Families Residing in Kallio -
A Choice?

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Appendix
This master’s thesis is part of the research program “Rosoinen urbaani” (The rugged urban in English). The program is part of the Research- and collaboration program in urban studies of the Helsinki metropolitan area (Metropolialueen kaupunktutkimuksen tutkimus- ja yhteistyöohjelma KatuMetro). The research was conducted by Ilona Akkila for the University of Helsinki in collaboration with Aalto University’s Centre for Urban and Regional Studies (YTK).
1. Introduction

The city planning department of Helsinki expresses the following aims in “From City to City-Region - City of Helsinki - Strategic Spatial Plan”, that concern the new residential areas of Kalasatama and Konepaja, which are in proximity to Kallio:

“Metropolis symbolism will be used in the development of the area. The identity consists of industrial and labour history and the positive image factors of the neighbouring area of Kallio, which are, for example, urban life, tolerance and urbanity. The area will be marketed as an area of cultural heritage in which families, single persons, students, professionals and foreigners live. The image will be created by multiform housing solutions such as housing with a view, lofts and separate housing enclaves. The coastal buildings reflect on the water surface and give the image of a lively city.“ (Gordon et al. 2009, 28)

Hence it seems as if the City of Helsinki has detected a specific kind of identity in the neighborhood of Kallio that it appreciates, wants to enhance and perhaps even promote to its surroundings. The area appears to have a specific type of identity that also urban scholars (e.g. Waris 1973; Mäenpää 1991) and other writers (e.g. Saisio 2005; Lehtinen 1982; Rimminen 2004) have recognized. Kallio has been described as a former working class (Waris 1973), trendy bohemian (Mäenpää 1991) and rugged area (Kuoppamäki-Kalkkinen 1984, 214) where young adults live their “extended youth” (Rimminen 2004).

The urban neighborhood of Kallio is a northern part of the Helsinki city center, providing residence for more than 30 000 people. An interesting and particular group from the researcher’s perspective consists of families, which have been present in the local media in the past few years. For instance in Helsingin Sanomat (HS), there have been newspaper articles describing how families with children nowadays remain in
Kallio, when they used to move somewhere else (Kärkkäinen HS Kaupunki 17.2.2011; Saikkonen HS Kaupunki 2.1.2011; Toivonen HS Kaupunki 25.7.2010). On the other hand some of the articles in HS also ponder on how the small apartments are not suitable for families that would very much like to keep living there (e.g. Räty HS Sunnuntai 28.3.2010; Jokinen HS Kotimaa 14.3.2010). Also according to Mäenpää there has been modest growth in the amount of children in Kallio during the last five years (Mäenpää 2011, 69). These writings indicate a possible increase in the demand for urban housing for families. This could be a phenomenon that would change the character of Kallio. On a wider scale it may indicate a heightened appreciation of urban lifestyle among families.

In addition to the fact that flats are small, Kallio has a reputation, which is not primarily the kind that one would assume to attract families with children. In previous research literature Kallio is described as lively in a rugged sense and as an unpleasant and even notorious neighborhood, associated with social problems such as drugs, alcohol abuse and prostitution (Tani 2001; Koskela et al. 2000, 27; Mäenpää 1991, III). Of course, urban settings change constantly. Therefore it is interesting to know, what draws families to Kallio, and why do they live there? What characterizes these families? Do they live there out of necessities or because they choose to do so? Is Kallio changing its character? Could it become for instance similar to Stockholm’s trendy neighborhood Södermalm with its latte-sipping, trendy moms and dads (Wiklund Dagens Nyheter 28.9.2008; Lilius 2008, 39)?

The fact that the assumed phenomenon has figured prominently in the local media and that the number of children may have risen indicates some kind of change, but it has to be further investigated in order to find out what this change is about. The thesis does not aim to make widely generalizable findings, rather it is a case-study that is limited to a few observed units (see e.g. Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000, 58) concentrated in the particular group: families in the neighborhood of Kallio. The primary data gathering method are interviews with local parents. General observations and photographs
taken by the researcher are used as complementary data. Secondary material consists of previous research literature and other literature and online sources.

From the theoretical perspective, this thesis contributes to the scientific discussion of housing choice and preference research. There are gaps in the examination of housing choices and a need for methodological discussion on how researchers in different fields of urban studies investigate them, and how choices should be looked into in urban studies. Choices are often called “preferences” or used perhaps falsely and synonymously with housing wishes (Coolen & Hoekstra 2001, 285; Lapintie 2008, 30). This thesis consciously aims to separate housing choices from wishes.

Thus, the aims of this thesis are: 1) to clarify the assumed phenomenon of Kallio becoming more popular among families with children and 2) to elucidate the process of choice in this context. Hypothetically, families used to live in Kallio perhaps because of necessities, but now they may do so as a choice.

1.1. Central concepts

**Choice:** Preference can be seen as a potential *choice* (Hasu 2010, 60). Choice can be seen as a revealed preference (Coolen & Hoekstra 2001, 285-286), also taking into account the actual decision making situation and process (Hasu 2010; Clapham 2002, 64).

**Differentiation:** *postmodern differentiation* is also seen as differentiation of lifestyles (Kersloot & Kauko 2004, 152; Scheiner & Kasper 2003, 319; Clapham 2002, 63; Giddens 1991) that usually happens in the realm of consumption. Differentiation in lifestyles can relate to phenomena happening inside a social class. The current research focuses on the differentiation of lifestyles, since the research is focused on presumably middle-class inhabitants (see appendix 5) and the interest of knowledge lies in their lifestyle choices. Thus, similar to Mäenpää (1991, 4), the assumption of this research is that the
families residing in Kallio have sufficient economic resources to be able to make lifestyle choices.

**Gentrification:** According to the OALD “to gentrify something/somebody” is “to change an area, a person, etc. so that they are suitable for, or can mix with, people of a higher social class than before” (OALD 23.11.2011).

**Household:** Household is used in the similar contexts as the Finnish term “ruokakunta”. “A household is formed by family members living together and by other persons who have a shared household. Thus parents, their children and a grandmother living with them constitute a household. Excluded from households are people living in various institutions, and thus in shared households. In this work, I use the term household as a synonym to family unlike Statistics Finland (Statistics Finland web-page 23.9.2011.) Family in this work mean one or more parent plus one or more children. In other words, a family is a household with one or more children under the age of eighteen.

**Housing:** a wider concept of housing is used. It includes the living environment outside the home (Ilmonen 2002, 69). This seems to be a useful way of looking at housing especially in an urban context, where the home is often considered to extend outside the actual housing unit. Thus, housing refers to both the individual housing unit and the neighborhood in question.

**Housing attribute:** a characteristic attached to a residence such as a detached house, an apartment, proximity to greenery, urbanity, etc.

**Lifestyle:** is a “set of practices which an individual embraces” since they help to accomplish “utilitarian needs” and “give material form to a particular narrative of self-identity” (Giddens 1991, 81).
Preference: According to the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (OALD) preference is “a greater interest in or desire for somebody/something than somebody/something else” (OALD 3.10.2011). Thus a person prefers something opposed to all other alternatives he/she is faced with (Hasu 2010, 60). Preferences relate to the variety of options on the housing market. Preference differs from the term choice in the sense that it is not yet materialized as a choice.

Self-identity: (see also “Lifestyle”) self-identity in this thesis is seen as a changing and continuous reconstruction (Hall 1999, 11, 14; Giddens 1991, 76). An individual’s self-identity can be seen as a narrative of the self, as a “reflexive project” where one makes of herself what she wants in different phases (and environments) in life (Giddens 1991, 75-76, 79, 85).

1.2. Research framework: housing as a lifestyle choice

As stated in the introduction chapter, the inspiration to investigate families in Kallio, Helsinki, came from the hypothetical phenomenon of the neighborhood becoming popular among families described in Helsingin Sanomat.


In her master’s thesis for The Department of Geosciences and Geography, Lilius compared families living in the urban neighborhood of Kruununhaka in Helsinki to Södermalm in Stockholm. The central question she was interested in was why some families decide to reside in the city center when traditionally families have relocated to suburbia (2008). Lilius noticed that Helsinki city center has not increased its popularity in the same manner as Stockholm city center, but the families living there
recognized many positive sides to living in the city center such as proximity to “everything”, good public transport, aesthetics of the architecture, communal atmosphere and safety (ibid. 104). She states that since the families in Kruununhaka live in small apartments, one could assume that for them where they live is more important than in what kind of residence they live in (ibid. 105). Thus, urban settings may be a central preference for some Kruununhaka families. This is a very central remark since it brings us back to the choice these families face when deciding where to live. Individuals, in this case parent(s) weigh their pros and cons when considering different possible alternatives. It will be interesting to see if the same applies to the families interviewed in Kallio as in the Kruununhaka -case. Are families living in Kallio because they choose to live in a city, and does location weigh more than other factors and attributes influencing their decision?

Pasi Mäenpää studied the socio-economic and cultural changes happening in Kallio at the turn of 1980s and 90s. He analyzed demographic and migration statistics and in addition made interviews with people living in the Kallio neighborhood (Mäenpää 1991). His ambition was to show that Kallio has altered from a working class area into a middle class area. Especially Mäenpää´s starting point of housing as a lifestyle choice for middle-class people (ibid. 4) became a central theme in this research. Mäenpää is not the first one to write about housing as a choice, but he operationalized the term in a manner that was useful for my learning in this research process. He looked at individuals as consumers who make (lifestyle) choices on the markets from a sociological angle (ibid. 4-5). According to him Kallio has a unique history, clear borders, and it is an exceptionally well known neighborhood carrying the traditions of the working class. He thinks that therefore values and preferences attached to the neighborhood must have significantly more effect on the choice of living there. (Mäenpää 1991, 6.)
According to Anthony Giddens, “lifestyle choice is increasingly important in the constitution of self-identity and daily activity” (Giddens 1991, 5). He insists on the preeminence of lifestyle in people’s decision making and choosing (ibid 81). According to Giddens “a fundamental component of day-to-day activity is simply that of choice (...) not only because such practices fulfill utilitarian needs, but because they give material form to a particular narrative of self-identity”. The choices are often made in the realm of consumption, where also housing can be seen as a commodity, and the choice symbolizes the identity of the individual (Giddens 1991, 80-81). In this line of thought, the choice of housing or a neighborhood could express a person’s identity as well: how she/he wants to be seen, a self-identity. Underlying these choices are goals, attitudes, and values that people possess (Coolen & Hoekstra 2001, 286).

Similar to Giddens, Stuart Hall sees identities as some kind of fabrications which are altering in time and never stable (1999, 11, 14). In a way, by making housing choices, one chooses an environment that enables the creation of a narrative of self-identity in different phases of life (Giddens 1991, 85). This identification in turn is supported by people’s conceptions of places in the environment. Also according to environmental psychologists home environment can be very much attached to the self-identity of a person. (e.g. Aura et al. 1997, 49, 127.) Thus, one chooses a living environment that will support and express her/his self-identity. Self-identity in this thesis as an identity construction related to the current housing environment.

1.3. Research questions

Housing can be seen as a lifestyle choice that expresses self-identity. Consequently, the intention of this research is to enlighten this process of choice in the case of families in Kallio. Whether this choice is a lifestyle choice remains to be discussed in latter chapters.
The primary research questions of this thesis are:

1. Why do some families decide to live in Kallio?
2. Is it a choice for them? How is this choice made? (process of choice)

Additional research questions are:

- What characterizes these families?
- What kind of self-identity they attach to living in Kallio?

The purpose of the first research question is to find out why some families decide to live in Kallio, to what degree is it a choice and how was this choice made. The process of choice is discussed theoretically in chapter five and six. The additional questions try to clarify the expression of self-identity of the families.

The empirical material is the central point of this research. It gives insights how the families view their home neighborhood. These results are presented in chapter 7.

1.4. Structure of the paper

The structure of the paper is the following: In chapter 2 the research material and methods are introduced. The next chapter 3 is an effort to illuminate how Kallio’s identity and social space has been seen by some selected authors. In

Chapter 4 the research area is defined more exactly. The relevant statistical data, since this is primarily a qualitative case study, are presented and analyzed. In chapter 5 the research problem, choice, is operationalized and discussed from different theoretical viewpoints. Chapter 6 presents a recent discussion on housing choices in the Finnish context, and an effort is made to concretize problems having to do with research on housing choices.
In chapter 7 the results from the gathered data are portrayed and structured by different themes. The actual analysis takes place in chapter 8. In chapter 9 the conclusion and suggestions for future research are presented. The appendix can be found at the end of this thesis.

Translations from Finnish to English are done by the author.
2. Research material and methods

2.1. Data gathering and sampling

The background literature and data for this research were gathered during the spring and summer of 2011. Previous research literature, newspaper and online articles were collected and reviewed in order to maintain a general view over the area, and its past and current developments. Statistical data was also investigated in order to see the “bigger picture” what kind of an area Kallio is, and what kind of people live there.

However the primary data used in this research is interview data. Firstly, altogether 10 interviews were conducted at people’s homes: 4 mothers and 6 couples of whom one mother was a single parent were interviewed. In addition 6 “ad hoc” interviews were conducted in communal parks (3 moms, 1 dad, and 2 couples, which of whom one was a single parent). These parks are upheld by the City of Helsinki Social Services Department. They provide activities for children and the whole family, and in addition there is staff present at specific hours.

The parents interviewed at their homes were contacted via Kallio elementary school’s parent’s association e-mail list, day-care center notice boards, and via social media (announcements on Facebook-group pages). Each of these interviews took from one to one and a half hours.

The interviews in parks were conducted spontaneously and they lasted about 10-20 minutes. They serve as complementary material (see e.g. Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000, 38-39) for this research but are also used to see if the interviewees answer any differently with this approach (ibid. 39).

The purpose of gathering informants in various ways and using two different interview methods was applied to serve the validity of the research. The interviews were
conducted until the “saturation point” (ibid. 60) was reached: when the data results start to repeat the same issues, the data gathering can be concluded.

Even though the amount of interviewees is small (10 in depth and 6 ad hoc interviews with a parent/parents) it does not necessarily mean that the amount of data is small (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000, 135). Ten of the interviews were longer, in depth interviews that provided deeper and more profound information.

2.2. Making observations and taking photographs

When conducting case studies, it is important that one strengthens and completes the data by using more than one information source (ibid. 37-38; Yin, 1994, 81). In addition to the interviews the researcher conducted general observation in the area researched at different hours of the day in order to have a grasp how urban everyday life in Kallio occurs to families.

Photos and observations were made in the spring and summer of 2011 in Kallio. The focus of observation was three different parks: Linjanpuisto in the area called Linjat, Kirkkopuisto in between of the areas Linjat and Torkkelinmäki, and Braahen puisto in Harju. Observations were made in general on the defined research area of Kallio (Linjat, Torkkelinmäki and Harju). The observations are illustrated by the photos presented in the thesis. Photographs were used to illustrate and deepen the information provided by this research, not to be interpreted and analysed per se.
Yin writes that “By making a field visit to the case study site, you are creating the opportunity for direct observations (...) The observations can range from formal to casual data collection activities” (Yin, 1994, 86). In this case-study, which is trying to clarify a phenomenon more from the residents’ point of view, it is crucial to visit and investigate the area in question in order to understand it and the people who live there using the space.

Gillian Rose writes about visual methodologies that photos are not just illustrations, rather they can be used in combination with other methods such as interviews:
“photos can reach something that methods relying on speech and writing cannot” (Rose 2001, 237-238). Neither are photos central in this research. The photos are used as a supplemental method. It means that “specific visual qualities of photos are allowed to display themselves rather more on their own terms, thus acting as a visual supplement to the written text of the researcher” (ibid. 239). In other words, the photos are not looked upon as data to be interpreted as such; they only help to paint a more complete image of phenomena, according to Rose, as “a parallel source of understanding to the text (...) among the range of evidence” (ibid. 246).

2.3. Choosing interviews as the central data gathering method

To clarify the process of housing choice, it is necessary to collect data directly from the residents or prospect residents in question. Thus, one needs to go to a subjective level – from the general to the particular. Quantitative methods rarely catch the depths, specifics or nuances on an individual level that an interview method can do.

