



# IMPROVING QUALITY OF LIFE THROUGH URBAN PLANNING

A CASE STUDY OF TØYEN AND GRØNLAND

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MASTER'S THESIS BY JASMIN ALIMARI

MASTER OF TECHNOLOGY, CITY AND REGIONAL PLANNING

UNIVERSITY OF STAVANGER  
FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY, ECONOMICS AND PLANNING  
SPRING 2021





University of  
Stavanger

Faculty of Science and Technology

## MASTER'S THESIS

Study program/Specialization: Master of Technology (siv.ing) City and Regional Planning	Spring semester, 2021  Open / <del>Restricted access</del>
Writer: Jasmin Alimari	..... <i>Jasmin Alimari</i> ..... (Writer's signature)
Faculty supervisor: Daniela Müller-Eie  Supervisor: Ana Llopis Alvarez	
Thesis title: Improving Quality of Life through Urban Planning - A Case Study of Tøyen and Grønland	
Credits: 30	
Key words: Quality of Life Urban Planning Living Conditions Områdeløft Områdesatsning Spatial Analysis Socio-Cultural & Socio-Economic Analysis Development Proposal	Pages: ....104.....  Oslo, ..June 15, 2021. Date/year



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This is a master's thesis conducted in the spring of 2021, which concludes a 2-year degree in Master of Technology in City and Regional planning at the University of Stavanger.

My inspiration for writing a thesis on improving Quality of Life through urban planning was due to my strong interest for how urban planning can be utilized to positively affect people's lives and it is linked to people's overall life satisfaction. Furthermore, when trying to find a research topic for my thesis last year, I came to find the Områdeløft-project for Tøyen and Grønland which I became drawn to immediately.

Firstly, I would like to thank my friends, family and classmates for supporting me throughout the past semester, by providing me with words of encouragement, support and reminding me to take breaks. Furthermore, I would like to thank my supervisor Ana Llopis Alvarez for assuring me that I was indeed on track even when I was doubting my own progress, and by helping me build up my thesis structure and evenly distribute the workload.

During the past six months life has had its ups and downs, where my motivation to work on the thesis also has differed. This was especially difficult considering the Covid-19 pandemic, where the possibilities of meeting my classmates for cooperation and finding motivation have been limited. Thankfully, due to alternative communication platforms such as zoom, several phone calls and the occasional stop by Ivar Langens hus, it was still possible to stay in contact with my classmates to keep each other motivated and come with academic insights.

Oslo, June 15, 2021

Jasmin Alimari

## ABSTRACT

For the first time in history, more people reside in cities and urban settlements than ever before. The anticipated population growth in the coming decades is expected to primarily happen in cities and urban settlements, going from 4.4 billion inhabitants in 2020 to 6.7 billion in 2050. Uncontrolled growth in many cities has previously resulted in a lowered Quality of Life. With those large numbers of people residing in cities, well thought through urban planning has never been more important.

The living condition and crime issues in Tøyen and Grønland have been persistent and increasingly worsening over the past years. Tøyen and Grønland are two of the most multicultural neighborhoods in Oslo, Norway where many of the inhabitants struggle with unemployment, low income, and living cramped and/or in public housing.

This thesis attempts to discover how the Quality of Life in an area can be improved through urban planning, here in the context of Tøyen and Grønland. Firstly, a criteria list for improved Quality of Life was developed, then the project area was analyzed where the spatial, socio-cultural, socio-economic, and human aspects were investigated. In addition, Oslo municipality's Områdeløft-project was summarized and analyzed. Lastly, the criteria list and results of the analysis were used to summarize a development proposal for the project area.

## SAMMENDRAG

Flere mennesker bor i byer og tettsteder enn noen gang før. Den forventede befolkningsveksten de neste tiårene forventes primært å skje i byer og tettsteder, og vil gå fra 4,4 milliarder innbyggere i 2020 til 6,7 milliarder i 2050. Ukontrollert vekst i mange byer har tidligere resultert i en senket livskvalitet. Med det store antallet mennesker som bor i byer, har gjennomtenkt byplanlegging aldri vært viktigere.

Dårlige levekår og kriminalitetsproblematikken i Tøyen og Grønland har vært vedvarende og stadig forverret de siste årene. Tøyen og Grønland er to av de mest multikulturelle nabolagene i Oslo, hvor mange av innbyggerne sliter med arbeidsledighet, lav inntekt, trangboddhet og / eller bor i kommunale boliger.

I denne oppgaven har det blitt undersøkt hvordan livskvaliteten i et område kan forbedres gjennom byplanlegging, her i sammenheng med Tøyen og Grønland. For det første ble det utviklet en kriterieliste for forbedret livskvalitet, deretter ble prosjektområdet analysert der de romlige, sosiokulturelle, sosioøkonomiske og menneskelige aspektene ble undersøkt. I tillegg ble Oslo kommunes Områdeløft-prosjekt oppsummert og analysert. Til slutt ble kriterielisten og resultatene av analysen brukt til å sammenfatte et utviklingsforslag for prosjektområdet.

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# 1

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INTRODUCTION

*"The quality, not the longevity, of one's life is what is important"* (Martin Luther King Jr., 1964).

## 1.1 BACKGROUND & RELEVANCE

For the first time in history, more people reside in cities and urban settlements than ever before (Ritchie & Roser, Max, 2018). The anticipated population growth in the coming decades is expected to primarily happen in cities and urban settlements, going from 4.4 billion inhabitants in 2020 to 6.7 billion in 2050. Uncontrolled growth in many cities, with little to no planning, has previously resulted in a lowered Quality of Life (QoL). With those large numbers of people residing in cities, well thought through urban planning has never been more important (United Nations, 2020).

The topic QoL is used in many professions, such as politics, healthcare, international development, and urban planning. QoL indicates to which degree humans residing in a city, country or urban area are living healthy and comfortable lives and can participate in/or enjoy life (Jenkinson, 2020). According to Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union, the measurement of QoL can be affected by the following factors:

- material living conditions
- productive or main activity
- health
- education
- leisure and social interactions
- economic security and physical safety
- governance and basic rights
- natural and living environment
- overall experience of life (Eurostat, 2020).

In addition to the big role that well-planned urban areas play for societies' QoL: societies that have managed to improve the QoL for their inhabitants, are also more likely to find themselves more sustainably advanced. Such societies increase access to public areas and have a strong belief that the chosen leaders and governing powers have a responsibility to improve QoL for their inhabitants through

providing satisfactory recreational areas, green spaces, street space, and other public areas (Andersson, 2016). It can thereby be argued that striving for improved QoL is also a matter of working towards environmentally sustainable urban planning and cities.

Improving individuals' QoL and overall wellbeing has for decades been very sought after and been an important topic of discussion. It can be argued that humans' QoL and wellbeing originally became important during the Age of Enlightenment. During that era, an individual's knowledge, freedom, and happiness were of utmost importance (Duignan, 2021). Today, humans' rights to lead happy, safe, and healthy lives have become part of the core beliefs in most societies worldwide.

This thesis aims to first identify the links between the practice of Urban Planning and QoL (the theoretical part) and second to compile a criteria list of factors that guarantee an improved QoL in a city or defined area (practical part). The criteria list will be based on the findings from the literature review which will consist of several existing reports, articles, and other secondary data. Going further a spatial analysis will be conducted including interviews and site visits of the case areas Tøyen and Grønland. In conclusion, the compiled criteria list will be utilized to generate a general development proposal for the project area. Tøyen and Grønland are two urban areas in the district Gamle Oslo, Oslo, Norway. These two areas had almost 20 000 inhabitants as of 2020, with an increase of over 40% from 2005 (Statistisk Sentralbyrå, 2021).

## 1.2 RESEARCH QUESTION & SUB-QUESTIONS

Based on the aims of the thesis discussed earlier, the main research question of this thesis is:

*“How does one improve Quality of Life through urban planning?”*

Due to the research question's broad nature, attempting to answer several sub-questions will aid in answering the main research question. The sub-questions are as follows:

1. *How does urban planning influence Quality of Life?*
2. *Is it possible to develop a criteria list for improved Quality of Life which can be universally utilized?*
3. *What has been accomplished/not accomplished in Tøyen and Grønland during the “Områdeløft” project?*
4. *How can Tøyen & Grønland be developed to improve the Quality of Life of their inhabitants?*

The first two sub-questions will be attempted to be answered in the second chapter of the thesis, *Literature review*. The third sub-question will be answered in the third chapter, *Case Study of Tøyen and Grønland*, and the fourth sub-questions will be answered in the fourth chapter, *Development Proposal*. Finally, the main research question will be answered in the last chapter of the thesis, *Conclusion*. See the figure below.

	Chp. 2 Literature Review	Chp. 3 Case Study	Chp. 4 Development Proposal	Chp. 5 Conclusion
Sub-quest.1	x			
Sub-quest.2	x			
Sub-quest.3		x		
Sub-quest.4			x	
Main quest.				x

Figure 1: The research questions divided throughout the thesis

## 1.3 THESIS STRUCTURE

This study consists of a total of five chapters: (1) Introduction, (2) Literature Review, (3) Case Study of Tøyen & Grønland, (4) Development Proposal for Tøyen & Grønland, and (5) Conclusion. The structure of the thesis can be seen in figure 2 below. The results originating from the literature review and case study will be utilized in the development proposal and finally presented in the thesis conclusion.

The thesis primarily consists of four parts. First, the introduction in which the relevance and aims of the thesis are presented. Second, the literature review and case study in which the terms QoL, urban planning, and Quality of Urban Life are defined, and a spatial analysis of the project area is conducted, by collecting and utilizing qualitative and quantitative data. Third, a development proposal is planned by utilizing the results from the third part of the thesis. And finally, the conclusion where the findings in the thesis are presented and a brief reflection on the thesis is made.

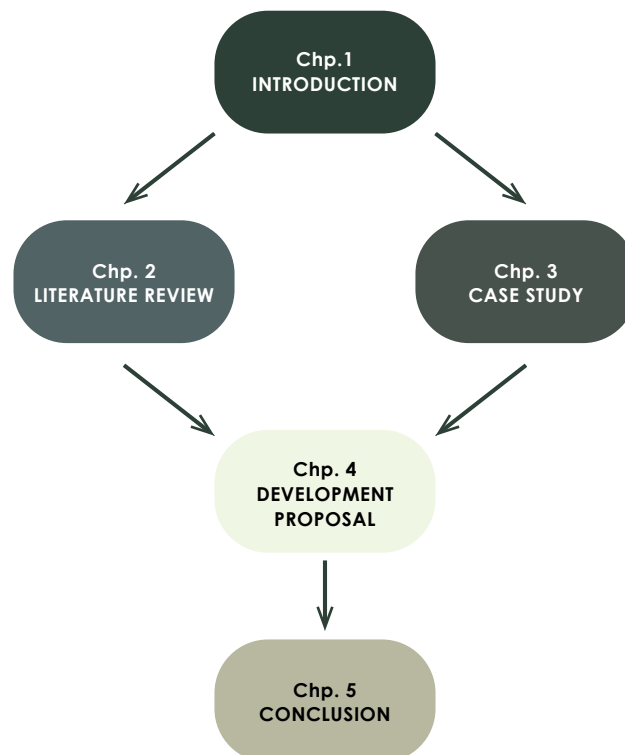


Figure 2: The thesis structure illustrated

## 1.4 METHODOLOGY

This study is comprised of two general research approaches: quantitative and qualitative research. Here, primarily the case study and literature review will consist of a combination of qualitative and quantitative research. Whereas the development proposal and conclusion will be based on the results from the case study and literature review.

Quantitative research is objective and measurable and, in this study, encompasses the use of statistics provided by Statistics Norway (SSB) and Oslo Municipality. In addition, measurements and statistics from other reports and research papers have also been utilized.

Qualitative research is non-measurable and subjective and is based on theories and human perception. In short, it will vary from one person to another how something is perceived, and thereby the information obtained will vary from case to case. In this study, the qualitative research will consist of observations and site visits and collection of secondary data from reports, news articles, and research papers.

The spatial analysis conducted as part of the Case Study in chapter 3 encompasses both qualitative and quantitative research methods and is, therefore, to be found in both illustrations below.



### **QUANTITATIVE DATA**

- statistics from SSB.no
- spatial analysis
- socio-cultural and socio-economic analysis
- findings from reports and research papers



### **QUALITATIVE DATA**

- observations and site visits
- spatial analysis
- collection of secondary data such as reports, news articles, research papers & more



## 1.5 LIMITATIONS & COVID-19

There are primarily two types of limitations present in this study: limitations with the allocated data and limitations due to Covid-19. The possible limitations correlating with the allocated data in this study are primarily associated with the study's reliance on the collection of qualitative data and the verification of all data. The data collected, here especially the qualitative data, could be not entirely representative, biased, or exaggerated.

As of March 2020, the World Health Organization officially declared Covid-19 as a pandemic (World Health Organization, 2020). Shortly after several countries worldwide went into complete lockdown. Now, over a year after the initial breakout, the number of infected individuals in Oslo municipality reached a new all-time high of 465 new confirmed cases in one day on Tuesday, March 16th (Folkehelseinstituttet, 2021). Since the start of February 2021, the number of new cases has been on an upward trend, with the cases primarily consisting of the British mutated version of the coronavirus.

The eastern districts in Oslo are also the districts with the highest infection numbers in Oslo. As of March 19th, the districts with highest infections are, in chronological order: Stovner, Grorud, Alna, Bjerke, Søndre Nordstrand, Gamle Oslo (including Tøyen & Grønland) and Grünerløkka (Oslo helseetaten, 2021). Due to the project area being in one of the most infected districts, the findings from the spatial analysis and site visits will likely deviate from the normal situation. These deviations will be addressed in the respective collected data.

# Chp. 2

## LITERATURE REVIEW

*"If standard of living is your major objective,  
quality of life almost never improves, but if  
quality of life is your number one objective, your  
standard of living almost always improves."  
(Ziglar & Reighard, 2013)*

## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter of the thesis, primarily three different concepts will be defined: Urban Planning, Quality of Life, and Quality of Urban Life. These three concepts are will be important to define in order to answer the main research question and sub-questions. At the end of this chapter, a criteria list for improved QoL will be presented, based on the literature that was reviewed. Those criteria will be important tools for the analysis part of the study. Additionally, the two first sub-questions presented in chapter 1.2 will be answered in the chapter conclusion.

## 2.2 DEFINITIONS

### 2.2.1 URBAN PLANNING

Urban planning is a concept and multidisciplinary profession which relates to the development of the physical, economic and social aspects of an area or location. Urban planning consists of both the development of open land and the enhancement of existing spaces (Fainstein, 2020). The most common aims of urban planning include sustainable urban development, maximizing economic productivity, enhancement of the natural environment and providing public spaces, strong infrastructure, and protecting cultural heritages (Alvarez & Müller-Eie, 2017).

Urban planning as a profession has existed since the late 19th century as a reaction to the disorder that was brought by the industrial city. During that time several visionaries dreamt of ideal cities with better infrastructure, better sanitation, social equity, and aesthetic appeal. One of the most well-known planners from that time being Ebenezer Howard, the founder of the garden city movement. In his book *Garden Cities of Tomorrow* (1902) Howard meant that a city should not have more than 30 000 inhabitants and that it should be an independent urban organism where the residential areas consist of low houses surrounded by gardens (Britannica, 2012). Howard's garden cities were meant to bring people

back to nature, after many years of living in cities made up of steel and concrete. His idea led to a big garden city movement in the 19th century, and many such cities can be found today in several countries, such as England, Germany, the US, and Norway.

