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Gentrifying Practices Affecting Youths' Habitats

A case study of youths' perceptions of the threat of gentrification in Järva, Stockholm

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VT22

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The front picture was taken by the author. Husby center, Stockholm, end of March 2022.

“Gentrified and the tension builds
But we find a way to live together
Wish we could find a way to live forever”

Masta Ace & Marco Polo sing in Breukelen “Brooklyn” (feat. Smif-N-Wessun)

Abstract

While Sweden falls short in integrating youths growing up in segregated areas, these disadvantaged neighborhoods are more frequently imposed to profit-driven strategies that result in gentrification. This thesis aims to uncover how gentrification affects the lived experience that youths from disadvantaged areas have of their habitat. Choosing the case of Järva, Stockholm, the ways youths perceive that gentrification is manifesting itself, their perceptions of the threat of gentrification, and their ways of coping with this threat, are scrutinized. Gentrification is viewed as a phenomenon that exacerbates class-inequalities. Sweden is getting increasingly segregated and simultaneously gentrification poses a threat of reproducing unequal chances for youths from disadvantaged areas.

Rooted in Henri Lefebvre's theory of production of space, this thesis utilizes the concept of The Urban, Urban Ideology, and Habiting. Consequently, space is conceptualized as something constructed, practiced, and inscribed. Operationalizing the theories and analyzing the gathered data through an abductive approach, 4 themes were identified where people expressed their habitat gets affected by gentrification: housing, amenities, public spaces, and the general perception of change. The thesis finds that inhabitants from Järva perceive top-down planning inspired by neoliberalism, as inadequate and emphasize the importance of facilitating local knowledge and bottom-up initiatives. Based off this finding, I argue that youths implicitly express the need for a more dialectic understanding of what shapes the needs of their habitats and the urban at large.

Centering the lived experiences of youths, this thesis investigates an under-researched group within gentrification literature and contributes by generating perspectives on how youths perceive their local culture, on which gentrification has a negative impact. By uncovering which aspects youths value of their habitats and the different ways they perceive these are affected by gentrification, this study attempts to fill a gap in current studies. This requires a thinking that centers youths' perceptions which encourages viewing disadvantaged communities as a heterogenous group with varying perceptions on how gentrification forms a threat to their habitats.

Key words: Gentrification, Lived Experience, Critical Phenomenology, Renoviction, Housing Justice, Habitat, Youths, Järva

Word count: 20.000

Acknowledgements

To begin, I want to thank all the interviewees for participating, introducing me to new interviewees, and openly sharing their perceptions with me. A special thanks to Mirek Dymitrow for giving me valuable advice on how to shape this thesis and motivating me when necessary. Without Rishabh Khana this thesis would not have been what it is today. Thank you for introducing me to Järva's context and introducing me to key neighborhood actors. Thanks to Mohamed Hagi Farah and Guleed Mohamed for guiding me through Järva, sharing stories about Järva's history, and showing the beauty and the real sides of the area. I feel humbled and thankful towards all the people from Järva that welcomed me with open arms, lots of food, and an inspiring sense of community.

Thanks to my family, for supporting me from the Netherlands, through always believing in me. Thanks to my family in Sweden for housing me during my fieldwork. Thanks to my close friends for checking up on me, showing interest in this topic, and encouraging to carry on through the times.

Table of Content

1 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Aim and research questions	4
1.3 Structure of the thesis.....	4
2 Literature Review	5
2.1 Positioning within gentrification literature	5
3 Theoretical Framework.....	9
3.1 Planetary urbanization as a way of viewing urban life	9
3.2 Conceptualizing the threat of gentrification.....	12
3.2.1 <i>General context</i>	12
3.2.2 <i>Swedish/Nordic context</i>	13
3.3 Manifestations of threat and ways of coping with it	14
3.3.1 <i>Housing</i>	15
3.3.3 <i>Local services</i>	18
3.3.4 <i>Aggregation of framework</i>	19
4 Methodology	20
4.1 Operationalizing theory.....	20
4.2 Research design.....	21
4.2.1 <i>Situated knowledge</i>	21
4.2.2 <i>Sampling and data</i>	22
4.2.3 <i>Interview structure and conduction</i>	28
4.2.4 <i>Analysis and analytical framework</i>	29
4.3 Limitations and ethics	31
5 Setting the context.....	32
5.1 Geography and demography	32
5.2 Järva's built environment and housing policies	33
5.3 Housing justice movements in Järva.....	37
5.4 Safety and Järva's reputation	38
6 Results and analysis	41
6.1 Housing: Demoviction, renoviction, short-term contracts, and middle-class housing.....	41
6.2 Amenities: Shops and meeting points	46
6.3 Public Space: socializing and police control.....	48
6.4 General perception of change of habitat	51
7 Discussion.....	53

8 Conclusion	58
9 References.....	60
10 Appendix.....	69
10.1 Coding frame, per research question.....	69
10.2 Interview questions (in Swedish).....	70

Figures

Figures

Figure 1 Differences between Group Interview and Focus Group (Brown & Edmunds, 2011). (P.27)

Figure 2 Map of metro lines in Stockholm (Reskollen, 2022). Järva's neighborhoods in upper left corner, T-centralen in under left corner. (P.32)

Pictures

All pictures are taken by the author throughout the last week of March 2022.

Picture 1 Repetitive architecture by night in Hjulsta. (P.3)

Picture 2 Worn out rental buildings in Tensta. (P.34)

Picture 3 Einar Mattsson sign on the facade of a newly renovated rental building in Tensta. According to the interviewee the rents increased drastically after the renovation and people are struggling paying the housing costs. (P.35)

Picture 4 Pamphlet with information about a protest against the marketization of rentals in Järva. Seen at Folkets Husby. (P.38)

Picture 5 The empty former Tensta Gymnasium. (P.40)

Picture 6 Worn out couch at Fryshuset in Husby. One of the meeting points for youths in Järva. (P.57)

Tables

Table 1 Youths: one-on-one semi-structured in-depth interview. (P.23)

Table 2 Youths: semi-structured group interview. (P.24)

Table 3 Key Neighborhood Actors (KNAs): one-on-one semi-structured interviews. (P.25)

Table 4 Themes formulated abductively. (P.30)

1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Globally, urban areas are experiencing great pressures. Cities, with its inhabitants, have always been places that ignited, tolerated, and endured social tensions. Nowadays, urban areas are the arenas of heated debates about pressing issues such as covid, climate change, police brutality, and housing shortages. These issues are disproportionately striking in disadvantaged communities. In Sweden's cities these communities are spatially concentrated to its suburbs – 'orten', short for 'förorten' (a literal translation can be: 'before-settlements'). In Sweden 'orten' has a different connotation than the American suburbs. Typically, being located at the edge of cities, Swedish suburbs are relatively densely populated. Consisting of mainly social housing rentals, built in the 1960s and 1970s, these are often low-income areas with high crime-rates and a relatively high share of people with a foreign background (Castell, 2010). Orten's image, bears stereotypes of poverty, crime, drug abuse, non-Swedish ethnicity, and monotonous, repetitive architecture of worn-down rentals (Castell, 2010; Sernhede, 2007). Sernhede (2007) stresses that this stigma is created by others than them who live in these areas "which not only contributes to the legitimization of the division in 'us and them', but also enforces the experience of exclusion for people in these areas" (Sernhede, 2007:56). These disadvantaged neighborhoods experience class-inequalities and segregation, particularly when global issues, as covid, occur. Thapar-Björkert and Villaculla (2021) show how Stockholm's suburbs have been hit disproportionately hard by covid, as a result of not having sufficient resources, adequate organizational structures, and language barriers. Orten struggles with different kinds of issues than the rest of Sweden (Sernhede, 2007). Besides, cases of police brutality add onto the feeling and stigma of these suburbs being a kind of parallel societies ('parallelsamhällen'). Simultaneously, cities witness an increasing shortage in housing, where a "monstrous hybrid housing system" (Christophers, 2013) makes it difficult to find a place to live for those who newly enter the housing market (ibid.). Again, people from disadvantaged communities are hit the most by this (Tunström & Wang, 2019).

Neoliberal ideologies gaining traction since the 1990 in Swedish politics are often noted as a main reason of current challenges – concerning housing, healthcare, and other social services – disproportionately affecting disadvantaged communities (Hedin et al., 2012; Listerborn & Baeten, 2022). Another result of the dismantling of the Swedish welfare state is gentrification. Hedin et al. (2012) point out that neoliberal housing politics underly the continued increase of gentrification, leading to socio-spatial inequalities. Where gentrification previously was seen as a strategy to redevelop post-industrial areas, it nowadays also manifests itself in low-income areas. Here, the marketization of the social housing sector has opened Sweden’s doors to big profit-driven housing companies (Kellecioglu, 2021; Listerborn & Baeten, 2022; Pull, 2020). These housing companies apply gentrification tactics to Sweden’s rental housing stock, which is mostly concentrated in the segregated suburbs. With Sweden’s major cities belonging to Europe’s most segregated ones, and profit-driven housing companies being facilitated by the Swedish housing system, gentrification increasingly presses on the housing situation of the inhabitants of Sweden’s suburbs (ibid.).

A large part of the Swedish suburbs was built as part of the ‘million housing program’ (‘miljonprogrammet’) in the 1960s and 1970s (Castell, 2010). These areas have violent uprisings in the last two decades (Sernhede et al., 2016). There appears to be a strong discontent among its inhabitants about the state handling issues of housing, crime, unemployment, and education. A riot in Husby, Stockholm became global news in 2013. Over 100 cars were set on fire and, mostly youths, turned violent against the police (ibid.). In the weeks that followed, more riots in the suburbs of other Swedish cities took place. Youths from the suburbs feel disengaged from Swedish society and resort to actions of crime relatively often (Sernhede, 2007; Sernhede et al., 2016). This, in combination with the changed housing politics leading to gentrification, poses a threat to the habitats of youths from disadvantaged areas. Salhin (2008) compares how overall housing policies in Sweden switched to serving the demand of consumers, from providing equal opportunities to everyone where its “living conditions and, in particular, support good growth for children and youth” (prop., 2005:1 in Sahlin, 2008). This political shift poses a crucial development problem. Bartlett (2010) emphasizes that youths’ livelihoods and their involvement in local governance becomes increasingly pivotal in societies.

In sum, youths in Sweden grow up in increasingly segregated cities. The youths growing up in socially and economically segregated neighborhoods, are nowadays facing a threat of gentrification tactics mainly being applied to areas that were built as a part of the million housing program. In these areas, gentrification poses a threat to youths of being excluded from their habitat and further disengaged with society. Gentrification potentially exacerbates the downward spiral of segregation and the chances of good prospects for youths, living in disadvantaged areas. More specifically, this thesis henceforth focuses on the problem of youths living in disadvantaged areas and gentrification tactics threatening the lived experience of their habitat.



Picture 1 Repetitive architecture by night in Hjulsta. (H. Koetsier, 2022)

1.2 Aim and research questions

The presented problem of gentrification manifesting itself in Sweden's disadvantaged neighborhoods, is central to this thesis. This thesis studies what the implications of current gentrification tactics are for youths, growing up in the suburbs. As of now, Sweden is not integrating these youths sufficiently, which reproduces unequal chances for youths in Sweden. Hence, this thesis aims to uncover how youths growing up in disadvantaged neighborhoods perceive that gentrification is affecting their habitat. To study this, I use the Järva area in Stockholm as a case to conduct critical phenomenological fieldwork.

The research questions aim to scrutinize how youths perceive gentrification to affect their habitat and how they cope with this impending threat of gentrification.

- How do youths perceive the threat of Järva's gentrification is affecting their habitat?
- How are youths in Järva coping with the threat of gentrification?