The interview method is useful in this research since it aims to understand the housing choices from the families’, perspective. The interviewees actively create meanings and interpret them during the interview (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000, 35). The researcher is more a facilitator (Coolen & Hoekstra 2001, 296) in the discussion, letting the interviewees talk as freely as possible. The interviewer’s task is to make sure that the discussion stays within the themes of the research (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000, 102).

One advantage of using interview as data gathering method is its flexibility; one can direct and redirect the questions in a flexible manner in the interview situation. Simultaneously the motives behind the answers may become visible. Non-lingual hints help to understand the answers, and what the interviewee wants to communicate. (ibid. 34.) The downsides of using the interview method are that it is time- and resource consuming. In addition, the reliability of the data and interpretation highly
depends on the researcher’s skills and sensitivity to the interviewees’ tendency to give socially acceptable answers (ibid. 35).

The intention was to gather interviewees who live with their children in Kallio irrespective of whether they consider moving or if they are new in Kallio. The fact that the focus is on families already living in Kallio has an effect on the research results and this will be discussed later. When these people are already living in the neighborhood they are questioned about, it has an influence on how they answer. Phenomena such as happiness barrier (Roos 1988) and compensation (Hasu 2010, 74) have to be taken into consideration in the interpretation.

It seems as if the choices would be dependent on the wishes, needs and constraints a household has. The relationship between housing wishes, needs and constraints is not simple to explain or model, because they are not static and they include very personal issues like feelings, memories and other experiences that vary through time. These issues seemed to be difficult to study with statistical methods. Therefore interviews and qualitative analysis methods were a reasonable choice for this research. In order to get a deeper understanding of why people live where they do, it was necessary to go to an individual level, where it is probably more difficult to generalize but possible to gain a deeper understanding (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000, 35). However it gives the interviewees the opportunity to reflect and specify what they mean while they speak. This may not be so easily realized by quantitative methods, e.g. by using a questionnaire (Lapintie 2008, 32).

The interviews were recorded with a digital voice recorder and transcribed afterwards in the autumn of 2011. The analysis was partly conducted already while interviewing and transcribing during the spring and summer, but the more coherent analysis was done afterwards. The transcribed interviews were coded manually by themes, each theme having a different color. The themes were identified by looking at the constructions of meanings in the sentences of the interviewees. It is acknowledged
that this kind of coding is very subjective and dependent on the researcher. The researcher has to judge what is essential in the data and when a theme is discussed. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000, 142.) On the other hand counting words of meanings in a data consisting of 10 in depth and 6 ad hoc interviews did not seem meaningful either. Therefore it was more interesting to say something about families with children in Kallio as a case, rather than trying to treat the sample as representative similar to quantitative research.

2.3.1 On theme interview

Graham P. Martin researched the existing population views of the gentrified area of Notting Hill in London (Martin 2008, 116). Similar to this research, he was more interested in the qualitative and identity change of the neighborhood than in the economic and social conditions of gentrification in the area (ibid. 115-116). Martin writes that he was interested in contemplating the interviewees’ “feelings, comparing and contrasting their symbolic landscapes” with the help of semi-structured interviews (ibid. 119).

Theme interviews are often semi-structured interviews where the researcher uses a list of themes as a backup for herself so she remembers to cover all the themes that she wishes the discussion to touch upon (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000, 47-48). The themes work as a sort of framework for the interview. One should avoid posing very refined questions and let the interviewees talk and discuss. The themes do not have to follow any order; they work more as a list for the interviewer (ibid. 47–48, 67). The themes that I used for the interview were: 1) social class, 2) housing situation and background, 3) conceptions of places, and 4) housing wishes.

Martin’s semi-structured interview consisted of questions about the local area, its meanings to the residents, and how it was changing. In addition the participants were asked to tell about their occupations and housing tenure to reveal their socio-economic status (ibid. 119) which I also used in my list of themes (see appendix 1).
Martin used these and other implications of socio-economic status revealed via the interviews to frame the analysis (ibid. 119-120).

What Martin found via his interviews was that on the one hand the informants are more relaxed and detailed in their speech at home (Martin 2008, 128). This is why the primary material for this thesis is also gathered at people’s homes. On the other hand he saw that the importance of the surrounding environment was also evident: it made it easier to gesture what they meant by saying something. This supports conducting ad hoc-interviews in the parks for this thesis as well.

The interviews in my thesis are connected to current living situations, so that the interviewees are taking into consideration also the needs and constraints that they have in their household in addition to the wishes and dreams they have for a residence. Similar to Martin, the interviews are aimed at being conversational, leaving the interviewee/s space to reflect and influence the course of the interview (cp ibid.125)

Martin also mentioned that there may be difficulties in gathering comprehensive data on the phenomena he studied and this may result in a distorted interpretation of a phenomenon (ibid. 127). When one is utilizing a small sample, one needs to be particularly careful in interpretations what the data can be proof of.

The results of the interviews will be presented by theme in chapter 8. Theme 3), conceptions of places, will in addition be compared to the results of the SoftGIS Urban Happiness-research by Broberg, Tzoulas and Kahila (2011). Their research team conducted an internet survey where they also used the GIS cartographic location method, so that people could for instance locate their conceptions of different places online on a map.
2.4. Ethical questions

There are research ethical questions involving all research (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000, 19-20). The ethicality of this research was firstly ensured by making it clear to the participants that the data which they provide, is only used for research purposes and their input is presented anonymously, so that they cannot be recognized in the final text. The parents were also informed about what kind of publication would come out at the end, about the association to University of Helsinki, Aalto University, and the Katumetro-collaboration (see preface).

The researcher also had a research permit from the City of Helsinki Social services department to interview families in parks provided by City of Helsinki. Photos were taken in a manner where people in the pictures should not be identified. The photos were also taken in public places where taking pictures is legal.

In order to stay truthful to what the interviewees have said, the researcher asked supplementary questions and the respondent was often asked to specify what they meant on several occasions, so that there would be no misunderstandings. Also the depth of the analysis was constrained by how much there can be said based on what the interviews and other material indicate.
3. Kallio’s identity through the times

In order to understand more about what kind of an area Kallio is, one needs to look back in time to what has been written about the neighborhood. In the following section, Kallio’s identity is presented with the help of what different authors have written on it in different times. The historical view mainly leans on the history of Kallio written by Koskinen (1990). This serves to maintain some kind of comprehension about how the area has developed into its present form as a physical – but also social - construct.

Kallio has been a popular subject among writers and researchers, writing about it from historical (e.g. Koskinen 1990; Nyberg 1989; Auvinen 2010), socioeconomic (e.g. Waris 1973; Mäenpää 1991), town planning (Kuoppamäki-Kalkkinen 1984) and socio-cultural perspectives (Vihmalo 2005; Eskelinen 2006, 2008; Tani 2001, 2002). Many researchers seem to be interested firstly in Kallio’s distinctive image as a working-class-district, and secondly in the changes that occur in the area.

3.1. Kallio at the turn of the 19th century – cows grazing and “speakeasies”

From the literature review, it seems obvious that change has been one clear feature of Kallio as an urban area since its existence. Both the area and its inhabitant profile have gone through major changes during the last century.

According to Koskinen, the 19th century landscape in Kallio was still a rural and scarcely inhabited area with cattle grazing on the forested and rocky lands. The first signs of urbanity started to show in the forms of industry and outdoor restaurants. (Koskinen 1990, 12-16, 318). There were also arcane pubs at the dock areas of Sörnäinen (ibid. 302; Kuoppamäki-Kalkkinen 1984, 17). While the southern parts of the city of Helsinki were built up, Kallio remained on the outskirts of progress, depending on factory workers as inhabitants, being almost deserted at some times due to economic fluctuations. Wooden villas with gardens where factory workers resided started to rise
on the hilly and forested lands of Kallio in the middle of 19th century. (Koskinen 1990, 12-16, 318.) Young, mostly male factory workers, craftsmen, servants, and merchants and their employees were Kallio’s residents in the late 1800s (ibid. 43).

3.2. Young, dense, lively, and sensitive to economic fluctuations

More people started to move into Kallio and the surrounding area when industrialism grew in the mid and late-1800s (Koskinen 1990, 43; Kuoppamäki-Kalkkinen 1984, 13). A “Worker’s neighborhood” had emerged on the northern side of Pitkäsilta (bridge separating Kallio from the southern city of Helsinki) (Waris 1973). New apartment buildings, some wooden, some stone-made, from one to four stories high, were built, but too slowly for the inflow of new city dwellers. Living conditions were tight, unhygienic and unsanitary (Koskinen 1990, 18, 20). The people had become less attached to their birthplaces and occupations (ibid. 47). Workers in the late 1800s were freer but simultaneously their jobs were less secure due to economic fluctuations. Child labor was not extensive but existed. (ibid. 49, 51.) Entrepreneurs and workers were the new social groups (ibid. 45; 47). A city like Helsinki appeared to offer more modern living standards and opportunities to prosper. Social security of any kind did not exist yet, philanthropy executed by different organizations eased people’s problems (ibid. 47, 61-62).

In Kallio during the late 1800s, some children were undernourished and poorly clothed, and their families had to rely on voluntary help organizations. According to Koskinen, a worker’s life was tough and children died of plagues and diarrhea. Children had room to play outside and there was no fear of cars. All the children could not fit into Kallio’s several kindergartens in the late 1800s. (ibid. 62, 64-65.) In the early 1900s quarrelsome gangs were common in the urbanized Kallio. Ice-skating, sledgering, skiing, swimming in the sea and playing games in the summertime were popular seasonal activities. (ibid. 69-70.)
According to Koskinen, Kallio has had an urban character since its birth. The first town plan for Kallio was made in 1901, with the new building code. (ibid. 23, 27.) The apartments were still confined, with 4.6 people living in a flat on average, and the turnover of tenants was high (ibid. 24). The majority of inhabitants were now women who were in demand in commerce. Families and single people shared apartments. Women who worked were often single, the ones with children were likely to stay at home and take care of young children. An area called “Linjat” was densely built. (ibid. 47, 48.) Buildings were mostly closed blocks (Waris 1973, 142). The building process accelerated at the beginning of 1900s. Kallio had become a “well-established small town” and the living density just increased. It was the bourgeoisie who now owned the buildings (Koskinen 1990, 24-27).

It seems as if the birth of urban Kallio was a very organic process, with houses popping up wherever there was free land. The way Koskinen describes the early urban Kallio of the beginning of the 20th century as a “well-established small town” (ibid. 28) describes for one its separation from the southern parts of Helsinki, but perhaps also its original local character. On the other hand the working class in Kallio lived in substantially more expensive, unhealthy and crammed apartments than elsewhere in Finland. Apartments were humid, cold and badly constructed. (Koskinen 1990, 28; Waris 1973, 169, 173.) In the early 1900s there was shortage of land, so not much new was constructed (Koskinen 1990, 28).

Koskinen describes the social life as vivid, perhaps because of the lack of space. There seemed to be little privacy in the good and bad senses. Many large life changes, crises and joys were shared with ones neighbors. Spending time together was spontaneous; one could sit on the apartment stairs outside and have coffee with the neighbors (ibid. 82). Whether one owned her/his apartment did not signify social status, people knew each other since they lived side by side for ages (Kuoppamäki-Kalkkinen 1984, 211). Civic life was also diverse (Koskinen 1990, 103-105).
Sörnäinen, the eastern area of the Kallio district, had a reputation for being a dangerous working class area, violent and hostile, but on the other hand it may have been caused by the division of social classes on the northern and southern side of Pitkäsilta (ibid. 102-103) - the border may have been mainly a strong mental construction. Koskinen describes Kallio as a very local residential area in the sense that everything that one needed was close by (ibid. 103). There was no need to do business outside Kallio.

During the First World War less people moved to the area, the rate of construction of new apartments remained low, and people stayed crammed in one- or two-room-apartments (ibid. 30). The 1920s world economy crisis caused almost a full stop to the construction of Kallio (ibid. 122). The population was still mainly working class who worked in industrial or construction jobs, in commerce, or in transportation (ibid. 115, 119 and 120). New sources of livelihood emerged, but large-scale industry still remained employed the majority until the 1960s (ibid. 308). After independence, cafés and restaurants became more common (ibid. 303-304). Local entrepreneurs were in charge of retail trade (ibid. 308). The shops and cafés must have changed the street image into a more lively and modern direction.

Sörnäinen was a well-known center of leftist radicalism, and later the social democrats started their office in Siltasaari (ibid. 162).

3.3. Urban worker’s Kallio – a lost or an enduring identity?

Heikki Waris’s *The emergence of the workers’ society to the north side of Pitkäsilta* in the 1930s is one of the first sociological urban studies conducted in Finland. Waris wrote in the preface of his publication that “While I learned to know and understand the mental life until then foreign to me, I got an urge to make myself familiar in detail with the birth of that workers’ society and its inner development”. He used statistical and qualitative (oral memory) data in his research. (Waris 1973, 9.) Even back in the
early 1930s, Kallio was considered to be a peculiar area that evoked research interest. What was so interesting and unusual was the cluster of population in an area that consisted of the working class who formed their own sort of community. Also Koskinen repeatedly mentions Kallio’s distinguishable image without really elaborating on it more deeply (Koskinen 1990, 179).

During the mid-1920s economic boom, four- six- and even seven-story-buildings made out of stone were built in Kallio and Sörnäinen. The population grew from 27 000 to 36 640 in a decade. (ibid. 122.) The city of Helsinki made a new building code in 1929. Wooden houses were demolished so that the stone houses could take their place; this symbolized development and prosperity to people ( Koskinen 1990, 59-60; Kuoppamäki-Kalkkinen 1984, 30, 36). Street life was made lively by foreign peddlers, farmers selling their products and street entertainers. Koskinen mentions Italian organ grinders who would entertain people at the inner courtyards of the blocks (Koskinen 1990, 59-60).

Less children were born after the 1920s, and child mortality decreased because of better health care. Nevertheless there were still many children living in Sörnäinen. Education became compulsory in 1921, but some children still worked mainly part-time to help their families. Children worked for example as messengers, domestic help, newspaper sellers or interns. (ibid. 51, 138.) Voluntary organizations, such as Christian, sobriety and workers organizations, worked for the upbringing of children until the 1970s (ibid. 67-68). Different kinds of free time clubs gathered children together to spend time with each other (138-139).

In the 1930s Kallio had become a cheaper area to live than the downtown areas (ibid. 31). Because of the worldwide recession that started in New York in 1928, a lot of people were unemployed and there was shortage of living supplies (ibid. 131). In the late 1930s the markets started to recover again. The apartments were somewhat less crammed but the construction industiry still wanted to make fast profits with small
Apartments (ibid. 32), and people from the countryside kept moving in. This led to a housing shortage (ibid. 33, 126). According to Koskinen Sörnäinen and Kallio were closer to Häme and Southern Finland’s rural districts than to the rest of Helsinki because there were so many newcomers (ibid. 127). A new lower middle class, such as office workers, officials, and small entrepreneurs started to live in Kallio (Koskinen 1990, 123, 134; Kuoppamäki-Kalkkinen 1984, XII). Nevertheless Koskinen defines the mentality of Kallio to be “less petit bourgeois” than the rest of Helsinki (ibid. 123). Prohibition law (started in 1919) ended in the 1930s, and restaurants became more modern and featured concerts (ibid. 304-305).

In 1941 there were 52,365 inhabitants in Sörnäinen and Kallio. As the population aged in the 1940s and 1950s, the majority of inhabitants were now 30-45 years old, and the majority of children were now teenagers. (ibid. 34, 170-173). According to Koskinen the children of 1950s looked poor, but happy and healthy. Living standards had risen. Children had more time to play, and organizations and clubs remained an important part of children’s everyday lives. (182-183.)

In the 1950s, Helsinki residents were still living in more cramped conditions than in cities of similar size in Germany, Britain or other Nordic countries. Population density was at the Southern European level. In the late 1950s and the beginning of 1960s a large part of the wooden houses in Kallio were demolished. Many six to eight-story buildings were built at an ever-growing pace. (ibid. 35, 37.) Kallio started to look like a city.

