opera yet.

To return to the original question of these paragraphs, the question of whether or not the development one can see in Old Oslo would have taken place without the opera;

²⁵ This is only based on my own observations as a visitor in Gothenburg and will need more investigation, but still I will argue that one can view this area of Gothenburg as a rather empty area.

This might be an impossible question to answer, but still I have tried to gather information about similar projects to try to explain what might happen. The main trend seems to be the fact that areas which are the hosts of big cultural spectacles, like Bjørvika in the future, will experience an increase in economic prosperity, as well as an increase in what can be termed cultural capital. The use of culture as a way to build a city's image, is a well-known strategy that seems to work and which is well documented around the world. But as tried to show here, the use of culture as a brick in a city's development might not always be the success it was intended to.

11.2. Conflict and Equilibrium Revisited.

In the beginning of this chapter I asked the question: Is there a conflict between the forthcoming development in Bjørvika and the development in Old Oslo, or are the two different gentrification processes in a state of equilibrium?

The theory of gentrification predicts and expects conflict because of the nature of the process: one group of people is being forced out of an area as another group is moving into the area (See e.g. Ruth Glass 1963). My perspective on gentrification is not a "people perspective" where I look at the inhabitants of Old Oslo; rather I have looked at the businesses and cultural institutions to investigate whether or not there is a change in the composition of these and how the owners of the different businesses react to the present and forthcoming changes in Old Oslo.

The equilibrium in Old Oslo is at first glance present. The interviewees in my study welcome the new city part, Bjørvika. As mentioned earlier the planners of Bjørvika do not consider the effects of the Bjørvika construction to be a major concern when it comes to Old Oslo. (KOP 2002, 149) Many of the interviewees do not see it this way, instead they think that Bjørvika will have an impact, but this is viewed upon as something that will happen in the future, and it does not seem like this is a major concern right now. The future, according to a business owner, looks bright:

They do have intentions about getting things done down there (in Bjørvika) and the opera in itself will look really great and I think that if they manage to build the roads and everything that they've planned it will become really extreme. There will be a lot of new houses, new shops, a whole new part of the city in a way so it's hard to imagine what really is going to

happen. But I think that it will be a whole lot more people and a whole new market will open up for people like us who are running restaurants, shops and so on. I think it will be totally crazy! But I do hope that it will not end up being this over-commercialized thing because that will end up being a bit wrong down here.

The constructions of Bjørvika and the opera have not yet influenced the thinking of many of the proprietors and the cultural institutions of Old Oslo. The way I see it, one of the reasons for why the opera is not affecting the way proprietors of Old Oslo think might be because they feel they belong to the city part in one way or another. Many of them can be put in the category which I call internal influence i.e. they view Old Oslo as their own, as a place where they are working from within, not something that they are interested in concurring from the outside in order to gain as much profit as possible. They do not consider themselves gentrifiers or revitalizers of the city part, but inhabitants and / or supporters of Old Oslo:

I've always loved Grønland because this is the part of the city where you get the feeling of being in a big city. I think it is a very nice part of the city.

On the surface it seems as if there is no conflict between the forthcoming Bjørvika construction and the businesses in Old Oslo. One can of course ask the question, why should there be a conflict between owners of businesses and the new area which will produce new potential customers?

Or will the changes that might end up taking place influence Old Oslo in a negative way? With this I mean that Old Oslo might end up experiencing the development that the interviewees do not wish for: The disappearance of the mixed crowd, the multiculturalism of the shops, the kebab places and the Indian restaurants. As the owner of Café con Bar explains it:

When I get in here [the café] and see the mix of people sitting here I find it very okay because that is what this part of the city is.

Even though many of the people I interviewed are well aware of the trend in the neighboring city part Grünerløkka, they do not consider the same to happen in Old Oslo. On one side they see the parallels to Grünerløkka and the gentrification taking place there, whereas on the other side there is a refusal to believe that the same thing

will take place in Old Oslo. Drawing upon experiences from other cities one would expect that there might be an even greater change in Old Oslo, and especially in the areas close to Bjørvika. Two features that can be observed in Old Oslo, namely the opera and the interest that businesses and cultural institutions have expressed about the city part, leads to the thought of gentrification and revitalization. And as revealed culture are often used as a tool to revitalize neighborhoods and heighten living standards, still the businesses and cultural institutions question the impact of the Bjørvika construction. The cultural institutions do seem to realize the potential of what might happen, and is on the verge of happening, to a fuller extent than the businesses:

I think [the gentrification process] has a positive effect of this side of the city, but it is of course not nice for the old guys working in the production halls seeing everything just turns white and styled. There is a cultural conflict there, which we should be aware of.