The two questions aim to provide insights into areas that hitherto remained a gap in the literature on the gentrification effects on youths and their socio-spatial context. This gap is further elaborated on in the literature review in chapter 2.

1.3 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is structured as follows. After a brief historical introduction of the term gentrification, I describe what different effects have been researched hitherto and how this thesis positions itself within gentrification effects literature (2.1). Then, an explanation of select aspects of Henri Lefebvre's theory is given. The pivotal concepts of the urban, habiting, and space, are delineated (3.1), followed by highlighting possible effects of gentrification on peoples' habitats (3.2 & 3.3). Next follows a description of the methods (4): in-depth interviews, walking interviews, and attending local meetings. This chapter also includes an explanation on how the theoretical framework was used in the analysis (4.1). Before elaborating the results, a contextual description of Järva is provided (5). The results (6) are then presented and linked to the theory as a way of interpretation. The discussion (7) highlights the most important results and discusses them on a theoretical and societal level. Lastly, the conclusion (8) sums up the most important findings of this study.

2 Literature Review

This section reviews and provides a necessary understanding of the different approaches there are to study gentrification and its socio-spatial effects. Searching for material, the focus was mainly on literature that defines gentrification and studies its effects on peoples' (specifically youths') lived experiences. After a brief introduction of the term gentrification, this section defines how gentrification is understood in this thesis. As part of this understanding, this thesis explains how inserting temporality in the analysis and an alternative understanding of space is necessary when studying the effects of gentrification on peoples' lived experiences. Then, this section elaborates different approaches that scholars have when analyzing gentrification. This chapter concludes that there is a research gap in the gentrification effects literature, concerning knowledge about the effects on the lived experiences of youths.

2.1 Positioning within gentrification literature

Ruth Glass firstly coined the term gentrification in the 1960s when analyzing rising housing prices as a “burden for low-income and working-class incomes” (Slater, 2011:571). Since, there have been many different takes on how to define and analyze gentrification (Slater, 2011; Smith, 2002). Smith and Williams (2013) express an invitation to debate when highlighting long debated contestations within this field of studies. Because of its theoretical controversies and variety in approaches, it is necessary to outline that this thesis contributes to the strain of gentrification literature that is rooted in Lefebvre's theory on planetary urbanization.

This thesis studies gentrification as a market-led urban strategy, facilitated by policy makers and driven by competing urban economies (Smith, 2002). These strategies generally involve a demographic change of areas through working-class residents being displaced, with middle- and high-income inhabitants being introduced to the area (Patch, 2015). A part of the literature maps gentrification through quantitative analyses that focus on the demographic changes as a result of neoliberal policies (for example Hedin et al., 2012). Another part focuses on the effects that displacements and other consequences of gentrification have on people and their lived experience of their living environments. The last decade this, more qualitative strain of gentrification literature, is growing (Sakizlioğlu, 2014). Anguelovski et al. (2021), for example,

show how gentrification negatively impacts the health situation of historically marginalized groups. The call for a broader focus on the effects of gentrification has resulted in an increasing focus on the lived experience and has asserted – as stressed by Doucet (2014) and Sakizlioglu (2014) – the element of temporality into the analysis. The latter opens for studies on how people are living through the process of gentrification, before actual displacement happens – instead of only focusing on the effects on people after displacements (Doucet, 2014; Sakizlioglu, 2014). This thesis contributes to the body of literature that centers peoples’ experiences of the consequences of gentrification before they are displaced. Gentrification is hence seen as a real, impending threat. Researching lived experiences, that can be felt long before displacement, calls for an alternative understanding of space and place (further elaborated in 3.1). One that is not merely spatial and allows to focus on the effects on place-based social networks, meanings of home, and community (Davidson, 2008). Gentrification, as socio-spatial phenomenon, affect people differently depending on how this threat manifests itself.

Lefebvre (1970) describes the ‘embourgeoisement’ (gentrification) of city centers as an outcome of capitalism. Ultimately, this thesis also views gentrification as a phenomenon driven by capitalism, where class relations lie at the core of the process (Patch, 2015). Smith notes in the foreword of Lefebvre’s ‘Urban Revolution’ (2003 [1970]) that, “that process, too, has changed dramatically since the 1960s.” From being an anomaly in the housing market of capital cities, gentrification is nowadays globally embraced as a planned strategy of urban development (Smith, 2002).

Globally, and in Sweden, there is a growing body of literature focusing on so-called “renoviction”. The term renoviction – a portmanteau of the word renovation and eviction – refers to a profit-driven strategy by private housing companies, where through renovations rents increase drastically (Pull, 2020). These new prices are often set too high for previous tenants to sustain a living, effectively evicting initial tenants, and drawing in middle- and high-income tenants (ibid.). “[The] complex hybrid of legacy regulated elements on the one hand and neoliberalized elements on the other” – as Christophers (2013) notes – make the Swedish housing system prone to gentrification strategies of profit making. These strategies mostly affect low-income ethnic minority communities – mainly concentrated in Sweden’s suburbs built in the 1960s and 1970s (Kellecioglu, 2021; Pull, 2020). Researchers have the last decade (like Kellecioglu, Listerborn,

Pull, Westerdahl, and Westin), in collaboration with activists, contributed with insights into how strategies, like renoviction, manifest themselves and affect minority communities and their living environments. In recent years researchers additionally focused on how residents, through housing justice movements, resist these threats of gentrification (Listerborn et al., 2020).

Although the consequences of gentrification affect entire communities, including all age groups, I observe that studies focus mostly on the head tenants or main ‘bread-winners’ – those who are responsible for paying rent for their dwelling or shop space. At the same time, the group that in these contexts often is the largest in numbers – the youths – seems to be forgotten. Youths typically make up the largest share of low-income ethnic minority communities in Sweden (Sernhede et al., 2016). In a British context, Butcher (2015) mentions some effects of gentrification on youths, like not feeling part of the critical mass anymore. In her study on how gentrification affects the use and appropriation of public spaces in gentrifying neighborhoods, Belanger (2007) stresses, how families with children are particularly affected when they forcefully have to move and leave attachments and social structures behind. Butcher (2015) stresses how displacement can disrupt youths’ education. However, within the gentrification effects literature I identify a blind field, where the effects of the impending threat of gentrification on youths seem to be largely unknown. As I observe, research is mainly uncovering the effects of gentrification on the ones mainly responsible for the household and head-tenants, whom are typically adults. Logically, youths therefore fall outside of the scope of studies.

In the literature that focuses on how youths are affected by their socio-spatial environment – including issues of segregation, poverty, and crime rates (Brännström, 2006; Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997; Crowder & Teachman, 2004; Holloway SR & Mulherin S, 2004) – gentrification remains undiscussed. However, studies on the relation between urban unrest and socio-spatial factors (as abovementioned), mention how introducing gentrification strategies partly triggered uprisings in which mostly youths are involved (Malmberg et al., 2013; Sernhede et al., 2016). Also here, a specific focus on how youths perceive and cope the threat of gentrification is missing from the literature. The missing link, of how the livelihoods – in this thesis referred to as ‘habitats’ – of youths, in specific, are affected by gentrification is relevant because “the challenges facing urban youth in terms of both livelihoods and their involvement in local governance are increasingly recognized as some of the most important development issues worldwide” (Bartlett, 2010).

Acknowledging this imperative, this thesis focuses on how the impending threat of gentrification affects the perception the youths hold of their habitats. Thus, this study focuses on an under-researched group. To do so, this thesis goes beyond the focus on peoples' dwellings, and contributes to literature that inserts temporality into the analysis of consequences of gentrification.

3 Theoretical Framework

In answering the research questions and explaining the results, this thesis uses the concept of ‘the urban’ as used by Henri Lefebvre as its point of departure (3.1). After elaborating how “urban ideology” results in a reductive practice of urbanism, the understanding of “habitat” is delineated. Subsequently, this chapter explains how a different understanding of space is necessary in analyzing the lived experience. The explanation of how financialization leads to gentrification tactics (3.2.1), is followed by how these gentrification tactics are conceptualized to the Swedish context (3.2.2).

The latter part of this chapter highlights the different ways people cope with the threat of gentrification, how it manifests itself in low-income neighborhoods, and how this is perceived as a threat (3.3). Discussing this, I distinguish between three aspects of peoples’ habitats that get affected by gentrification: housing (3.3.1), public space (3.3.2), local services (3.3.3). Lastly, a summary of the most important aspects for the theoretical framework is given.

3.1 Planetary urbanization as a way of viewing urban life

Gentrification forms an increasing global threat to urban dwellers (Hedin et al., 2012; Patch, 2015; Slater, 2011; Smith, 2002; Wilhelmsson et al., 2021a). The process and its threats manifest themselves in various ways (Bélanger, 2007; Listerborn et al., 2020; Smith, 2002; Uitermark et al., 2016). What in this study is seen as the main threat, is the insight that gentrification exacerbates class inequalities (Crosby, 2020; Emily Chong, 2017; Larsen & Hansen, 2008; Wilhelmsson et al., 2021a). These class inequalities lead to increased homelessness, poverty, criminality, and segregation (Emily Chong, 2017; Massey et al., 1994; Wilhelmsson et al., 2021a). Discussing the different approaches to analyzing gentrification, Patch (2015) notes, “many writers on gentrification are influenced by radical or Marxist scholarly traditions, and thus tend to view gentrification as a key manifestation of contemporary class conflict” (Patch, 2015:3). This thesis also views gentrification as an outcome of class conflicts, exacerbated by capitalism.

Rooted in the theory by Henri Lefebvre – Planetary Urbanization – gentrification is in this thesis understood as a phenomenon that is an outcome of capitalism (Lefebvre, 1970). Since the introduction of this theory, there has been much debate about what this entails and how to

operationalize it with different visions that study urban phenomena (Angelo & Goh, 2020; Brenner, 2018a, 2018b; Goonewardena, 2018; Peake et al., 2018). In earlier debates, various critiques on Lefebvre's theory on the production of space arose (Moravánszky et al., 2014). Firstly, its application was mostly critiqued based on confusions and problems that arose concerning its interpretation and theoretical construction (ibid.). Secondly, people argue that his theoretical concepts were developed five decades ago and do not apply on today's world (ibid.). Countering these critiques, it is important to point out that Lefebvre aims with his theory to achieve a change in society. More importantly, its concepts should therefore always be advanced and in contact with social reality and its current issues, instead of being "canonized" (ibid.). Accordingly, relevant concepts – the urban, urban ideology, and habiting – are delineated to the context of this study.

Later, critiques focused on "how this theory can be successfully introduced into empirical analysis" (Moravánszky et al., 2014:27). This because his theory remains elusive and he only used empirics as illustrative examples, so was understood (ibid.). However, Stanek (2011) brings counter arguments by showing that Lefebvre's arguments are grounded in empirical work. Still, there are no straightforward answers on how to apply his concepts. Once again, this underlines the importance of expanding the theoretical concepts "as part of an engagement with current developments in society" (Moravánszky et al., 2014:35) and thus tailoring to the context of this thesis.

A pivotal concept for this thesis, is the concept of 'the urban'. With this concept, Lefebvre attempts to explain the global tendency of cities' expansion and production of spaces at large (Brenner & Schmid, 2014). In his theory he builds off the hypothesis that society in the future will become completely urbanized (Lefebvre, 1970). The theory sets forth that all spaces become "functionalized to facilitate the continued expansion of industrial urbanization and its associated planetary urban networks" (Brenner & Schmid, 2014:162). It is hence that Angelo and Wachsmuth (2015) emphasize on a process-based focus rather than a site-based focus when studying urban phenomena through the theoretical lens of planetary urbanization. A process-based focus aims on an understanding of "territorial development mediated through capitalism, state strategies and socio-political struggle" (Brenner, 2014:22).