A building construction law was implemented in 1961. After the 1960s not many new buildings were built, and there was not much space left unbuilt. (ibid. 37, 40.) In the 1960s the majority of Kallio’s population was 50-60 years old. There were fewer families with children. The population decreased as more people were moving out than in (ibid. 174, 193). Factories moved out of Kallio, and so did the families with many children. Koskinen writes that Kallio renewed its working class image due to this
process. (ibid. 308). This is also visible in the Diagram 1 which illustrates how Kallio’s population decreased dramatically in the 1960s and 1970s. Many families must have moved to the newly built suburbs.

Koskinen writes that Kallio kept its working-class image until the 1970s. (Koskinen 1990, 179) In 1970 the population of Kallio decreased to 36 000, but was still dense compared to the rest of Helsinki (ibid. 293). There were less big families in Kallio than before, which had its own effect on the population. Most of the children living in Kallio were teenagers or children under the age of five, and the one-person households were often women (ibid. 193-194). Many families moved to the eastern and northern parts of Helsinki or to Vantaa, to places where they could have more room (ibid. 38, 193). A new kind of population started to emerge in the area. Kallio served as a starting point for young people from the countryside (ibid. 37). In the 1970s two-room apartments were often occupied by couples and studios by singles, and the demand still exceeded the supply of housing. In the late 1970s the question of housing space faded and the prices (ibid. 38) went down. Kallio and Sörnäinen were no longer that separated from the rest of the city, but they still remained inhabited by the lower social classes. The direction of migration was often from the countryside to Kallio, and from there to the newly built suburbs with more space and modernity (ibid. 194-195). There were less people working in industrial jobs, and commerce and service industries started to take over (ibid. 201).

In the 1970s children and teenagers were less attached to home, organizations and clubs. Higher living standards permitted more choices and free time. Free time was often spent outside the home, in bars, doing sports and hanging out on the streets. (ibid. 197.) Koskinen writes that staying in Kallio was mainly practical for adults, but children and young people had emotional bonds to the neighborhood. Local identities were attached to the environment (ibid. 103).

Thus, the working class on the northern side of Pitkäsilta has ceased to exist.
3.4. 1980’s – a turning point?

The 1980s were a time of rapid economic growth (Koskinen 1990, 203). The status of Kallio started to rise in the 1980s and the price level rose to the same level as in the rest of downtown Helsinki. Kallio was in fashion. Because of its good transport connections and location, the apartment prices were above downtown Helsinki levels in the late 1980s. Prices were high also due to professional real-estate business. (ibid. 40.) The socio-economic structure of the population became more versatile, and educated people came to live in the area (ibid. 204-205, 308). There were even less children than before and the population decreased to 26 366. There were almost equal amounts of men and women. Koskinen views the 1980s population as peculiar: it consisted mostly of single old women, old couples, somewhat young singles, single parents and young couples. (ibid. 201.)

In the 1980s Kallio was no longer considered to be a full-blooded working-class area. That can be considered as a major change in Kallio’s image. Pasi Mäenpää’s previously mentioned research on Kallio, “Kallio becoming middle-classed in the 1980s – Destruction of the workers’ society?” was inspired by Heikki Waris’s work. Mäenpää was interested in who lived in the 1980s Kallio, and if and why Kallio is becoming a middle-class area (Mäenpää 1991, 1, 7). Similar to Koskinen and Waris, Mäenpää looks at the population structure in terms of moving to and from Kallio, as well as occupation and age (Mäenpää 1991; Koskinen 1990; Waris 1973, chapter 3). Mäenpää perceives the presence of higher officials as a sign of Kallio becoming a middle class-area, just as Koskinen saw the majority of industrial and construction workers as a sign of a worker’s area (Koskinen 1990).

As stated earlier, Mäenpää stresses the importance of choice as the middle class’s distinctive motivation for moving to an area; the middle class has more income to invest in their housing (Mäenpää 1991, 1, 4). In Bourdian terms, housing is a choice,
not a necessity for them (Bourdieu 1986, 372). Since the 1980s, Kallio was no longer an area where one moved in because of lower housing prices. No longer was Kallio an area with a majority of rental apartments either (Mäenpää 1991, 25). As previously stated, the choice to move somewhere is often related to the identity (Giddens 1991, 5, 82-83) of the place; one is prepared to pay for a certain location that offers possibilities for a self-identification and an expression of the aspired lifestyle choice.

Mäenpää saw gentrification in Kallio as the transformation into a culturally and socially mixed area in the end of the 1980’s. The negative aspects of gentrification were displacement and marginalization of especially those people who were tenants. (Mäenpää 1991, 68-69.) The housing situation was somewhat similar when Mäenpää conducted his research to the situation today: prices in central Helsinki were skyrocketing.

3.5. Kallio today – towards gentrification?

When one writes about more families coming to a neighborhood that used to be a rugged worker’s area, it is often associated with gentrification (see e.g. Karsten 2003, 2007). Families are usually considered to be better tax payers, and tidying up the neighborhood is often associated with families that have children preferring safer environments. Also Lilius cites Karsten who has written about the middle class “YUPPS” (Young urban professional parents) who counter to expectations, stay in the city instead of moving to the suburbs (Lilius 2008, 24; Karsten 2003). According to Karsten families are a relatively new group of gentrifiers (Karsten 2003, 2573).

Still today, Kallio seems to have a somewhat ambivalent character that offers possibilities for a self-identification in the form of urban lifestyle. The recent writings in the media about Kallio becoming more popular among families (see chapter 1.) do portray a hip and trendy image of this former working class area, which one could easily picture swarming with YUPPS. On the other hand the signs of socio-economic
inequality such as Veikko and Lahja Hurstin Laupeudentyö, “Hursti food queue”, are very visible in the media and on the streets (Hursti charity food queue has been discussed in the Finnish media since the spring of 2011 when the residents living in the neighboring apartments to Hursti office were complaining of disturbances caused by people queuing outside (Sippola HS Kaupunki 5.5.2011 and 28.4.2011). It seems as if the situation has not changed largely from that of Mäenpää´s research except for the media´s suggestion of the possible increase of families.

Kallio is not easily gentrified already because of its small apartments. Unless people´s demand for residential space diminishes or the combining apartments become more common, it is difficult to envision a change in the socio-economic structure of the area.

Gentrification matters in the context of this thesis because there seem to be social and cultural signs of the process, such as the emergence of cafes and special food stores that Zukin also mentions as signs of cultural gentrification (Zukin 1995). Hence, gentrification can be seen qualitatively, but whether it can be noticed by quantitative measures is uncertain.
4. Definition and demography of the research area

The administrative district and statistical area of Kallio defined by the city of Helsinki comprises of Siltasaari, Sörnäinen, Linjat and Torkkelinmäki (see appendix 3., source: Helsingin seudun aluesarjat www-page 12.9.2011). In this thesis the limited area of Kallio will primarily consist of the areas called Linjat, Torkkelinmäki and Harju. This is the area where observations and photos were taken. The area is limited to these three districts since they have a similar physical structure, which one could describe as distinctively urban: the settlement is dense and the apartments are small (Helsingin kaupunki, Tietokeskus 2011, 77-78). The same area was also used in a research on urban happiness conducted by the ©SoftGis-team (©PehmoGIS in Finnish) at the Centre of Urban and Regional Studies (YTK). Broberg et al. wanted to limit the area to these three smaller areas since they also recognized the similarities between them as being distinctively urban (Broberg et al. 2011, 2). Also Tani has recognized the sub-district Harju as an area which is often considered to be part of Kallio even though in official terms it belongs to the administrative district of Alppiharju (Tani 2001, 146). A few interviewees who live outside the area, but in proximity to it, were included to participate in the research.

The limitation of the research area is of course quite rough, but useful when one wants to look at statistical measures as a basis for qualitative study. In order to test whether this limitation corresponds to people´s conceptions, the participants in the research were asked to draw lines where they conceptualize Kallio´s boundaries to be (see Map 3). The limits were quite consistent with the defined research area. On the other hand, Kallio, independent of how it is defined consists of different kinds of building blocks and quarters, so in that sense there is variation even inside Kallio. Different eras are visible in Kallio; most of Siltasaari was built before the Second World War, Torkkelinmäki in 1920s and 1930s, Linjat mostly in 1960s, Merihaka in the 1970s and Kinapor and Näkki in the 1980s (Koskinen 1990, 40). Thus, there is diversity inside the borders.
According to the Statistical Yearbook of Helsinki 2010, Linjat has an average living area per apartment of 42,2 m², Torkkelinmäki averages 37,2 m² and the area of Harju has an average of 37,7m². Siltasaari on the other hand has an average of 51,8m² and Sörnäinen an average living area per apartment of 48,7m² (Helsingin kaupunki, Tietokeskus 2011, 78). Thus the apartments in Siltasaari and Sörnäinen are somewhat larger than in Linjat, Torkkelinmäki and Harju. Siltasaari also seems like a geographically separate entity because it is located on a cape, water and Siltasaarenkatu cutting it off from Hakaniemi and the rest of Kallio. Harju on the other hand is included to the area of analysis due to its geographic proximity and physical similarity to the limited research area.

Compared to the rest of central Helsinki the apartments in the research area are small. In other central areas, for instance Kamppi, the average living area per apartment is 57,6 m², in Kruununhaka 68,2 m², Katajanokka 76,9 m2, Etu-Töölö 68,0 m² and in Taka-Töölö 57,2 m² (Helsingin kaupunki, Tietokeskus 2011, 77-78). The apartments in the research area are also far from the average 62,9 m² area for families in Helsinki altogether (Helsingin kaupunki, Tietokeskus 2011, 77-78).
Map 2: Area used in this research is the administrative district of Kallio (see appendix 3) disregarding the sub districts of Siltasaari in the southern Kallio, Sörnäinen on the south-east side of Hämeentie and including the sub district Harju. Source: Helsingin seudun aluesarjat 2011 web-page 14.9.2011. © Kaupunkimittausosasto, Helsinki 048 / 2012.

The area defined for the research was very similar as the lines drawn by the interviewees. Most of the participants thought that Sörnäinen does not belong to Kallio, “because it’s just different”. Many also did not include Siltasaari to Kallio. Hakaniemi square and Market place were thought as part of Kallio by many. The eastern side of Töölönlahti was also attached to their living area. Many thought that Helsinginkatu in the north is the limit of Kallio but some parts of Harju were included. Generally is seemed that Linjat and Torkkelinmäki were considered as the most central areas of Kallio and some parts of Harju.

Whether the number of families has increased, gets a negative answer (see diagram 1). By looking at statistics it becomes visible that all in all the number of inhabitants in Kallio has decreased since the mid-1960’s, and stayed at a similar level from early 1990’s onwards. The biggest age groups are people aged 20-29 and 30-39. There is more or less the same amount of people whose age is around 65+, 50-64 and 40-49. Least represented in the area are people between the ages of 0 to 19. Thus, there are not many children or teenagers living in Kallio. The majority of the population are young adults at the age of 20 to 30+

On the other hand, Pasi Mäenpää claims he has observed a mild growth in the numbers of 0-6 year-olds. But also he states that the dwelling stock of Kallio is not changing, rather, its lifestyles are becoming more pluralistic (Mäenpää 2011).

There were less than thousand children (age 0-17) living in Kallio in 2011 (Helsingin seudun aluesarjat www-page 4.1.2012). Most of the children in Kallio are under the age of three (see diagram 2).

In a sense it is not surprising that there are so few children and teenagers in Kallio since the apartments are so small. Simply, the physical aspects of Kallio do not enable it to become a family neighborhood, unless of course radical changes would happen in people’s demand of space. But this is very unlikely.

Thus statistically, the number of families and children has not increased significantly. What caught the researcher’s interest was the public discussion in the media, Helsingin Sanomat, but the phenomenon created by them proved not to be true, at least in a quantitative sense. Anyhow, since it has been a topic of public discussion, there is still reason to inquire about the question qualitatively. The phenomenon may be a marginal one, but this does not mean it would not be interesting for urban studies. Even smaller groups and qualitative change can provide housing research with important information (Lapintie 2008, 38; Kersloot & Kauko 2004, 145). The discussions in the media may also be an indication of a mismatch in demand and supply. Perhaps there would be demand for urban family apartments, but there is not a sufficient and affordable supply. Since a whole new neighborhood, Kalasatama, is
being built next to Kallio, it is reasonable to ask these families in Kallio, could they consider moving there? Kalasatama is under construction, and when it is ready the neighborhood will house some 20 000 people (Kalasatama web-page 2011).
5. On housing choices

Housing is not perhaps directly comparable to other consumption since it has some particular characteristics: it is usually the biggest investment in an individual’s life time, dependent on loan, influenced by financial institutions, and the conditions of the loan (Laakso & Loikkanen 2004). This may indicate that financial resources constricting choices are of particular importance when it comes to housing.

How do people decide where to live then? To what extent is it a rational choice we base on facts such as distances, physical aspects and how much money we have at our disposal? Are we rational even then, do we perhaps take a loan that is almost too much to meet monthly payments? To what degree do we base our decision on feelings and conceptions of places? Do we let other things, other people’s expectations and past experiences have an effect on our choices? Housing is a comparably large and valuable commodity; therefore it is reasonable to assume that it has deeper symbolic meanings to the residents.

The decision to dwell somewhere is complicated and unpredictable (Coolen 2008, 1; Hasu 2010, 87). It may also vary in a person’s different phases of life (Clapham 2002, 64; Giddens 1991, 85; Hasu 2010, 74). It is a personal decision but it is also influenced by wishes and other people (outside and in the household) (Kortteinen 1982, 21, 240; Hasu 2010, 75), limited and determined by external constraints (Giddens 1991, 86), such as our economic situation, and simple physical constraints such as distance. In this specific research the interest lies in the question: why do some families live in Kallio? Deciding to live somewhere is a choice for one alternative as opposed to all other alternatives (Hasu 2010, 60). Though, making a choice usually requires having more than one alternative, in other words having a choice to begin with.

Housing preferences have been investigated from various theoretical and methodological angles (Coolen 2008, 1); for instance from an environment-
psychological (e.g. Kyttä 2007; Kyttä & Kahila 2006), “socio-geographical” (Kortteinen et al. 2005; Strandell 2005), economic (consumer) (Arvola et al. 2010) and sociological or social policy angles (Ilmonen 2000, 2002; Mäenpää 1991). There are many different ways of investigating housing issues in general (see e.g. Lawrence 2005, 5-8; Clapham 2002, 57-59). Thus, housing research can be seen as multidisciplinary: different scientific traditions working in collaboration and transdisciplinary: using theory and methodology of other scientific traditions (Öberg 2008, 26, 35).

Coolen and Hoekstra have made a division between “stated” and “revealed” preferences. According to them “revealed preferences are based on actual housing choices. In contrast, stated preferences are based on intended preferences or hypothetical choices.” (Coolen & Hoekstra 2001, 285-286.) These stated preferences largely look at the wishes and ideals people have, detached from their everyday lives. This thesis will look at the revealed preferences, in other words, the actual choices the families in question have made to live in Kallio. Wishes and unrealized preferences are separated from the actual choices.

In the Finnish context housing choices have often been studied with the assistance of quantitative methods (Lapintie 2008, 28) which aim at generalizations and often concentrate on stated housing preferences rather than revealed preferences (Kersloot & Kauko 2004, 151-154; Coolen & Hoekstra 2001, 258). The interest may have been too much on people as a whole, also presuming that that their wishes (stated preferences) would correspond to the actual choices they make (revealed preferences).

The research appears to be too much tangled in old paradigms that are looking at housing often from a universalist and positivist angle (Clapham 2002, 59). There is also a need to study housing as lifestyle that Mäenpää also wrote about already in the 1990s (Mäenpää 1991, 5). The role of institutions has diminished as the influence of the global economy has increased, and this has resulted in individuals having more choices than ever in the contemporary society (Clapham 2002, 59-60; Giddens 1991,
81). The lifestyles of people have differentiated as simultaneously the society has traditional affiliations (such as the family, politics and other institutions) have fragmented (Scheiner & Kasper 2003, 319; Clapham 2002, 60; Giddens 1991, 80-81). Lifestyles are several. Today there is no general mass or “us” that architects are planning for as there supposedly was in the modernist era of planning. Consequently, lifestyle differentiation and plurality of lifestyles need to be considered in research and planning. To look at the particular next to the general is important.