One of the most well-known and recognized urban planners today is Jan Gehl, who is an architect and author from Denmark. His work stands out from many other planners, due to his focus on "life between buildings", meaning the activities that occur in the public spaces. In his book *Life Between Buildings: Using Public Spaces* (2011), Gehl divides these activities into three categories: necessary activities, optional activities, and social activities. The necessary activities include activities such as going to work, waiting on the bus, or buying groceries. These activities are the least affected by the physical environment, due to their necessary nature. The optional activities include things such as going for a stroll, sunbathing, or reading a book on a bench. These activities are highly affected by the physical environment, where spaces of poor quality are recognizable by a lack of/ or decrease in these optional activities. The last category, social activities, consists of both planned and spontaneous activities such as taking one's children to the park or meeting

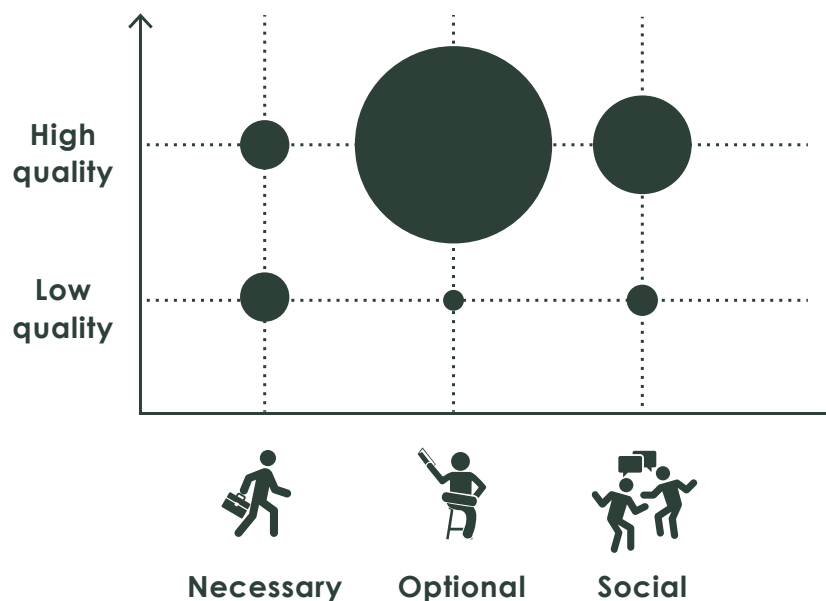


Figure 3: The three activity types and quality of urban spaces

friends for a coffee. According to Gehl, these activities are also greatly affected by the physical environment, but not as much as the optional activities.

In the book *Det nye byliv* (2006), Gehl together with Gemzøe, Kirknæs, and Søndergaard, discovered that urban spaces would have to meet 12 criteria to be considered of high quality. Those 12 criteria were then divided into 3 categories: Protection, Comfort, and Enjoyment. The criteria are as follows:

1. Protection against traffic and accidents.
2. Protection against harm by others.
3. Protection against unpleasant sensory experiences.
4. Options for mobility.
5. Options to stand and linger.
6. Options for sitting.
7. Options for seeing.
8. Options for talking and listening/ hearing.
9. Options for playing, exercise, and activities.
10. Scale.
11. Opportunities to enjoy the positive aspects of climate.
12. Experience of aesthetic qualities and positive sensory experiences (Gehl, Gemzøe, Søndergaard, & Kirknæs, 2006).

The first three criteria encompass the individuals' overall feeling of safety when walking through or staying in a public area. The infrastructure and traffic in the area are important factors with regards to the protection against traffic, accidents, violence, and noise/air pollution. According to Gehl, good public urban spaces must be facilitated for the pedestrians intended to utilize the areas. Pedestrians should be able to cross the road without fearing getting hit by a car. In addition, public spaces should be placed separately from

highly trafficked roads, to lessen the air and noise pollution in the area and heighten the pedestrian's sense of safety.

The next six criteria, regarding Comfort, encompass developing urban spaces so that the very basic human activities can take place under good conditions. Gehl states that pedestrians should be able to move, sit and stand freely in public spaces, where it feels natural to them. This means developing urban spaces which facilitate for different activity wants and needs. In addition, there should be good conditions to see, hear and talk in public spaces. Pedestrians should, furthermore, be able to comfortably stay in urban areas and utilize the area both for passive and active recreation.

For the last category, Enjoyment, the criteria accommodate for urban spaces developed with the human scale in mind, with attention to details and good quality materials and outdoor furniture. Gehl states that the visually aesthetical aspects of recreational areas play an important role in creating good quality spaces, where attractive sensory impressions can be anything from the colors in the public area to the number of natural elements such as green structure and water elements.



Figure 4: The 12 criteria for high quality public spaces

### 2.2.2 QUALITY OF LIFE

As briefly introduced earlier in this paper, QoL is a concept that is utilized in many professions, such as politics, healthcare, international development, and urban planning. indicates to which degree humans residing in a city, country or urban area are living healthy and comfortable lives and can participate in/or enjoy life (Jenkinson, 2020). To date, there is not a single agreed-upon way of measuring the QoL, but rather many several approaches and indicators. The most commonly used indicator of QoL used worldwide is the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which represents the total value of all goods and services produced in, and sold on, the market of a country during a time period (Fernando, 2020). GDP has for many years been considered to have a link to the well-being of a country's citizens but has in more recent years been considered to be insufficient and should be complemented by other indicators (Eurostat, 2020).

OECD, the Organization for Economic Co-operation, is a policymaking international organization that works together with governments, policymakers, and citizens. Their goal is to "shape policies that foster prosperity, equality, opportunity, and well-being for all", by developing and providing evidence-based international standards (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, n.d.a). The OECD has existed for more than 60 years and has a total of 37 member countries, with Norway being one of them since the year 1961 (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, n.d.b).

The OECD has conceptualized a way of measuring QoL, called the *Better Life Index*, to measure the population's well-being for the different counties. This index is found by utilizing 11 dimensions and 24 indicators, these can be seen in the table on the next page (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, n.d.c). The indicators range from everything that relates to the built environment, the population's demographics, housing conditions, and individual's health and economic situations. All the listed indicators can be applied to urban planning, but some of them more than others. Therefore, the most relevant indicators have been highlighted.



<b>Housing</b>	Dwellings without basic facilities Housing expenditure Rooms per person
<b>Income</b>	Household net adjusted disposable income Household net wealth
<b>Jobs</b>	Labour market insecurity Employment rate Long-term unemployment rate Personal earnings
<b>Community</b>	Quality of support network
<b>Education</b>	Educational attainment Student skills Years in education
<b>Environment</b>	Air pollution Water quality
<b>Civic Engagement</b>	Stakeholder engagement for developing regulations Voter turnout
<b>Health</b>	Life expectancy Self-reported health
<b>Life Satisfaction</b>	Life satisfaction
<b>Safety</b>	Feeling safe walking alone at night Homicide rate
<b>Work-Life Balance</b>	Employees working very long hours Time devoted to leisure and personal care

Figure 5: OECDs Quality of Life dimensions and indicators

According to the OECD's *Better Life Index*, among all 37 member countries, Norway ranks as number one with an index of 7,6 compared to OECD's average of 6.5 (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, n.d.d). In addition, Norway ranks on top in the categories which concern environmental quality and personal safety and ranks above average on housing, income, jobs, community, education, civic engagement, health, and work-life balance.

The official Norwegian Statistics Bureau, SSB, published at the end of 2020 a national QoL report, which was the first of its kind in Norway (Støren, Rønning, & Gram, 2020). In the past, subjective aspects of QoL had been analyzed as parts of other surveys and reports but QoL had not been the main topic of interest. In the report, titled *Livskvalitet i Norge 2020*, primarily nine factors were found to affect Norwegians QoL, each factor with its indicators, as presented in the table on the next page. In the table, the two factors Work Environment and Student Environment have been combined due to their similar indicators. Here too, all factors and indicators apply to urban planning, but the most relevant ones have been highlighted.

In the report, it was found that 26 percent of the people surveyed were very satisfied with life (9 or 10 on a scale from 0 to 10). On the other hand, 22 percent answered that they were very unsatisfied with life (0 and 5 on the scale). With regards to Housing, Local Environment & Security it was found that individuals who experience noise and pollution and lack safe outdoor areas also report a lower life satisfaction. Here, 14 percent of the population was found to experience noise and air pollution, and 7 percent do not have access to safe play and recreational areas. Furthermore, 35 percent of those who do not have access to safe play and recreation areas report having low life satisfaction.

In total, it was found that individuals with higher income also experienced a higher QoL, where they also scored significantly better on all indicators than the rest of the population. On the contrary, those who scored significantly worse on all indicators were overly represented by unemployed individuals, have low income, low education, have physical disabilities, mental illness, and/or identify as queer (gay, lesbian, bisexual, and other sexual identities).

<b>Health</b>	Symptoms of mental illness (anxiety, depression) Chronic diseases or disability Pain and discomfort Sleep problems
<b>Social Relations</b>	Contact with good friends & family People to trust with personal problems Solitude Trust in other people
<b>Work Environment / Student Environment</b>	Poor opportunities to utilize education/work experience Can influence decisions that are important to their work Job requirements interfere with private life Feels physical / mental exhausted after work Spends more than one hour each way on to travel between home and work Job security Unwanted sexual attention
<b>Financial Situation</b>	Does not have the opportunity to manage an unforeseen expense Has difficulty in making ends meet financially Missing one or more material goods
<b>Housing, Local Environment &amp; Security</b>	Problems with noise in the home Problems with dust, odor or other air pollution Belonging to the place Has access to safe play or recreation areas Has access to local hiking areas Has problems with crime, violence or vandalism in the residential area Feel safe when they go out in the local area
<b>Society &amp; Rights</b>	Influence on the authorities Trust in public services Experience of discrimination
<b>Culture &amp; Leisure</b>	Has too much to do Exercises or is physically active Goes to the cinema, concerts, exhibitions Participates in activities in a club or organization Time spent watching TV & on social media Volunteered the last 12 months
<b>Negative Life Events</b>	Serious illness or death in close relationships Serious financial problems Gone through a breakup / divorce Experienced serious illness or injury Been forced to have sexual intercourse Humiliated for a long time Exposed to, or threatened with, physical violence Children with severe and permanent disability Responsibility for care of a family member

Figure 6: SSBs Quality of Life indicators

Another set of dimensions and indicators has been developed by the statistical office of the European Union, Eurostat, which consists of 9 dimensions and over 25 indicators (Eurostat, n.d.). The eight first dimensions relate to people's ability to pursue their wellbeing in accordance with their own life values and priorities, these dimensions include indicators such as income, employment, education, security, and access to recreational areas. The last dimension considers the individuals' perception of their QoL, with indicators such as life satisfaction, meaning, and life purpose.

When comparing the dimensions and indicators provided by Eurostat, OECD, and SSB one will quickly see strong similarities between them, with OECD's dimensions being the most general and Eurostat's the most detailed. The three different agencies/statistical offices range from 9 to 11 dimensions with indicators ranging from 24 to 47. When combining the three different sets of indicators one is left with the following list:

1. Housing
2. Income & employment
3. Education
4. Natural- and living environment
5. Civic engagement
6. Health
7. Culture, leisure & community
8. Negative life events
9. Overall life satisfaction

A more detailed criteria list for improved QoL with regards to urban planning will be presented later in this chapter.

<b>Material living conditions</b>	Income	
	Consumption	<i>Constrained consumption</i> <i>Consumption</i>
	Material conditions	<i>Material deprivation</i> <i>Housing conditions</i>
<b>Productive or other main activity</b>	Quantity of employment	<i>Employment and unemployment</i> <i>Underemployment (quantity)</i> <i>Underemployment (quality)</i>
	Quality of employment	<i>Income and benefits from employment</i> <i>Health and safety at work</i> <i>Work/life balance</i> <i>Temporary work</i> <i>Assessment of the quality of employment</i>
	Other main activity	
<b>Health</b>	Outcomes	<i>Life expectancy</i> <i>Morbidity and health status</i>
	Drivers: healthy and unhealthy behaviors	
	Access to healthcare	
<b>Education</b>	Competences and skills	<i>Educational attainment</i> <i>Self-reported skills</i> <i>Assessed skills</i>
	Lifelong learning	
	Opportunities for education	
<b>Leisure and social interactions</b>	Leisure	<i>Quantity of leisure</i> <i>Quality of leisure</i> <i>Access to leisure</i>
	Social interactions	<i>Activities with people</i> <i>Activities for people</i> <i>Supportive relationships</i> <i>Social cohesion</i>
<b>Economic and physical safety</b>	Economic security and vulnerability	<i>Wealth (assets)</i> <i>Debt</i> <i>Income insecurity (including job)</i>
	Physical and personal security	<i>Crime</i> <i>Perception of physical safety</i>
<b>Governance and basic rights</b>	Institutions and public services	<i>Trust and/or satisfaction in institutions</i> <i>Trust and/or satisfaction in public services</i>
	Discrimination and equal opportunities	
	Active citizenship	
<b>Natural and living environment</b>	Pollution (including noise)	
	Access to green and recreational spaces	
	Landscape and built environment	
<b>Overall experience of life</b>	Life satisfaction	
	Affects	
	Meaning and purpose	

Figure 7: Eurostats Quality of Life indicators

### 2.2.3 QUALITY OF URBAN LIFE

The concept Quality of Urban Life (QoUL) can be defined as “the degree of satisfaction with the possibility to fulfill needs and aspirations by individual's occupying an urban space” and “optimal conditions that combine and determine sensations of comfort in the biological and psychosocial within the space where the man lives and act” (Alvarez & Müller-Eie, 2017). In other words, QoUL relates to the aspects of QoL which can be directly linked to the practice of urban planning, as illustrated below.

It can be argued, from the definitions and factors of QoUL, that the built physical environment has a great impact on individuals' overall QoL. According to Serag El Din, Shalaby, Farouh, & Elariane, the following seven urban aspects are key factors in bettering an individual's life satisfaction with regards to QoUL:

- transportation
- quality of public areas
- recreational opportunities
- land-use patterns
- population densities
- building densities
- access to basic goods, services, and public amenities (Serag El Din, Shalaby, Farouh, & Elariane, 2013).

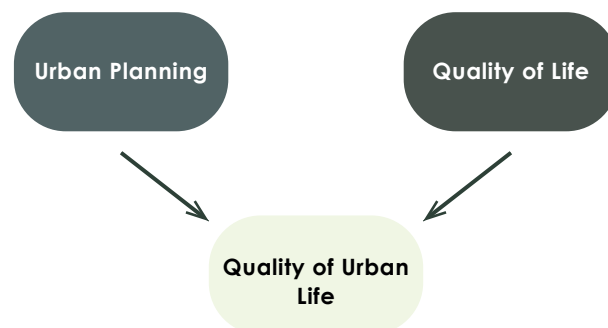


Figure 8: The relationship between Urban Planning, QoL and QoUL.

## 2.3 CRITERIA LIST FOR IMPROVED QUALITY OF LIFE

Finally, by combining the QoL and QoUL factors and dimension provided from Eurostat, OECD, and SSB the following criteria list for improved QoL through urban planning can be developed:

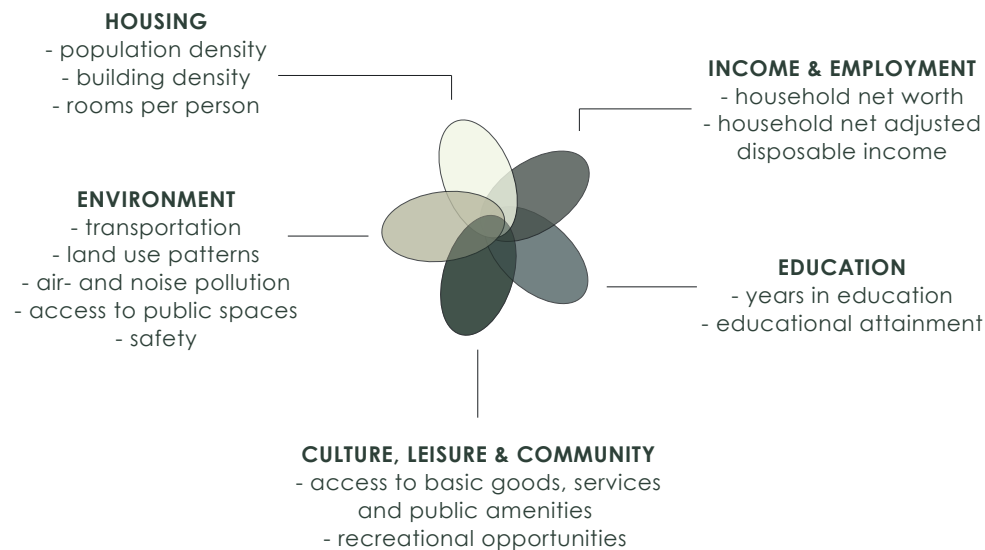


Figure 9: Own criteria list for improved QoL through urban planning, based on the dimensions and indicators provided from Eurostat, OECD and SSB.