Acknowledging the influence of capitalism on the production of space, forms a multidimensional approach comprehending the twofold of the process of urbanization and,

simultaneously industrialization (Lefebvre, 1970). Lefebvre (1970) argues that modern urbanism lacks this dialectical approach, making for an “urban ideology”. This urban ideology results in a reductive practice of urbanism that limits that what humans and their complexity in lives – ‘habiting’ in Lefebvre’s words – actually stand for (ibid.). Relevant for this thesis is that urban ideology is limiting in three ways, which ultimately results in spaces that bear “a form of class urbanism and incorporate a class strategy” (Lefebvre, 1970:157). Firstly, this reductive practice of urbanism includes a strategy where an inhabitant is functioning as a buyer of space to realize surplus value. Secondly, urban ideology legitimizes top-down planned activities that disregard the complexity of habiting. Thirdly, “Ideology and its application (by the corresponding institutions) overwhelm actual practice” (ibid.). Meaning that use value (closer to the complexity of habiting) – of for example housing – is being pushed away by the development of exchange value, which also pushes the reductive urban ideology.

The main subjects of analysis in this thesis are the lived experiences youths have of their habitats. For this study to do justice to the complexity of their lives and lived experiences, this thesis adopts the opposition to the reductive practice as an outcome of urban ideology. This means that “habitat” in this thesis, is inspired by Lefebvre’s “habiting”. This thesis explains habitat, following Lefebvre’s thought, as the complex process of lived experiences including “diversity of ways of living, urban types, patterns, cultural models, and values associated with the modalities and modulations of everyday life” (Henri Lefebvre, 1970:81). Instead of a focus on habiting academia focused more on ‘habitat’, “a simplified function, which limited the ‘human being’ to a handful of basic acts: eating, sleeping, and reproducing” (ibid.). This thesis utilizes an understanding of the lived experience that youths have of their habitat that leans toward Lefebvre’s explanation of habiting, acknowledging the complexity of human life, and adopting a more process focused understanding when studying lived experiences.

Using a version of habitat that leans toward Lefebvre’s habiting and acknowledging the ways urban ideology reproduces spaces that bear class strategies with them, this thesis aims to view urban life in a Lefebvrian way. This also includes an understanding of space and place that is not merely spatial. Being similar in subject of analysis this thesis adopts much of how Davidson (2009) – in his phenomenological study of displacement as results of gentrification – defines place. This thesis sees an understanding of place – that Poggeler (1989) notes – as something constructed,

practiced, and inscribed, as suitable. Here Poggeler (1989) refers to Heidegger's thought on place, where place and 'being' are intimately connected. This allows us to understand the effects of gentrification in other ways, rather than, for example, only quantitative data on displaced people. This will prove more fruitful in studying the habitat of youths under the threat of gentrification.

3.2 Conceptualizing the threat of gentrification

Having discussed how space harbors class inequalities and gentrification is seen as an outcome of class conflicts on a more abstract level, this section sheds light on more concrete ways how gentrification produces places of exclusion. As discussed in chapter 2, renovation is present in low-income areas in Sweden, resulting in a threat of displacement and ultimately being part of gentrification strategies. These strategies are a result of the global financialization of the housing market (Crosby, 2020). However, theories on how these strategies manifest themselves have been conceptualized based on studies mainly done in the Anglo-American world (Listerborn & Baeten, 2022). Since this study focuses on a Swedish context, it is necessary to discuss how gentrification tactics and its effects are conceptualized in this thesis. Consequently, this section firstly discusses effects of gentrification more generally and then how it affects people within a Swedish context.

3.2.1 General context

To understand the wave of renovations and demovictions¹ in a general context, a basic understanding of the global trend of finance capitalism infiltrating the rental housing sector, is necessary. Since the 1990s a global trend of neoliberalization of housing policy in western countries is identified by scholars (Byrne & Norris, 2019; Crosby, 2020; Wijburg, 2019). This trend entailed the deregulation of policies that protect housing as a common good (use value) toward a commodity (exchange value) (August & Walks, 2018). "By the end of the 1990s and into the 2000s, due to transformations at the global economic and state governance levels, multi-family rental housing was increasingly approached as a financial asset" (Fields and Uffer, 2016 in Crosby, 2020:186). This type of commodification of rental housing leads to, financialized gentrification: "a process of displacement (usually of lower-income residents) enacted by the corporate capture of housing, and driven by the accumulation strategies of landlords governed by logics of finance

¹ Demoviction: a portmanteau of the word demolition and eviction.

capital” (Crosby, 2020:186). That this strategy for profit accumulation in the rental housing sector leads to gentrification, is logical according to Crosby (2020) since the corporate capture of rental housing brings demographic changes where less affluent and vulnerable people are replaced by people with greater purchasing power. It is hence that “the intrusion of the financial logics of capital accumulation” into the rental housing sector leads to gentrification and thus forms a threat of displacement (Crosby, 2020:186).

3.2.2 Swedish/Nordic context

Understanding how renoviction and demoviction lead to the threat of displacement in a Swedish context, Listerborn and Baeten (2022) argue for a different conceptual understanding of displacement, specific to the Swedish and Nordic context. Differing from an Anglo-American context, Swedish displacement tactics are slow, indirect, and more subtle (Larsen & Hansen, 2008; Listerborn & Baeten, 2022). People in Sweden cannot directly be evicted by third parties but are often victims of self-imposed displacement because they succumb under the pressure of renoviction or demoviction strategies (Listerborn & Baeten, 2022; Pull, 2020). This slow and indirect nature presents us with a methodological challenge when studying displacement in a Swedish context (Listerborn & Baeten, 2022). It is hard to identify who is affected and what it actually does to people (ibid.). However, the displacement pressure is a real threat (Pull, 2020; Westin, 2011). Especially for families with children tend to move because the pressure of displacement, caused by reno- or demoviction tactics (Boverket, 2014). The core difference in conceptually understanding displacement tactics is that these tactics in a Swedish context not always result in gentrification (Listerborn & Baeten, 2022). Hence, Listerborn and Baeten (2022) argue to disentangle gentrification research from displacement research and not uncritically import a conceptual apparatus, developed in another socio-spatial context. However, after critical consideration and acknowledging these are two different things, I still choose to speak of threat of gentrification instead of the threat of displacement. As discussed earlier, renoviction and demoviction remain tactics of gentrification motivated by profit. Even though, the outcome of these tactics might not always be followed by gentrification – as Listerborn and Baeten (2022) prove – the intentions of these tactics are still to gentrify neighborhoods, which makes the question how habitats are affected by the threat of gentrification still relevant. Furthermore, researching the threat of gentrification, instead of only displacement, is relevant because this opens up to a broader range of what people

perceive as a threat – which will be discussed in the next section. Lastly, to stay away from uncritically adopting an unsuitable theoretical framework, a thorough description of the context and relevant issues is given in chapter 5.

3.3 Manifestations of threat and ways of coping with it

This section firstly, highlights how gentrification impacts the lived experience of peoples' habitats. Moving away from the more general theory, this section then focuses on different aspects of peoples' habitats that get affected by gentrification. The theoretical framework is built as follows. As observed in earlier studies, peoples' habitats get affected on three aspects: housing, public spaces, and local services. The different ways of coping with the threat of gentrification are discussed per aspect. I distinguish between three ways for coping: people 1) organize themselves (for example, through tenants' associations or activist groups), 2) do nothing (because they are too paralyzed by the threat or they do not worry about it, or 3) abandon their habitat. These three ways of coping are a conjunction of what studies that focus on the reactions by people on gentrification put forth (Bélanger, 2007; Listerborn et al., 2020; Listerborn & Baeten, 2022; Westin, 2011).

Different ways of coping with threat come forth from when people perceive change – to a greater or lesser extent – as a threat to their habitat. Belanger (2007) describes the process of the formation of a threat to peoples' habitats as follows:

Dissatisfaction with the home environment results from a mismatch between the demand of a residential environment and the supply [forming a threat to peoples' habitats]. Dwellings and their physical environment can deteriorate or be modified by economic or individual actors, or public authorities

- Helene Belanger (2007:4).

In this thesis the focus lays on deteriorations or modifications through the manifestations of gentrification in low-income neighborhoods. Belanger (2007) continues, “[t]his transformed built environment [habitat] may no longer meet the needs, expectations, and aspirations of a household” (Brown & Moore, 1970 in Belanger, 2007:4). In other words, gentrification tactics change peoples' habitats, which results in a mismatch between the supply and demand, and thus form a threat to peoples' habitat.

3.3.1 Housing

Driven by neoliberalism, the global trend of private profit-driven housing companies capturing rentals, presents tenants with the threat of displacement through reno- or demovictions. These processes can be long and affect tenants' habitat, especially their mental health, before displacement happens (Listerborn et al., 2020; Sakizlioğlu, 2014; Tsai et al., 2021). Tenants are faced with a period of insecurity about their future and must shift their focus in daily life from sustaining a household to finding a new dwelling – or not (Listerborn & Baeten, 2022; Pull, 2020; Westin, 2011). It is this low sense of control that by humans is experienced “as unpleasant and associated with decreased psychological and physical health. (The Amsterdam Uncertainty Lab, 2022). Besides dreadful processes of reno- and demovictions, tenants also experience similar stress because of short-term (often not longer than two years) contracts (Kellecioglu, 2021; Sokolova, 2015).

Coping by abandoning

The threat of increasing rents – and thus forming a mismatch in supply and demand – and their long, complex processes lead to people choosing to move, abandoning their habitat. The decision of leaving friends, attachments, and support systems behind is often a last resource for families and is especially traumatizing for children (Listerborn & Baeten, 2022; Westin, 2011). Butcher (2015) points to a study in London summing a series of risks youths face because of the threat of being displaced: Youths lose play areas, social networks around these, and their education is disrupted. Moreover, gentrification strategies result in household resources being spend on increases housing costs, instead of being invested in the children (Butcher, 2015). Lastly, if parents are displaced out of cities, this could lead to longer commuting times which otherwise could have been spend on the child (ibid.).

Coping by organizing

Before coming to this decision, engaged tenants often organize themselves, mainly through tenants' associations or activist groups (Ärlemalm, 2014; Kellecioglu, 2021; Listerborn et al., 2020; Pull, 2020; Westin, 2011). In creating a framework to answer the question how youths (in specific youths) in Järva cope with the threat of gentrification, an overview of current common ways of resistance is necessary. In chapter 5.2 Sweden's history of tenant movements is further elaborated.

Because the Swedish Tenant Union had to compromise their strategies and influence since the conservative government in 1990, the number of separate organizations grew. Nowadays housing justice movements have different strategies, some are explicitly formulated, some are more flexible. There are new tenants' organizations that are formally registered, for "more stable and formal engagement and better conditions for formal negotiations" (Listerborn et al., 2020:128). Within this field of many different independent organizations, there are initiatives that unite the organizations, forming national networks. These organizations "exchange experiences, create new alliances, mobilize public opinion, and make politicians aware of the situation of those excluded from the housing market" (Listerborn et al., 2020:127).

Nowadays, organizations formulate demands to private housing companies when there is too little information provided about changes in peoples' housing situation. This proactive attitude generates valuable insights into strategies of resistance, which are documented into handbooks in collaboration with scholars. Other examples of their strategies include: "protest actions, documentation in written pamphlets, music videos, debate articles, and various media appearances" (Listerborn et al., 2020:127). In recent years, tenants' organizations have become even more proactive, from making political demands to taking a leading role in resisting gentrification practices by private housing companies (Listerborn et al., 2020). To offer resistance, these people become experts in a wide variety of topics: legal rights, forms of regulations, negotiation, and political economy). Although Listerborn et al. (2020) point out that people who resist these threats are from all age groups, Butcher (2015) notes that youths "have little leverage in negotiations over processes of gentrification that are often accompanied by long periods of precarity" (Butcher, 2015).