Similar to Clapham (2002, 59), this thesis will not discuss postmodernity as a theme per se, because it is a too wide concept to be dealt with in this context. In order to keep things simple, I will also attach the pluralization and fragmentation of contemporary western society to globalization, which is perhaps a better institutionalized and tangible concept (especially when one looks at literature in the field of economics).

In the following chapters 2.1 and 2.2 perhaps the most dominant ways of explaining housing choices - economic and environmental - are presented and reexamined. These means of explanations are only one way for the current author to operationalize the term housing choice. It is not to suggest that there even would be purely economic or environmental research paradigms or that these would be the only existing approaches. As previously stated, there are many different ways of researching housing issues, and they can be interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and use applied methods.

5.1. On economic ways of explaining housing choices

Microeconomic theories often look at a household as one unit and not as two or more individuals, or parent(s) deciding on behalf of children. When it comes to housing choices, this may be a problem with many approaches. In the literature reviewed for this work, the particular perspective is hardly ever pointed out: is it that of the parent, spouse, or child? This is important since the context or life “sector” the person is
speaking from (Giddens 1991, 83; Lapintie 2008, 30; Hasu 2010, 64). In the context of family usually the adults anyway decide where to live in the end, but children are often taken into consideration (Lapintie 2008, 30). Functional constraints such as distances, routes and children’s hobbies (ibid. 30; Laakso & Loikkanen 2004, 147.) can influence these decisions.

The starting point assumption in neoclassical economic theory is often that the individual is rational and makes rational choices. The individual is usually seen as a utility maximizer who aims for the maximum utility with a minimum of effort. An individual is primarily a consumer who strives for utility which in turn reveals her/his choices (e.g. Varian 2006, 54; Laakso & Loikkanen 2004, 147). An individual’s behaviour is thus predicted based on utility maximization when it comes to traffic connections, location, services, value and qualities of the property and its surroundings (Laakso & Loikkanen 2004, 147.) In addition, individuals are often reduced to consumers whose behaviour can be explained by “universal assumptions of human behaviour” (Clapham 2002, 58).

It is apparent that in social scientific research the view of an individual as a utility maximizer is not adequate to explain human behaviour. Firstly, a person does not make choices in a vacuum (without being influenced by other institutions and actors). Secondly, she/he does not have perfect information on which economic explanation models often are based on. Thirdly she/he may not act rationally. She may for instance have conflicting goals that make her actions seem irrational (Sen 1992, 61; Kahneman 1981, 458). Neither are choices of housing static. Individual and societal economic conditions, needs and constraints change and therefore choices do also. Furthermore, even though the state’s role has diminished in housing policy in most of the Western countries (Clapham 2002, 58), at least in the Finnish context it still exists (Lujanen 2004, 15). The whole context where housing choices take place has to be taken into consideration. If one studies housing choices from the market perspective, one has to
take into consideration the role of public actors since they affect both markets and individuals.

The mainly economic angle of explaining housing choices has been criticized for instance by Clapham (2002, 58) and Hasu (2010). In her text Hasu tries to shed light on the whole concept of housing preference. She bases the assumptions of housing preferences on economics, but deliberates on how other aspects related to housing choice should be accounted for. Hasu stresses the importance of weak preferences, which are not so easy to recognise and analyse, but may respond better to the real situation (Hasu 2010, 61). Weak preferences occur in a situation where the consumer has two or more alternatives that are considered to be equally good. According to Hasu, choices are often simplified by placing a hierarchical order of value on available options, even though in real life choices are so multifaceted that hierarchical ordering (transitivity) is often not possible (ibid. 61, 63). People do not organize their preferences in terms of simplified housing attributes such as the type of housing (for example a detached house, or an apartment in a multi-storey building). It may not even be possible, since housing is such a heterogeneous product (Coolen & Hoekstra 2001, 295) that each and every one compose of different sets of attributes.

One’s wishes cannot be separated from one’s needs and constraints, because they exist in the same time and space. Thus, resources set limitations to the realization of housing preferences. Temporality and the occurring non-transitivity of choices have to be taken into account when people’s housing choices are studied.

5.2. On environmental explanations of housing choices

It seems as if the physical and natural environment is still often used as an explanation of human behaviour. In other words, a person is affected by and responsive to her environment, and not the other way around. Environmental explanations often stay at
the level of stated preferences, concentrating mainly on wishes and conceptions people have of their environment.

The sociologists of the Chicago school are well known for their evolutionist perspective which views the city as “an extension of the processes of the natural world” (Kleniewski 2007, 1-2). This perspective also concentrated on the individuals’ personal choices (Dear 2007, 56), but it tried to explain human behaviour more in terms of reactions to the environment, rather than emphasising individuals as active agents, and part of institutions that also affect the environment. The criticism they later faced was their natural scientific, evolutionist approach to sociological and societal issues, which do not take into account institutions and social forces. The explanation models seem positivistic and universalist if one tries to apply them today’s society. In the 1970s they had to be reconsidered when new urban issues became more complex involving new institutions and relationships between them (Kleniewski 2007, 2-3).

The way of explaining the human – environment relationship today could still be largely affected by Chicago School’s tradition of thinking. This may materialize when one looks at quantitative-oriented research with regard to people’s wishes, preferences and conceptions of the environment (e.g. Juntto 2007; Kyttä & Kahila 2006; Kortteinen et al. 2005). The fact is that measured in this way, a majority of people like nature, detached houses, and open spaces, which has been proved again and again if one is only concerned about the (perhaps unrealistic) wishes people have regarding their environment. These results are just often unattached to their real situations and surroundings where they have to actually live and make constrained choices. The actual choices that have to take place in a real-life context would also provide politicians and planners plausible information to base their decisions on. The preferences and wishes that people have may never be realized, but the choices people have to make are real and continuous. Moreover these choices do influence - and are influenced by - housing policy and planning.
In contrast to the Chicago school, today’s environmental explanations often recognize that the environment does not work one-way; rather, the environment is an interactive process, where humans, nature and the physical interact. Contemporary environmental psychology takes more and more into consideration the relationship between the human being and a place and the sociocultural context (Aura, Horelli & Korpela 1997, 15-16). Even though environmental psychology nowadays investigates people-space relationships and takes the community as an important factor forming people’s housing choices, what the environmental explanations still often lack is the societal context, policies and institutions. Neither are environmental psychologists very interested in the realities of the decision-making process (constraints and needs), which for instance economic explanations are very much concerned about.

This is not to say that the environmental explanations of housing preferences do not provide valuable information. But if one ones to look at the actual choices, one has to take into account the actual context where decisions on housing are made.

5.3. Composition of choice: wishes, constraints, and needs

Anthony Giddens states that “..because of the ‘openness’ of social life today, the pluralisation of the contexts of action and the diversity of ‘authorities’, lifestyle choice is increasingly important in the constitution of self-identity and daily activity.” (Giddens 1991, 5.) He insists on the preeminence of lifestyle in people’s decision making and choosing (ibid 81). His considerations on lifestyle options seem to be strongly integrated with the term choice, by which we may also be able to explain/operationalize housing choice.

What Pierre Bourdieu and Giddens have in common is the argument that the choices made, even by those economically more constrained, have a power to create identity (Giddens) and habitus (Bourdieu) by distinguishing the self from others and attaching the self to a group identity (Bourdieu 1986; Giddens 1991, 82). Both appear to see that
lifestyle differences between people are a very basic human way of distinguishing and evaluating oneself to others, and this is not just an issue of working class and bourgeoisie. Giddens admits that “To speak of multiplicity of choices is not to suppose that all choices are open to everyone, or that people take all decisions about options in full relation of the range of feasible alternatives.” (ibid. 82). This is important since it would be naive to assume that class would not matter anymore. So there are people who have to settle with necessities (Bourdieu 1986, 372) or less, having no choice. On the other hand, people with greater ability to choose may not have perfect information about their range of alternatives in the way that microeconomic theories presuppose.

Also Finnish Social scientists have written about how choice, the way of choosing a neighbourhood and a home, like a commodity, is a way to distinguish oneself from others; a way of self-expression. Mäenpää (1991) and Roos & Rahkonen (1988) have utilized Bourdieu’s famous concept of distinction (1986) as a theoretical framework to explain the housing choices of the social classes. The idea is that housing is not a mere necessity, a roof overhead, it is a lifestyle choice (Mäenpää 1991, 3, 15-16).

In other words, with adequate financial resources, one is able to choose where and how to live, in Bourdieu’s terms, to express taste, to distinguish oneself from the rest. This should lead us back to the primary research questions: if living in Kallio is more of a choice than a necessity for the families, how is this choice made? What wishes, needs and constraints affect their choices? Why do they live in Kallio?

Thus, what I shall call the “degree of choice” means that people, even in Nordic welfare states, can have less choice when it comes to decisions on housing and housing preferences. It may be that the degree of choice is dependent on the composition of wishes, constraints and needs, and housing choices, are the outcome of this process.
Diagram 3: Decisions where to live are made based on hopes, dreams and wishes, limited by economic and other constraints, and dictated by the households’ needs. Diagram by Ilona Akkila 2011.

Bourdieu’s and Giddens’ ideas of choice are based on microeconomic assumptions similarly to Amartya Sen. Sen writes about “well-being freedom” as being dependent on the capability to choose from various combinations of functioning that the person can achieve and that a person’s ability to choose can make a person’s life “richer” (Sen 1992, 40). Sen’s term well-being freedom and the term degree of choice describe the same thing: the capability to choose a lifestyle.

In short, Bourdieu and Giddens appear to look at lifestyle choices from a societal point of view, while Sen offers a more libertarian (ibid. 41) way of looking at choice: choice is seen in a way as a sum of the “degree of choice”.

5.4. On gentrification

The appearance of new groups of inhabitants and new kinds of lifestyles in an area are often associated with the process of gentrification. Supposedly also families who like living in Kallio could be a sign of gentrification.
Gentrification is not just a phenomenon of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. The term has been used in scholarly literature since the 1970s. It seems as if the focus of the research has been changing but the contents of the concept itself have not. According to Smith and Williams, gentrification is “a process which operates in the residential housing market” and “it refers to the rehabilitation of working-class and derelict housing and the consequent transformation of an area into a middle-class neighborhood” (Smith & Williams 1986, 1). They also state that “gentrification is widely identified with the supposed emergence of a new middle-class because the process seems to bring with it the concentration of trendy restaurants, boutiques, clubs and other recreation and retail facilities that are frequented by the ‘new young professionals’” (ibid. 7). Thus, gentrification has for long been seen as a class or status demarcating process in the urban space. Seeing aesthetics and culture as symbolic of gentrification is not a new thing either (Jaeger 1986, 78-79), they come along as the “gentrifiers” take over a neighborhood.

Sharon Zukin may be one of the central authors who have concentrated on the cultural aspects of gentrification. She sees the visual “displays” in the city, such as “gourmet food stores” and establishments associated with artists as manifestations of gentrification (Zukin 1995, 9, 23), but also as the city’s new representations as a creative force in the emerging service economy (ibid. 268). In a way Zukin sees culture in the urban context as branding and marketing the city – competing for inhabitants and investments: “Property values are not only determined economically; they respond to intangible public cultures, cultures of ethnicity and gender as well as social class” (ibid, 291). So in a sense, one can look at gentrification from both perspectives: as a process of the housing market, but also as a socio-cultural dynamic affecting the society.

Brown-Saracino writes also that gentrification is often seen as an economic and social process where often young, highly educated individuals move to a neighborhood due to lower housing prices, seeking jobs or cultural services (Brown-Saracino 2009, 4). She
states that “the gentry’s residential choices, together with public and commercial investment, result in the economic, political, and cultural transformation of neighborhoods and towns”. In addition the process in a way feeds itself, when more wealthy people move to an area, apartments become pricier and the built environment is transformed towards the gentrifiers. (ibid. 4.) Alike Zukin, Brown-Saracino seems to think that in addition to demographic, economic, and political aspects gentrification needs to be looked at from a bottom-up, cultural point of view. She looks at gentrification from the perspective of view of the individual, asking why do they choose to settle in a gentrified area. According to her, ideology may be influencing their decisions. (ibid. 5.)

The intention is not to undermine the economic processes central to gentrification. But because this research concentrates more on the lifestyle choices of the inhabitants, the cultural and socio-cultural aspects of gentrification are of primary interest in this thesis.

6. A recent discussion on housing choices in the Finnish context

Choices are quite unpredictable since the amount of alternatives is often vast, though not unlimited (Giddens 1991, 82). The postmodern problem in urban planning and studies may be that there is no “us” anymore, and there perhaps never was. If we want to know what households perceive as a good living environment, we cannot seriously be expecting a homogenous result. Even making inferences that suggest that the majority of Finnish people prefer a certain type of housing might be questionable. Housing choice is deeply embedded in the decision making context and the varying aspects that one has to consider alter from time. Therefore, as stated previously, using high level of generalization may not be desirable in the housing choice context. Quite the contrary, it may be useful to look at people on more of an individual basis (Lapintie 2008, 38; Clapham 2002, 61), for instance particular groups (Kersloot & Kauko 2004, 145).
A recent and interesting debate concerns Kortteinen, Tuominen and Vaattovaara’s research on housing wishes and preferences in the metropolitan area of Helsinki (Kortteinen et al. 2005). Kimmo Lapintie criticized Kortteinen and his colleagues for oversimplifying the question of housing choice, their methodology and for making vague judgments based on their analysis (Lapintie 2008).

6.1. Colliding perspectives of housing research

In their work, Kortteinen, Tuominen and Vaattovaara express their concerns about social disintegration and criticize the contemporary urban planning for neglecting the citizens and having too much emphasis on the technical and physical environment (Kortteinen et al. 2005, 122, 129). They analyzed a survey (N=10 425) in which they asked about city dwellers’ experiences of their living environment, anticipations and wishes, housing preferences and their willingness to move in the Finnish metropolitan area. According to Kortteinen et al, a substantial majority of the respondents preferred to own their apartment/house and live in a single-family detached house. Only roughly half of the downtown residents who participated preferred to live in an apartment. (Kortteinen et al. 2005)

In addition, their factor analysis revealed the five most important factors attached to a good living environment. Factor one included the attributes “proximity to nature”, “calmness of the area”, “outdoors recreation possibilities”, “areas with detached housing”. The second factor consisted of attributes “commercial services”, “transportation connections” and “communal services”. The third factor attributes were “anticipated growth in value”, “price-quality relationship” and “reputation of the neighborhood”. The fourth factor had the attributes “acquaintances and friends” and “inhabitant structure”. The fifth factor included the attributes “city-centeredness and architecture.” (Kortteinen et al. 2005, 122.) The authors state that they found that the housing wishes of people are largely identical regardless of where they currently
lived, their profession, their level of income, and their education. This consistent housing preference seemed to be connected with “proximity to nature, calmness and an area with single-family detached housing.” (ibid. 123-124.)

They also focused on a separate group of families with children as well as their willingness to move. They based their choice on the families´ sensitivity to their living environment and their changing needs of space. The research group found out that the most important reasons for dissatisfaction were associated with the size of the dwelling, its equipment level and the costs of housing. Regardless of this, the researchers decided to concentrate more on the living environment outside the home in their analysis. Social characteristics, such as “people living in the neighborhood”, “disorder”, and “not a good environment to bring up children”, were most significant causes for families consider moving. Disquiet, other disturbances and the belief that the area is not good for bringing up children were the most distressing causes. Social disorder such as the lack of security in the neighborhood proved to be the most important issue influencing the families´ readiness to move. Services and transportation connections were not very significant reasons for dissatisfaction, but slightly more significant in the areas where families were more dissatisfied. (ibid. 125-126.) The researchers conclude that they found a correlation between the significance of social distress (influencing families´ readiness to move) and low income level. According to them living in socio-economically mixed urban apartment buildings may explain this (ibid. 127).

Kimmo Lapintie responded to Kortteinen, Tuominen and Vaattovaara´s text by firstly acknowledging the problems in today’s´ planning “paradigm” from a different angle. He claimed that since the 1990s, environmental problems and the supposedly good urban planning solutions have become normative guidelines for planning. He maintained that one has learned to regard dense and limited built area-structures to be sustainable, versus unsustainable dispersed detached housing structures. According to him, the problem in this so-called ecological planning is that it does not take into
account the societal and social action, let alone the political or market economy. According to him, technology and cheering for the local community do not bring about sustainable urban structures alone. (Lapintie 2008, 25-26.) In addition Lapintie agrees with Kortteinen and his colleagues that there is serious pressure towards the outer municipalities in the Finnish metropolitan area, and he is similarly worried about the development of the urban structure.