As illustrated above, only the indicators which are directly related to the practice of urban planning are included in the criteria list, meaning that the dimensions Civic engagement, Health, Negative life events and Overall life satisfaction were not included. Furthermore, all factors which directly are linked to the built physical environment will be analyzed with regards to Jan Gehl's 12 criteria for high-quality public spaces.

The three dimensions (1) Housing, (2) Income & employment, and (3) Education are primarily made up of statistical data and can be presented in diagrams and tables. The remaining two dimensions, (4) Environment and (5) Culture, leisure & community, on the other hand, are geographically based and will mostly be able to be presented in descriptive maps, pictures, and illustrations. Together these 5 dimensions and 14 indicators will be utilized in the analysis and development of the project area.

## 2.4 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the three concepts, (1) urban planning, (2) Quality of Life, and (3) Quality of Urban Life have been defined utilizing different reports, books, and research papers. As previously presented, primarily two sub-questions were to be answered in this chapter of the thesis. The questions being:

- 1. How does urban planning influence Quality of Life?*
- 2. Is it possible to develop a criteria list for improved Quality of Life which can be universally utilized?*

From the definitions of urban planning, QoL and QoUL it was found that a populations QoL indeed is influenced by their urban surroundings and factors such as building densities, net household income, noise- and air pollution, and access to public spaces and transportation (Serag El Din, Shalaby, Farouh, & Elariane, 2013). This leads us to believe that surely many, though not all, aspects of QoL are influenced by urban planning. Where good and well-designed urban planning can improve the QoL of the inhabitants of a city or urban area.

Furthermore, the criteria list for improved QoL summarized in chapter 2.3 can be argued to be universally applicable, due to the criteria's not being exclusive to any singular climate, political environment, culture and population composition, and lifestyles. The criteria list presented can additionally be supplemented with factors relevant to the different areas and cities, with regards to what the weaknesses, challenges, opportunities and strengths of the different areas are. Even though the concept of QoL and the planning for its improvement is quite complex, a set of indicators can still be developed and utilized despite the intricate nature of human life satisfaction.



	Chp. 2 Literature Review	Chp. 3 Case Study	Chp. 4 Development Proposal	Chp. 5 Conclusion
Sub-quest.1	<b>X</b>			
Sub-quest.2	<b>X</b>			
Sub-quest.3		<b>X</b>		
Sub-quest.4			<b>X</b>	
Main quest.				<b>X</b>

Figure 10: The research questions answered so far in the thesis.

# 3

Chp.

CASE STUDY OF TØYEN &  
GRØNLAND

*"There is no logic that can be superimposed on the city; people make it, and it is to them, not buildings, that we must fit our plans"*  
(Jacobs, 1958).

## 3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this part of the thesis, a case study of Tøyen and Grønland will be conducted. The case study will primarily consist of five main parts: (1) an introduction to the project area, (2) a spatial and physical analysis, (3) a socio-cultural and social-economic analysis, (4) a behavioral analysis, and lastly (5) an analysis of the municipalities "Områdeløft av Grønland og Tøyen".

In the first part, the project area will be introduced on a general basis for the reader to get a basic understanding of the project areas' location and composition. In the second part, the built physical environment will be analyzed, such as the areas' green structure, infrastructure, morphology, and landmarks. In the third part, a social-cultural and socio-economic analysis will be conducted, meaning that the inhabitant's demography, age, gender, crime, employment, and more will be examined and analyzed. In the fourth part, the human behavior on site will be analyzed, this part will include behavior mapping and observations from the site visits. In the last part, the municipalities plan for "Områdeløft av Tøyen og Grønland" will be gone through and analyzed.

At the end of this chapter, in the chapter conclusion, the third sub-question *"What has been accomplished/not accomplished in Tøyen and Grønland during the "Områdeløft" project?"* will be answered utilizing the results from the case study. Further on, the results of the case study and literature review will together be utilized to propose a development plan for Tøyen and Grønland. This will be presented in the next chapter of the thesis.

## 3.2 THE PROJECT AREA

### 3.2.1 LOCATION

The project area, Grønland and Tøyen, is located in Oslo, which is the capital of Norway. Oslo is geographically located within Viken County Council, as illustrated below, but functions

legally both as to a county council and municipality.

Oslo consists of a total of 15 districts, with the project area being situated in two of those districts (Oslo kommune, n.d.). By the end of 2020 Oslo municipality had a total population of 697 010 inhabitants and is expected to have 800 540 inhabitants by 2050, meaning an increase of almost 15 percent (Statistisk Sentralbyrå, n.d.).

The project area is located in the districts named Gamle Oslo and Grünerløkka. Gamle Oslo and Grünerløkka are situated closely to Oslo's city center, making the project area easily accessible for all inhabitants and visitors of Oslo.



*Figure 11: Map illustrating the project areas placement in Oslo and Viken.*

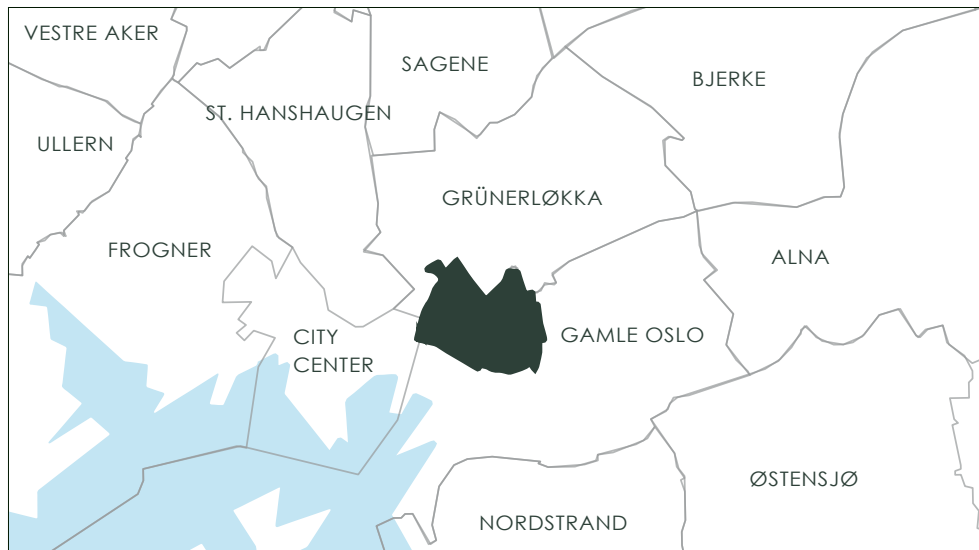


Figure 12: The placement and surrounding districts of Tøyen and Grønland in Oslo.

### 3.2.2 BOUNDARY DEFINITION

The exact borders of the residential areas Grønland and Tøyen are widely discussed. When researching the area, it was found that many different boundaries were utilized by different actors. The boundary utilized in this thesis will be the same as those used by Oslo municipality in "Områdeløft Grønland og Tøyen". The project area stretches from the Akers River to the west, Botanical Garden and Tøyen Park to the north, the residential areas of Kampen and Vålerenga to the east, and the railway tracks and Old Town to the south. This boundary definition is arguably the most logical, due to the area's surroundings ability to naturally limit the project areas. This can especially be said about the river to the west and parks to the north.

As earlier presented the area is closely located to the city center, which can also be seen from the map on the next page. Two highly trafficked national roads, Rv4 and Rv161, cross the area from north to south making the area very easily accessible from many parts of the city. In addition, an underground metro with two stations, one in Grønland and one in Tøyen, crosses the area from east to west. In figure 13, the project areas' main infrastructure and urban spaces have been presented to give the reader an overview of the area.

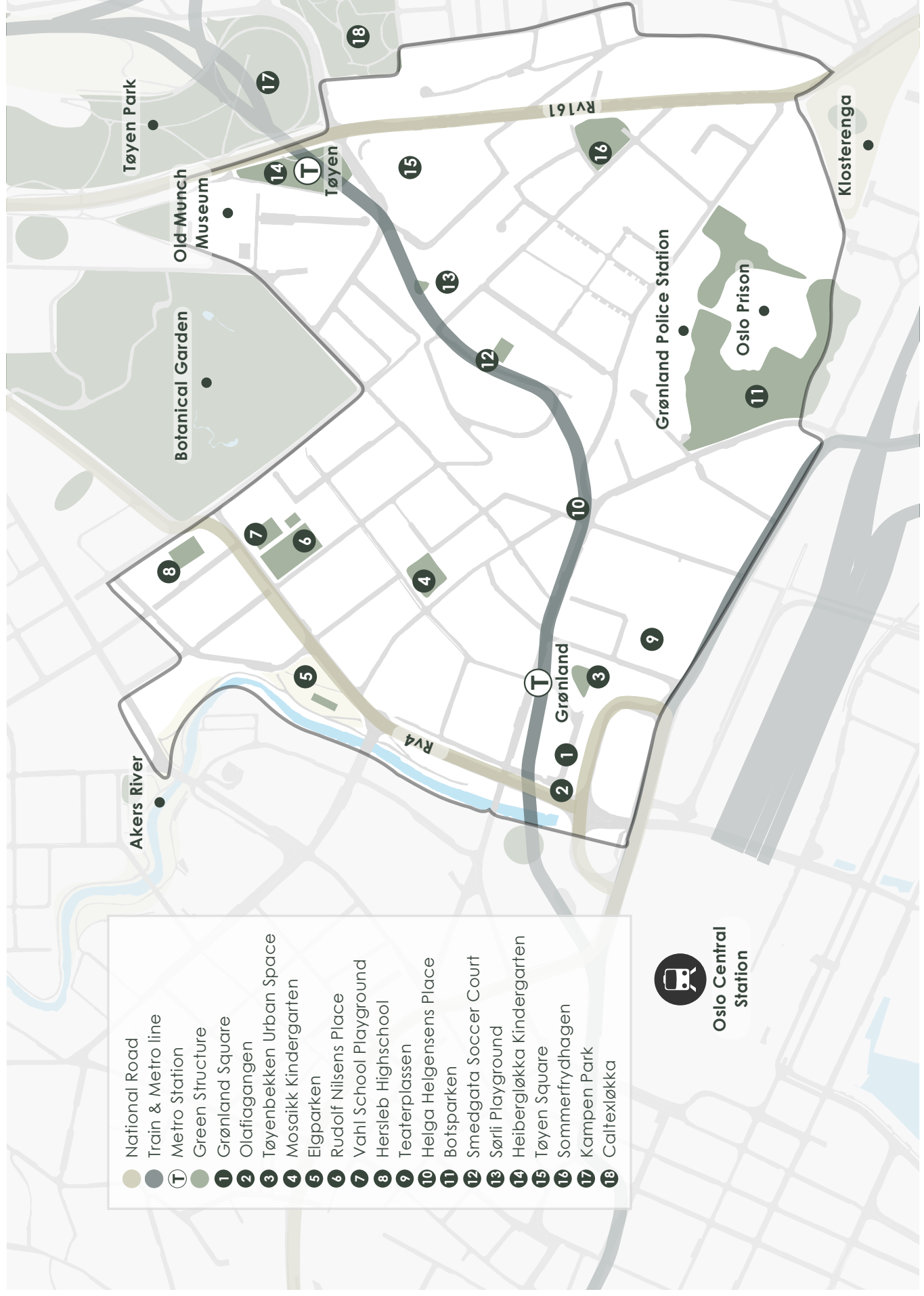


Figure 13: Overview of the project areas main infrastructure, greenstructure on bordering areas.

## **3.3 SPATIAL AND PHYSICAL ANALYSIS**

A spatial and physical analysis of the project area will be conducted in this part of the case study. Here the physical built environment and its functions are to be presented and studied. The following four factors will be studied in the analysis: street network, green structures and urban areas, morphology and lastly building types.

### **3.3.1 STREET NETWORK**

The project areas street network hierarchy can be divided into primarily five infrastructure types: (1) Metro line, (2) National roads, (3) Primary roads, (4) Secondary roads, and finally (5) Pedestrian pathways.

On the Metro line, metros nr. 1 through nr. 5 drive to the metro stations Grønland and Tøyen daily, throughout the entire day. At night, when the metro closes several bus lines continue to run, making it easy to get back and forth to the area at all hours of the day (Ruter, n.d.). The National roads, as the name implies, stretch throughout the entire country, connecting the different municipalities. Rv4 for example stretches north to Gjøvik municipality where it then merges to the European route E6. For an overview of the infrastructural connection to the nearby areas, see Figure 13.

Primary roads are streets that directly connect different districts and residential areas, hereby being the link between the National roads and the Secondary roads. On the project area there are mainly six primary roads: Grønlandsleiret, Åkebergveien, Lakkegata, Motzfeldts gate, Tøyenegata and Økernveien. Secondary roads are characterized by being less trafficked than Primary roads and mainly function as the roads which directly lead to the urban spaces, facilities, and buildings in the area.



Lastly, the Pedestrian pathways are roads and streets which are only meant for pedestrians and cyclists. These can especially be found in and around the parks and urban spaces of the area. Pedestrian lanes can also be found on both sides of almost all roads in the project area, however, only the pathways free from vehicles are marked on the map below.



Figure 14: Map illustrating the project areas main traffic arteries.

### 3.3.2 GREEN STRUCTURE AND URBAN AREAS

The green and recreational areas located in the project area can be divided into three main categories: (1) Squares and urban spaces, (2) Playgrounds, and (3) Parks. The squares and urban spaces are mainly found southwest in the area around Grønland close to Grønland metro station and the street Grønlandsleiret. Those parts of the area are the closest to Oslo city center and therefore also the busiest places. This can especially be said for Grønland square where many international shops and restaurants are located. Tøyen square is similarly to Grønland



Figure 15: Map illustrating the project areas recreational and urban areas.

square busy in the daytime and is located closely to Tøyen metro station. Both squares play big roles in inhabitants' everyday life, more about this can be found in Chapter 3.5 where site visits and observations are presented.

Playgrounds can be found evenly dispersed throughout the area, where some of them are connected to kindergartens and schools. Most of the playgrounds are meant for children, but some playgrounds such as the Smedgard soccer court and Hersleb Highschool outdoor area can be used by all ages. The playgrounds located in kindergartens and schools are only open to the public when on the evenings and weekends when the kindergartens/schools are closed. There are also some other smaller and more hidden playgrounds around the area, such as those placed in the middle of apartment buildings, where some are private, and others open to the public.

There are three parks located on the project area, Elgparken along the Akers River, Botsparken near Oslo Prison and Grønland police station, and Sommerfrydshagen which is a small park with a playground in Tøyen. There are two sand volleyball courts and several places to sit and grill in Elgparken. Botsparken, the project area's biggest park, consists mostly of trees and grass and has a bigger playground and outdoor workout equipment in the southern part of the park. The nearby police station and prison play a big role in the park's identity, leaving the park with a more serious atmosphere.

There are also bigger parks and recreational areas in very close proximity to the project area, such as Botanical Garden, Tøyenparken, and Caltexløkka, as shown in Figure 13. The Akers River, which is partially on the project area, is a widely popular recreational area that runs from Maridalsvannet in the district Kjelsås and ends in Vaterland in Grønland (VisitOslo, n.d.). Along the 8 kilometers long path of the river, one walks past an industrial historical site, a waterfall, swimming and recreation areas, fishing spots, forest areas, and animal and plant life.

### 3.3.3 MORPHOLOGY

The building footprints on the area show the morphology on site. From the map below, the morphology of the area seems to be a mixture of a grid and organic pattern. It is easy to tell that the street network has played a big role in developing the area, thereby also the placement of the different buildings. Most of the buildings in the area have larger footprints, where many of the buildings have urban spaces in the middle of them, some enclosed and only meant for the inhabitants of the buildings and others open to the public.