So, even though there might not be a conflict yet, one is likely to take place once the influence of Bjørvika and the opera has reached its potential. The equilibrium might be there today but how this will develop after a few years when more real estate investments are done in Old Oslo and more businesses are being established, will be interesting to see. The symbolic economy deals with how the city is manipulated by the combination of land, labor and capital and how the place entrepreneurs see possibilities for investment and real estate development and how the city advocates and business elite build the city (Zukin 1995, 7). The building of Bjørvika, even though mainly a political decision, can be regarded as a strategy to make an area more attractive. In using the symbolic economy of the city in such a way, the economic capital of the city will normally rise. A rise in the cultural capital will also normally be seen if one interprets the concept of culture as high culture, but what about the lower kinds of cultural activities, such as the sub cultures and the cultures of immigrants and all the other types of that one can see at the grass root level of a city? Will one still be able to find these sorts of cultural activities when the climate of Old Oslo changes?

The reasoning behind the building of the opera and the construction of Bjørvika seem to be going in two different directions. On one hand, Oslo wants to place itself on the world map as a cultural city, with an architectural flagship inviting the cultural elite to

interesting experiences. On the other hand, the KOP rapport (2002, 149) claims that Bjørvika will not affect the environment of Old Oslo. According to Zukin this is not the case: The growth of the symbolic economy in finance, media, and entertainment may not change the way entrepreneurs do business. But it has already forced the growth of towns and cities, created a vast new workforce, and changed the way consumers and employees think (Zukin 1995, 8). So, changes in the environment might be inevitable because of the impact the opera and its surroundings will have on, not only Old Oslo, but also the whole city of Oslo.

In this chapter I have argued that it is difficult to predict what will happen to Old Oslo and the development already evident today. But I have tried to draw upon experiences from other similar projects in order to show what the future development might look like. The tendency is to use cultural landmarks as a way to lift an area out of a former deprived state and into a state of cultural and economic prosperity. The conflict here will of course be the conflict between the new and the old, the well established and the new established. This is a conflict which I claim is not yet visible in Old Oslo, but experiences from related sites indicates that this might be the outcome of the beginning revitalization one can see in Old Oslo and the building of the opera.

Ending this analysis it is interesting to go back to the quotation used in the introduction to the chapter:

The broad definition of urban planning can be described as change: preventing undesirable changes and encouraging desirable changes (Garvin 1996, 399).

The desirable change of Old Oslo is of course to heighten the living standard of its inhabitants and one might read the building of the opera as an underlying agenda for reaching this goal. The undesirable change and underlying problem here is that a heightening of the living standard does not necessarily imply that one will raise the living standard of the people already living there. Rather the opposite might end up happening. This is the worst case scenario of gentrification: The people already living in Old Oslo will have to move out due to the rising prices following revitalization of the area. Another desired change might be to get the highbrow culture into the city

part, but this might lead to killing all sub cultural activity, ending up with a city part so polished and impersonal and so far from the city my mother once knew.

12. Conclusion.

In this thesis I have studied the development and changes in Old Oslo the last five years when it comes to commerce and culture. In order to do so I have chosen to explore the processes of gentrification because these are powerful processes when it comes to change and definition of an area or a place. The main goal has been to reveal that there are clear signs of gentrification in Old Oslo. The approach has been a rather ambitious one. I have tried to demonstrate gentrification through development in business and culture. Basing my research mainly on interviews with the people who have established businesses, commercial or cultural ones, in Old Oslo the last five years I mean having detected clear signals of gentrification. My main research question therefore remains:

To what extent and in which ways can one see the gentrification processes in Old Oslo?

The first two chapters of my analysis have revealed that there is a great deal of interest among both cultural institutions and commercial businesses for Old Oslo as a place to be established. Several features make the city part interesting. There is an expectancy and a belief about Old Oslo as an area which have a great potential and which both will “boom” and “bloom” to an even greater extent than what can already be seen. Reasons given for these expectations are the location Old Oslo has i.e. it is very centrally located in relation to public transportation, close to the city center etc. The construction of Bjørvika and the new national opera is also a central feature of the attractiveness of Old Oslo. The diversity of the inhabitants of Old Oslo is also a reason for why Old Oslo is experienced as so attractive these days. I suggest that the diversity, which is so heavily emphasized by most of my interviewees, not necessarily is as present as they want it to be. This again indicates that a gentrification process is commencing.