I compress Kimmo Lapintie’s criticism to 5 points: 1) Critique of the role of urban planning, 2) critique on methodology, 3) postmodern critique, 4) planning vs. lifestyle norms, and 5) dreams and wishes do not equal choices. It seemed as if this criticism would be more widely aimed at the field of urban planning and studies than just the aforementioned authors, which makes it interesting.

What Lapintie firstly did not agree upon is Kortteinen, Tuominen and Vaattovaara’s lumping together of socio-cultural and market forces (Lapintie 2008, 29). It seems as if he was unsatisfied with the way the researchers see the relationship between individual and society: that individuals and market forces could lead us to a functioning urban structure in the social sense (Lapintie 2008, 29). He appeared to think that researchers often neglect the societal guidance that urban planning can do. Lapintie, similar to Clapham (2002), seemed to look at the contemporary housing research as too positivist, relying on the balancing effects of market forces.

Secondly, Lapintie stated that housing choices are often used synonymously to housing wishes in sociology, urban geography and environmental psychology (Lapintie 2008, 30). He was critical of the way Kortteinen and his colleagues among others pull out housing choices out of the every-day context (ibid. 30). Lapintie appeared to think that housing choices are described with simple and rough attributes, such as living in detached houses or in urban building blocks, which per se could represent various kinds of housing areas (ibid. 31, 32). He argued that not only are people in different life phases, but family compositions and their inner dynamics vary, there can be several
wishes, and people are constrained by their budgets (ibid. 30). He also mentioned that methods, such as using surveys, often include interpretative problems, difficulties of gathering multifaceted information and that the respondents’ role in the household and other factors can skew the results (ibid. 28, 33).

Similar to Kersloot and Kauko (Kersloot & Kauko 2004, 146, 148), Lapintie appeared to think that qualitative methods could offer a plausible solution to methodological problems. He wrote that theme-interviews are one possibility to tackle housing choices as a research problem (Lapintie 2008, 33). In this way, it would be possible to identify needs of particular groups. Lapintie, alike Clapham (2002, 61) and Coolen & Hoekstra (2001, 286), appears to think that one needs to look beyond the physical housing and environmental attributes (“functional definitions of housing”) and see the cultural meanings and structures of meanings behind them (Lapintie 2008, 31, 33, and 37). Clapham’s social constructivist approach to housing (2002, 61) and Coolen and Hoekstra’s approach which would take into account the goals, attitudes, and values behind the attributes (Coolen & Hoekstra 2001, 286), appear to be in line with Lapintie’s view.

Thirdly, Lapintie is also skeptical of the “collective” or “uniformity” of culture that Kortteinen, Tuominen and Vaattovaara claim to have found (ibid. 30). This is related to the discussion of the degree of generalization. For one it may be questionable to write about unity or a general housing preference in today’s postmodern and globalized society. Due to lifestyle differentiation and fragmentation of society it is not necessarily reasonable to generalize about people’s housing wishes. A pluralist approach to lifestyles may respond better to the reality.

Lapintie also stated that “housing choices are made (...) after discussing amongst the family members or are a result of inner family dynamics and power, not just as an individual choice” (ibid. 30). A parent could dominate the housing choice of a family and thus lead to a situation where the other parent’s housing preferences are not
fulfilled. Some preferences may be hidden under the power dynamics of a family. One can also take into account the supposed individualization of the society (e.g. Ilmonen 2002, 68) which can have an effect what the parents choose for their family having mainly their own, not their families’, preferences in mind.

Fourthly, according to Kimmo Lapintie, defragmentation of urban structure has become the goal urban planning in the 2000s, but the prevailing appreciation of detached housing areas in Finland is still a politically sensitive issue (Lapintie 2008, 27-28). He writes about the Finnish repugnance towards urbanity which is almost ingrained in our culture. Lapintie seems to be of the opinion that unquestioned “planning norms” such as densification do not benefit the urban structure in long term either, but neither does the unquestioned cultural norm of living in one family detached houses “in the middle of the forest”.

As fifth, Lapintie stated the way the markets portray housing demand differs from the picture Kortteinen, Tuominen and Vaattovaara have described. According to him urban housing is very popular and therefore also expensive. Thus, at least part of the households chooses an urban lifestyle and its unique offerings instead of escaping to the outskirts of the city. But even then, the prices in the city area have jumped through the roof (Lapintie 2008, 30), so not all can afford it.

Therefore, what people answer to prefer in surveys might not correspond to choices (Hasu 2010, 70; Lapintie 2008, 32). This is important: it really may be the case that one dreams of a detached house outside the city but then choose to live in an apartment in the city or vice versa! Hence, it is important to clarify why people are moving to the city center even though their housing wishes could refer to the other direction.
6.2. A battle of methodologies - and lifestyles?

Kortteinen (et al.) write that it seems as if the living environment does not meet the wishes of the residents in the Finnish metropolitan area (ibid. 127). In some ways it appears as if they were forcefully trying to prove that single-family detached housing is the most preferred housing type. But even if their conclusion were correct: one perhaps should not prune housing choices or preferences into such a generalization since it is widely acknowledged that housing choices have differentiated and there exist a plurality of lifestyles (Lapintie 2008, 38; Giddens 1991, 83; Kersloot & Kauko 2004, 147; Kauko 2006, 159, 165, 176). One could perhaps also look at choices of different groups rather than try to generalize back to the whole population.

Neither do Kortteinen and his team take into account the fact that people did answer to be generally quite pleased with their living environment in the survey (Kortteinen et al. 2005, 124). Even though people tend to give more positive answers about their level of satisfaction with their housing area (ibid. 124), neglecting the fact that they did say so, gives a certain kind of result and this should be accounted for in their analysis. As also previously stated people may have all kinds of dreams and wishes even though they may be pleased with their housing.

Kortteinen, Tuominen and Vaattovaara write that they chose to look at families with children as a separate group and study their willingness to move based on their “sensitivity to the living environment” (ibid. 12), in order to show dissatisfaction with the living environment and document the reasons for it. If families really can be considered to be more receptive, they would probably be sensitive to other issues as well, such as social disturbances? Therefore perhaps the data they collected would also have to be interpreted acknowledging that the discontent of the families may seem greater than it is in reality.
Living in apartment buildings appears to get a rather negative connotation in their text. Urban environments (ibid. 127) are almost seen as if they would be something no one would prefer as living environment. One comes to think of the gloomy picture painted by Chicago-school (e.g. Wirth 1938) about the urbanity and disintegrating social characteristics it has. Behind their argumentation may lie the old-world assumption that every Finnish person wants her/his own single-family detached house (what Lapintie called “Impivaara”, a known metaphor for Finnish mental isolation that corresponds to living remotely from other people (Lapintie 2008, 27).

The discussion is political, and it has been portrayed for instance in the public discussions involving the former Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen with his comments on a so called garden city model, which has little to do with Ebenezer Howard’s model (Howard 1985), which could offer a solution to a sustainable urban structure. In his vision people could live outside the city in single-family detached houses in a community. According to him this would lessen the burden of the cities and also be environmentally sustainable (Jokinen HS Kaupunki 7.9.2008). These comments have received many counter-arguments, often involving the claim about dense urban centers to be the only ecological way of living. In a way: the media and the public discussion portray the polarization of the planning discussion.

In short this polarization is between two ideals of lifestyle: living in detached housing or in an urban environment. This seems in the end like a conflict of lifestyles - a polarization in the Finnish housing discussion. The current planning paradigm or norm, if one can label it as such, has worked to polarize ideas of lifestyles in the Finnish society: on one side the urban lifestyle and on the other the perhaps more scattered or suburban lifestyle. Lapintie probably brought this up in his article to point out that in the end the discussion has little to do with good urban structure or science. It is a question of lifestyles; who gets to say what the right way to live and dwell is. As Pasi Määnpää points out this discussion could be somewhat useless. He argues that there actually is not that much difference between these lifestyles, or their claimed
ecological sustainability. Unlike Lapintie and Kortteinen et al, he thinks that the Finnish lifestyle is already urban, and we should give up the myths about Finnish people’s seeking for isolation and nature. He advocates for a “broad definition of urban”, which does not juxtapose urban lifestyle to (allegedly) other kind of lifestyles (2011, 55, 57.) Thus, also Mäenpää stresses the plurality of lifestyles in urban planning.
7. Results

In this chapter the empirical results are presented thematically, using the themes set for the interview before the accomplishment of data. The themes are: 1) social class, 2) housing situation and background, 3) conceptions of places, and 4) housing wishes. This classification is essential for the final analysis since the themes create the framework that helps interpretations (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000, 147). These results presented in chapter 8 are then further analyzed in chapter 9.

- Theme 1) social class relates to the theme choice. As stated earlier, the economic situation of a family largely determines their degree of choice: Are families living in Kallio as a choice or have they “ended up” there because they can’t afford to live somewhere else?

- Theme 2) housing situation and background is aimed to find out what the family’s housing situation is now and where they have lived before since they seem to have an effect on the current choice of housing. Thus, finding out why they chose to move to Kallio.

- Theme 3) conceptions of places have a link to the theme 5) self-identity. How people perceive different places in a neighborhood is connected to the identity of the place (Tani 2001, 145; Aura et al. 1997, 49, 127). The identity of the place then is linked to the (narrative of) self-identity of a person, how she wants to see herself and be seen by others (Giddens 1991, 81) in terms of where and how she lives.

- Theme 4) Housing wishes is used in order to find out whether the families prefer urban lifestyle, or would some other kind of residence fulfill their wishes better? This theme was specifically serving the purpose to distinguish housing wishes (stated preferences) from housing choices (revealed preferences).

In addition to the preselected themes, new themes emerged which were relevant to the research questions. They are 5) self-identity 6), choice, and 7) urban lifestyle. By
-Theme 5) self-identity and 6) choice are interlinked. By self-identity is meant how the families perceive themselves as residents of Kallio. If living in Kallio is a choice, it can be seen as an expression of their self-identity (ibid. 5, 81). In terms of self-identity three different groups will be named in terms how they identify themselves with Kallio. In other words, choices of neighborhoods express the self-identity of the person, but also a special image that a person holds of the neighborhood.
- Theme 6) choice is concentrated on how the families’ perception of choice.
- Theme 7) urban lifestyle portrays how the interviewees perceive the neighborhood they live in, and whether urbanity is a central characteristic of Kallio? What does urbanity mean to them?

These themes are not clear-cut in the sense that they do have connections and overlaps between them, since they focus on the same research problem: housing choice. To be elaborate about the interviews, it is worthwhile to mention that the setting of the questions was different in each interview, and different sets of additional questions were asked in addition to the theme questions (see and appendix 1). As stated in chapter 7.2, the point of conducting specifically semi-structured theme interview was to let the interviewees discuss more freely while the interviewer stayed more in the background as a facilitator. The themes worked as a structure for the interviewer to follow and guide the discussion.

After representing the results of the interviews in this chapter, the actual analysis is combined from the themes in chapter 9.

7.1. Social class

Since economic issues can be considered a sensitive topic, family income or other financial assets that families may have were not asked about directly. Instead, the interviewees’ age, occupation, education, tenure type and the square meter area of
The apartment were queried in order to acquire some kind of understanding of the families’ financial situation.

The interviewees’ ages varied between 27 and 50, however most of them were in their 30s. Their occupations were diverse; they worked as entrepreneurs, in public services, as higher clerical workers/officials, office assistants, students, in the service industry, and in the creative industry. Most of the parents (including their partners who were not present in the interview) were university educated. Altogether 14 of 19 parents had graduated from a university.

Four of the interviewees owned their apartments, and six rented. One of the families was renting the apartment from their relative, so they were paying rent below the market prices. Most of the people who were tenants had rented from the private market. A few of the families noted that they may have to move if the landlord would raise the rent.

The families lived in somewhat larger apartments than the average apartments in Kallio (Linjat: 30,6 m², Torkkelinmäki: 29 m² and Harju 28,6 m², Helsingin kaupunki, Tietokeskus 2011, 78). The smallest apartment visited was 40 m² and the largest approximately 100 m². Two families had bought neighboring apartments and extended their apartments to combine these, originally two, flats. Both of these families in question considered extending their apartments if an apartment would be for sale beside or above theirs so they could buy it.

All of the interviewees found their current apartments too small, but most of them stressed the fact that they are used to living in cramped conditions and maximizing the utility of the space, by for example using the storage space in their basement or attic closet.
7.2. Housing situation and background

Under this theme, the interviewees were asked how many children they have and their ages, how long they had lived in Kallio, where they had resided before, why they moved to Kallio, how they found residing in the neighborhood, and if they would at some point consider moving. The intention of this theme was to find out whether the families were happy living in Kallio and how they had ended up living there.

The interviewed families had from one to three children, aged one to 14. There were six children under the age of three, seven between four and ten, and seven children between ten and 14 years old.

Many of the interviewees had lived in Kallio before having children, or then they had some sort of other attachment to the neighborhood, such as having gone to high school, or lived there as a student. There were also a few who had lived their entire youth in Kallio. Seven parents out of the 15 parents (3 mothers and 6 couples) were originally from the Helsinki metropolitan region, one originally from Kallio. Six more parents were from other Finnish cities, one parent came from countryside and one parent was from central Europe. Many of the families had lived elsewhere in the Helsinki metropolitan area outside the city of Helsinki.

It seemed that the original reason for the families to move to Kallio was its urban character and proximity to transportation connections and services; the necessities and leisure goods are close and provide many choices, and one is able to walk from place to place. The public transport makes it easy to travel and a car is not a necessity. Some parents thought that the location is good in the sense that children can walk or use public transport to go to their hobbies instead of the parents having to drive them by car. Many parents also said they were surprised how well organized public services for families with children are in Kallio. A few parents worked in Kallio or its
surroundings so Kallio had been a reasonable location to reside. A few mentioned social reasons, such as friends, as important for the decision to move there. What appeared obvious from listening to the parents was that all of them may not even use the vast supply of services, such as theatre or restaurants frequently, but still, they enjoy having the choice to do so.

In addition to its character and closeness to transport and services, Kallio appealed as a neighborhood. On the one hand its distinctive character and “laid back” atmosphere appealed to most of these families. Kallio seemed to enable the expression of a certain kind of lifestyle and self-identity. On the other hand, there were a few interviewees who found Kallio to be in some sort of a transition stage, that it would be too rugged and untidy now, but in the future it would be a nice neighborhood. In a way all of the interviewees seemed to be appreciating the unique character of the neighborhood, but with the difference that some thought it already represents their lifestyle, while some few thought that someday it will. A few also said that the current housing situation works for them now as a family, but they wanted to stress the point that their preferences may change in the future if their life situation changes.

All of the parents interviewed enjoyed living in Kallio. This is not a surprise in the sense that people often tend to see their living environment in a positive way (see e.g. Roos 1988). Neither was it surprising that most of them were not ready to move away from the neighborhood. Only a few considered moving when their children would go to school. Many of the parents with teenage children thought that at the point when their apartment starts to get too crowded, one of the children may move out at the age of 18, so there would be more space again. As said in association with the social class theme results, some families were also considering extending their apartments in order to be able to stay in Kallio.
7.3. Conceptions of places

The parents participating in the research were asked to tell which places in Kallio they liked and disliked, and whether there were some particular places children had mentioned to them. They were also asked what kind of people they thought reside in Kallio. These questions were intended to get the interviewees to express how they felt about different places and other people in the same space. This third theme is strongly linked to the fifth theme (self-identity) since the aspiration of both themes was to acquire answers about how they perceive other people in relation to themselves, who and what do they identify themselves with – and who and what do they not?