When comparing the morphology map to the green structure map it becomes apparent that there are few to no parking spaces in the area, where great amounts of the floor area are utilized. The white/empty spaces that can be seen on the morphology map are green and public recreational areas, such as Rudolf Nilsen's place, Botspaken, Elgparken by the Akers River, and the playground above Tøyen metro station.



Figure 16: Map illustrating the morphological pattern of the project area.

### 3.3.4 BUILDING TYPES

The buildings on the project area can primarily be divided into 14 categories, ranging from several types of residential, commercial, and public buildings. These different building types and their functions have been illustrated on the map below. As one can see from the map, great parts of the buildings on the area function as residential buildings, which can be divided into three types: (1) Detached and Terraced houses, (2) Apartment Buildings with 3 to 4 floors, and (3) Apartment Buildings with more than 5 floors. Apartment buildings with less than 3 floors have been marked together with the first category, *Detached and Terraced houses*.

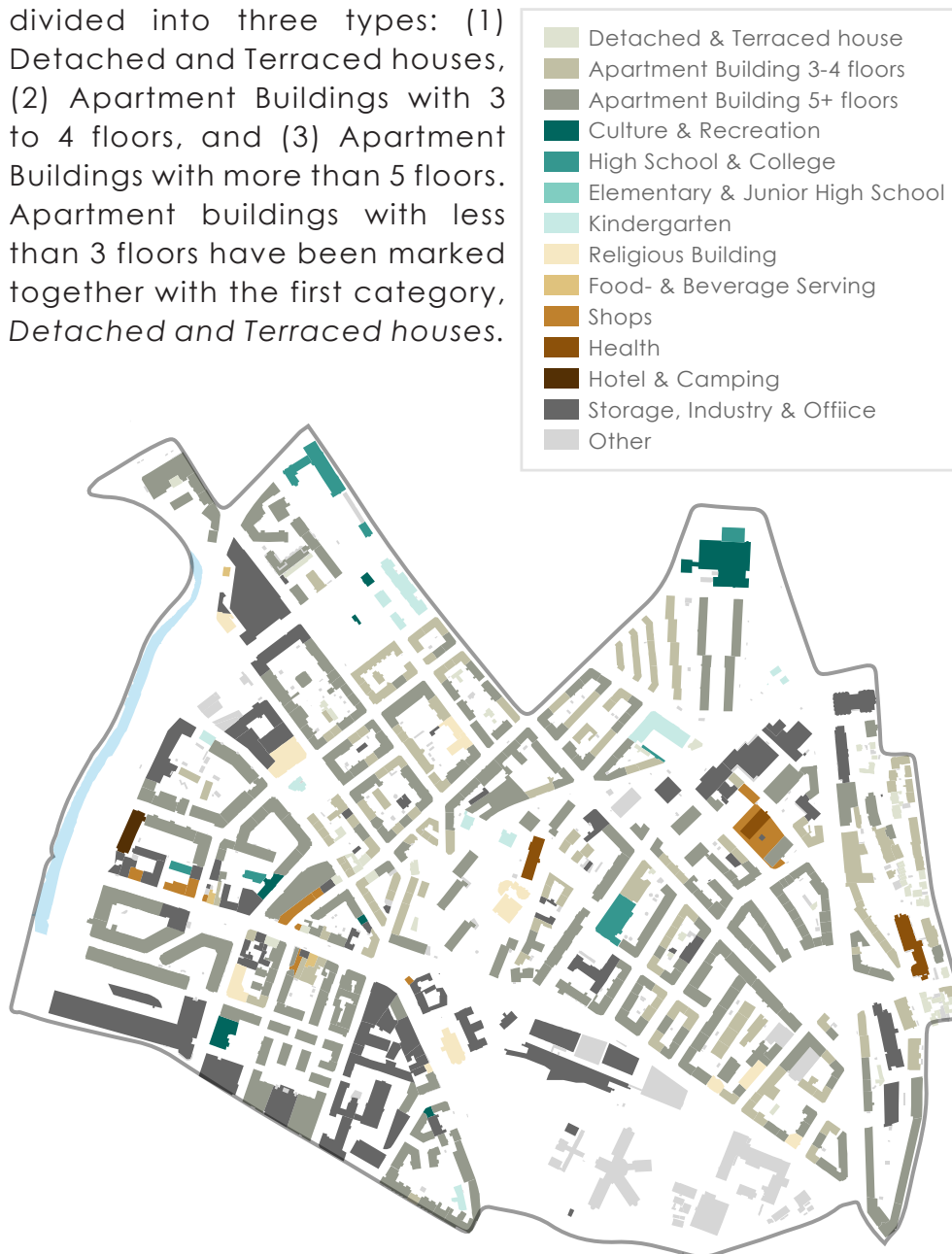


Figure 17: Map illustrating the building types and their function in Grønaland and Tøyen.

The second biggest building category is *Storage, Industry, and Office*. As seen on the map, storage, industry, and office buildings are many found in the southeastern part of the area in Grønland and along the Akers River. Going further into the residential areas to the north and towards Tøyen the offices and industrial buildings become fewer. There are additionally some offices close to the Tøyen metro station and Tøyen square, where agencies such as NAV, the Norwegian Labor and Welfare Administration, have one of their offices.

There are some kindergartens, elementary schools, junior high schools, high schools, and one college building that can be found in the area. These buildings are evenly distributed throughout the area. Most kindergartens can be found closest to the residential areas north on the area further away from the busy primary roads around Grønland square. The same goes for some of the elementary- and junior high schools in the area. In addition, there are quite a few religious buildings in Grønland and Tøyen, mostly being churches, mosques, and Islamic prayer and learning centers. This is a great indicator of the inhabitants' beliefs, being mostly Muslim and Christian.

Furthermore, there can be found several restaurants, shops, and supermarkets in Tøyen and Grønland. However, due to most of the buildings in the area being mixed-use, not all the shops, restaurants and supermarkets can be seen on the map. Most of the apartment buildings and offices/storage buildings marked on the map have shops and restaurants on their first floors, this is especially true for the buildings closest to Grønland and Tøyen square, along the primary roads and close to the Akers River.

Lastly, the buildings marked as *Other*, are building types that did not fit into any of the other 13 categories, such as the Oslo Prison and its surrounding buildings, and other publicly owned buildings.

### **3.3.5 SPATIAL ANALYSIS CONCLUSION**

From the findings of the spatial analysis, it can be concluded that the inhabitants of the project area have everything that is needed in their everyday life on the area: this includes green- and recreational areas, public transportation, schools and kindergartens, shops, and restaurants. Furthermore, there can be found bigger parks and recreational areas closely bordering the area, including the Botanical Garden and Tøyen Park to the north, the Akers River to the west, and Klosterenga Park to the southeast. With the Oslo city center being in close proximity to the area, any amenities or special facilities which cannot be found in the area are easily accessible for the inhabitants of Grønland and Tøyen. Additionally, the project areas' placement in Oslo makes it easily accessible for visitors and for commuting to other parts of the city, due to the metro line going through the area and the Oslo Central Station which is a walking distance away.

The quality of the public spaces and recreational areas has been further analyzed in Chapter 3.5 Human Analysis concerning the site visits and observations, where Jan Gehl's 12 criteria for urban spaces of high quality have been utilized.

### 3.4 SOCIO-CULTURAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

In this part of the thesis, a socio-cultural and socio-economic analysis will be conducted, meaning that everything that relates to the inhabitants' background, characteristics, occupation, and income will be studied. The analysis will mainly consist of four subchapters: (1) History and Identity, (2) Population Characteristics, (3) Housing and Accommodation, (4) Economic Activity, and finally (5) Crime.

The socio-cultural and socio-economic aspects of society are important to examine in order to get a holistic understanding of the population at hand. Moulaert and Nussbaumer (2005) stated in their paper "The Social Region: Beyond the Territorial Dynamics of the Learning Economy" that human interactions in spatial development can be defined with regards to geographic, sociological, political, and economic studies. The social and economic aspects of society are also important when planning for sustainable development. The illustration below shows one of the most used Venn diagrams in sustainable development, where social, economic, and environmental are the three main factors (Adams, 2006). The environmental aspects were analyzed in the previous subchapter, 3.3 Spatial Analysis, and here the remaining two aspects will be analyzed.

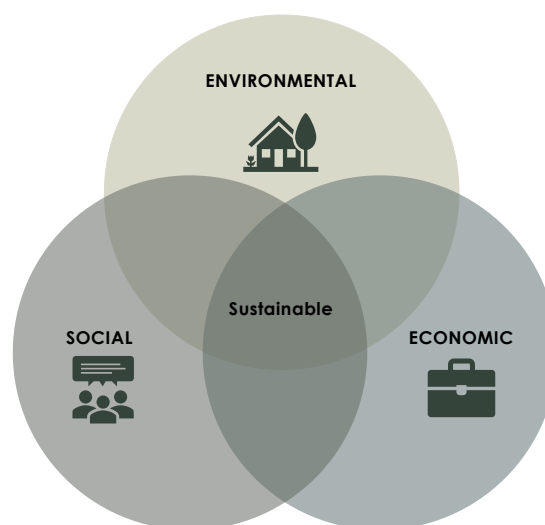


Figure 18: The Sustainability Venn diagram (Adams, 2006).



### 3.4.1 HISTORY AND IDENTITY

Grønland and Tøyen are commonly known as the residential areas with the most non-western immigrants and inhabitants with multicultural backgrounds in Oslo. Thereby, the areas' identity, is strongly affected by the inhabitant's multicultural ethnical background, which can be seen from the expression of the public spaces and amenities on the area. For example, this is reflected in the many international grocery stores and restaurants owned by said individuals of other ethnical backgrounds.

Grønland was a former suburb which was joined with Oslo in 1859 (Oslo byleksikon, n.d.). The grounds of Tøyen belonged to the University of Oslo in 1812, and the original intention was to build the university in Tøyen, but instead the construction of 20 buildings for professors was planned in 1835, called "professorbyen" meaning the professor town (Oslo byleksikon, n.d.a). Both Tøyen and Grønland underwent immense renovation and development in the mid-1800s, as part of the city expansion in Oslo (Oslo byarkiv, n.d.). Outside the University's area in Tøyen to the southwest, several wooden houses were built after the city expansion in 1887 until 1900.

On the historic map to the right the settlement in Grønland and lower Tøyen can be seen from 1816, before the city expansion (Aslaksby, 1986).



Figure 19: The settlement in Grønland and lower Tøyen in 1816 (Aslaksby, 1986).

### 3.4.2 POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Here the population's main characteristics will be analyzed, such as their age, gender, and ethnic background. All numbers presented are for the defined project area, meaning the boundary definition presented in Chapter 3.2. Most numbers presented are collected from SSB and Oslo municipality's official websites. The data collected from SSB are the sum of the different basic statistical units found on the defined project area.

To date, there are almost 20 000 inhabitants in the defined area of Tøyen and Grønland, with an approximate increase of 40% from 2005 (Statistisk Sentralbyrå, 2021). This would indicate that the residential areas are under continuous growth, making it further important to ensure a good QoL for the inhabitants. The immense population growth, especially in Grønland, between the years 2005 to 2010 can be a result of a combination of factors, such as the building of new block buildings the cheaper housing prices during that time period, more about this will be discovered in the next part of this chapter under 3.4.3 Housing and Accommodation.

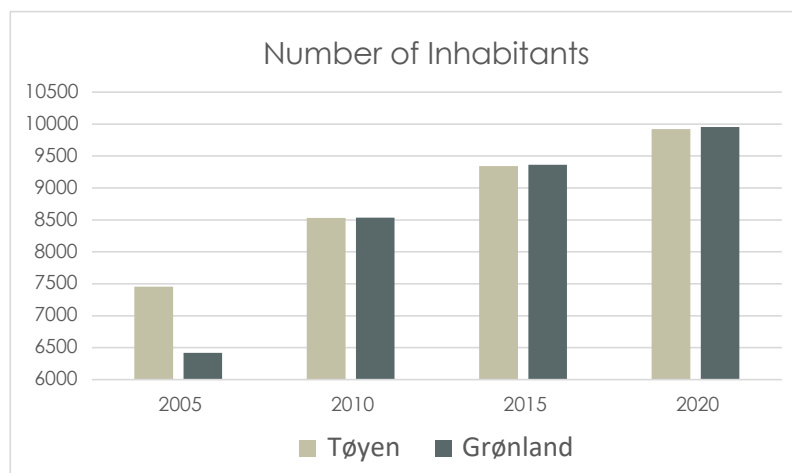


Figure 20: The number of inhabitants in Grønland and Tøyen. Data collected from the Norwegian Statistics Bureau (Statistisk Sentralbyrå, 2021).

When comparing the population pyramid of Tøyen and Grønland to the entire municipality, it becomes apparent that the population in Tøyen and Grønland is younger than

the average population in Oslo municipality. Furthermore, it seems that the female/male ratio in Grønland and Tøyen is more uneven than in Oslo. In Tøyen and Grønland there are 7,5 percent more men than women, whereas in Oslo municipality the ratio difference is only 0,25 percent more men than women. Furthermore, it seems that the population of Tøyen and Grønland is on average younger than the population of Oslo in total. The average age of the inhabitants in Oslo is 37,47 years compared to the average 33,13 years in Tøyen and 34,14 years in Grønland (Oslo kommune, n.d.a).

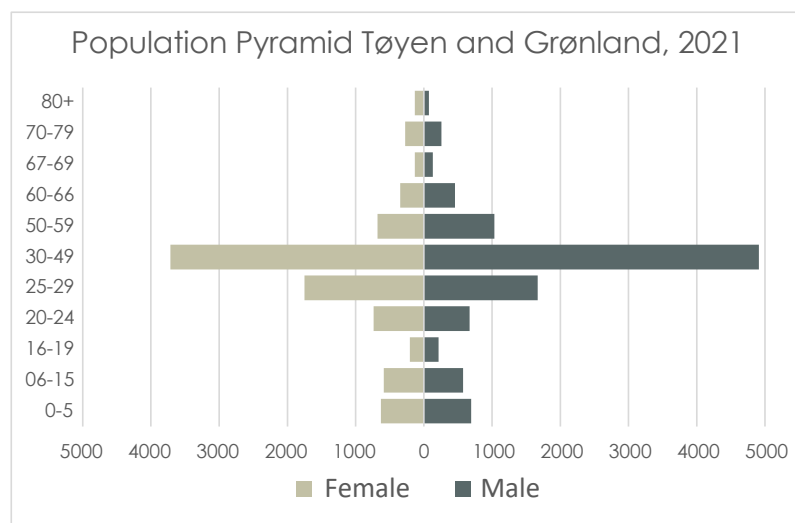


Figure 21: Population Pyramide of the inhabitants in Tøyen and Grønland. Data collected from the Norwegian Statistics Bureau (Statistisk Sentralbyrå, 2021a).

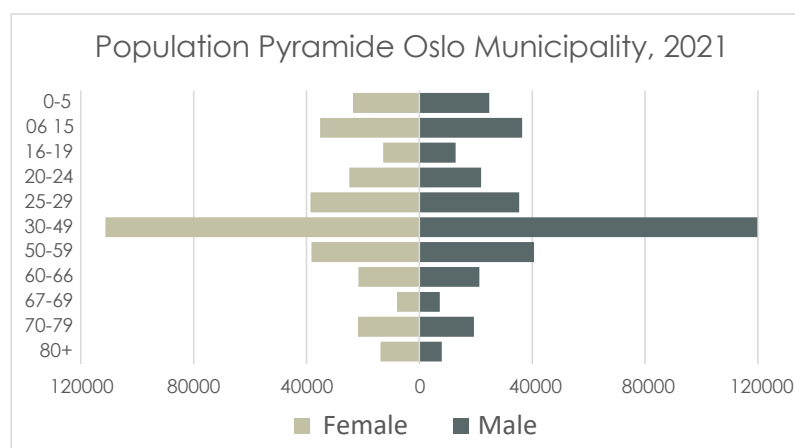


Figure 22: Population Pyramide of the inhabitants in Oslo municipality. Data collected from the Norwegian Statistics Bureau (Statistisk Sentralbyrå, 2021b).