Coping by doing nothing

Lastly, it also happens that people do nothing to resist. This is either because people feel overwhelmed and paralyzed by the threat and complex challenges it brings with it, or because they do not believe displacement is a consequence possible in the Swedish welfare-state (Pull, 2020; Westin, 2011).

3.3.2 Public space

Rapoport (1985) describes how public spaces, as an extension of the dwelling, are part of the home environment – in this thesis understood as part of someone’s habitat. Individuals get a sense of familiarity and attachment to public spaces by “acting, relaxing, navigating through, modifying, adapting, perceiving, representing and feeling” them (Bélanger, 2007). The sense of familiarity and attachment can result in that people consider these spaces to be theirs, which means people are going to exercise forms of control over it, thus appropriation (ibid.). These forms of control can be through legal acquisition or by implicit or explicit exclusion of others (ibid.). Legal acquisition results in places not being accessible for everyone any longer. Implicit or explicit exclusion of people can be done by people not accepting differences. The level of acceptance depends on social and ethnic relations (Schaller & Modan, 2008). Schaller and Modan (2008) describe in their research that people with a migration background and the working class use public spaces for socializing, whereas for gentrifiers use public spaces are meant for circulation or consumption. As public spaces are part of peoples’ habitats, “individuals or groups will anticipate certain types of people and certain types of behaviors and will behave accordingly” (Hélène Bélanger, 2007:6). If a perception of misuse is created and certain behaviors are frowned upon, people feel excluded in these public spaces. Feeling looked down upon by gentrifiers is an effect that youths experience when areas become gentrified (Butcher, 2015). This is especially sensitive for youths from disadvantaged neighborhoods since they already live with the downsides of class inequalities (ibid.).

Public spaces also contribute to the image of a city. To attract investors, affluent inhabitants, and tourists, public spaces are often revitalized (Bélanger, 2007; Butcher, 2015; Fraser, 2013). The action of revitalization of public space is often an effort “to sanitize/homogenize public spaces through design, programmed uses, activities and exclusion of more marginal populations” (Hélène Bélanger, 2007:6). Hence, revitalization of public spaces is often perceived

as a harbinger of following gentrification (Bélanger, 2007; Fraser, 2013). The symbolic redesigning of public spaces for more affluent inhabitants, or investors of can thus generate a mismatch in supply and demand among initial inhabitants.

Coping

The reactions and ways of coping with these impending threats, vary. Firstly, people might organize themselves to either ‘counter appropriate’ public spaces from gentrifiers or oppose the arrival of the new inhabitants (Bélanger, 2007). To oppose the arrival of new inhabitants, people organize themselves in similar ways as when fighting processes that form a threat a displacement and gentrification (ibid.). These include protests, conferences, and other ways of creating awareness about the driving forces creating these threats. Secondly, people abandon public spaces when they are or feel excluded and withdraw into the private sphere (ibid.). Thirdly, some people do nothing because they might feel powerless, or do not perceive that these changes pose a threat for them.

3.3.3 Local services

As spaces are revitalized, the supply in services (shops, restaurants, beauty salons, barbershops etc.) also often change (Bélanger, 2007; Fraser, 2013). However, new, or newly renovated spaces for entrepreneurs are built with higher rents than before (ibid.). This results in local entrepreneurs, that have had their shops before revitalization or new entrepreneurs, having to sell their services at higher the price than before to make a feasible business case. This results in a mismatch between the supply and demand an area has. Entrepreneurs that typically can pay a higher rent, are either affluent private entrepreneurs or big corporate businesses. This results in services either for affluent people or homogenizes the supply in products because of big chains establishing their business (ibid.). Not being able to buy products in one’s local environment, makes that youths lose the sense of home in their habitats (Butcher, 2015).

Coping

Local entrepreneurs often have a difficult time in resisting this threat, because landlords owning their spaces are less bound to regulations than when it comes to housing (Bélanger, 2007; Byrne & Norris, 2019). Creating awareness about this issue is often combined with movement resisting

displacement out from their rentals, since this is a form of demo- or renoviction focusing on commercial spaces (Kellecioglu, 2021; C.-U. Schierup et al., 2021). Organizations of entrepreneurs negotiate solutions, as subsidies, with the local authorities so they can maintain a feasible business case. Some entrepreneurs do nothing to resist, because they do not have the legal knowledge to resist higher rent from their landlords. Entrepreneurs often do not want and cannot afford to lose customers that they sometimes have had for decades, by raising prices (Bélanger, 2007). To abandon a space as local entrepreneur and locate elsewhere is often a risky investment for entrepreneurs from poor neighborhoods (Davidson, 2009; Fraser, 2013).

In sum, people can experience gentrification tactics as a threat because it can directly lead to displacement, or in more indirect ways it leads to a change in daily practices of cultural norms and values. This affects peoples' experiences of their habitat in different ways.

3.3.4 Aggregation of framework

The following are the most important aspects, as stated above, in making sense of the findings from the fieldwork. Gentrification puts people through periods of insecurity concerning their housing situation, which also affects youths. The increase in housing costs results in parents having less time and money they could otherwise spend on raising their children. Being displaced, youths lose attachments and frequently used places. Initial tenants get excluded from public spaces through two ways: 1) public spaces get legally appropriated by gentrifiers, or 2) people get excluded by not feeling accepted by the newly introduced norms and values. Moreover, to attract investors public spaces get homogenized. This symbolic redesigning is perceived as a harbinger of gentrification. Gentrification of local services affect the lived experience of peoples' habitats in two ways. The increase of prices makes that people cannot afford local products. Lastly, initial tenants do not recognize themselves in the changing supply because shop-owners now supply a different community.

4 Methodology

As described in chapter 3.1, Lefebvre (1970) stresses the importance of acknowledging the complexity of what he calls *habiting*. Urban life cannot be reduced to being studied as something that is merely spatial or quantifiable. Moreover, when studying urban life in relation to the complex phenomenon of gentrification, an understanding of space that allows us to view the wide variety of effects that gentrification has on lived experiences is needed. To obtain perspectives about the lived experience a qualitative methodology based on interviews is fitting (Mason, 2002).

The following chapter elaborates on the methodological choices made, to get an understanding of how youths from Järva perceive the threat of gentrification is affecting their habitats. Firstly, I explain how I apply theory and previous findings are applied in this thesis (4.1). This includes an understanding of space that Poggeler (1989) describes as being constructed, practiced, and inscribed, and previous findings by Belanger (2007) and Butcher (2015) on the effects of gentrification on youths. Secondly, I briefly discuss my philosophical standpoint (4.2.1), whereafter I elaborate on the process of sampling my data (4.2.2). Fourthly, this section discusses the process of gathering data (through constructing interviews, observing the area through the eyes of locals, and attending meetings with local representatives and authorities) (4.2.3), and analyzing the data (through the method of qualitative content analysis and using a coding frame) (4.2.4). Thirdly, ethical concerns are discussed.

4.1 Operationalizing theory

This study sets out to uncover how gentrification affects youths' experiences of their habitats. Studying how the perception of their habitat is affected I operationalize Poggeler's (1989) understanding of places as something constructed, practiced, and inscribed. Such an understanding of places makes it possible to uncover currently valued places, why and how these are valued. Furthermore, it opens for perspectives on how perceptions change with changing practices of these places. Belanger (2007) highlights how changes in the physical and social environment can lead to dissatisfaction of peoples' living environments – in this thesis understood as *habitat*. To explain peoples' dissatisfactions about their habitats, earlier findings by Belanger (2007) and Butcher (2015) were used, in combination with newly discovered perspectives derived from the interviews.

The combination of using previously found perspectives from theory and newly discovered perspectives from empirics to make sense of a certain phenomenon is also known as an abductive approach (Blaikie, 2000).

4.2 Research design

All primary data, used in this thesis, was gathered during two weeks of fieldwork in Järva, Stockholm. During these two weeks I conducted in-depth interviews with inhabitants from Järva. The (18) interviewees are categorized into three groups: (3) youths interviewed one-on-one, (8) youths interviewed in a group-interview, and (7) key neighborhood actors (KNAs) interviewed one-on-one. Throughout this study I had to be flexible in adapting a mix of methods to gain peoples' trust, so they wanted to share perspectives with me. This also called for a flexible research design that included two other methods of data gathering, besides in-depth interviews: walking interviews and attending meeting with local representatives and authorities. The conversations held using the latter two methods were not recorded. The perspectives gained in these unformal settings were pivotal in getting an ethnographical understanding of Järva and ultimately helped explaining the results. After transcribing all the recorded interviews, this data was analyzed through a qualitative content analysis (QCA).

4.2.1 Situated knowledge

This thesis is part of the paradigm that often is referred to as critical theory (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). I use historical realism as an ontological point of departure in studying the phenomenon of how youths' perception of their habitats gets affected by gentrification. As Guba and Lincoln (1994) explain: "A reality is assumed to be apprehendable that was once plastic, but that was, over time, shaped by a congeries of social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender factors, and then crystallized (reified) into a series of structures that are now (inappropriately) taken as "real," that is, natural and immutable" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994:110). In studying such a reality, I adopt a critical phenomenological approach. "When we study something phenomenologically, we are not trying to get inside other people's minds. Rather, we are trying to contemplate and theorize the various ways things manifest and appear in and through our being in the world" (Vagle, 2014:22). Where phenomenology is typically being descriptive, critical phenomenology is additionally

trying to critique the current context (Simonsen & Koefoed, 2020). In contributing to knowledge, I am aware of my own thinking being embodied and socially and politically situated.

Since “qualitative research operates from the perspective that knowledge is situated and contextual” (Mason, 2002:62), a section on my situated knowledge is crucial. My political standpoint on housing politics is for a less market-led and more social housing politics. This might have resulted in a bias when interpreting the data, which would have affected the quality of this study. When analyzing perspectives on how people perceive gentrification, the perspectives that express gentrification is perceived as a threat, might have been filtered out more than neutral or positive perceptions. However, doing the QCA a variety of labels were used to code the interviews, also including labels that grouped neutral and positive perceptions. Moreover, going into the topic of how youths get affected by top-down policies, I had to acknowledge that my political standpoint and personal experiences with authorities shape a bias which brings a risk of sympathizing too much with perspectives from youths from disadvantaged neighborhoods. To avoid this reflecting onto the results, I chose a case where I did not know anyone nor their standpoint toward gentrification. Interviewees were approached through key informants that were engaged with development in Järva or youth organizations and approaching youths at neighborhoods gatherings (as open brunches). This avoided me choosing youths based of similar viewpoints. However, all these youths were hence already using local meeting points for youths. This makes it likely that they express meeting points as valuable places. Therefore, asking deepening follow-up questions of what aspects of these places they value, was crucial.

4.2.2 Sampling and data

Because I had no connections in this area, planning interviews beforehand was challenging. Two main informants helped in creating the final sample group. The sample was heavily depending on the willingness of locals to participate in an interview. A disadvantage here was that I did not know any of the locals before that could introduce me. The two main informants are both engaged in local developments in Järva and could introduce me to youths and key neighborhood actors (KNAs). The sample was entirely put together when I was In Järva, after I met personally with interviewees that the key informants introduced me to. The fact that it was not possible to plan a time beforehand, made that I had to be flexible in who I was meeting and hence who became part

of my sample. In search for a representative sample, I had the following aims: sampling a varied group in terms of gender, neighborhood of residence within Järva, being able to give an overview of social structures, having different insights in social structures, and having different positions toward the threat of gentrification. Through communicating these aims with the main informants, I obtained a sample of 11 youths and 8 KNAs. In table 1, 2, and 3, can be seen what form of (recorded) interview was used, their age, and their social role in Järva. The tables do not show gender, to assure anonymity. Of 11 youths interviewed, 3 were female and 8 were male. Of 7 adults interviewed, 2 were female and 5 were male. All participants lived in Järva at the time, of which 15 of the interviewees lived here their whole life.