The places that the parents mentioned which they mostly liked were the nearby basic local services (food stores, pharmacy, public services), Karhupuisto-park, Hakaniemi market place and indoors market hall, Kallio Library, Linjan puisto-park, Töölölähtigulf, Braahen puisto-park, the playground at Tokoinranta (rantapuisto), parks in general cafés and restaurants, street level shops, workrooms and galleries, Tokoinranta, the football court at Braahen kenttä where one can also ice-skate in the winter, Torkkelinmäki, Torkkelinmäki sand court, Pengerkatu, the rocks on Toinen Linja, Helsinginkatu, Linnunlauulu, Lintulahdenaukio, theatres, the swimming hall, places by the water, and the path next to the train rail.
Places that had a more negative connotation to the parents were the corner of Helsinginkatu and Fleminginkatu where Hursti food queue is located. Close by there is also the Alko liquor store. Also Helsinginkatu provided negative associations: mostly the bit from Fleminginkatu to the Sőrnäinen subway station.

“The ghetto starts when you start strolling down Hesari (Helsinginkatu) towards Sőrnäinen [...] the area around Vaasanaukio, I don’t miss it. It’s good to show it to the children though, so that they are not raised inside of a bottle. “ [Father, 30]
Picture 4: Vaasanaukio on a weekday morning in June 2011. Police car patrols on Vaasanaukio every now and then. Picture by Ilona Akkila.

Other places mentioned for their negative character were: Fleminginkatu, Vaasanaukio, also named as “Piritori” (Finnish word “piri” refers to the slang word for amphetamine) and “the square of eternal Vappu” (Vappu is a traditional spring festival that is celebrated on the 30th of April and 1st of May, which is also a labour day), Vaasankatu, traffic nodes which are unpleasant for adults and dangerous for children, Toinen linja social centers for alcoholics and drug addicts, Thai massage places, surroundings of the Helsinki Deaconess Institute (where some housing for homeless people is located, Helsinki Deaconess Institute www-pages 13.1.2012), Tokoinranta, Kurvi, the Salvation army´s food queue next to Kallio church, “boozers” (Finnish slang word is räkälä), and the area surrounding “Ympyrätalo” (a round office and commercial building located in the northwest corner from Hakaniemi square: Alko and a grocery store are on the street level in this building).
These results had some similarities to the locations families had chosen in the SoftGIS Urban Happiness-research (Broberg et al. 2011), see map 4.

**Map 4:** Locations chosen by families living in Kallio (Positive locations on the left, negative on the right) Picture by Tuija Tzoulas, unpublished material based on Urban happiness research data (Broberg et al. 2011). Map source: National Land Survey of Finland (2010).

As one can see from map 4, the locations marked with positive conceptions are particularly grouped around the Hakaniemi square market and inside the market hall, Tokoinranta, Linjan puisto-park, Karhupuisto, library, Brahen puisto and its sports court. Torkkelinmäki was not mentioned frequently in the interviews but it forms a locus of positively conceptualized places. Tokoinranta on the other hand, had an ambiguous image in the interviews, on one hand positive and the other not. In the map above one can see that there are more positive locations made by the participants in Tokoinranta.
Negative clusters in the map above were located closely by Ympyrätalo and the bit of Toinen linja from Ympyrätalo to Suonionkatu, where some social services for alcohol and drug abusers are located. Another negative centralization was around the same location mentioned in the interviews: Helsinginkatu between Fleminginkatu and Kustaankatu and the area of Vaasanaukio.

More exact map of Kallio with street and place names can be found in appendix 4.

Some of the concrete improvement suggestions for the neighborhood by the parents were to open the block courtyards, have more traffic lights, lessen the concentration of social services in Kallio to other central neighborhoods, clean up Vaasanaukio from crime (by e.g. renewing the subway entrances), and allow bars in Kallio to be open until 3 or 4 am.

7.4. Housing wishes

The interviewees were asked about their dream housing, as an open question. Additional questions were asked in order to specify what it would be in realistic terms: if they would have the same needs and constraints as they have at the moment.

The interviewees were also asked about the prospects of living in some of the new neighborhoods that the City of Helsinki is building such as the large housing area called Kalasatama on the shore of Sörnäinen. New residential blocks are also erected north of Kallio: Konepaja on the border of Vallila and Alppila.

All of the interviewees preferred to stay in Kallio, which may not be surprising for similar reasons as stated in theme 2: people rarely say negative things about where they live. All the same, many felt pressured to leave because of the lack of room, but they were still trying to find solutions that would enable them to stay. These solutions were e.g. the aforementioned extending the apartment, children sharing a room, and
“multi-function” rooms, where parents sleep and it is used as a living room in the daytime. Hence, it seemed as if the parents wanted to keep residing in Kallio.

When the interviewees were asked where they would move in case they considered moving, most of them responded they would stay in Kallio. Some thought that they could not afford living anywhere else in the inner city, and the only possibility for affordable urban lifestyle was Kallio. Most of them said that housing in Kallio is nowadays expensive, but it is still borderline of affordable for many.

Many of the interviewees wanted the interviewer to define, were they being asked about their housing wishes in a realistic or just imaginary – dream – sort of way? All of the interviewees considered their preferences primarily in realistic terms, matching their current situation. They were also given the opportunity to reflect upon housing wishes and dreams. This was done in order to find out whether they would choose very differently if they had more options and fewer restrictions.

When he interviewees were asked about their “dream-housing”, it seemed like many still wanted to remain in Kallio, but if they had the money, their dream could be to live in a more “prestigious” area of Kallio such as Karhupuisto or Torkkelinmäki. Some few would consider living in other, also more prominent, inner city neighborhoods such as Eira if they could afford it. None of the interviewees appeared to hold living in the suburbs, in detached or row-houses outside the inner city, as their first option. On the other hand, many of the parents mentioned that living in a multi-storey building has no benefit in itself but the environment compensates for the cramped space and closeness by to other people.

“For us it’s not the apartment where you live in, rather the surrounding environment is what extends our residence. For instance the school is just there, kindergartens as well, playgrounds, transport connections, Hakaniemi indoor and outdoor market – these are all luxuries! If we
were to move somewhere else we most probably would have to give up something.” [Mother, 40]

Proximity to water was an important element to many: some thought that their “dream-housing” would be by water, or then they could have a city apartment and a summer cottage in the forest or by the water.

Some mothers said they miss having their own yard, or at least wish that the inner courtyard of the house would be more appealing for one to spend time there. Inner courtyards in Kallio, and in Helsinki in general are often limited by fences between different properties and are used for bike storage, parking lots or may just not look that inviting for spending time and meeting one’s neighbors. A few who owned their apartments thought that there is no desire to improve the courtyard appearance since most of the people living in Kallio’s housing blocks are tenants, and people who rent may have no interest in caring for and not violating the place. On the other hand some who rented their apartments felt that the landlords and people who owned the apartments have no desire to make the courtyards more appealing.

Only one family thought they would quite likely live in a detached house in the future since they had access to a valuable family plot that was “too good to let pass”. Even this family was exploring ways to stay in cramped space if they had more children since they enjoyed living in Kallio.

All felt that the apartment prices were too high, and some were suspicious about the image of the new neighborhood of Kalasatama that is being built. In addition they thought that they could never afford to live there. Some of them were wondering if it would become like another “suburb” in the city like Ruoholahti, a “disconnected entity” a “fake scenery” such as Pikku-Huopalahti, or like the new concentration of housing blocks on Eiranranta. Many were unsure whether it could become and an extension of Kallio, an urban neighborhood with street life. Some thought that the
street level shops and activity (such as work rooms, cafés, and galleries) were crucial in order to sustain a neighborhood’s liveliness, not just to have green spaces and minimum car access. A few thought that Kallio’s urban atmosphere could be recreated elsewhere with a more condensed street network. Some of the parents thought that there could be a more accessible shoreline in the proximity to Kallio, and Kalasatama could offer an access even to people who do not live there. Thus, the assumed housing prices and the anticipated physical appearance of Kalasatama were not convincing for the families being interviewed.

In the interviewees’ opinion several new residential areas lacked of details, personality and the patina of time. Many of the parents found the aesthetics of buildings important, not just some physical characteristic or old age per se, but the fact that

**Picture 5:** Kalasatama. Source: Kalasatama web-pages, City of Helsinki City Planning department © Adactive Oy.
buildings possess something individual to identify with, particular character. Old buildings also appeared to be representing some kind of permanence in a neighborhood where the in- and outflow of people is rapid. Some of the parents thought that the neighborhood Arabianranta was an example of more successful urban design. The physical character was not positive in all of the parents’ view, but the varying artistic details in Arabianranta were appreciated. Similarly many appreciated the details in old architecture, especially the national romantic style.

“Residential areas could be more interesting to look at. It doesn’t have to be something massive, even small details can be insightful, in the way that you have to pass by six times until you realize what’s so peculiar about this building? What signifies its personality?” [Mother, 45]

Many of the interviewees wished that if they would move to a new housing neighborhood, it would consist of mixed owner-occupation- and rental tenure, including affordable housing such as council apartments. Some held the mixture of different social classes to be important in the context of housing: the importance of seeing and meeting – encountering - different kinds of people.

“I think every new residential neighborhood should be built in a way that it’s a mixture [...] all the social classes would have to stand each other in the same neighborhood” (Father, 32)

Many seemed to think that realistically they could afford housing only very far away from the city in the case of relocation. The “fringe” of the inner city areas such as the wooden houses of Käpylä and Toukola or new houses in Arabia were mentioned as sought after neighborhoods, but all of the interviewees thought that these apartments were too expensive for them. In addition, Kallio was preferred before these areas. Eastern Helsinki was a preferable location for some because of family living in that direction. In general it seemed as if the benefits of living in the inner city area from the parents’ point of view started to rapidly decrease after moving beyond the northern and eastern inner city areas of Töölö, Alppila, Vallila, and Sörnäinen (see map: 1, 27).
When it comes to housing wishes, even when detached from realistic options, many of the parents preferred urban living in comparison to other alternatives and wanted to think about it in realistic terms, attached to their current life situation. Even though some of the parents were complaining about the small area of the apartment, the positive aspects of the neighborhood compensated for the lack of space.

7.5. Self-identity

Self-identity as an interview theme that differs from the other pre-set themes in the same sense as the theme of social class and choice: it was not directly addressed. Rather, issues involved with identity and choice appeared when people were answering more freely to the other questions.

As noted before, Kallio was often seen as a neighborhood one can easily identify with, or parts of it (e.g. Linjat, Torkkelinmäki). Kallio was seen as a coherent neighborhood, but the interviews revealed that even inside Kallio there are districts which have their own character, and this can vary from block to block. View from the window or a pleasant inner courtyard were in some cases important characteristics of a home. Some highlighted that they would not like to live everywhere in Kallio. Their apartment, housing block or the street they were living, sometimes served self-identification. Regardless of that, it seemed as if Kallio enables various possibilities for identification. Thus, it appeared to have a certain meaning as a neighborhood to all, but in addition, it offered a more particular point of identification for each family.

Three “types” of families were identified among the interviewees (cp. Brown-Saracino 2009; 13; Ilmonen 2000, 2002): A) lifestyle-urban, B) gentrifiers, and C) suburbs. These groups were not clear-cut categories; a family could have characteristics of more than one type. The types are used to understand the construction of self-identities of the families.
A) Lifestyle urban families were the most prominent type of group among the interviewees. They emphasized their choice to live in Kallio and they would not like to live anywhere else, since the urban lifestyle is so important for them.

They appeared to be downplaying the negative sides of the neighborhood, such as the concentration of social services, alcoholics and drug users, by saying that it is just an image created by the media or people who do not live in Kallio. On the other hand, the “social cases”, the drunks and drug addicts were also seen as a part of Kallio as a neighborhood, representing its open-mindedness.

“If somebody is shooting up drugs in the inner courtyard I guess it’s a bit silly. But those are not things for which it is worth moving to Espoo. It is not that sort of a choice. (...) One would go crazy in that emptiness too (in Espoo)” [Father, 30]

They did not consider Kallio to be a trendy neighborhood; they assessed it as being more authentic, multifaceted (in terms of social life and physical form), and relaxed than other city center neighborhoods. In general, this group of parents was against “tidying up” Kallio. Some mentioned the “cleansing” that has happened in Karhupuisto. It is a park, which not more than a decade ago was a typical, run down, park in Kallio where some old men would sit on a bench drinking their beers. Today it is a flourishing place upheld by the neighborhood residents’ community, with a trendy café and a snack bar on the side. Some of the life style urban parents were against the idea of this kind of tidying up of the neighborhood but simultaneously they found the social and aesthetic changes to be positive. Many seemed to have an ambivalent relation to the social problems and tidying up the neighborhood:

“Sometimes I feel that living in Kallio is social porn: the down sides of life are walking towards you. Sometimes I ask myself is it justified to raise a child in Kallio just because I
enjoy living here. But on the other hand I don’t want to raise my kids in a bubble, so that they would understand things when they are grownups. Humanity has its downsides, what can you do? “ [Mother 32]

It seemed as if in parents’ opinion the social problems should be visible if they exist, but only to a certain degree. Many complained that the social services for alcohol and drug addicts are too concentrated to Kallio and that this creates disturbances on the streets.

Lifestyle urban parents seemed to be portraying a picture of them as more environmentally conscious, they exemplified this for example by not using a car and favoring close-by services and organic food. According to Hall identities are based on making differences in comparison to others (1999, 13).

“Oppositional” neighborhoods to Kallio were primary in their opinion Töölö, the western area of the Helsinki city center and the western capital region Espoo in general. These areas seemed to represent the opposite kind of lifestyle than Kallio. Also living in the suburbs or in a detached house in general represented a contrary way of living. A multi-storey apartment had no added value for them per se, but for them it was what the urban lifestyle consists of. Neighborhoods, which were considered to have a slightly similar identity, were Vallila and Alppila, which are located north from Kallio.

Some lifestyle urbans appeared to see living in Kallio as an ethical or a political choice. This aspect appeared in the interviews partly due to the food-queue discussion that had been present in the media (e.g. Sippola HS Kaupunki 5.5.2011 and 28.4.2011). Many of these parents found it to be shocking that a charity food queue would disturb anyone and found the people complaining about the queue to be intolerant. A few parents called people that wanted to clean up Kallio “tukarit” (a slang abbreviation of a concept “yhteiskunnan
tukipilarit”, in English the “society’s standard pillars”) and “uuskalliolaiset” (“the new-comers”).


“I think the criticism of Hursti food queues is a phenomenon inaugurated by the new-comers in Kallio. I understand that for instance Vaasanaukio in Sörkkä (Sörnäinen) is restless and a concentration of crime, and this should be weeded out, but you can’t get rid of people just for what they look like or what their income level is. ” [Mother, 45]

It seemed as if some of the parents wanted to be seen as part of an alternative and perhaps more acknowledging lifestyle, diverging from the mainstream. Some parents also stressed that they found living in the city to be ecologically sustainable, because it is concentrated in a small area and one can use local services.
In a way life style urbans seem similar to Saracino-Brown’s characterization of gentrifiers of different types: the social preservationists (Brown-Saracino 2009, 13). They have an aspiration to embrace an “authentic” lifestyle, they appreciate the “old-timers” (in this research the alcoholics, and perhaps some of the drug-users can be seen as old-timers as well) way of living, they feel that the new inhabitants can put out of place the old residents, and they tend to aestheticize the “old-timers” who were there before them. In a way life-style urbans see themselves as old-timers as well, even though they had lived in Kallio only for a few years. They seem to want to protect their own lifestyle from newcomers as well.

Gentrifiers were not as visible in the interviews as lifestyle urbans. In a way the group can be considered as a weak indication of a change of inhabitant profile in the context of this research. Gentrifiers are not as bohemian as the life-style urbans perhaps are.

Gentrifiers resemble lifestyle urbans to some extent: they appreciate the cultural and social aspects of living in Kallio and they also aspire for an urban life style. They also highlighted the alternativity of their lifestyle just like the lifestyle urbans. Some also pictured their urban lifestyle as ecological. Differentiating from others in terms of lifestyle was as important as it was for the previous group.