From the data provided by Oslo municipality, over 55 percent of the inhabitants of Grønland and 51 per cent of Tøyen have immigrant backgrounds, being either first- or second-generation immigrants. Compared to 34 per cent in Oslo municipality (Oslo kommune, n.d.b). Among those inhabitants with immigrant background in the area, most of them are first generation immigrants which have resided in Norway for more than 5 years, and the second biggest category being second-generation immigrants, meaning individuals born in Norway with immigrant parents.

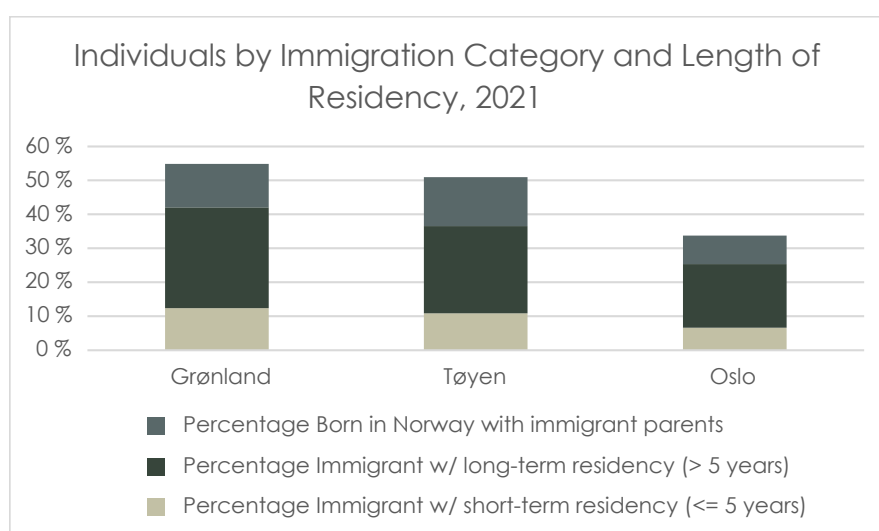


Figure 23: Individuals by immigrant category and length of residency in Grønland, Tøyen and Oslo municipality (Oslo kommune, n.d.b).

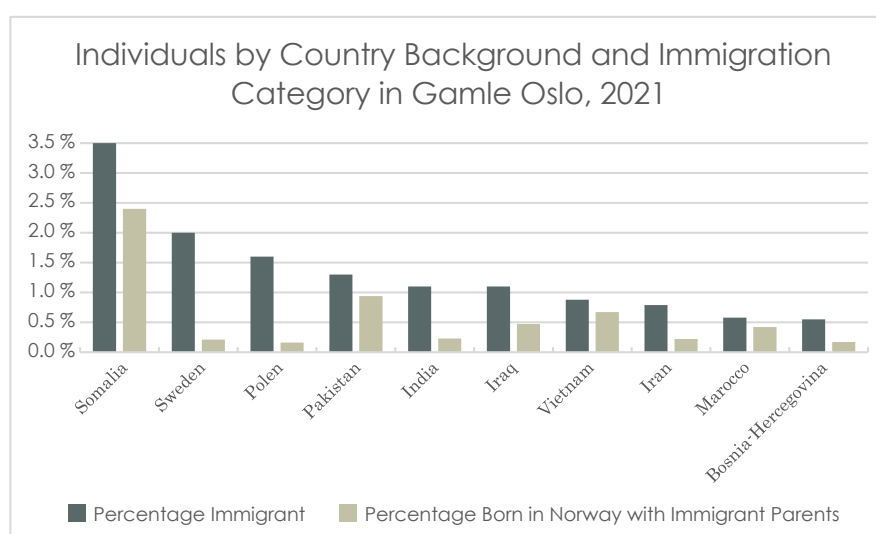


Figure 24: Immigrants country background in Gamle Oslo (Oslo kommune, n.d.b).

The immigrants residing in the district Gamle Oslo, have their origins from many different countries, but most from the following ten countries: Somalia, Sweden, Polen, Pakistan, India, Iraq, Vietnam, Iran, Marocco, and Bosnia-Hercegovina. Most individuals with immigrant background in Gamle Oslo have their backgrounds Somalia, Sweden and Polen, but second-generation immigrants have mostly their origins from Somalia, Pakistan, Vietnam and Iraq. The differences in the amount of second-generation immigrant from the European countries versus the Asian and African countries can be explained by the cultural differences between the western and eastern countries. In eastern societies, building a family is a big part of the culture whereas the focus on family is less significant in the western culture (Goody, 1996).

### 3.4.3 HOUSING AND ACCOMMODATION

In this part of the thesis the housing and accommodation in the area will be analyzed. Here factors such as the building types, rooms per person, ownership, household types and the number of community housing units will be discovered and discussed for Tøyen and Grønland and compared to the average in the municipality as a whole.

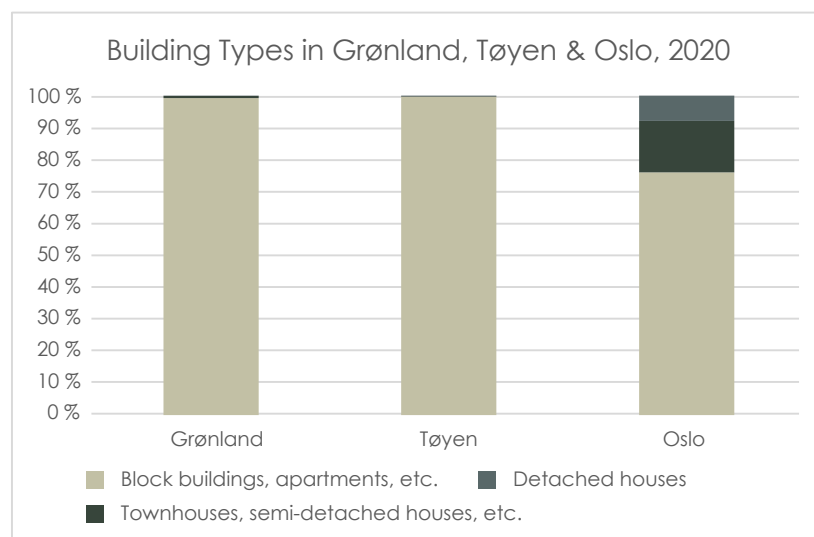


Figure 25: The dominant building types in Grønland, Tøyen and Oslo municipality  
(Oslo kommune, n.d.c).

The dominating building types on the project area are block buildings, apartments and the like, making up almost 100 per cent of the buildings in both Grønland and Tøyen. Compared to the building types in Oslo, which make up 76 per cent block building, 16 per cent townhouses and semi-detached houses and 8 per cent detached houses (Oslo kommune, n.d.c). When regarding the households by the tenancy/ownership ratio, it was found that almost 50 per cent of the inhabitants in the area are tenants, compared to Oslo where only 30 per cent are tenants (Oslo kommune, n.d.d). This could indicate that the population of Tøyen and Grønland have a lower purchasing power and ability to enter the housing market.

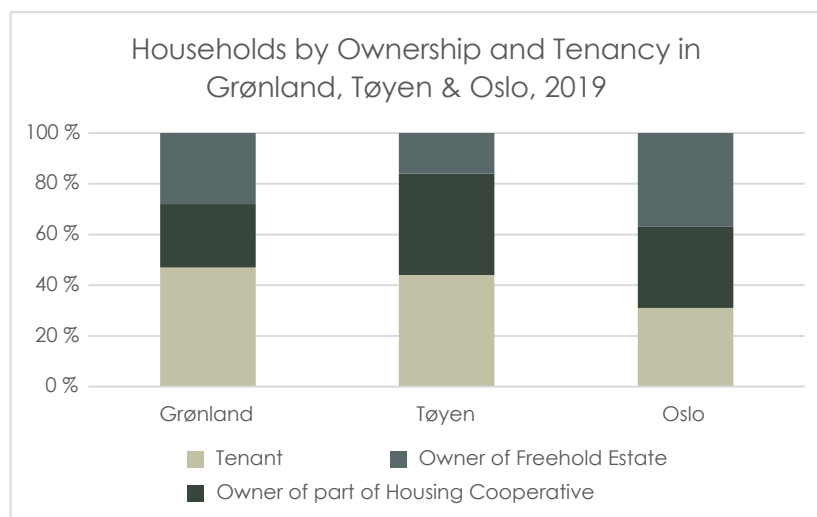


Figure 26: Households by ownership and tenancy in Grønland, Tøyen and Oslo municipality (Oslo kommune, n.d.d).

In addition, the inhabitants of Grønland and Tøyen live more cramped than the rest of the municipality. Where 2 per cent of the households in the area have less than 0,5 rooms per person and between 11-14 per cent less than 1 room per person. In comparison to Oslo where 1 per cent of the population has less than 0,5 rooms per person and 10 per cent less than 1 room per person (Oslo kommune, n.d.e). People live especially cramped in Tøyen compared to Oslo, where 5 per cent more of the population have less than 1 room per person. In Grønland the difference is slightly smaller, but still over the average of the municipality.

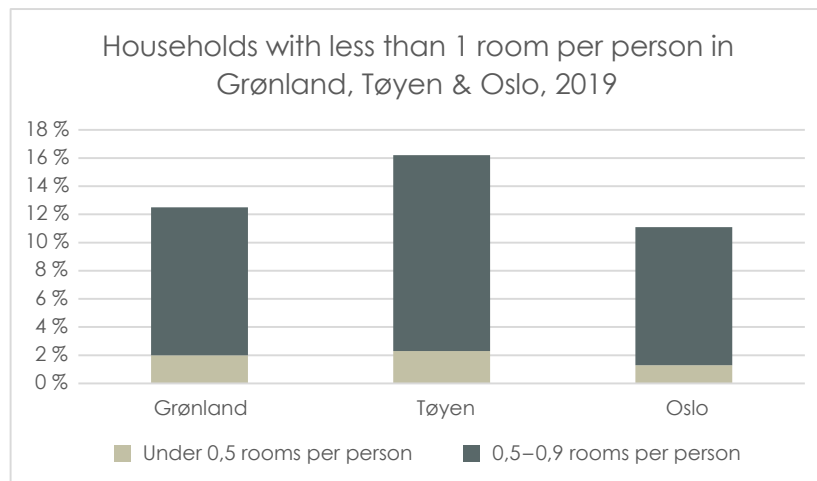


Figure 27: Households with less than 1 room in Grønland, Tøyen and Oslo municipality (Oslo kommune, n.d.e).

Living more cramped can be seen as a natural consequence of living in the capital, but in this case, it could be an indicator of the inhabitants being economically disadvantaged and not having the means to live in apartments with more rooms. This can also be seen by the number of individuals living in publicly provided housing. Approximately 17 per cent of the inhabitants in Tøyen and 6 per cent in Grønland live in public housing provided by the municipality, with the average in Oslo municipality being 3 per cent (Oslo kommune, n.d.d). These are very big differences, further supporting the notion that the inhabitants of Tøyen and Grønland are more disadvantaged than the average Oslo-citizen.

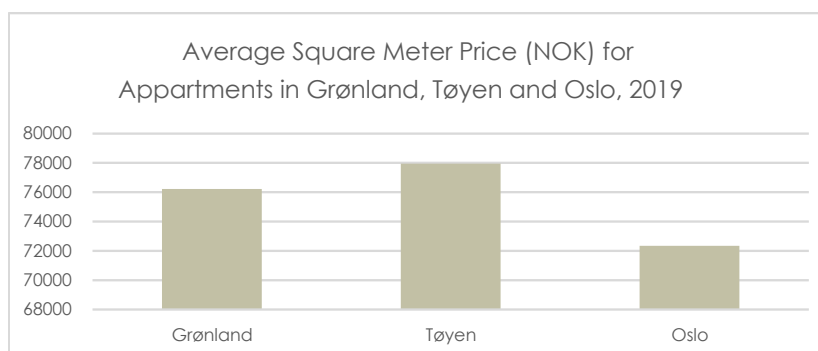


Figure 28: Average square meter price (NOK) for appartments in Grønland, Tøyen and Oslo municipality (Oslo kommune, n.d.f).

By 2019 the square meter price in Grønland was 76 228 NOK, and Tøyen 77 958, compared to Oslo being 72 342 (Oslo kommune, n.d.f). In the most central neighborhoods in Oslo, including Tøyen and Grønland, the per square meter price for buildings has increased by 40 per cent the last 5 years, and almost 50 per cent the past 10 years. Where the continued rise in the property market is not expected to stagnate anytime soon (Lorvik, 2020). This could lead to many of the current inhabitants of Tøyen and Grønland not being able to afford living in the area and having to move to the outskirts of the municipality.

A further rise in the property market could arguably mostly affect newly established families with young children, single parents and single individuals living alone, due to those households normally having less income and economic stability. According to Oslo municipality the dominating household types in the area are one-person households, couples without children, and multi-family households (Oslo kommune, n.d.g). The household types in Grønland and Tøyen are quite similar to the distribution within the municipality. However, there are almost 10 per cent more one-person households in Tøyen and Grønland compared to Oslo, and fewer couples with children.

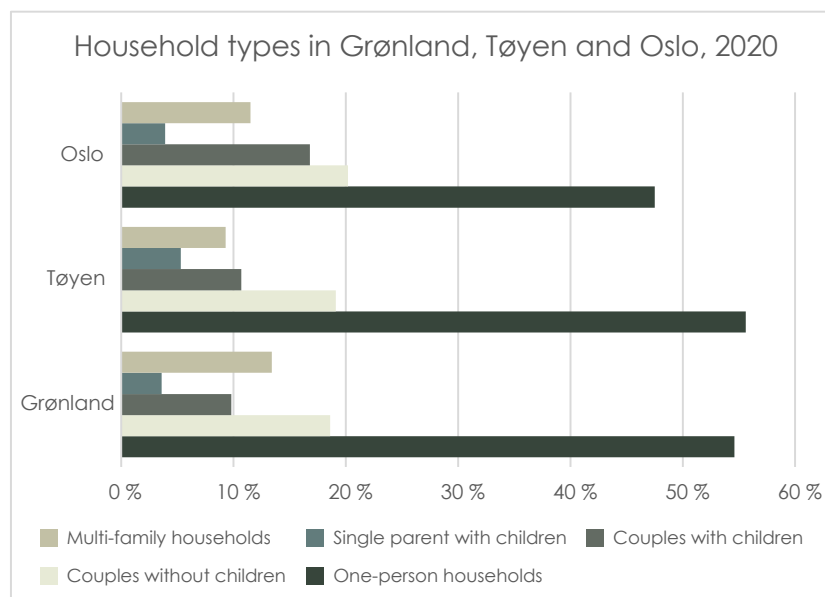


Figure 29: Five household types in Grønland, Tøyen and Oslo (Oslo kommune, n.d.g).



### 3.4.4 ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

Due to new privacy laws, the last updated statistics available for occupation and employment in Tøyen and Grønland are from 2011, which in this case will be too outdated. The same goes for income statistics, where the closest numbers to Tøyen and Grønland are for the district Gamle Oslo and Oslo municipality. According to numbers for SSB from 2019, the households in Gamle Oslo made on average 63 500 NOK less than the rest of the municipality. With the average income per household being 805 000 in Oslo and 742 500 in Gamle Oslo (Statistisk Sentralbyrå, 2021c).

From the data provided by SSB, households consisting of single parents with children and couples with children had in 2019 on average a lower income than the average in the Oslo municipality. On the contrary, the one-person households had a higher average income, and couples without children the same as the rest of the municipality. This indicates that the families with children in the project area are at a more disadvantage than those without children.