Table 1 Youths: one-on-one semi-structured in-depth interview.

Ref.	Age	Social role in Järva
Y1	27	Growing up in Rinkeby and works at 'Folkets Hus' (the People's House ²) in Rinkeby. Because of this they have a broad social network they can give many examples when telling how they perceive Järva is changing because of gentrification.
Y2	22	Growing up in Husby and does an internship at Folkets Hus in Rinkeby, volunteers as homework teacher, gives swimming lessons, and studies social work. They have their social life mostly in Järva.
Y3	19	Growing up in Akalla and is active as a member of 'Tensta Flickorna'. This is a group of youths in Järva organizing activities specifically for girls. Their active role in Tensta Flickorna, provides reflections on what girls value as social places.

² Folkets Hus is a national initiative from the 1960s, introduced by the Social Democrats to provide secular spaces for the people to build social networks and social support systems.

Table 2 Youths: semi-structured group interview.

Ref.	Age	Social role in Järva
A	18	Growing up in Husby, spending free time with friends mostly at home or at the local meeting point for youths.
B	19	Growing up in Husby, spending free time playing online video games, or at the local meeting point for youths.
C	19	Growing up in Husby, spending free time practicing boxing or with friends at the local meeting point for youths.
D	19	Growing up in Husby, spending free time with friends driving around, hanging out at parking lots or viewpoints or with friends at the local meeting point for youths
E	19	Growing up in Husby, spending free time watching documentaries, playing online video games with friends, playing football or hanging out at the local meeting point for youths.
F	19	Growing up in Husby, spending free time producing music at the local meeting point for youths, with friends on courtyards, and driving around to quiet spots.
G	19	Growing up in Husby, spending free time with friends playing basketball on public courts, writing rap songs, and mostly being outside where other friends are.
H	19	Growing up in Husby, spending free time watching TV-series or being with friends at the local meeting point for youths.

Table 3 Key Neighborhood Actors (KNAs): one-on-one semi-structured interviews.

	Age	Social role in Järva
KNA1	50	Living in Rinkeby for over 15 years they have a managing position at Folkets Hus in Rinkeby. They organize, amongst others, recurring initiatives that help children with their homework or teach locals Swedish, connect parents with each other, and provide information about social services.
KNA2	43	Holding a MSc in sociology they are working as a social worker for the municipality of Stockholm. They help youths and parents with advice, on how youths stay away from the criminal world. They are in close contact with youths in Järva that have a criminal record or a passed with drug abuse. They have lived in Rinkeby their whole life.
KNA3	40	Growing up in Rinkeby, they are nowadays a social pedagogical worker for the municipality of Stockholm. They are in close contact with parents and youths who need advice about social services.
KNA4	34	They grew up in Tensta and are engaged in developments happening in Tensta and Järva at large. They hold a MSc in political science, with the focus on gentrification and class-inequalities In Järva. Prior to the interview they showed me around in Tensta, explaining about places where he perceives gentrification tactics are changing their habitat.
KNA5	50	They have lived in Akalla for over 20 years and is part of several grass-roots organizations that engage in local developments and participatory research in Järva.
KNA6	43	They have lived in Kista for over 25 years and are part of several grass-roots organizations that engage in local developments and participatory research in Järva.
KNA7	33	Growing up in Husby, they hold a MSc in political science and conduct research as part of the Institute for Urban Research in the field of the financialization of the housing sector. In this research they are in close contact with activist tenant organizations and learn from experiences that they have resisting forces of gentrification.

To obtain knowledge ‘from the ground’ on how the participants engage in the social structures, in Järva, in person meetings were the only way. Several interviewees mentioned they value having a feeling of who they are speaking with. Hence, the main informants played a pivotal role in this thesis. They also made me aware of which roles participants had and what information they could get me, and how locals possibly would react to my invitations for an interview – hesitant because they are scared to be framed. The subjective nature of this study calls for creating an environment where interviewees feel free to share their thoughts (Mason, 2002). Hence, prior to the start of every interview I mentioned explicitly that I only have professional intentions of hearing their perspectives and every perspective they have is welcome.

The interviews took place in informal settings, which the participant could choose themselves. As Pull (2020) notes: “The interview subject (in phenomenological studies often referred to as “interlocutor” or “co-creator of knowledge”) is not an object to be learned about but a subject who can be learned with through mutual exchange” (Pull, 2020:117). Hence, a semi-structured interview in a to them familiar setting seemed most suitable, leaving room for more spontaneous conversations, leading to deeper understandings of the lived experience of the interviewee. Through these interviews I gained other contacts of locals who wanted to participate. This ‘snowball effect’ was an efficient method when composing my sample (Mason, 2002). A group interview is different from a focus group in the way that participants are not explicitly asked to react on each other, to obtain an image of how a certain group think about certain topics. A group interview focuses more on the separate answers of participants (Brown & Edmunds, 2011). However, it is important to know that influences on each other’s answers still exist.

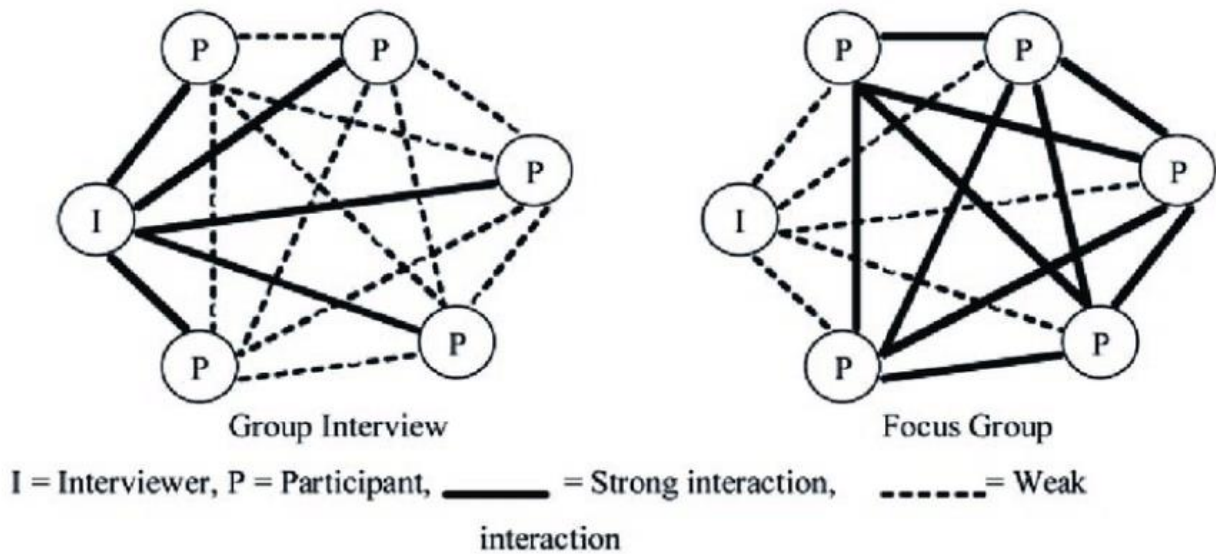


Figure 1 Differences between Group Interview and Focus Group (Brown & Edmunds, 2011).

All interviewees have a foreign background. Of the 18 participants, 11 participants have an ethnic background from East-Africa, 3 from India, 2 from Turkey, and 3 from the Balkans. The fact that all participants had a foreign background, and the most of them from East-Africa, is representative for the population of Järva (see 5.1) (Stockholms Stad, 2021a). All adults had occupations that include local development in Järva.

4.2.3 Interview structure and conduction

Semi-structured interviews were most suitable to gain perspectives of inhabitants in Järva because this opened for a fluid conversation where perspectives were mutually shared. As mentioned, this approach of co-creating knowledge with a subject, instead of excavating from an object is compatible with the phenomenological approach (Pull, 2020). A conversation of mutual sharing can also take away perceived power structures between the interviewer and interviewee.

The interview questions were construed abductively using Poggeler's understanding of place, drawing from previous results by Belanger (2007) and Butcher (2015), and formulating open exploratory questions. The interview guide is included in the appendix (10.2). The first part of the interview focuses on how and why people value places they consider as part of their habitat. In other words, the first part aims to uncover how places are constructed, practiced, and inscribed by people from Järva. The second part of the interview goes in on the different ways of how people perceive the threat of gentrification. To better understand the perception the interviewees would share with me, I beforehand gained knowledge from previous studies on how gentrification affects youths. However, the questions were formulated as open, exploratory questions. The previous knowledge about the context of the case and possible ways of perceiving this threat, in combination with the exploratory element of this interview, is characterized as an abductive approach (Blaikie, 2000). All interviews were conducted, in person, in Järva, during the last week of March and first week of April (2022). Being in the field for two weeks gave me the chance to be flexible in meeting the people and to continuously reflect on the research aim and theory. This ongoing reflection resulted in the realization that I can move onto the second part of the interview sooner. I noticed that people find it hard to talk about which places are dear to them. The moment when we moved onto how gentrification poses a threat to their habitat, they consequently mentioned which places they consider to be part of their habitat. This made follow-up questions, to deepen the understanding of why these places are valuable to them, crucial. Discussing the qualitative research process, Mason (2002) notes that "its unique value is in encouraging from the start the process of strategic thinking and reflection which must continue throughout the whole research process" (Mason, 2002:25).

Besides interviews providing insights in social structures, local meetings also were of great help. These were meeting where local grass-root organizations, politicians (local and national), authorities and inhabitants could meet to share information and socialize. During these meetings I had informal, non-recorded, conversations with a wide variety of representatives from authorities, grass-root organizations, tenant associations, and politicians. Besides the KNAs that I interviewed one-on-one, three additional KNAs guided me through Järva on several occasions. “When wanting to explore the participants’ understanding of place the walking interview provides the researcher with an opportunity to observe and not just hear an account” (Jones et al., 2008 in Kinney, 2017). These unrecorded conversations – walking interviews – were an important source of information about how people in Järva value places and view their position in society. While out, the KNAs met several others which they also introduced me to. “Walking interviews provide the researcher with opportunities to observe the participant in interactions with others in their community” (Carpiano, 2009 in Kinney, 2017). The latter two methods (attending meetings and walking interviews) have an ethnographical nature. These methods were not planned beforehand but anticipated when being in Järva. Gaining this extra information was possible because of the flexible research design and has helped this thesis to get a better understanding of the case. Lastly, notes were taken during the recorded interviews and after the conversations while walking and attending meetings, since these were standing conversations.

4.2.4 Analysis and analytical framework

To process the data gathered from the interviews, a qualitative content analysis (QCA) is done. As a method of data analysis, QCA was chosen because it allows to systematically reduce, thematize, code, and give meaning to the gathered data (Schreier, 2012). Formulating the themes was done through an abductive approach (Blaikie, 2000). This abductive approach allows operationalizing known effects of gentrification, simultaneously include newly emerging topics. Partly the themes, as used in the analysis, were derived from theory and partly from analyzing the interviews. In analyzing the interviews, going through the field notes and transcribed interviews was pivotal. Secondly, a coding frame (see 10.1) with reoccurring topics was used to overview which perspectives were most important to whom. The topics in the coding frame were grouped per research question. Topics generated in an inductive way, concerned the perceptions people have of changes that are a result of top-down policies and the arrival of a dominant ‘Swedish’ culture.

These were combined with topics informed by theory. Through reviewing the notes and coding the interviews, four main themes were identified: housing, amenities, public space, and general perception of change. These were the overarching themes that reoccurred the most as aspects of peoples’ habitat that got affected by the threat of gentrification. Besides, the previous studies distinguish similar aspects that shape peoples’ experience of their habitat.