“[…] I think it’s cool to live in Kallio, the history, the workers blocks… the neighborhood has a certain feeling to it. […] I like it that I can say I live in Kallio, we live in Sörkkä. In the swimming hall you meet old grannies who have lived here for ages and old working men… I guess it’s naive to try to hold on to the past but I somehow like it.” [Mother, 33]

They differed from lifestyle urbans in that they were still expecting Kallio to change, to become more pleasant and clean.
“We hoped that Kallio would become like Södermalm in Stockholm. That would be fun! ” [Mother, 33]

“I don’t think Kallio’s image is yet clean enough. It still has a certain roughness.” [Mother, 39]

For gentrifiers, Kallio was not enough as it was, they were hoping for the neighborhood to change, to have less social problems, more cafés, bigger apartments and more owner-occupied housing. In addition, some of them had extended their apartments by buying the apartment next door and knocking down the wall in between. They stressed the importance of the aesthetics of a neighborhood. The social problems visible in Kallio’s everyday did not disturb them all, but it seemed as if there was less acceptance towards alcoholics and drug-addicts. Some thought that Kallio lacks a feeling of community, that the people do not care much about their environment and others since they do not own their apartments.

Gentrifiers also seemed to think that they may not live in Kallio for so long, that this may just be a stage, and then when the children grow older and need their own rooms the family could move to a suburb or to a detached house outside Helsinki. Gentrifiers could also see themselves living in other inner city neighborhoods unlike lifestyle urbans. But, even for wealthier gentrifiers who were interviewed, the current apartment prices adjacent to Kallio were above what they could afford.

The group of gentrifiers is comparable to Saracino-Brown’s social homesteaders or pioneers: they have the aspiration to live in “authentic space” and for the “excitement of revitalization of a neighborhood”. In addition they hope that the space would include “embodiments of culture and certain
original features” and/or that the “frontier to be tamed and later marketed”. They also want the neighborhood to have more people that are similar to them to help preserve and cleanse the neighborhood and they are “threatened by” or “critical of” old-timers. This kind of symbolic preservation is important for social homesteaders (Brown-Saracino 2009, 13).

C) The suburbs, similar to the two previous groups, appreciated Kallio for its urbanity and atmosphere. They differ in the sense that they miss having their own yard and space around perhaps more than the two previous groups. Suburbs, just like gentrifiers, were not certain about living in Kallio on a long-term basis. They appeared to be more open to different living environments than the two previous groups. They could see that the positive sides of not living in a city would be the proximity to greenery as well as not being close to highly trafficked streets, safety and letting even smaller children go outside on their own, for instance in the backyard.

Suburbs seemed to be more influenced by their conceptions of a good environment to raise children. They worried about how their children would go around by themselves as they grew older, and if they would be scared. Thus, unlike the other groups, gentrifiers were uncertain of the suitability of city life for families.

Suburbs also found that Kallio lacks communal life. People do not get to know each other. Suburbs appreciated the lifestyle in Kallio but at the same time they were not sure if it was a neighborhood that they can identify with.

It became apparent from the interviews, that when one looks at the parent’s identity types, they have many similarities to Saracino-Brown’s gentrifier types (ibid. 13). Most of the parents considered themselves as being socio-economically middle class and were “newcomers” to the area, which is often associated with gentrification.
Some parents emphasized that they may want to live in different settings in a different life situation, and that the “overall picture” is crucial when choosing where to live. Some held neighborhoods as representative of a particular phase in their personal life:

“I associate Lauttasaari with a certain phase of life, I don’t want to go back to that phase. ”
[Mother, 32]

This corresponds to Giddens’ idea of life planning (Giddens 1991, 85) that is, having a sort of manuscript about how your life has been and how it will be in the future. Similar to Clapham’s concept “housing pathway” (Clapham 2002, 63-64), it is central to differentiation of lifestyle, how one wants to be seen by others and how one conceives her/his self-identity at different phases of life.

“I want to break norms. I cannot understand why a family couldn’ t live the way we live. Someone told me at the playground that she couldn’t raise her children in Kallio – I’m asking why? I think it’s peaceful here. ” [Mother, 32]

7.6. Choice

Having a choice became a central theme in the interviews. Some parents said that they had originally “ended up” in Kallio in the early 2000’s when they were students and the apartment prices were low. Back then living in Kallio was perhaps more of a necessity than a choice. Many of the parents said that their attitude to Kallio has changed since then, nowadays they like living there and they want to stay even though the apartment prices are at the same level as in the rest of the city center.

The respondents themselves stressed the fact that they have to make choices when deciding to reside in Kallio: by choosing something one always omits some other alternative or a combination of alternatives. Thus, the parents seemed to acknowledge the compensating effects of different attributes:
Interviewer: How did you decide to move to Kallio?

Interviewee: “Well, it was intentional to move away from that suburb [...] I moved with my husband, it was a conscious choice, we wanted to live in the city. [...] We made the choice back then: more square meters or a better location.” [Mother, 45]

Some parents, whose children were at the age when they can go out on their own, seemed to feel that they had made a choice to live in Kallio for their own reasons. As the children grew older though, it started to be more difficult to consider moving since also the children had their lives and friends close by.

“The value of this apartment is now high. If we would be ready to move somewhere else [...] With the price of this apartment we could get more square meters. What we are compromising at the moment is space. We rather settle with this than move away. Two of our three children are at school. Changing school and friends is not something that we would consider lightly [...] Moving is not easy; we are rooted in this neighborhood in many ways.” [Mother, 40]

Some parents also highlighted that Kallio is their - not their children´s choice (the decision is not influenced to a large degree by having children or what one assumes to be a good environment for children).

“...But if you’re looking for an idyllic place for families with children, Kallio is not that in my opinion. I think many parents live here for themselves, not because of the children. This is a nice neighborhood to live in for parents who want to have a life outside the family.” [Mother, 29]

“I would not like to live surrounded by people who are just like me! I find it to be important that I encounter different kind of perspectives and people. Even though I have children it doesn’t mean it’s the only thing determining my personality and what I do.” [Mother, 32]

The limited amount of options that one faces when deciding where to live also became apparent.
If you would have to move out of Kallio where would you move?

“[...] If we go south from here, our financial standing is not enough. If we go towards north, there are only bad alternatives. One cannot always have what one wishes for.”

Some parents also highlighted that the kind of housing they wished for was a sum of many things: for instance the people, built environment, and services had an influence. In addition, some of them said that they weigh different attributes when they are looking at different housing alternatives. This would support the claim that housing preferences are not static, and that the attributes are weighted differently in different life situations (Hasu 2010, 74).

**7.7. Urban lifestyle**

The parents were not asked questions about city life or living in urban settings until the end of the interview (please see the appendix 1). This served the intention of not influencing their answers by prescriptive questions.

What does urbanity mean to you?

It refers to a city.

Easiness of life, you have everything close by.

But then we’re all side by side and on top of each other…

It doesn’t bother me.

Kallio is not far from our ideal living environment. Although we have little space.

On the other hand we’re always in the same room anyway. In the end, I don’t really miss having more space.

As stated earlier in this work, the interviewees appeared to think that the urban living environment that they view as positive compensates for the lack of space in the actual apartment. Home often extends outside the actual rented or owned apartment in urban settings. They were conscious about the choices they had made when moving to
Kallio. In order to attain some goals in housing (Coolen & Hoekstra 2001, 286) such as urban lifestyle, one has to sacrifice something such as space and having one’s own yard.

The parents stressed the importance of being able to walk and “hang around” without any particular purpose, looking at shop windows, sitting down and looking at people and the street life.

“It is important that there is commercial space as well, it gives you the opportunity to just be.” (Mother 32)

Many seemed to think that this was also something very profound to urbanity: seeing and being with people, although perhaps not in direct contact. The possible encounter seemed to be of importance, just like the possibility to go to the theatre even though one would never go. Perhaps this relates to the issue of choice. One feels that one is faced with multiple choices and possibilities in the city, but simultaneously the anonymity, the possibility to disappear in the crowd enables people to be alone together. As said in association with theme 4, the parents found it important that the streets are lively due to local services. Without the services a neighborhood could be come a suburb in their view.

7.8. “Ad hoc” interviews

During the spring and summer of 2011 general observation in the research area was conducted. Photos were taken in order to illustrate the remarks made in “the field”. Altogether six ad hoc interviews (1 fathers, 3 mothers, and 2 couples, of whom one is a single parent) were conducted in three different parks: Linjanpuisto in the area Linjat, Kirkkopuisto in between of the areas Linjat and Torkkelinmäki, and Braahen puisto in Harju.
The parents were between the ages of 29 and 47, most of them around their 30’s. They were working in public services, as clerical workers, in other service or in the creative industries. All, except for one parent, had a university or a college degree. All of the parents interviewed liked living in Kallio and hoped to live there in the future as well, except for one family, which was going to move to live in their childhood town in eastern Finland. Another family, particularly the mother, was uncertain if they would move out of Kallio when their child goes to school. The reason for this was that they were not sure if they would like their child to go to school in Kallio.

While conducting the ad hoc interviews the collection of data seemed to be saturated at some point. The themes 3) conceptions of places, 4) housing wishes, 6) choice, and 7) urban lifestyle started to repeat themselves. The themes 1) social class and 2) housing situation and background gave still varying results. When visiting these parks the theme 5) self-identity became quite central. These three parks all seemed slightly different.
Pictures 7 and 8: Linjan puisto in June 2011. Pictures by Ilona Akkila.
Linjanpuisto was very popular. Many people who were approached there were not from Kallio, people came there from even further away. On the warm summer days the park seemed almost like a festival, where mostly young, trendy parents in their 30’s were playing with their kids but in addition enjoying the company of other adults, having coffee or a picnic. When addressing a few parents it was recommended that I visit Braahen puisto since “the atmosphere and the parents there are more `relaxed´”.

Also Kirkkopuisto next to the church of Kallio was visited. Kirkkopuisto is smaller than the other two, and there are no indoor facilities and benches for parents like there are at Linjanpuisto and Braahen puisto. A paid child minder was present in the park and busy looking moms came to leave their children there while they went for some errands or jogging. Kirkkopuisto was mainly a children`s playground.

**Picture 9:** Kirkkopuisto and other parks that are playgrounds provided by the city of Helsinki are fenced and marked with this kind of sign. Picture by Ilona Akkila.
Brahen puisto was also popular among people other than families with children. Older people were sitting on the benches in the shade, and some young adults were sunbathing and having a picnic. Families were eating lunch and having coffee by the tables next to the playground. The atmosphere was more chilled out than in the busy and sunny Linjan puisto.

![Brahen puisto in June 2011. Families with children, elderly people and sunbathers spending time in Brahen puisto. Picture by Ilona Akkila.](image)

**Picture 10:** Brahen puisto in June 2011. Families with children, elderly people and sunbathers spending time in Brahen puisto. Picture by Ilona Akkila.

These parks appeared to be used in different hours. All of them were busiest in the morning and afternoon, but Linjan puisto was crowded at all times of the day. Kirkkopuisto’s child carer was present from morning to the afternoon so that was when the parents brought their children there. Brahen puisto became less crowded in the evenings; its peak hours were also in the morning and afternoon.
When making these interviews, observations and photographs, it became apparent that there is much versatility in different areas of Kallio, and people choose to identify with specific areas or places, and different groups of differentiation, but they still have the same denominator: Kallio.

Many of the altogether 16 interviewees seemed to use specific places in Kallio, even though there was some similarity in people’s favorite and disliked places. There are opposite identity groups such as the lifestyle urbans who are against some newcomers (uuskalliolaiset) and call them sarcastically “tukari” (the society’s standard pillars).
8. The analysis

The framework for analysis which is used in chapter 8 to find out opinions that are common to several interviewees. The connections between different themes are analyzed (cp. Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000, 149-150, 173-174). The aim is to thematize the central phenomena, which rose from the interviews.

The way of reasoning in the analysis was more inductive than deductive. Inductive reasoning gives the central attention to the material that is collected (ibid. 136).

8.1. The enabling and constricting urbanity

Choosing an urban lifestyle, living in Kallio, was clearly a choice for the families. What became clearer from the interview results is that after making the choice to lead an urban lifestyle, the parents did not actually allow themselves to long for more spacious apartments and gardens that could have been possible had they chosen another lifestyle, such as living in row-houses or detached single family homes. They were very conscious of the lifestyle choice they had made, and they appreciated the benefits of living in the city, because it was what they preferred compared to other alternatives at their disposal.

It also became apparent that urban residence seems to always include choice. All of the interviewees were of the opinion that since one cannot have everything one likes, making choices is a necessity. Thus, choice is a central component of urban living, since what is meant by “urban” is a dense and multifaceted environment providing opportunities. The number of options increases compared to living in a non-urban environment.

Of course we have no guarantee that the interviewees answer truthful manner. JP Roos’ concept of a “happiness barrier” is well known in urban sociology, and it has been used especially in the suburban context. It is “a situation where people present
themselves as happy” and it describes a situation where individuals “hinder others from having a view of the life of the individual family” (Roos 1988, 141). It is difficult to know if people really are as pleased with their environment as they say, and the happiness barrier need to be considered in people’s answers. The living environment encompasses elements of self-identification that allow one to be happy. Therefore the parents may not want to say negative things about it.

On the other hand, the interviewees realized that by choosing something, one always omits other alternatives and living environment attributes (such as having your own garden for example). Hasu describes this phenomenon as “compensation”, where the resident is downplaying the negative aspects of housing or the housing area and simultaneously compensates the negative characteristics for positive ones (Hasu, 2010, 74-75). The concept of compensation feels more useful in an urban context than happiness barrier. People realize that they can’t have it all, so they decide to be pleased, or even happy, with what they have. In addition, this shows that as Lapintie has suggested, housing attributes alone, without the real life context, are not sufficient for describing housing choice (Lapintie 2008, 32). The context, where attributes are chosen and omitted, in relation to each other, is crucial for understanding housing choices.

As stated in the previous chapter, living in a multi-storey apartment may not be a preferred type of housing per se. Rather, the interviewees often highlighted the fact that the environment where they are living, outside their home, is of a greater importance. Also Lilius found a similar kind of results in her research on families living in Kruununhaka (Lilius 2008, 105). Previously for instance Mervi Ilmonen has pointed out the importance of the environment when it comes to housing (Ilmonen 2002, 69). The extension of the home to the environment is closely related to the enabling character of urbanity.
Some defined the possible positive social encounters similarly to Jan Gehl: “Life between buildings offers an opportunity to be with others in a relaxed and undemanding way” (Gehl 2006, 17). Thus, the possibility of having social encounters is enough. This possibility exists in the urban space where one can “hang around” or just be, without any particular purpose. This reminds of a term that urban theorists are very fond, being a flaneur (Benjamin 1969). It could perhaps be detected in the interviewees’ responses. By flaneur is meant a postmodern person who strolls and looks around in the city without any particular purpose or goal, sort of drifts around and reacts to impulses, “someone who casually observes others enjoys the experiences that others are having, but does not directly engage with others” (Kleniewski 2007, 5.)

Similarly, the possibility of having services and places to choose from became a central characteristic of urbanity. For instance one mother said that one may not ever go to the theater, but the knowledge of having theaters close by gives some kind of comfort. Similar to Sen’s writings on choice, having choices increases one’s well-being freedom (Sen 1992, 40). This freedom and a greater degree of choice is something that only urban settings can offer, and it is one of the compensating factors when people choose to live in the city.

Commercial street life was appreciated for its positive effects on street life. Similar to Jane Jacobs’ thoughts on urbanity (Jacobs, 1992, 29), the interviewees thought that urbanity is primarily a product of street life, which in turn is supported by street level commerce and other services.

The interviews also indicated that the anonymity of living in the city can be seen as freedom. One is surrounded by people and the dense city structure, but simultaneously allowed to have privacy since the amount of people is so large that no one can keep track of others lives. One can be alone together.
8.2. Ambiguous urbanity

Some of the places, which were associated with more negative conceptions also had an ambiguous character. Locations such as Helsinginkatu, Fleminginkatu, Vaasanaukio and the corner of Helsinginkatu and Fleminginkatu were sometimes simultaneously avoided but also perceived as something that belongs in Kallio, and are in some sense intriguing. Also Karhupuisto seemed to have a dual image: for many interviewees it represented the “tidyfication” of Kallio, but even those who thought so liked the park and what it has done to the neighborhood.

It seemed as if many interviewees, even the most “hard core” lifestyle urbans, were divided on the question of whether Kallio should become a tidy and pleasant neighborhood or not? Many perceived that it would not anymore be the same place without its downsides such as old boozers, people with social problems and wild nightlife.