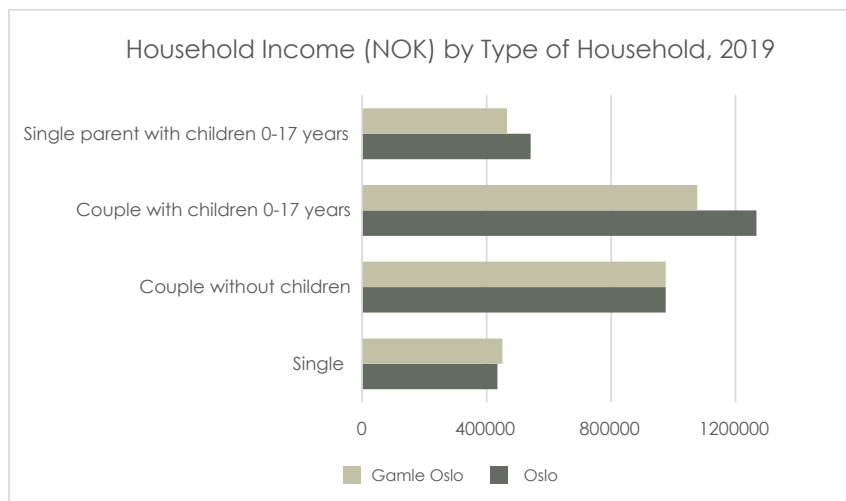


Figure 30: Household income by type of household in Gamle Oslo and Oslo municipality in 2019 (Statistisk Sentralbyrå, 2021c).

From the data provided by NAV, the total number of unemployment was somewhat even in 2018 and 2019 in the different districts in Oslo. In 2020 the unemployment rate increased significantly in all districts, but especially in three

districts: Gamle Oslo, Grünerløkka and Frogner (NAV, 2021). This was a direct result of the Covid-19 pandemic which hit Norway at the beginning of 2020, where many lost their jobs and were temporarily laid off due to many industries having to stop production and close to help reduce the risk of infection. Even though most industries have been able to open again in periods where the infection rate has been low, many companies have gone bankrupt due to longer periods of not being able to run as normal. This has led to a 261 per cent increase in unemployment due to bankruptcy compared to 2019 (Bjørntvedt, 2020).

The unemployment numbers for Gamle Oslo indicate that many of the inhabitants of Tøyen and Grønland work in service and entertainment industries such as retail, restaurants, cafés and other industries not defined as “essential” during a pandemic. Which would explain the significant increase in unemployment from 2020 to date. These negative consequences of the pandemic on people's income and employment will likely be very difficult to counteract, this especially due to the many companies going bankrupt.

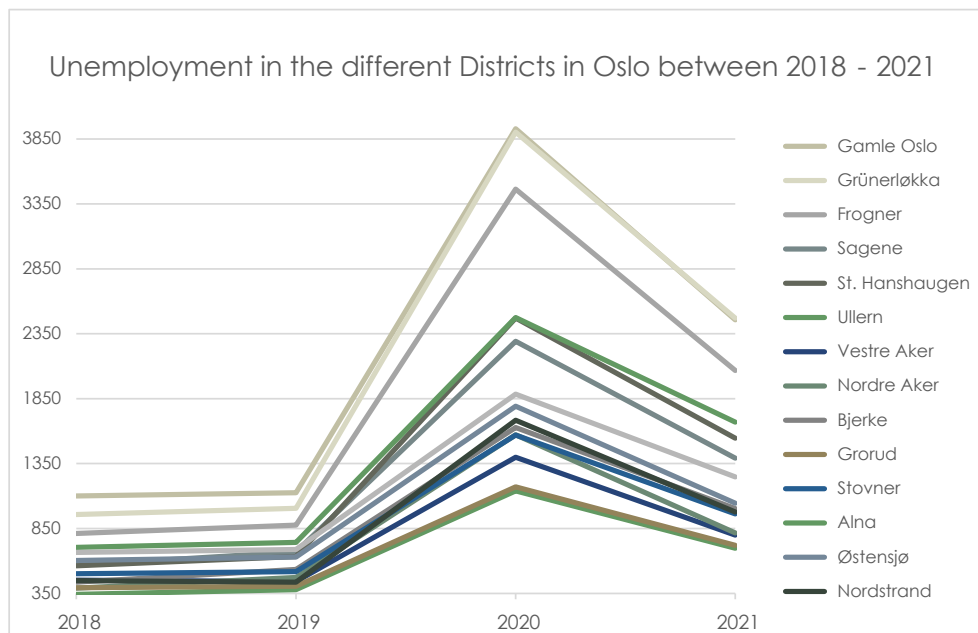


Figure 31: Unemployment in the different districts in the month May between years 2018 - 2021. Data provided by NAV, compiled from monthly reports (NAV, 2021).

### 3.4.5 CRIME AND LIVING CONDITIONS

Just as the data regarding the economic activity in Tøyen and Grønland, there is no publicly available data for crime instanced other than for the entire municipality or different counties. From the data provided by the Norwegian police force, the police district in Norway with the most reported crimes is Oslo (Politiet, n.d.). It is important to note that Oslo police district is the district with the most inhabitants in Norway, explaining why the number of reported crimes there are reasonably more. Furthermore, the data from the police's official website shows that the number of reported crimes in Oslo has been reduced by a little over 4 per cent since 2016.

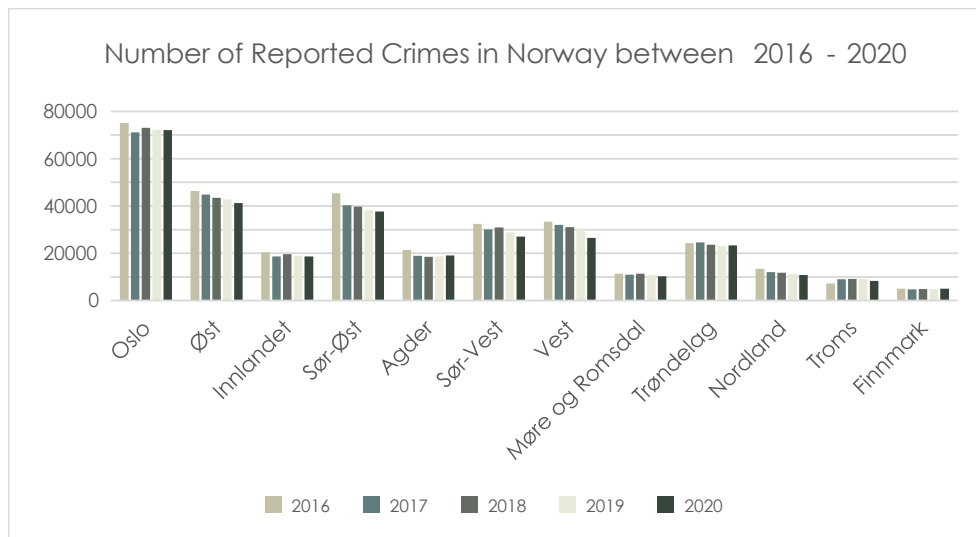


Figure 32: Number of reported crimes in Norway by police district between years 2016 - 2020 (Politiet, n.d.).

According to the Norwegian newspaper Aftenposten, almost 36 000 crimes were reported from the central parts of Oslo, here including Tøyen and Grønland. These reported crimes making up almost 12 per cent of the total crimes committed in Norway (Johansen, 2020). The occurrence of crime is often closely related to living conditions indicators, such as low income and unemployment, low education, poor housing, poor mental health and drug addiction (Jensen, 2013).

Oslo municipality compiled a list of various living indicators, where the occurrence of the different factors was presented

in per cent compared to the entire municipality. The five living condition factors which differed the most from the rest of the municipality were: Morality, Unemployment, Low-income households with children, Low education level and Immigrants from Africa, Asia and other non-western countries with short residence time (Oslo kommune, n.d.h).

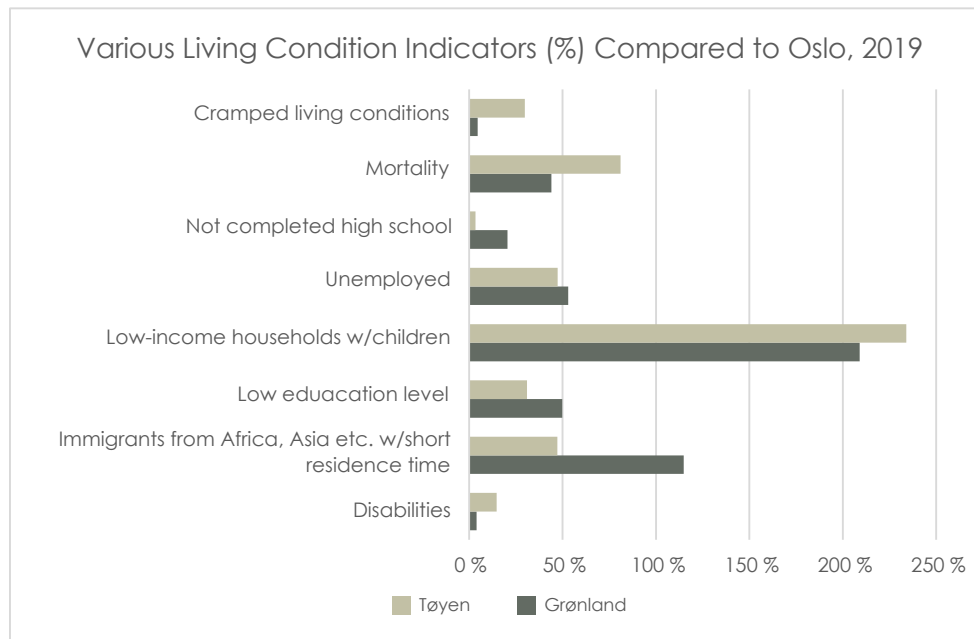


Figure 33: Various living condition indicators (%) compared to Oslo from 2019 (Oslo kommune, n.d.h).

The most noteworthy difference is the number of low-income households with children occurring almost 230 per cent more in Tøyen and Grønland than the rest of the municipality. Most children growing up in low-income households experience negative consequences both in the short and long term. This applies, for example, to their physical and mental health, education, employability, relationship building and struggle to be included in society (Bufdir, 2018). Furthermore, children raised in low-income households have an increased likelihood of continuing to have the same problems as their parents, being alcohol- and drug addiction or unemployment. Early intervention and follow-up of disadvantaged children could in the long-term lead to fewer instances of crime and alcohol- and drug addiction in the population.

### **3.4.6 SOCIO-CULTURAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC ANALYSIS CONCLUSION**

From the findings of the socio-cultural and socio-economic analysis it can be broadly concluded that the inhabitants of Tøyen and Grønland are more disadvantaged than the rest of the population of Oslo. First, it was found that the population on the project area are on average younger than the average in Oslo and consist of a greater number of men versus women. Furthermore, it was found that almost half of the inhabitants on the area have an immigrant background, either being first- or second-generation immigrants. When analyzing the housing and accommodation instances it was discovered that the dominating household types in the area are one-person households, couples without children and multi-family households, where between 12-16 per cent of the households in the area have less 1 room per person. In addition, approximately 17 per cent of the inhabitants in Tøyen and 6 per cent in Grønland live in public housing provided by the municipality, with the average in Oslo municipality being only 3 per cent.

Regarding the economic activity in the area it was discovered that many had recently lost their jobs due to the Covid-19 pandemic, where the number of unemployed individuals in Gamle Oslo is more than double that of most of the other districts in Oslo. Furthermore, it was discovered that one-person households in Tøyen and Grønland have on average a higher income than the rest of the municipality. On the contrary, single parent households with children and couples with children make on average less than the rest of the municipality. From the crime and living conditions analysis it was further confirmed that the most disadvantaged individuals in the project area are the low-income families with children. And from the indicators provided by the municipality it can be concluded that there are lower living conditions in Tøyen and Grønland than the rest of the municipality, where the high crime instances can be seen as a direct consequence of the low living conditions.

## 3.5 HUMAN ANALYSIS

In this chapter observations and findings from numerous site visits conducted in the month of May in 2021 will be presented. In addition, observations of behavior in the different public spaces will be discussed and the quality of the public places analyzed. In the human analysis anything relating to the use of the public areas and behavior of the inhabitants of Tøyen and Grønland will be investigated.

### 3.5.1 SITE VISIT

When visiting the project area, it was noticed that all parts of Grønland and Tøyen were in a comfortable walking distance away from the city center, and the different urban areas were easy to navigate to. Furthermore, all the public spaces and parks are within walking distance away from each other, where most streets were well maintained and had trees and green structures connected to them. Below two examples from Tøyen can be seen, the first being the fountain in Sørli plass, close to the Sørli playground and the second being Jens Bjelkes Road which crosses Sørli plass. All in all, it was found that most parts of Tøyen and Grønland had a relaxed atmosphere, where many people used the public places for leisure and socializing.



Figure 34: Sørli plass.



Figure 35: Jens Bjelkes Road.



## Grønland

Due to Grønlands close proximity to the city center, many parts of Grønland are very busy at almost all times of the day, this goes especially for Grønland square and the main road Grønlandsleiret. In Grønland square a broad variety of international shops, fruit- and vegetable shops and a popular secondhand store, Fretex, can be found. There are even more international shops and grocery stores located along Grønlandsleiret, in addition to several restaurants, pubs and fast-food restaurants, such as MAX burger. Below and to the right, pictures of Olafiagangen and Grønland square can be seen. Olafiagangen is a bridge underpass which connects Grønland to the Oslo city center and crosses the Akers River.

From the site visits, Grønland can broadly be described as a multicultural, social and busy neighborhood, with facilities and urban areas meeting the needs for both its younger and older inhabitants.



Figure 36: Olafiagangen.



Figure 37: Grønland Square.



Figure 38: Fresh produce in Grønland.

## Tøyen

From the site visits, Tøyen was in many ways perceived as being similar to Grønland, meaning being a multicultural, social and busy neighborhood. Compared to Grønland, many parts of Tøyen were less busy and had a more relaxed atmosphere to them, where many parents were out on the playgrounds and parks with their children. This can be explained from the socio-cultural and socio-economic analysis where it was found that there are more single parents and couples with children in Tøyen versus Grønland. Furthermore, there were also many young adults outside utilizing the public spaces for leisure and social activities. And just like in Grønland, many international shops and grocery store can be found in Tøyen. Below and to the right, pictures of Mosaikk kindergarten, Tøyen square, and the soccer court in Rudolf Nilsens Place can be seen. The atmosphere in Tøyen square was less pleasant than Grønland square, probably due to the lack of sunlight access.



Figure 39: Mosaikk Kindergarten.



Figure 40: Tøyen Square.



Figure 41: Rudolf Nilsens Place.



### 3.5.2 BEHAVIOR IN SPACE

When observing people's behavior in the public spaces in Tøyen and Grønland, it was discovered that all three activity types, necessary activities, optional activities and social activities, were present in the area. People were observed rushing through the main streets of Grønland and Tøyen, probably on the way to work or running errands, and many were observed relaxing and socializing on the many public spaces and green structures. The number of different activities present in the area differed depending on the time of day and if it was a weekday or weekend.

In the pictures taken from the site visits, people using the different public spaces in Grønland and Tøyen can be seen. The first picture illustrating people sunbathing in Botsparken, the second picture a little boy playing by himself on a quite evening in the Vahl

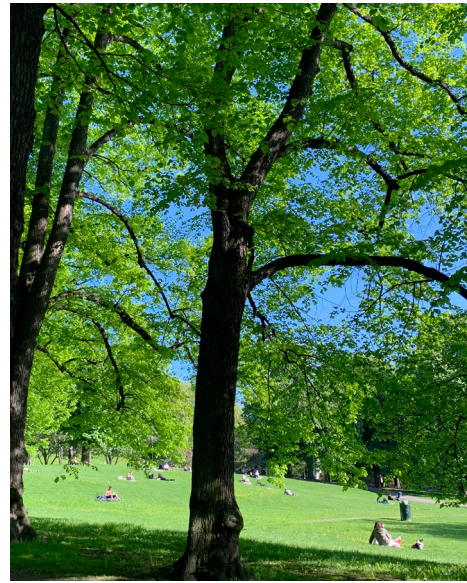


Figure 42: Botsparken.



Figure 43: Vahl elementary school.



Figure 44: Grådi outdoor seating.

elementary school playground, and the third picture people enjoying outdoor serving at a restaurant named Grådi next to Sørli plass.

The differences within the area were very noticeable, where some parts of Tøyen and Grønland felt safe and had many families with their children playing and being social whilst other parts of the area felt unsafe where obviously drunk and intoxicated individuals were using the streets and public areas, this is especially true for the areas around Grønland and Tøyen square, the Akers River and Olafiagangen.

