

Summary:

New traffic – new neighbours?

Traffic and segregation in Oslo inner east

Background

During the last 10 – 15 years, the Institute of Transport Economics has conducted a number of studies on traffic and environment in Norwegian cities, especially in Oslo inner east. The studies document that road traffic is of great importance in peoples' evaluation of their local environment. The main question raised in this report is whether road traffic is so important that it may act as a catalyst for segregation in accordance with Thomas Schelling's "tipping point model". The possible mechanism is that traffic changes may attract specific population groups to an area, and that this social remix together with the traffic changes may lead to further relocation of people. We have formulated the following two hypotheses on how traffic changes may lead to segregation:

- A) Improvements of local traffic conditions makes a residential area more attractive. Thus the area attracts people with more resources than those who typically lived there before. This again, makes the area even more attractive; both the traffic conditions and the fact that many people with plenty resources live in the area makes it an attractive residential area.
- B) Road traffic improvements often imply that road traffic is transferred from some streets or areas to others. Areas with traffic increase will experience similar mechanisms, but the other way around. Areas with traffic increase become less attractive as living areas, leading people to move out. Those with most resources will have greater opportunities on the housing market than the relatively poorer, and accordingly move out to a larger extent, thus leaving the relatively poorest behind. This will generate a socially remix making the area even more unattractive.