Comparing the two groups focused upon in the thesis, the cultural institutions and commercial establishments, it seems like the cultural institutions are more aware of their role as potential gentrifiers and this group is also most concerned about the development of Old Oslo. Ironically, the tendency points towards that it is the cultural institutions and the use of culture in general that contributes most to the gentrification of Old Oslo. Not only do the cultural institutions of Old Oslo contribute to making the city part more attractive, culture also seem to be an important ingredient used by the commercial businesses. The cultural expressions of the commercial businesses morphs into several forms ranging from theater evenings to focus upon the design of the places. All in accordance with a recipe for attracting people possessing the right amount of both cultural and aesthetical capital.

Architecturally gentrification also seems to manifest itself in the landscape of Old Oslo. The trend in architecture and design in Old Oslo is an emphasizing of three themes: old, authentic and new, but these styles are taken to the extreme in the sense that they are romanticized and only the wanted elements are accentuated. I further suggest that this type of architecture and interior design work in a social distinction process and that architecture can be a powerful tool in the segregation process of a city. This supports my findings about the audience groups and customers in Old Oslo: the tendency seems to be more and more “trendy” people, even though the proprietors like to give the picture of a diverse audience.

The last section of the analysis focused on which actors are influencing the gentrification process of Old Oslo. The tendency here is an intertwined (co)operation between small actors (internal influence), larger ones (external influence), and the state. The state is in my thesis mainly represented by the construction of Bjørvika and the New National Opera. I have also emphasized Bjørvika as a large actor in the future gentrification of Old Oslo by drawing upon experiences in other counties. I further suggested that Old Oslo is not only experiencing one type of gentrification, but two. The first type of gentrification is the one going on in Old Oslo today, as described in the first chapters of my analysis. The other gentrification process is a function of the construction of Bjørvika because of the huge role Bjørvika most likely will play in the life of Old Oslo in the future. To predict the future is impossible, but in the last section of the thesis I compared Bjørvika and the development in Old Oslo

to two other cities which have undergone the same development as Old Oslo is about to undergo, namely Bilbao and Gothenburg in order to outline some possible outcomes of the gentrification process there and how this will affect Old Oslo. I found that the development and the gentrification, and hence also the future of such cities are hard to predict, but also that it is almost impossible to fight against gentrification.

With this summary I would like to add some final assessments. A remark, which I find necessarily because it might be understood as a weakness in my research, is the fact that I have only focused my data gathering on the newcomers in Old Oslo without interviewing the businesses that was there from the start, before the changes I am describing started to happen. I am aware of this weakness in my research but I still think I can justify this, as my main research focus has been on the *new developments* in Old Oslo. On one hand, one might criticize me for actually having missed some of the essence of gentrification, i.e. I have not pinpointed the displacement that is a consequence of gentrification processes. On the other hand I have documented this through the interviews with the business owners and the cultural institutions. Many of them have touched upon this in one way or another, either by describing the customers or audience they are experiencing that they have or by expressing concern or knowledge about what is happening with the composition of the population in Old Oslo. I have also emphasized how the architecture and design of Old Oslo and Bjørvika can function as a divider between “us” and “them”. Also, I have, to my knowledge, described other sides of the gentrification process (see for example Savage Warde & Warde, 2003), which leads to the conclusion that a gentrification process is taking place in Old Oslo. At the same time I think it is important to emphasize that the gentrification process is in a starting phase. Still, you can find examples of the opposite of gentrification in Old Oslo. You can see blocks which not have gone through any kind of rehabilitation and still it is possible to find the good old, brown bars with real coffee and cheap beer, but as the gentrification process is sneaking up on old Oslo all experience tells us that this will disappear. The description of different scenarios from other gentrified cities mentioned in chapter twelve reveals that a gentrified city is not necessarily a perfect city. A city has to function for its inhabitants, not only be a display for the country in question. Cities are

places where creativity is concentrated, since there is no other source of innovation besides human brains and hearts (Mega 2000) and these hearts and brains need to be taken care of.

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Appendix 1: Map.