### **3.5.3 QUALITY OF PUBLIC SPACES**

When using Jan Gehls theory and 12 criteria for public spaces of good quality, it can be concluded that the green structures and public areas in Tøyen and Grønland are of good quality. This was especially confirmed by the many individuals who used the public spaces available. Gehl argued, as presented in Chapter 2.2.1, that the lack of people utilizing the available public spaces in an area would indicate that the public areas were of non-satisfactory quality.

It can be argued that the quality and safety of the public areas often go hand in hand. The areas of Tøyen and Grønland which were the least maintained and had bad street lighting were also the areas in which most potential criminal activity can be found. For example, people selling and buying drugs were observed close to Olafiagangen and near the Akers River. Furthermore, the public spaces which were not used by many were also the spaces which did not meet some of the criteria's developed by Gehl, in this case being (2) protection against harm from others and (11) Opportunities to enjoy the positive aspects of climate. In those areas in question, the public spaces could be experienced as unsafe for, for example, women and children due to individuals from the drug environment openly using the areas. Those were also the areas that lacked sunlight access and street lighting.

On the other hand, most of the public areas and spaces in the area are well maintained and are perceived as pleasant

and safe, leading to many utilizing the areas in Tøyen and Grønland. The findings from the socio-cultural and socio-economic analysis are also reflected here, where most of the people observed utilizing the public areas were young, either being parents with their children or young adults.



Figure 45: Playground in Botsparken.



Figure 46: Art on the walls of Vahl school.

### 3.5.4 HUMAN ANALYSIS CONCLUSION

From the site visits and observations, it can be concluded that the public spaces in Grønland and Tøyen are of high quality, where many utilize the green structures available. Most of the available public spaces available are a short walking distance away from each other and are well maintained, some examples can be seen on the pictures above.

The crime and drug problem that the project area faces, also affect some parts of the project area, where some public spaces feel unsafe to stay in, this especially for women and children. This issue needs to be addressed, but as discussed in the socio-cultural and socio-economic analysis, crime and drug issues can be worked against through bettering peoples living conditions. In other words, removing individuals with drug and alcohol addictions from the public spaces will not be a long-term solution to the problem.



## **3.6 “OMRÅDELØFT GRØNLAND OG TØYEN”**

In this part of the thesis the municipality's project “Områdeløft Grønland og Tøyen” will be analyzed. Hereunder, their main aims and goals will be examined. Furthermore, their progress and what has been accomplished will be discussed. Directly translated from Norwegian the word Områdeløft is “area lift” meaning area development or area improvement. The definition that the municipality uses for “Områdeløft” is “(...) a method where physical and social measures are to contribute to “comprehensive, lasting and locally based development work” in selected areas with special living condition challenges.” [translated] (Oslo kommune, n.d.i).

### **3.6.1 BACKGROUND**

On the 5th of June 2013 the city council of Oslo decided on a five-year program for the development of Tøyen, called Tøyenløftet, where the main goals would be to bettering the living conditions in the area. It was further on decided that 25 million NOK would be provided for the project annually by the municipality. The Norwegian state contributed with a similar amount, making it approximately 50 million NOK annually. The city council made it a prerequisite that residents, voluntary teams and organizations were given the opportunity to participate in the decision-making processes (Kommunerevisjonen, 2018).

The Områdeløft project was initiated in 2014 by Oslo municipality. Back then Tøyen was the only area which was included in the project (Oslo kommune, n.d.i). The Områdeløft project for Tøyen lasted until 2018. From 2019 the Områdeløft-project was extended to include Grønland. In 2018 an end-report was published for the Områdeløft project for Tøyen between the years 2014-2018. In that report the main achievements of the five-year project were presented. A more thorough and detailed report for the five-year Tøyen project was also published in 2018, called Tøyenmagasinet (Oslo kommune, 2018).

A new planning program was approved by the City Council on the 14th of April 2021, where the district of Gamle Oslo was given 25.52 million NOK to implement the goals of the plan. The main goal in the newest planning program is "The program will contribute to lasting improvements of services and local environmental qualities in areas where the needs are greatest, so that more residents in these areas become financially independent and actively participate in the local communities and society." [translated] (Oslo kommune, 2021). Further, the main goal is divided into six sub-goals being: (1) social life and voluntariness, (2) identity, trust and belonging, (3) living environment, (4) physical local environmental qualities, (5) urban development and (6) new municipal practice, as illustrated in Figure 47 below. This phase of the Områdeløft-project, with its goals, has been decided to last until the end of the year 2026.







Sub-Goal 1	Sub-Goal 2	Sub-Goal 3	Sub-Goal 4	Sub-Goal 5	Sub-Goal 6
					
Social life and Voluntariness	Identity, Trust & Belonging	Living Environment	Physical Local Environmental Qualities	Urban Development	New municipal Practice
The municipality facilitates for a varied cultural and organizational life and new forms for volunteering and participation.	Inhabitants contributing in higher degree to develop own local communities.	The living environments are in higher degree well-functioning and perceived as safe by the residents.	Buildings and outdoor areas are used and are maintained, and the inhabitants have good availability to important functions in and around the area.	Area and infrastructure planning, housing and urban development builds on insight in local needs and helps to increase areas attractiveness.	The municipality is better at cooperating inward and outward to create good living and upbringing environments.

Figure 47: Sub-goals in the Planning Program 2021 (Oslo kommune, 2021).

Two spatial and sociocultural analyses have been conducted in correlation to the Områdeløft project, one for Tøyen called "Hva nå, Tøyen?" from 2015 and the other for Grønland called "På sporet av det nye Grønland" from 2017. Both analyses were written on behalf of the municipality by AFI Arbeidsforskningsinstituttet, a research institute linked to the university OsloMet, previously known as Oslo and Akershus University College. The two spatial analyses were then utilized by the municipality in the further work on the Områdeløft-project (Brattbakk et al., 2015)(Brattbakk et al., 2017).

### 3.6.2 THE PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS

In Tøyenmagasinet, it is stated that Tøyen has become a better place to live in since the start of the Områdeløft project in 2014, where during the five-year period over 40 projects have been completed. Hereunder, it was stated that the main achievements of the project were the following:

- The development of a “activity-house” called K1, has given the inhabitants of Tøyen can go to socialize through different activities.
- All children in Tøyen have been given the opportunity to participate in a free activity school (AKS).
- Tøyen Sportsklubb and Sterling have given children and young adults the opportunity to join in activities after school.
- Several squares, streets and urban spaces in Tøyen have been upgraded, including playgrounds, murals and other art on public areas.
- The district Gamle Osla has provided services which are better adapted to the population in Tøyen, and the living environments have in many places become better.
- Ideas have become reality through investment in social entrepreneurship through Tøyen Unlimited.

Furthermore, it was stated in Tøyenmagasinet that the citizen participation was an important part of the Områdeløft project, making the decided upon plans become the “(...)best if they come from those who see and live with the challenges every day. The good collaboration with those who live on Tøyen has been crucial in achieving what we have achieved.” [translated] (Oslo kommune, 2018).

In the end of the magazine Tøyenmagasinet, Oslo's Vice Mayor for Urban Development Hanna E. Marcussen has written some last remarks regarding the previous Områdeløft project and expectations for the new project from 2019. Marcussen stated “I am proud of everything we have achieved in Tøyen so far. At the same time, there are still major challenges in the area, which we must sort out in the future” [translated]. Lastly, regarding the results of the project Marcussen stated “Although much has been achieved, many are disappointed

that nothing more has been done. When we now enter a new initiative, it is therefore important for me to emphasize that an area investment alone cannot solve the challenges associated with, among other things, poverty, drugs and psychiatry that we find in Tøyen. It is the ordinary public services, everything from health services to good schools, that are the backbone of the development of any area. An area development is an addition to this, which can make the ordinary services better."

In correlation with the end of the Områdeløft-project for Tøyen in 2018 the municipal audit, Kommunerevisjonen, published a report discussing the goal achievement and results of the project. An audit is an official independent examination and inspection of an organization's financial information and accounts, normally conducted annually or after the completion of a project (The Economic Times, n.d.). In the report, Kommunerevisjonen stated that their main recommendation was that the municipality should consider measures to strengthen the citizen involvement in the area development (Kommunerevisjonen, 2018). According to the district, there had been no citizen participation at program level in the development of the project plans since the year 2016. Thereby, the municipal audits assessment concluded that it had not been sufficiently arranged for residents, and voluntary organizations to participate in the decision-making process. This was especially true for the more disadvantaged citizens of Tøyen, who's voices were not heard in the development. This finding by the municipal audit is directly contradictory to what was stated in Tøyenmagasinet regarding the citizen participation.

Furthermore, from the report, it was concluded that there were reported various degrees of goal achievements in the different project in the Områdeløft in Tøyen, but that it was difficult to determine the degree of achievement. This was, according to Kommunerevisjonen, partially due to no methods set in place to measure the goal achievement and that the goals formulated for the project were formulated in a way which was impossible to measure the after the projects end. Kommunerevisjonen recommended that the municipality work on strengthening its project- and evaluation methods.

### 3.6.3 CRITICISM AND MEDIA

In addition to the criticism towards the results of the Områdeløft project given by the municipal audit, several media outlets and inhabitants of Oslo have voiced great concerns and strongly criticized the results of the Områdeløft project. The criticism was especially directed towards the funding that went into the project and the non-satisfactory results thereafter.

In a news article in NRK from 14th of November 2017, it was stated that at the time 141 million NOK had been spent on the project in Tøyen, but nevertheless, child poverty and juvenile delinquency had increased in the area the past years. In the article it was discussed that at the inhabitants of Tøyen back in 2013 were promised better living conditions, especially for the most disadvantaged, but the statistics on child poverty and juvenile delinquency of the time stated the contrary. Senior adviser Jon Epland at SSB stated in the article "It has gone in the wrong direction. The most financially vulnerable are not included in the developments of Tøyen" [translated] (Eraker, Sunde, & Kumano-Ensby, 2017). In 2010, 60,4 per cent of the children in lower Tøyen lived in poor families. In 2015, two years after the Tøyen-project was signed, the number had increased to 63,7 per cent. In addition, the numbers showed that the inhabitants in Tøyen are the poorest in Norway, with Grønland following in second place.

In another news article from the 31st of May 2019, it was stated that the area development of Tøyen and Grønland did not meet the expectations. "The Områdeløft of Tøyen and Grønland promised better living conditions, but experience shows that it instead contributes to a better local environment. - We do many little things that make it better to live there, but the living conditions indicator is the same, says the city director." (Knipperud, Klungland Ousdal, & Avdagic, 2019). In this article, just like the one from 2017, the criticism is directed towards the promise to improve major living condition problems, including child poverty and high unemployment, on the area, but rather the Områdeløft project has succeeded in bettering the public spaces in the area but failed to better the inhabitants' living conditions. Finally in the article, the city director in Gamle Oslo stated that a Områdeløft project does



not improve the living conditions on the area. This is directly contradictory to the first program plan for the Områdeløft of Tøyen from 2014, where the main aim was to improve the living conditions in Tøyen. In the program plan from 2019, the municipality has stopped using the improvement of living conditions as a goal. This was due to it being discovered from the previous Områdeløft-project that the project scope was not comprehensive enough to improve such living condition challenges. Therefore, the focus has been shifted to increase the overall well-being and to strengthen the local environment rather than the living condition.

In the newspaper VårtOslo from 2020, the anthropologist Katja Bratseth states that the gentrification of Grønland will not lead to fewer drug addicts, more children with safe playgrounds and more families with good and stable homes. Bratseth states that the gentrification taking place will be moving the issues to other parts of the city, and that the solution should be found in a collaboration with the inhabitants of Grønland whilst focusing on the local challenges. Lastly, Bratseth concludes by stating that complex problems will require complex solutions (Bratseth, 2020). More about the risks and consequences of gentrification can be found in Chapter 5.2 Discussion.

### **3.6.4 THE PROJECT TODAY**

As briefly mentioned earlier, the focus on bettering the living conditions in Tøyen and Grønland has been removed from the goals in the new Områdeløft-project. Rather, the Områdeløft-project has been expanded into the "Oslo indre øst-satsning" directly translated into the Oslo Inner-East initiative. According to the municipality an Områdesatsning is "a holistic and interdisciplinary effort that is directed towards a geographical limited area, as a supplement to ordinary services and methods on state and municipal level" [translated] (Oslo kommune, 2020). This project has three sub-projects, with the first being Local Environment, hereunder the Områdeløft project, the second being Upbringing and Education, and the third Employment.

According to the municipality this initiative will contribute to strengthening the local communities in vulnerable areas in Oslo's inner east, including Tøyen and Grønland. In addition to improving services in upbringing, education and employment (Oslo kommune, n.d.j). This initiative will like the Områdeløft-project last until the year 2026 and is a collaboration between Oslo municipality and the Norwegian State. The main goal and sub-goals of the new initiative can be seen in Figure 48 below. It is important to note that the goals of the initiative do not mention the improvement of the living conditions and bettering the QoL of the inhabitants of the areas. This makes it difficult to know if the measures taken in correlation with the project will have had positive or negative effects on the inhabitants. This also leads to difficulty in holding the city council and municipality accountable if the living condition indicators were to further decrease.



Figure 48: Main goal and sub-goals in Områdesatsning Oslo indre-øst (Oslo kommune, 2020)

Just like in the original plans for the Områdeløft of Tøyen from 2014, the municipality emphasizes the importance of citizen involvement and participation in the Områdesatsning-project.

The municipality states that they are working on achieving broader and better participation than what is required by law, as well as testing new ways of conducting citizen participation (Oslo kommune, n.d.j). Furthermore, they state that that a central part of the citizen participation work is to develop methods which also reach out to the "silent voices"; citizens which do not usually attend formal hearings or public meetings. In order to achieve this the municipality plans to stand where people travel, knocking on people's doors and developing their own area offices where the district can come into contact with the citizens. These plans to achieve higher citizen participation seem promising, but if the results turn out better than the previous Tøyen-project remains to be seen.

### **3.6.5 "OMRÅDELØFT TØYEN OG GRØNLAND"**

#### **CONCLUSION**

From the analysis of the Områdeløft-project mainly four things were found: (1) the municipality did not sufficiently involve the citizens in the decision-making process of the development of Tøyen in the time period 2014-2018, (2) the living conditions in Tøyen in the same time period decreased, (3) the municipality has removed the goal of improving the living in the area from the current development plans for Tøyen and Grønland, and lastly (4) the municipality has big ambitions for the citizen involvement in the new development plans for Tøyen and Grønland including utilizing new methods to reach out to individuals who usually do not attend formal hearings and public meetings. In addition, it was found that the municipality has successfully bettered the local environment in the project area. This could also be seen from the site visits conducted in the area, where most public spaces were experienced as lively and well-maintained.

On the contrary, one should question why the goals of improving the living conditions in the area have been removed from the plans. This could lead to one not being able to hold the municipality and Norwegian State accountable if the living conditions continue to worsen over the years, which was the case for Tøyen during the Områdeløft-project in 2014-2018.

### 3.7 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

In this conclusion of the Case study some of the main findings of the four different analyses conducted will be presented. From the spatial and physical analysis, it was found that that the inhabitants of Tøyen and Grønland have everything that is needed in their everyday life available on the area, including facilities, amenities, public transportation and parks and recreational areas. Furthermore, it was found that the inhabitants of the area can easily access other parts of the municipality and its facilities due to the infrastructure in place and close proximity to the city center.

From the socio-cultural and socio-economic analysis, it was found that the living conditions in Tøyen and Grønland are very bad compared to the rest of the municipality, and due to the Covid-19 pandemic these differences have become even more noticeable. As a direct result of the pandemic the number of unemployed individuals in the area has increased by almost 200 per cent. Furthermore, it was found that between 12-16 per cent of the households in Tøyen and Grønland live in cramped, having less than 1 room per person. In addition, it was discovered that the most disadvantaged individuals in the area are the households consisting of single parents with children og couples with children, which have on average a lower income than the rest of the municipality. Lastly, it was discovered that the area has higher crime incidence, especially crimes related to drugs and addiction. The crime issue in the area can be seen as a direct consequence of the low living conditions.