Table 4 Themes formulated abductively

Themes	Description
Housing	Mostly perceived as a threat by adults, the financialization of the housing sector results in evictions. The increase of housing costs forms a threat to adults having less time for their children, before being displaced. After being displaced, a family must leave behind a place with attachments and social structures of support.
Amenities	Revitalizations of local centers lead to an increase in rent to shop owners. This leads to an increase in price of their services, which makes them less affordable to locals. This generates a mismatch between the demand and supply and makes mostly youths lose the sense of home.
Public space	The arrival of gentrifiers makes for a different, ‘more Swedish’ culture perceived in public spaces. This perception (by youths) consists of not feeling able to be themselves. The threat of the introduction of a different culture is closely interrelated with the supply in local services.
Perception of change	Top-down imposed policies are perceived by the interviewees as providing inadequate solutions for the problems the initial inhabitants are facing. Instead, they are perceived to mostly benefit middle- and upper-class people. All interviewees stressed the importance of facilitating grass-root organizations and empowering local knowledge.

Under these themes different manifestations of gentrification, ways this threat is perceived, and ways of coping with it are summarized. Table 4 gives a description of what they entail. The ways these main themes are perceived to be affected by gentrification and what they mean for peoples’ habitat, is further elaborated in chapter 6.

4.3 Limitations and ethics

A limitation of this study concerns the choice of theory in building the theoretical framework. The choice of theoretical framework was based on previous knowledge and interest, formed throughout my studies. This thesis aims to critically study the current societal situation and is hence part of critical studies. Being rooted in the radically critiquing theory of Lefebvre, the theoretical framework might have been obfuscating in seeing the advantages of the current housing politics in Sweden. Hence, the contributions to knowledge this study makes, might be politicized when possibly used in future policies.

Two main ethical concerns within research on youths are on consent and protection of the respondents (Morrow & Richards, 1996). In this thesis all respondents were 18 and above, so no parental consent was necessary. Furthermore, they are kept as anonymous as possible by also not enclosing their sex.

5 Setting the context

5.1 Geography and demography

Järva is an area north-west of the center of Stockholm. The area consists of six neighborhoods which are located around each their own metro station along the blue line. All metro stops are approximately 15 minutes away from the city center. Before entering Järva by metro, the line splits into two lines. Along the southern line you will access Rinkeby, Tensta, and Hjulsta. Along the northern line you will access Kista, Husby, and Akalla.



Figure 2 Map of metro lines in Stockholm (Reskollen, 2022). Järva's neighborhoods in upper left corner, T-centralen in under left corner.

All neighborhoods were completed around the 1970s as part of 'miljonprogrammet' (KTH, 2014; Svenska Bostäder, n.d.). This was a state-led plan to quickly build a million dwellings in Sweden to fight the housing shortage at that time (Stockholmskällan, 2022). As satellites of the city, these were seen as modern neighborhoods designed according to rational, modernist planning principles (B. Bengtsson, 2015).

The demographic situation in Järva is unique in its wide variety of nationalities (Stockholms Stad, 2016, 2021b, 2021a). Inhabitants often proudly say that Järva has more than 50 different nationalities, most of which have an African or Asian background (Blomdahl, 2020; Stockholms Stad, 2016, 2021b, 2021a). Initially Järva was inhabited by mostly an ethnically Swedish working class since Järva almost entirely consists of relatively cheap social housing (Stockholms Stad, 2006a, 2006b). In 2021, about 90% of the inhabitants of Tensta and Hjulsta

have a foreign background (Stockholms Stad, 2021b). In Rinkeby-Kista this is about 85% (Stockholms Stad, 2021a). Järva counts around 65.000 registered inhabitants (ibid.). Throughout history, the demographics and image of Järva changed from a mainly ethnically Swedish working-class neighborhood to a ‘migrant no-go zone’ after riots in 2013 (Thapar-Björkert & Villacura, 2021). Because of high crime rates, a low employment rate, low average income (240.000 kronas (22.500 euros) in Järva compared to 308.000 kronas (28.900 euros) as Swedish average (Hyresgästföreningen, 2020), and a low education rate, Järva is in the public debate often spoken about as one of Sweden’s most disadvantaged and dangerous neighborhoods (Ask, 2016; BBC News, 2013; Dine Malmsten, 2020; Tottmar, 2019). While Stockholm is growing in popularity and number of inhabitants (Alexander Kuronen, 2019; Stockholms Stad, 2019a, 2020; Wilhelmsson et al., 2021b), the Järva-district has a negative balance in terms of people moving to the area (Stockholms Stad, 2019a). Even though the popularity to move here decreases, Järva has the highest percentage (38%) of overly crowded households of Stockholm (more than two adults per bedroom) (Tottmar, 2019). Furthermore, people in Järva express that they find it hard to find housing within the area (Stockholms Stad, 2016).

5.2 Järva’s built environment and housing policies

Improving Järva’s situation stands high on the political agenda of the city of Stockholm. There are different standpoints about possible solutions are for Järva’s problems as gang-violence and drug selling, overcrowded dwellings, low voter turnout, low Swedish proficiency rate, and the low quality in education (T. G. Anderson, 2015; Brännström, 2006; Stockholms Stad, 2019b, 2020; Tottmar, 2019). Because this thesis focusses on how youths perceive their habitat being affected by gentrification, this contextual description serves to deepen the understanding of happenings (like political decisions, policy pieces, and visions) that concern the socio-spatial development in Järva.



Picture 2 Worn out rental buildings in Tensta. (H. Koetsier, 2022)

The current housing market, in which the housing situation for the economically most disadvantaged in Sweden worsens the most, came into being because of mainly two trends (Christophers, 2013; Westerdahl, 2021). The first reason being that the state sold large parts of their rental housing stock to either current tenants or private housing companies (Christophers, 2013). The second reason is that the remaining public housing stock is owned by municipal housing companies that nowadays must “operate according to businesslike or (on some readings) for-profit principles” (Christophers, 2013:893). The latter makes it more likely that municipal housing companies will sell their property to private housing companies (Christophers, 2013). Nowadays, on a national scale, the marketization of the public housing sector has led to a trend where large international private housing companies see dwellings – especially those built as part of ‘miljonprogrammet’ – as profitable investments (Kellecioglu, 2021; Mangold et al., 2018; von Platten et al., 2021). Having lived through a period of disinvestment, most of the housing stock – built as part of ‘miljonprogrammet’ – has gone through a period of negligence with too little maintenance, which makes that they nowadays are no longer up to today’s Swedish standard (Arram Eckerbom et al., 2019; Kellecioglu, 2021; Listerborn et al., 2020; Mangold et al., 2018; Nyhetsbyrån Järva, 2021; von Platten et al., 2021). The price of rent gets determined according to the Swedish ‘Brukvärdessystemet’ (Hyresgästföreningen, 2022). This means that rent should match the standard of the rental (ibid.). The rent is set through a process of negotiation between

the landlord (in this case large private housing firms) and the tenants (often represented by a tenants' association). However, if these two actors do not come to an agreement, the landlord can set their own rent, knowing the dwelling can be tested by the 'rental commission' whether the price is justifiable (ibid.). Through conducting so-called "concept renovations" (often referred to as 'lyxrenoveringar') – which entails adding accessory elements to a rental, like built-in microwaves and heated towel hangers – private housing companies like Hembla set new, higher rents (Kellecioglu, 2021). These renovations do not solve any structural problems concerning, for example, leakages, ventilation, or heating systems (ibid.). This trend, as result of the marketization of the public housing sector, forms a threat for inhabitants of Järva.



Picture 3 Einar Mattsson sign on the facade of a newly renovated rental building in Tensta. According to the interviewee the rents increased drastically after the renovation and people are struggling paying the housing costs. (H. Koetsier, 2022)

Another exemplary project of how the neoliberalization of the public housing sector influences developments in Järva, is ‘Järvalyftet’. The conservative political party ‘Moderaterna’, in collaboration with Svenska Bostäder³, initiated a plan to build new middle-income housing and renovate social housing to bigger dwellings for the middle-class in Järva. The plan, introduced in 2007, got opposed by the inhabitants of Järva (Al-Khamisi, 2015; C.-U. Schierup et al., 2021). Inhabitants were mainly disappointed about the lack of dialogue between the actors initiating this plan and the inhabitants (ibid.). To generate profit and bring more variety in housing supply, the city of Stockholm wanted to sell rentals to their tenants. Many of the tenants could not afford to buy their dwelling. In a second attempt to sell rentals, Svenska Bostäder sold a large amount of their property to private housing companies (Al-Khamisi, 2015). Inhabitants were not consulted about this, which led to outrage among many of the inhabitants in Järva (Al-Khamisi, 2015). Besides marketization of the public housing sector, Järvalyftet included (and realized) plans to build housing for the middle class in Järva (Stockholms Stad, 2006b; Svenska Bostäder, n.d.-b). All in all, this plan to make Järva more attractive to spark investments has led to gentrification of the area (Månsson, 2016). Another example of where attractiveness was the aim of the development, is the renovation of ‘Rinkebystråket’ (Grander & Westerdahl, 2015). Here, new commercial spaces have been realized along a main street in Rinkeby (Familje Bostäder, 2021). However, local entrepreneurs could at first not sustain a feasible business case, because the higher rents made that the products were too expensive for the local demand (Emma Löf Hagström, 2021). Hence, the decision was made to allow a wider variety of businesses to establish here (Familje Bostäder, 2021).

Next to the threat of increasing rents, people experience that it is hard to settle down and focus on their future because of short-term tenant contracts (Sokolova, 2015). These short-term contracts have a max duration of two years (ibid.). Instead of tenants having a stable housing situation where they can focus on sustaining themselves economically, they have to focus on finding new housing (ibid.).

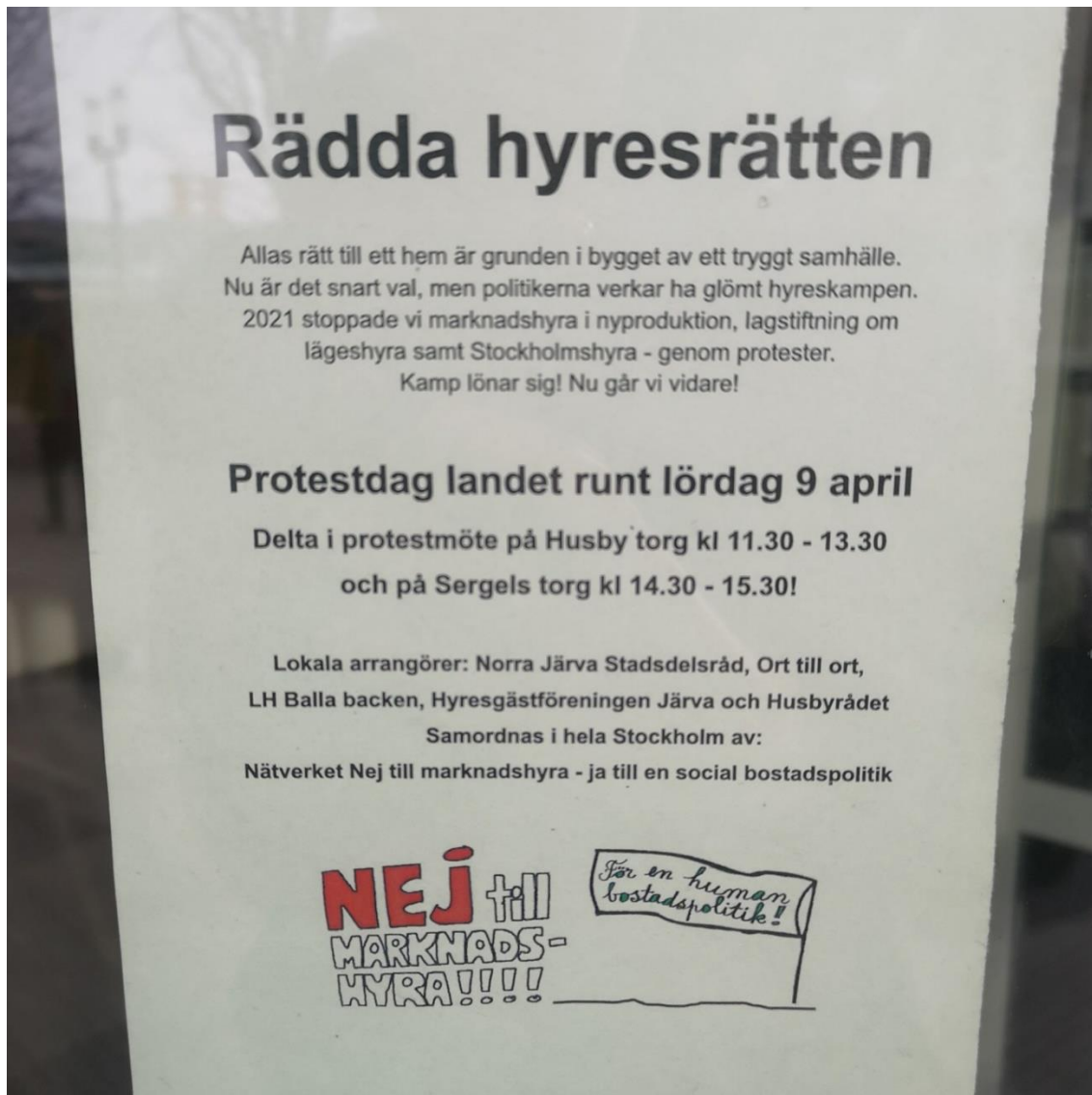
³ Svenska Bostäder is a housing company owned by the municipality of Stockholm (Svenska Bostäder, n.d.-a)

