

The Ecological Gentrification of Food

Proposed summer research project, UiO:Energy and Environment

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Preferred background of candidates: Human geography and similar social science disciplines (including sociology, anthropology and political science), as well as master candidates in Development, Environment and Cultural Change

Number of available projects: 1-2

Project period: June – September 2024 (tentative)

Outline of project work:

Green gentrification has over the last years received considerable scholarly attention and has generated a plethora of associated concepts like ecological and low carbon gentrification. While gentrification has long been used as a term to describe the replacement and displacement of poor or less privileged inhabitants in central parts of the city, and its accompanying changes in built environment, lifestyles and consumption practices, ecological or green gentrification focuses on how green interventions (i.e. parks and urban gardening), sustainable policies (i.e. public transport investments and the provision of car sharing) and energy transition initiatives (i.e. solar panels and energy efficiency measures) may generate or accompany ongoing processes of gentrification, with the implications of rising housing prices and cost of living in centrally located and attractive urban districts. Also, sustainable foods and food practices has received more attention, in relation to ongoing gentrification processes. A less explored, but interesting question is the relationship between gentrification and localized healthy food consumption and cultures.

In this suggested summer research project we aim to focus on the relationship between green gentrification and food, focusing on gentrifying districts in Oslo (like Tøyen, Grønland, Grünerløkka and Torshov). We wish to map and explore foodscapes (the food places and public spaces within a neighborhood or district) and particular food outlets (shops, restaurants and cafés), as well as how local residents perceive and navigate these. The data collection will be based on existing statistics and interviews with stakeholders (like owners of shops and restaurants), in order to map and understand recent changes in the access to and availability of different kinds of food. Our overall research questions guiding this “pilot project” are: To what extent has the ongoing green transitions and gentrification of Oslo’s inner east been accompanied or driven by changes in foodscapes and food consumption in the specific districts? How are these changes perceived as part of green transitions and gentrification processes?

We will develop a detailed research strategy in collaboration with the candidate and based on the international research literature. The aim is to provide quantitative data on the changes taking place over the last decades, as well as qualitative data (based on interviews with stakeholders, media articles, etc.) on how these changes are perceived, as well as strategies and practices developed to profit from or cope with these changes. The expected outcome is a report, presenting aims, methods and results, which could be the basis for writing a journal article.