In the human analysis it was found that most of the public spaces in Grønland and Tøyen are of high quality, where from the site visits it was observed that many people were utilizing the public spaces available on the area. Furthermore, it was found that most of the public spaces in the area were a comfortable walking distance away from each other, making it easy for the inhabitants of Grønland and Tøyen to access them. In addition, it was observed that the public areas which were of low quality, such as the areas which were not maintained and had bad street lighting, were also the spaces which felt the most unsafe.

The findings from the analysis of the Områdeløft-project answers the third sub-question:

3. *What has been accomplished/not accomplished in Tøyen and Grønland during the "Områdeløft" project?*

In the analysis of the Områdeløft-project it was found that the municipality achieved to improve the local environment on the area, making the available public spaces attractive to use for activities such as socializing leisure. This could also be seen from the findings in the human analysis. On the other hand, there were mainly two major factors which were not achieved in the Områdeløft-project being: successfully involving the residents of the area in the decision-making process and bettering the living conditions of the inhabitants in the area. This was also found in the socio-cultural and socio-economic analysis, where it was apparent that the inhabitants of Tøyen and Grønland in many ways are at a bigger disadvantage than the rest of the municipality. Furthermore, it was found in the analysis that the municipality has removed the goals of bettering the living conditions on the area from the plans after the completion of the Områdeløft in Tøyen in 2019. This leaves reason to think that the municipality does not believe in its ability to better the living condition of the inhabitants in the area or potentially not wanting to be held accountable for a further decrease in the living conditions in Tøyen and Grønland in the coming years.

	Chp. 2 Literature Review	Chp. 3 Case Study	Chp. 4 Development Proposal	Chp. 5 Conclusion
Sub-quest.1	x			
Sub-quest.2	x			
Sub-quest.3		x		
Sub-quest.4			x	
Main quest.				x

Figure 49: The research questions answered so far in the thesis.

# 4

Chp.

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL  
FOR TØYEN & GRØNLAND

*"We all have a choice. We can create transformational action that will safeguard the living conditions for future generations. Or we can continue with our business as usual and fail"*  
(Thunberg, 2019).

## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

From the case study and the analysis of the municipality's Områdeløft-project in Tøyen and Grønland it was found that the municipality did not plan for the improvement of the QoL in the area. According to the UN, cities that improve the QoL for their citizens experience higher levels of prosperity and are also likely to find themselves more advanced in terms of sustainability (Andersson, 2016). Furthermore, it has been found that the improvement of the QoL in an area will progress the urban planning and management outcomes mutually (Ebrahimzadeh, Aziz Shahraki, Shahnaz, & Myandoab, 2016).

Comprehensive and holistic planning is needed to succeed in improving the QoL in an area. The project managers and decision makers working on developing Tøyen and Grønland will most likely not succeed in increasing the QoL and living conditions in the area without considering all aspects of a society which affect the QoL and living conditions. It is recommended that the municipality and the Norwegian state utilize the criteria list for improved QoL developed in Chapter 2.3, illustrated below. From the Literature Review it was found that the most effective way to achieve better QoL

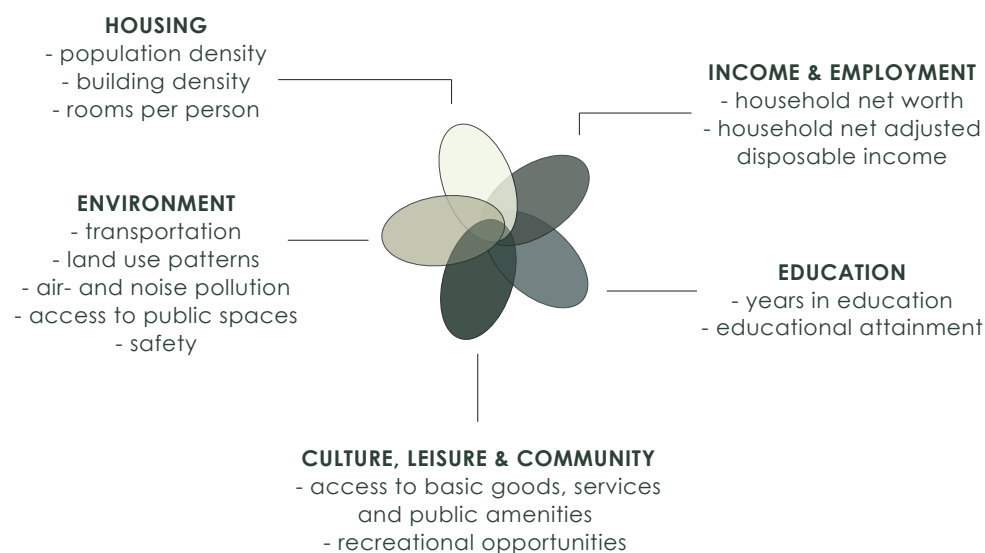


Figure 50: Own criteria list for improved QoL through urban planning, based on the dimensions and indicators provided from Eurostat, OECD and SSB.



through urban planning in an area is by planning for better *Housing, Income & Employment, Education, Culture, Leisure & Community*, and lastly *Environment*.

The municipality has spent the past years on improving and maintaining the public areas in the area, but not focusing enough on the factors which are not directly related to the built environment, being the socio-cultural and socio-economic factors. In the further development of Tøyen and Grønland, the primary focus should be on battling the low living conditions present in the area and utilizing a holistic approach in bettering the conditions.

The findings in the Case Study indicated that Tøyen and Grønland to date scores somewhat well for the dimensions Environment and Culture, Leisure & Community, and on the contrary scores low on the remaining three dimensions: Housing, Income & Employment and Education. In the following parts of the development proposal for Tøyen and Grønland, recommendations will be given regarding the five dimensions for improved QoL, and the dimensions respective indicators.

It is important to note that, as presented in the Case Study, the municipality, in cooperation with the state, is currently working on Upbringing & Education and Employment as two sub-projects in the Områdesatsning in inner-east Oslo. If done correctly, these projects will improve unemployment, income, and low education issues in the area. This will likely have long-term positive impacts on the living conditions in the area.

## **4.2 HOUSING**

To date the housing situation in Tøyen and Grønland is highly concerning. Only around 50 per cent of the population in the area own their own homes, 200 per cent more reside in public housing provided by the municipality in Grønland and almost 600 per cent more in Tøyen compared to the rest of the municipality. This indicates that that the inhabitants of Tøyen and Grønland do not have the means to own their own homes, and further that many must rent public housing due

to not being able to afford renting from the private housing market.

In the most central neighborhoods in Oslo, including Tøyen and Grønland, the per square meter price for buildings has increased by 40 per cent the last 5 years, and almost 50 per cent the past 10 years. These expected continuously increased prices in the housing market, both renting and buying, could lead to many having to move out of Tøyen and Grønland to the outskirts of Oslo in order to be able to afford housing. Therefore, great public action needs to be taken to ensure that more of the inhabitants in Tøyen and Grønland will have the opportunity to enter the housing market.

There are many three recommended solutions for the housing issue in the area, the first being publicly provided financial aid and assistance to enter the housing market for low-income families and young adults coming from low-income families. The second being to put laws in place to minimize the number of dwellings bought and sold by companies and individuals with high incomes, which are one of the main reasons for the continuously rising prices (Wig, 2021). And lastly, the third solution could be to plan and build more buildings, so that the current competition and pressure on the existing buildings can be lifted, where the rise in the housing market prices can be expected to stagnate.

Currently, the Oslo city council is working on developing a "third housing sector" which according to the municipality could offer housing which lies between the private and public housing market and could include both rental and owned housing (Oslo kommune, 2019). The main idea of the third housing sector is to provide housing for the part of the population which struggles with acquiring suitable housing in the existing housing market in Oslo. This includes individuals with middle or lower income, financially disadvantaged who need assistance out of public housing, and other individuals which are excluded from the housing market due to unstable income, debt, discrimination or other reasons. If implemented, the development of the third housing sector could be a good solution to the ongoing housing issues in Tøyen and Grønland.

## 4.3 INCOME, EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION

For the sake of simplicity, the next two dimensions from the criteria list for improved QoL, *Income & Employment* and *Education*, will be merged in this sub-chapter of the development proposal.

Just like the housing in Tøyen and Grønland, the income, employment and education in the area is a cause for concern. The number of individuals who do not finish upper secondary school or do not attend higher education is noticeably higher than the average in the municipality. The unemployment rates in the area are also considerably higher than the rest of the municipality. Furthermore, the inhabitants of Tøyen and Grønland have a lower income than the average in Oslo, this can especially be attributed to families with children.

In the long-term perspective the education, unemployment and low-income issues in the area could be solved by politicians, locally and nationally, cooperating with educational institutions in Tøyen and Grønland to assure that as many children as possible complete upper secondary school and education. This could be achieved by, for example, implementing study programs for the children which struggle with the curriculum and working on increasing the teacher expertise and knowledge when dealing with less motivated and troubled students. Studies have shown that completed higher education leads to increased income, and better health and longer life expectancy (Thomassen, 2013). This indicates that working long-term with assuring that more of the inhabitants in Tøyen and Grønland graduate upper secondary school and higher education could solve the income and employment issues.

The reasons why some choose to drop out of school whilst others don't are quite complex. Therefore, the solutions implemented to increase the number of graduating students must be made in cooperation with education institutions and professionals.

## 4.4 CULTURE, LEISURE & COMMUNITY

The existing public spaces in Tøyen and Grønland are great places for recreational activities and leisure. But what is lacking in the area today is the sense of community and the number of available activities and arenas for children and young adults to meet and socialize. Strengthening the sense of community and providing children and young adults with opportunities to socialize could aid preventing the young inhabitants of Tøyen and Grønland from getting involved in the lucrative drug-environment.

The recommended solution here is that the youth of Tøyen and Grønland in greater degrees are involved in the decision-making process in the development of the area. This is especially important since the recommended arenas for socializing are meant for the youth. Furthermore, citizen participation will strengthen the youth's sense of community and feel of ownership over the area.

## 4.5 ENVIRONMENT

The dimension regarding the environment encompasses almost all aspects of the physically built environment. The infrastructure in the area is very efficient, the available public spaces are easy to access, and most public areas can be described as pleasant. The environmental aspect which is not satisfactory is the safety of the area. Some of the public areas have been "taken over" by individuals with drug and alcohol addiction and individuals selling narcotics. This leads to, especially women and children, not being able to feel safe in some parts of Tøyen and Grønland.

The recommended solution to the safety issue in the area is to improve the overall QoL in the area, this is due to research showing that low QoL and living conditions are strongly linked to the occurrence of crime and violence (Healthy People 2030, n.d.).

## 4.6 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL CONCLUSION

In this chapter the fourth and last sub-question has been answered.

*4. How can Tøyen & Grønland be developed to improve the Quality of Life of their inhabitants?*

The common measure compiled from the development recommendations is that political agreement and action is needed in order to be able to improve the Quality of Life in Tøyen and Grønland. This improvement must be one of the main priorities for politicians and decision makers both locally and nationally in order to be able to implement strong and comprehensive political guidelines and plans of action.

The author of this thesis would recommend the Norwegian state and Oslo municipality to take responsibility for its inhabitants QoL and work systematically on improving it through implementing a comprehensive development plan in cooperation with specialists from the different related fields.

	Chp. 2 Literature Review	Chp. 3 Case Study	Chp. 4 Development Proposal	Chp. 5 Conclusion
Sub-quest.1	x			
Sub-quest.2	x			
Sub-quest.3		x		
Sub-quest.4			x	
Main quest.				x

Figure 51: The research questions answered so far in the thesis.

# 5

Chp.

CONCLUSION

*"Nothing defines the Quality of Life in a community more clearly than people who regard themselves, or whom the consensus chooses to regard, as mentally unwell."*  
(Adler, 1970)

## 5.1 CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this thesis was to gain more understanding of how a population's QoL can be affected by urban planning. In order to investigate how QoL can be applied to urban planning, a case study of two neighborhoods, Tøyen and Grønland was conducted. The main research question in this study was:

“How does one improve Quality of Life  
through urban planning?”

In the literature review conducted in Chapter 2, QoL was firstly defined, then a criteria list for improved QoL was compiled using dimensions and indicators developed by Eurostat, OECD and SSB. After analyzing the spatial, socio-cultural, socio-economic and human aspects of Tøyen and Grønland a development proposal was recommended utilizing the criteria list from the literature review. Below the main findings and recommendations of the thesis have been summarized.

Tøyen and Grønland are two of the most multicultural neighborhoods in Oslo municipality, being known for being very lively and active all day long and having inhabitants from many backgrounds and ethnicities. To date there are around 20 000 inhabitants in the area, with a much younger population composition compared to Oslo. Tøyen and Grønland are located closely the city center of Oslo, with many parks and public spaces located in and around the area. Furthermore, the inhabitants of Tøyen and Grønland have, for many years, been known for struggling with issues such as high crime rates, many having low income, high rates of unemployment, many who live in public housing and all in all having low living conditions.

In 2014, a project with the aims of improving the living conditions in Tøyen was initiated, called Områdeløft Tøyen. In 2019, the project was expanded to include Grønland. Due to the Områdeløft-project in Tøyen and Grønland many of the public spaces and recreational areas have been upgraded and maintained. But the living conditions in the area have



gotten worse. The municipality has received strong criticism from several media outlets, the inhabitants of the project area and Oslo, and from the municipal audit for the lacking results of the Områdeløft-project. There were mainly four findings from the analysis of the project in Chapter 3.4, being:

1. the municipality did not sufficiently involve the citizens in the decision-making process of the development of Tøyen in the time period 2014-2018
2. the living conditions in Tøyen in the same time period decreased
3. the municipality has removed the goal of improving the living in the area from the current development plans for Tøyen and Grønland, and lastly
4. the municipality has big ambitions for the citizen involvement in the new development plans for Tøyen and Grønland including utilizing new methods to reach out to individuals who usually do not attend formal hearings and public meetings.

Furthermore, it was found that most parts of the developing and upgrading of the public spaces in the area have been successful. Although the quality of the public areas is indeed important, it should not be the only thing that is worked on. The social and economic differences in the project area compared to Oslo need much more attention than what has been given so far. Primarily, it is recommended that politicians, both locally and nationally, take responsibility for improving the QoL of the inhabitants in Tøyen and Grønland. This can be accomplished by developing a holistic and comprehensive development plan, utilizing the criteria list and its five dimensions, *Housing, Income & Employment, Education, Culture, Leisure & Community, and Environment*.

Lastly, to summarize: The differences within the municipality need to be evened out, for the better of the entire community. Just like it was stated in the quote in the beginning of this chapter: a society is no better than the weakest individuals present in said society. In this case it is the politician's responsibility to lay the necessary guidelines, in order to successfully improve the QoL in Tøyen and Grønland.

## 5.2 DISCUSSION

There is a great value in the young population in Tøyen and In this last part of the thesis some additional reflections will be presented and discussed and recommendations for further work will be given.

Firstly, it is important to note that there is a high risk of gentrification in Tøyen and Grønland. Gentrification is defined as the process in which a geographical area changes from being a poor area to being richer (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). With the continuously rising housing prices in Tøyen and Grønland, the disadvantaged inhabitants of the area would potentially have to move away from the area in the near future due to not being able to afford rent anymore and not having the means to purchase their own homes. The risks and consequences of gentrification are intricate and complex. Therefore, further research is needed on finding ways to avoid leading to gentrification in the development of Tøyen and Grønland.

The second thing that needs further attention, is the potential that lies in the young population of Tøyen and Grønland. There is a great value in the young population in the area which needs to be taken more advantage of than it is today. If given the proper opportunities and tools the youth of Tøyen and Grønland will become a great resource for the future of Oslo. The younger population can supply the municipality with important labor, innovation and entrepreneurship, which in the long run will strengthen the municipality both financially and socially. This will be especially important when trying to counteract the negative long-term effects that the Covid-19 pandemic will have on the country's economy. Finding ways to truly bring out the potential of the youth in Tøyen and Grønland should therefore be further analyzed.



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