5.3 Housing justice movements in Järva

Initially, resistance against processes threatening peoples' housing situation was organized and led by the Swedish Union of Tenants (Hyresgästföreningen) (Listerborn et al., 2020). This Union was established in 1923 and became more organized and gained political support throughout the period the social democrats reigned Swedish politics. The political support made the Union well established and well facilitated by the state – more than an organization born from a movement of resistance (ibid.). This meant that, when the right-wing conservative government gained power from the 1990s onwards, the Swedish Union of Tenants was seen as a part of the Swedish state that stood in the way of neoliberal ideas to marketize the housing sector (ibid.). The Swedish Union of Tenants lost nearly 100.000 members from 1997 to 2011 (Hem & Hyra, 2014).

The marketization of the public housing sector has confronted inhabitants with gentrification strategies that are perceived as a threat to their habitats (Listerborn et al., 2020; Westin, 2011). Inhabitants of Järva organize themselves to resist these strategies. KNAs tell about how they were involved in organizing protests as part of a movement called 'Megafonen'. This was an organization with members between 15 and 30 years old that engaged in political questions around migration, segregation, and housing politics. Megafonen went underground after one of their protests turned violent. Nowadays, people unite through organizations as 'Ort till Ort' (Suburb to Suburb) and 'Nätverket Nej till Marknadshyra' (Network No to Market Rents). Ort till Ort is focused on issues concerning housing in Järva. In the summer of 2015 people united to share knowledge about ongoing problems around renovation. Their first act of resistance happened when 35 families with children in Tensta were to be displaced because upcoming renovations. Besides protests, Ort till Ort also publishes reports (Kellecioglu, 2021) uncovering, for example, how private housing companies like Hembla conduct gentrification strategies and neglect their tenants. Another strategy in spreading information is the weekly open hours Ort till Ort initiated, where tenants can get informed about ways to make complaints or through legal channels demand maintenance. In their actions they seek attention from the media to create awareness. Local newspapers like 'Nyhetsbyrån Järva' and 'Mitt i Järva' frequently report about their actions. Moreover, the forming of national networks – as Nej till marknadshyra and Bostadsvrålet – “to exert pressure on authorities and politicians and make affected groups in society aware of the

political changes affecting the housing situation is similar to the idea that originally gave birth to the Union of Tenants in the early 1920s” (Listerborn et al., 2020:127).



Picture 4 Pamphlet with information about a protest against the marketization of rentals in Järva. Seen at Folkets Husby. (H. Koetsier, 2022)

5.4 Safety and Järva’s reputation

Besides issues concerning housing and physical urban planning, there are other contextual aspects that need to be highlighted for a proper understanding of the context in which the fieldwork was conducted in. The number of people in the age group between 0-24 years, in Järva, is higher than Stockholm’s average. Youths in Järva – mostly young men – show up in the media in usually

negative stories. Especially after the riots in 2013, “Järva was told to be a no-go zone inhabited by marginalized groups from foreign backgrounds tormented by crime and the problematic stereotype of men who are violent, aggressive and hypermasculine” (Thapar-Björkert & Villacura, 2021). These riots mainly concentrated themselves in Husby, after a man was shot dead by the police and the police allegedly tried to cover this up (BBC News, 2013). Many saw this as an act of racism, which resulted in riots with over a 100 car burnings and violence against the police in Järva (BBC News, 2013; Higgins, 2013; Reuters, 2013). This outing of discontent about youths’ disadvantaged positions quickly led to more riots in other segregated neighborhoods across Sweden with similar social issues as Järva (Reuters, 2013). In media, crime related headlines as such paint a negative picture of Järva. Most crimes in Järva are related to gang violence and the drug industry, where mostly young men become victims of retaliations (Nordquist, 2021; Nyhetsmorgon, 2021). Moreover, 7 out of 10 shootings happen near schools (SVT Nyheter, 2022). However, there are developments being reported that contradict this image. Crime rates in Järva dropped from being an area in Sweden with the deadliest shootings, to an area that does not stick out above the national average, according to the police (Hagström, 2022). Yet, a feeling of insecurity still exists (Mulinari & Wolgast, 2020). The feeling of insecurity and mistrust are not only a cause because of Järva’s criminal reputation. Inhabitants also struggle with mistrust between each other because of traumas derived from conflicts in their ‘home-country’. Participatory research shows that people experience a generational gap (ibid.). This mainly has to do with the fact that first generation immigrants mostly still practice the culture from their home-country and feel a sense of exclusion from Swedish culture, whilst their children struggle with the feeling of being in between cultures and do not recognize themselves in the culture of their ‘home-country’ nearly as much as their parents do (ibid.). Lastly, in terms of trust, there is little trust from the inhabitants of Järva in the Swedish state (Sokolova, 2015; Stockholms Stad, 2016). The lack of trust in the Swedish system reflects in the low (under 60%) voter turnout (ibid.).

Although the importance of good education in disadvantaged neighborhoods is academically widely accepted and politically (both left and right) emphasized, Stockholm is struggling to provide good schooling in Järva (Stockholms Stad, 2016, 2021a, 2021b). This can be seen in the relatively lower grades children get in school and the relatively low number of students that continue to university (ibid.). Schools do often no longer meet the standard they are required to have, to exist. In 2019, Tensta Gymnasium – which was once one of the highest ranked schools

in Sweden – had to close because of too little influx of new students (Hagström, 2021). In terms of Swedish language proficiency, Järva also scores low, and many inhabitants experience a language barrier which makes it harder for them to be part of society (Sokolova, 2015). As people are ashamed of admitting they do not speak Swedish well enough, they rather avoid occasions where they must speak Swedish (ibid.). This becomes a vicious circle which is hard to break (ibid.).



Picture 5 The empty former Tensta Gymnasium. (H. Koetsier, 2022)

Another factor contributing to the vulnerability of Järva is the low average income. The average income in Järva is 240.000 SEK compared to the national average of 308.000 Kroner and Stockholm's average of 362.000 SEK (Hyresgästföreningen, 2020; Stockholms Stad, 2021c). Furthermore, Järva is struggling with a high unemployment rate, mostly among young men and women (Stockholms Stad, 2016). As a way of empowerment Järva has a relatively strong network of organizations that are a source of information of what happens in Järva and play an important role in making peoples' voices heard (B. Bengtsson et al., 2007). The organizations' budgets have decreased because of less state support, but at the same time the role of these organization became more crucial because the housing market and other social services being increasingly being marketized (B. Bengtsson et al., 2007; Jan-Erik Lind, 2021).

6 Results and analysis

The following chapter highlights the most important results found throughout this study. Section 6.1 elaborates how gentrification affects peoples' housing situation and indirectly affects youths too. Relating to the theory (3.3.1), this section also sets out how people in Järva cope with the threat gentrification poses on their housing situations. 6.2 firstly highlights how current amenities contribute to a sense of home and the predominant religion. Then it explains how amenities get affected by gentrification and gives examples of how youths perceive that this changes their habitats. 6.3 discusses the meaning of public spaces for youths and how gentrification affects the perception of these. Lastly, 6.4 elaborates on how current top-down changes are perceived as inadequate or not beneficial for the initial inhabitants. This section also highlights how locals would see adequate changes happening.

The perspectives from interviewees are discussed according to following order: how they perceive that the threat of gentrification manifesting itself in Järva, how inhabitants (youths in specific) perceive that the threat of Järva's gentrification is affecting their habitat, and how they (youths in specific) are coping with the threat of gentrification. The section describes and analyzes the gathered perspectives thematically. As introduced in chapter 4.2.4, I identified four overarching themes where people experience that their habitat gets affected by the consequences of gentrification: (1) housing, (2) amenities, (3) public space, and (4) general perception of change. The second and third theme are closely related to each other in how it shapes peoples' perception of their habitats, but to highlight the nuances of how youths' habitats are constructed, practiced, and inscribed, they are divided into separate themes. Discussing the results, no references are made to which participants said what. Only quotes are used from participants that explicitly gave permission to anonymously quote them.

6.1 Housing: Demoviction, renoviction, short-term contracts, and middle-class housing

The first theme concerns the threat in peoples' housing situation in Järva. When the interviewees discussed gentrification, housing was perceived as the most affected and simultaneously most vulnerable aspect that gentrification touches in Järva. The KNAs and three youths pointed out that increases in rent pose a threat to their and others financial situations in Järva. All seven adult KNAs

mentioned the effects gentrification tactics have on housing. However, only three out of ten youths mentioned housing as an affected aspect of their habitat when discussing gentrification. My analysis of the fact that all adults but few youths mention housing as most affected aspect of their habitat, is that youths rarely are the main breadwinners of a household and thus less concerned with issues around housing costs. Although age is mostly not explicitly mentioned in studies uncovering the effects on peoples' habitats, they mainly focus on how gentrification tactics form threats to those paying housing costs (Ärlemalm, 2014; Crosby, 2020; Lind et al., 2020; Listerborn et al., 2020; Polanska & Richard, 2019; Pull, 2020; Westin, 2011). Yet, it must be mentioned that in poor neighborhoods, youths often need to help their parents by getting extra jobs, to make ends meet (Andersson & Malmberg, 2016; Brännström, 2006; Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997). During this study it was not found to be explicitly discussed – neither in the literature, nor the field work – how the increase in housing costs was perceived by youths, (Bélanger, 2007; Butcher, 2015). Yet, the threat on housing situations is an important theme since it is found to affect youths indirectly.