The social street life which allows all kinds of people to be in the space, seemed to be a central prerequisite for urbanity according to some of the interviewees. Some families viewed the street life according to a social justice (e.g. Mitchell 2003) manner: the downsides of the society such as food queues should be visible to all on the street. It seemed as if seeing all kinds of individuals in public space was something important that belonged in a city. Encountering different kinds of people seemed to be a characteristic of urbanity, and perhaps of Kallio. Urbanity enables both the possibility of positive social encounters and qualifies as some kind of embodiment of personal values. This acceptance of social versatility is quite contrary to the findings that Kortteinen and his colleagues detected in their survey. They found indications that the social mix in housing areas would have a significant effect on dissatisfaction (Kortteinen et al. 2005, 127). Quite on the contrary, some interviewees highlighted the fact that they would like to live in neighborhoods where tenure and socio-economic groups are mixed. They found Kallio to be an area like this.

8.3 Wishes, constraints, and needs

As stated earlier, the degree of choice is dependent on the composition of wishes, constraints and needs, and housing choices are the outcome of this process.

It became quite clear from the interviews that as anticipated, the housing wishes (stated preferences) of families are something quite different than the actual housing choices (revealed preferences).

The parents often wanted to differentiate their real and imaginary preferences when they were asked about how they would like to live. Many, especially mothers, wished that they would have their own yards or a balcony. Some dreamed of a summer cottage close to nature, or a house or an apartment by water. Thus, the proximity to nature became central when asked about housing dreams and wishes. But still, most of
the interviewees thought that the best-case scenario was to have more nature in urban settings, but in the same breath they stated how unrealistic their preferences would be. Even the dream residence for many would be in Kallio.

When asked about housing choices in realistic terms, if the family were to move, the choices were located in urban settings, often in Kallio. Many were pleased to live where they lived now, and would not want to move. Hence, the central wish of the interviewees was to live in urban environment. It was clear that the context was important in the actual decision-making: feelings, housing history and conceptions of places and neighborhoods had an influence on their decisions.

The obvious wish to lead an urban lifestyle, attached to a real life situation of housing, was constrained by aspects associated with the realization of this goal such as the family’s economic standing. Housing prices in Kallio have risen almost to the same prices as in other central locations: the average price is around 4600 €/ m² (see e.g. Asuntojen hintatiedot-service www-page 4.1.2012). Just two years ago the prices in Kallio were still around 3700 €/m² (Statistical Yearbook of Helsinki 2010, 90). According to a real estate agent to whom I talked to in this summer when the apartment prices reached their peak all studio flats in June 2011 in Kallio were sold at the approximate price of 5000 €/m².

As previously stated, apartments in Kallio are small, and therefore cheaper. So, as the interviews indicated, families are ready to live in small apartments in order to stay in the city center when there is housing shortage in central Helsinki. Thus, the wish of leading an urban lifestyle and the need to be mobile and have nearby services weigh altogether more than the area of the apartment. In terms of choice, Kallio is probably affordable choice for some families, which want to live in the city center. Also the pressure to enlarge apartments that appeared in the interview may be an indication of Kallio´s popularity among families.
The needs affecting the choice were often the need to be close to transport due to the parents’ work or children’s school or hobbies. Needs were also important, and the urban lifestyle fulfilled the most important needs (proximity to transport connections and services).

It is noticeable that in these interviews, nature and greenery, allegedly one of the most important elements of good living environments (Kyttä & Kahila 2006, 41-42, 44; Bonnes & Secchiaroli 1995, 116), was a secondary feature here. Unlike in Mervi Ilmonen’s research on design and information technology professionals in the Helsinki metropolitan region (Ilmonen 2002, 70), the interviewees for this thesis did not mention “nature” as an important attribute of their housing wishes or choices in addition to “urbanity”.

Urbanity was above everything else of importance to the parents living in Kallio and other attributes were not so central. Then again, this is highly dependent on the methods used and questions asked. Supposedly the idea of compensation may have something to do with this; since the interviewees who participated in this research, answered that they already had made a choice when choosing an urban lifestyle instead of living close to greenery. Choice in this sense means setting priorities. The limited access to greenery is accepted, since the positive aspects of urban lifestyle compensate for it.

If parents would have been asked about their housing preferences in general, or if the method of this query would have been a multiple choice questionnaire, perhaps the interviewees would have stressed nature and green environment more. But then the research would not have included the context of choice, which is central to this thesis.

It seems as if all of the interviewees had the same wish except for some of the suburbs. According to Giddens, “lifestyle choice is increasingly important in the constitution of self-identity and daily activity” (Giddens 1991, 5). The wish was to lead
an urban lifestyle, which can be seen as an expression of self-identity: the way they want to be seen and expose themselves to others. It seemed as if this wish for an urban lifestyle was very central to many of the parents, and weighed more than the wishes they would fulfill by living somewhere else. This is similar to what Lilius found in the case of the families in Kruununhaka (2008, 105).

8.4. Plurality of self-identities

As previously stated, self-identity is a changing and continuous reconstruction (Hall 1999, 11, 14; Giddens 1991, 76). An individual’s self-identity can be seen as a narrative of the self, as a “reflexive project” where one makes of herself what she wants in different phases (and environments) of life (Giddens 1991, 75-76, 79, 85).

There were deviations in what kind of self-identities families attach to living in Kallio. Lifestyle urbans had a positive attitude towards other people in Kallio and Kallio as a neighborhood. Suburbans seemed to be somewhat neutral in their attitude: they presented less strong opinions about the social life and the environment. Gentrifiers on the other hand had a negative view of the social life and the image of the neighborhood: they were waiting for the neighborhood to become more trendy and tidy.

All parents appeared to represent some similar aspects of self-identity: urban lifestyle enabled the kind of pleasure and excitement that they all appreciated and perhaps could not attain in other kinds of environment. The life-style urbans identified themselves to Kallio as it is now, as a socially and culturally multifaceted area. They appreciated the past and traditions. The suburbs were not sure if they identify to Kallio. They considered moving out of the city, to a place they consider better for children. The gentrifiers identified to the aesthetic features of Kallio, but hoped that Kallio would become tidier.
Their self-identities diverged between parents in the following way: lifestyle urbans seemed to relate to other people with tolerance and communal feeling. They seemed to stress the importance of the existing environment and people living there, and social relations as well. Attitudes of the sub-urbans were quite neutral. They appreciated the environment, but did not find it to be suitable for their narrative of self-identity and were looking to move somewhere less urban and vivid. Suburbans were ready to leave Kallio because the neighborhood did not respond to their wishes of a lifestyle. Gentrifiers appreciated the neighborhood compatible to lifestyle urbans but mainly for its aesthetics, not its social life. They were hoping the social life to change into a more homogenous direction, where there would be more people like them. Also Brown-Saracino writes that “gentrifiers celebrate neighborhoods for what they may become, rather than for what they are or were” and that “transformation entrances gentrifiers” (2009, 5-6).

To go back to the theme mentioned in chapter 6.2., battle of lifestyles, it seemed clear that the parents’ lifestyles had counter-lifestyles that they do not identify with. This was exemplified in the way families, which strongly identified themselves with Kallio, held the neighborhood of Töölö as opposite to their lifestyle. Töölö was described as something quite opposite to Kallio: too calm and tidy, no people on the streets. It appeared as if lifestyle was a value question, where people hold their own lifestyle as the only right one in opposition to others.

8.5. The role of the media

Some of the interviewees highlighted the image of Kallio created by the media. They gave the impression that it is even difficult for them, who are living in Kallio, to separate the media’s picture of Kallio from their own. Many said that the number of children has increased in Kallio, but added that this is just what they have read in the newspapers. This is reminiscent of Giddens´ description of mediated experience where “the traditional connection between `physical setting´ and `social situation´ has
become undermined (Giddens 1991, 84). The media is another force effecting our self-identification and lifestyle. The media offer representations of Kallio but simultaneously these representations can be simultaneously reproduced by its inhabitants. Notwithstanding the truth value of these representations, they affect the social world.

Sirpa Tani has written about the image of Kallio and about people living there (e.g. 2001, 2002). She has stated that the media has a the tendency of reproducing images of, and even stigmatize a neighborhood. The way how Kallio has been described according to her are for instance “images of the place for ordinary people, images of the dangerous neighborhood and images of bohemian romanticism” (Tani 2001, 143).

Also recently the British newspaper Daily Telegraph published a text written about travelling to Helsinki recommending that travelers ought to “steer clear of Kallio late at night, especially the ´red light´ stretches of Vaasankatu and Aleksiskivenkatu” (Miller Daily Telegraph 28.11.2011). Some of the interviewed parents thought that the media is making Kallio look bad, similarly to what Tani has written (Tani 2001, 143). On the other hand some were even proud of the rugged reputation. As said previously, Kallio appeared to have an ambiguous character in the parents’ minds. It was simultaneously rugged and interesting. The media seemed to be contributing to this image.

This kind of ambiguous image of a neighborhood is often associated with gentrification. The rough and old architecture from the industrial era and the historical worker’s neighborhood identity attracts middle-class, often young professionals to reside there and transform it into something hip and trendy. This thesis does not take a stand on whether Kallio is or is becoming a gentrified area in a socio-economic sense. That would be a subject of another investigation. Rather, this research settles for saying something about the cultural implications of gentrification in Kallio, since these signs are present and are strongly connected to the neighborhood image, and consequently to the residents’ choice to live there.
In order to recap, the number of families has not increased in Kallio as some newspaper articles have claimed. The journalists seem to have been trying to find a trend that does not exist. As stated early in this thesis, already the small apartments in Kallio make it a challenging residence for families with more than one child.

8.6. Methodological considerations

It is worth acknowledging that this type of qualitative case study does not aim at generalizations, rather, it aims at saying something about a particular group in a specified context: families in Kallio in the context of housing choice. With qualitative research, one has to consider, what the data stand for, and what conclusions can be drawn. The positive sides of an interview method and qualitative analysis are that this sort of data would be difficult to attain by other methods and the direct impact of the interviewer is reduced.

The questions of reliability and validity are complicated in qualitative research because these concepts are based on an assumption that there is an objective reality and objective truth (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000, 185). It is unrealistic to expect that one would get the same results by replicating a qualitative case study research. Nevertheless qualitative research can be judged by whether the research material allows one to make the conclusions she/he has made – is it credible? The validity in qualitative research can be seen as a reflective process where the researcher´s claims can be evaluated from different viewpoints depending on purpose of the research (Cho & Trent 2006, 327). There is no denying the researcher´s subjectivity. The important thing to do is to make valid arguments and staying true to the material collected (Eskola & Suoranta 1998, 212.)

The purpose of this research was to explore why some families live in Kallio. The additional research questions were: what characterizes these families, what
characterizes Kallio as a neighborhood in their view, is living in Kallio a choice for these families, and how is this choice made? These questions are strongly related to the families’ everyday lives, and the interest lies on the subjective level where socially constructed meanings appear. Therefore I judge the interpretive validity of this research as quite high since it has gained an interpretive validity that illustrates these families and their subjective reasons well.

In terms of housing wishes, it was striking how all of the interviewees gave realistic answers taking into consideration their current situation and their limitations and constraints. This would support the claim that previous authors have made: the theme interviewing is a plausible method to collect data for housing choice research since it takes into account the real life context (Giddens 1991, 83; Lapintie 2008, 30; Hasu 2010, 64). The participants could have answered differently to a questionnaire where their housing wishes would be separated from their real life context.

This thesis aimed at consciously separating housing wishes (stated preferences) from housing choices (revealed preferences) (Coolen & Hoekstra 2001, 285-286), which so often are confused with each other and expected to be the same thing (Lapintie 2008). This thesis attempted to offer a fresh angle to the discussion on housing choice. As previously stated, the interview method proved to be successful in gathering information that allows the separation of wishes from choices and to gain an understanding on a more subjective level about the choice making process. Choices clearly are dependent on the composition of wishes, hopes and needs, and the degree of choice determines the possibility to lead a preferred lifestyle.

This research has contributed to the multidisciplinary research field of housing in general and housing choice in particular. What can be learned is that qualitative studies concerning peoples’ housing preferences offer valuable information as to phenomena that are difficult to argue for quantitatively. Peoples lifestyls are differentiating, and even those of families. Some families do want to lead an urban
lifestyle, and even more would like to raise their children in the city if they had the possibility.

9. Conclusion

To answer the research question “why do some families decide to live in Kallio?” the answer is to lead an urban lifestyle. Urbanity was a central housing wish for the parents. For them it meant spontaneity and excitement.

Housing is influenced by an increase of individualistic (Ilmonen 2002, 68) and changing family ideals. The research results support this. According to the parents, living in Kallio was a choice made mostly because of the parents’ reasons, in order to continue their own lifestyle, not because it would be a good environment to raise children. Thus, in addition to lifestyle differentiation the choices appear to have become more individualistic.

The results may also indicate that the urban lifestyle has become more popular in general. The popularity of dense, allegedly ecological living may influence this. Many parents argued that ecological and environmental values are one of the reasons why they live in Kallio. If urban housing really is becoming more popular, and if there is reliable proof that the dense urban city structure is more climate friendly, actions need to be taken to provide affordable urban housing for families. What the research results also indicated was that the family apartments perhaps do not need to be as large as the ones that are constructed now. It looked as if many of the families interviewed could settle with a less than 63 m² (average size of apartments in Helsinki, Uudenmaan liiton tietopalvelu web-page 30.12.2011) if there are compensating factors such as proximity to transport connections and services.

Kallio may not radically change its demography for already previously mentioned reason of the flats being small in Kallio. But a qualitative change in its population can
be registered. Similar to Mäenpää (2011, 69), I view that the lifestyles of families might be altering and becoming more multiform. Urban lifestyle is something some families aspire, and this should be accounted for in urban planning. Qualitative signs of gentrification exist in the lifestyle choices of families and in the urban space of Kallio. The three self-identity types which were illustrated, the life-style urbans, suburbans and gentrifiers are interesting from the viewpoint of change. What kind of identity groups Kallio will host in the future? One thing is sure: Kallio will be constantly changing, as it has done until now.

Helsinki is in an exceptional situation in its planning history. Three new neighborhoods are being planned and built in the city: Jätkänsaari to the south-west, Kalasatama in the north-east and Kruununpuolenranta further in the east of Helsinki. New housing and workplaces are also planned to the new areas of Östersundom, Keski-Pasila (which Konepaja is a part of) and Kuninkaantammi. How people want to live should be a central question for the decision makers involved in the planning. Hence, the plurality of housing choices is important.

It remains to be seen whether Kalasatama will influence on the demography of Kallio, and whether some families aspiring for an urban lifestyle will move there. It is also unclear whether the present, positive, aspects of urban lifestyle in Kallio will “spill over” to Kalasatama in the way the city planning department of Helsinki has anticipated (Gordon et al. 2009, 28; see chapter 1. in this thesis). Similar to the interviewees and some urban scholars (Mäenpää 2011), I think it may be difficult to recreate a neighborhood identity by the means of planning. The urban life is primarily produced by the people who live in and use the urban space. Furthermore, in order for these families to move to Kalasatama, the prices of apartments should be affordable.

There is a clear need for residential research that takes into account plurality of the wishes, needs and constraints of specified groups of people and looks at the actual choices people make when it comes to housing.
Sources


Electronic Publications


Newspaper articles


Unpublished material


Web-page sources


Appendix

Appendix 1

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

THEME 1: social class
Background information: age, occupation and education
Tenure type and the area of the apartment

THEME 2: Housing situation and background
Amount of children and their ages
Housing career and reasons for moving and staying

THEME 3: conceptions of places
Favorite places
Places that are disliked or avoided
Changes in Kallio
Characterization of the locals

THEME 4: housing wishes
Ideal residing environment
Shortcomings or flaws in the neighborhood
Positive and negative aspects of the neighborhood
Specific characteristics in Kallio

(THEME 5: identity )

(THEME 6: choice)

(THEME 6: urban lifestyle)
Appendix 2

Appendix 3


Appendix 4

Appendix 5

Income per person (age 15+) in the city of Helsinki and the subdistricts of the designated research area of Kallio (Statistics source: Helsingin seudun aluesarjat www-page 4.1.2012).