When talking about gentrification tactics, those who mentioned the effect on housing all gave examples on renovictions, demovictions, short-term contracts, and building housing for middle income in Järva. As mentioned, in 2007 Järvalyftet was introduced as a plan to bring more variety in income groups to Järva which should have motivated economic progress and put a stop to the increasing crime rates (Månsson, 2016; Stockholms Stad, 2006b). The introduction of this vision was by all 18 interviewees mentioned as a starting point of gentrification tactics threatening the habitats of inhabitants of Järva. Four interviewees elaborated on a project, in the beginning of Järvalyftet, where housing for the middle-income group was realized. The housing around 'Järingegränd', in Tensta, is realized around 2007 and is commonly referred to as the 'Swedish Colony' by residents of Tensta. There are no rentals among these houses and the prices are significantly higher than the average in Tensta, as noted by the interviewees. All four interviewees perceive this area to be segregated from the rest of Tensta, which for them shows that attracting higher income groups is not an adequate solution to solve issues around segregation. Furthermore, when discussing the consequences of Järvalyftet, all seven adult KNAs and two youths explained how – after resistance against projects suggesting housing for middle-income groups – state-owned housing organizations (Svenska Bostäder (SB) and Familje Bostäder (FB)) offered tenants to buy their dwelling. None of the seven KNAs said that they have been able to afford this at that time. A mentioned reason for this was that people with a foreign background have not lived in Sweden

long enough to build up a sufficient pension to get a mortgage. The interviewees continued to explain: For SB and FB to get rid of their housing stock, they sold many rentals to private housing companies (Kellecioglu, 2021). The study at hand and various other studies (Ärlemalm, 2014; Kellecioglu, 2021; Pull, 2020) view this to be a consequence of neoliberal politics and the marketization of the housing sector. This marketization resulted in more short-term rental contracts and confronted inhabitants with strategies of renovictions (ibid.). The KNAs describe these situations as “insecure and stressful times”, leaving them with less time to pursue a career because they have to engage in complex themes to be able to resist these threats. This also means having less time to spend raising their children. Besides resisting, peoples’ minds are occupied with thinking of a “plan B” in case they must move. Four interviewees that have seen an increase in rent, stress that this leaves them with less money to invest in their children. All these perceived threats align with findings by Butcher (2015), and Listerborn et al. (2020), and Westin (2011), on how people experience these insecurities generated by gentrification tactics.

Besides being put in insecure situations, the interviewees also talk about the lack of structural maintenance, renoviction strategies, and short-term contracts, and how because of this a sense of dissatisfaction with their housing situation and mistrust with the state-authorities exaggerates. The lack of trust and overdue maintenance is also proven in reports by Kellecioglu (2021), Pull (2020), Listerborn et al. (2020), and Sokolova (2015). Moreover, all the KNAs said they were not consulted, and never planned to be – according to three of the KNAs that say to have gotten this confirmed by representatives of the municipality of Stockholm – before selling their dwellings to private, profit-driven housing companies. This lack of proper consultation about their housing situation feeds the mistrust in state-authorities regulating the housing sector.

All KNAs mention to have been part of some activity of resistance against gentrification tactics. These engagements range from attending a protest, to doing participatory research, to writing academical reports. One KNA says they are not actively engaging in forms of resistance anymore, because they either do not have time to get knowledgeable about these complex issues or feel powerless. This feeling of powerlessness, they explain, is a result of being let down by state-institutions too many times and do not trust their perspectives will be heard anyways. Polanska and Richard (2019) had observed similar reactions and explain that their “perception of a strong tenants’ position collided with their current experiences and lack of influence in their own

neighborhood, thus creating a fracture in trust” (Polanska & Richard, 2019:150). The interviewees that do engage in organized resistance experience a similar feeling. Yet, they mention that they feel like they are left no other option than to resist against the threat of displacement. Since this study aims to uncover the perceptions of youths, this section does not go further into detail of how the interviewed adults resist against this threat – apart from the examples of resistance that are highlighted in chapter 5.3.

One of the youths elaborated how they are part of ‘Vänsterpartiet’ (left-wing political party), have participated in actions against gentrification, and gathers with friends to discuss housing issues. Except two, the interviewed youths did not explicitly mention housing as an affected aspect of their habitat by gentrification. However, they did mention to be aware of increasing rents after dwelling being renovated. When asking the youths how they perceive the development of increasing rent pushing people out of their houses, 6 of 11 youths seemed to be relatively open to moving away from Järva when they can support themselves financially. “We all would like to get away from ‘orten’ (the suburbs) when we are older and have the chance.” They are mostly concerned for their parents:

They already took the first step to come to Sweden, they’ve had their share of stress and adopting to life here. We don’t want them to be bothered with moving again because they soon cannot pay the rent here! Especially not when they established their social structures here.⁴

The youths express that their parents are less flexible when it comes to moving to new places, because the language barrier would make it harder for them to find new jobs and social structures as support systems. None, except two youths explicitly mention gentrification as the cause of increasing rents. When introducing the interview and the topic of gentrification, more explanation about the issue was needed when talking to these youths. Seemingly not laying the connection between the marketization and renovations that make rents increase, could indicate a knowledge gap among youths’ understanding of how market forces shape their habitat. Furthermore, they do not perceive increasing rents as an urgent problem that would affect them before they can support themselves financially. This possibly explains why this study found only one youth to be engaged in issues of housing justice.

⁴ Quote from group interview where youths seem to agree about how their neighborhood feels like home for them now, but preferably want to move to other areas when they can support themselves and have the opportunity.

Additionally, youths expressed a general feeling of mistrust and lack of interest in political issues like housing. For example, none of the youths (except one) considered to vote for the upcoming elections in Sweden, because they did not think it would make any difference anyway. The complex nature of resisting gentrification tactics (see Listerborn et al. (2020)) in combination with the mistrust (see Polanska and Richard (2019)) and disinterest in state-institutions (noted by Stockholms Stad (2016)) could explain why few of the interviewed youths were engaged in some form of organization to resist the threat gentrification tactics pose on their housing situation.

Lastly, two of the KNAs mentioned to know former neighbors that moved out of Järva because they lost the sense of a safe, stable home as a direct result of the insecure situations the threat of gentrification put them in. Abandoning their habitat, the interviewees considered as a last resort because such a change of social environments would put stress on their children. They did, however, mention that leaving this area could maybe mean an opportunity to get better education and more safety for their kids, as they point out that the education in Järva is not up to standard. The fact that parents also see opportunities for their children's education is a notable perspective and brings nuance to what Butcher (2015) describes: that displacement establishes a risk of disruption of education. The KNAs note that this would indeed disrupt education, but possibly in a good way too, since schools in Järva have little resources.

In conclusion, gentrification is affecting peoples' lived experiences of their housing situation negatively. As discussed in previous studies, gentrification tactics confront people with periods of insecurity where their focus shift away from their children. In this way the youths are affected indirectly. Additionally, it was not found that youths are actively perceiving gentrification as a threat to their housing situation. Consequently, the majority of the youths were neither found to be engaged housing justice movements.

6.2 Amenities: Shops and meeting points

As Hedin et al. (2012) observed, low-income areas in Sweden (Järva amongst them) went through a period of disinvestment. This affected, the quality of the housing stock, increased criminality, and worsened the overall reputation of Järva (Mangold et al., 2018; Pull, 2020). All interviewees mentioned that roughly between 2010 and 2018 they have felt let down by the Swedish state. This perceived period of disinvestment resulted in the closing down of, for example, all cash withdrawals and bank offices, post offices, police station, and Tensta's highschool (Tensta Gymnasium). In this period all interviewees experienced an increased feeling of unsafety. With the media reporting on more and more shootings and inhabitants being left with no state-institutions, the interviewees tell they felt let down by the Swedish state. This, possibly, partly explains why Järva has such a low voter turnout (Stockholms Stad, 2016).

Currently valued amenities are valued because they serve the demand existing in Järva. During my fieldwork, I identified two aspects of why youths value certain amenities: having a sense of home/being themselves and religion. Meeting points for youths, like 'Blå Huset' in Tensta and 'Fryshuset' in Husby, play an important role in youths' habitats. Apart from organized activities, these are places where youths can meet each other in a place that is always accessible to them. The fact that these places are specifically for them, makes them feel valued and at home. "Me and my friends would literally go here in our pajamas to hang out on a Sunday morning when we have nothing to do."⁵ When asking what these places mean to them in their daily life and sense of home in Järva, all youths answer that places like these mean "everything" to them. This is where most of the memories are made, and they can behave as they would at home. Here, they also have casual chats with volunteering peers who, when needed, give them advice on different matters, if their parents do not do so. Parents not being in the position to give their children advice can have multiple reasons. Two reasons that were mentioned are that: (1) youths do not always feel comfortable in overly crowded households and would rather spend their free time outside of their house, and (2) parents are too busy with making ends meet to sustain their household. Meeting points for youths bring opportunities to get a perspective on their possibilities in society and help them to organize and develop ideas of contributing to society in a way. Youths are facilitated when

⁵ Youth that grew up and lives in Husby. Besides being a resident, they are involved in an organization for girls in Järva, 'Tensta Flickorna'.

they want to record music tracks, have career fairs, or other things they find to be necessary. This freedom of organizing their spare time at these places makes that the supply matches the demand the youths have. Outdoors, youths spend time on different places, depending on who they are spending time with. Spots that were named during the interviews are Järvafältet, viewpoints around Järva, basketball courts, and football courts. In these, the aesthetic and calming characteristics of nature, and the possibility to do sports are valued aspects.

Since most of the population of Järva is Muslim, amenities established accordingly. Youths emphasize on the value of having a local Mosque. This is where they practice their religion, socialize, and feel at home among like-minded people. The predominantly Muslim culture makes that there are shops that sell products Muslims demand, like: halal meat, hijabs, and thobes. Also, restaurants selling food from their 'home countries' are places where youths spend their time and get meals for an affordable price.

All interviewed youths explain how they experience gentrification posing a threat to the current supply of services they value. Three youths and one KNA pointed out how a café, that has operated in Husby over 25 years, had to close because the owners could not pay the increased rent anymore. They perceive this is a result of gentrification tactics by the municipality of Stockholm. According to a KNA that conducts academical research on gentrification in Husby, Stockholm decided to almost only allow beauty related services in Husby center. This would fit better in the image Stockholm's municipality want Husby center to have, the KNA explains. The result was an increase in mostly barbershops around the Husby metro station. Two youths and three KNAs point out 'Rinkebystråket' as another example of where the image of the services is attempted to be revitalized, top-down. The interviewees perceive this development as part of the gentrification of Järva because the rents of the new shop spaces are generally too high for local entrepreneurs to start their business and serve the local demand. They emphasize on five examples where entrepreneurs opened a café or restaurant and had to close down because they could not sustain a feasible business case. Youths tell they are afraid that further gentrification will lead to a further change in the supply of goods. They note that gentrifiers "do not share the same religion as we have" [Islam] but have the means to sustain services at higher costs. Hence, youths are afraid they eventually cannot get products, as halal meat, hijabs, and thobes. They also do not value services that gentrifiers, according to them, typically value. Those mostly orient around alcohol

consumption – for example, wine bars. This aligns with Belanger (2007), who explains how the mismatch in supply and demand results in dissatisfaction of peoples' habitats. All youths said that they want to move out of Järva if their habitats would gentrify to the extent that they would not recognize themselves in the supply of services. They note that they do not see any other option, because they would not be able to afford local services. This feeling of powerlessness could be explained by what Butcher (2015) describes as “having little leverage in negotiations over processes of gentrification”. Moreover, this feeling could be exaggerated by the mistrust youths have in state-institutions listening to their perspectives, based on the perceived period of disinvestment where they felt let down.

In sum, the current amenities provide youths with a supply that plays an important role in creating a sense of home and their religion. They are aware of gentrification leading to increasing prices of spaces for entrepreneurs and ultimately their products. The development of products becoming less affordable is perceived as a threat to their habitat. All youths said that they want to move – seeing abandoning as the only option – out of Järva if local amenities would gentrify to the extent that they would not recognize themselves in the supply of services.

6.3 Public Space: socializing and police control

As defined earlier in this thesis, place is conceptualized as something constructed, practiced, and inscribed. Places in public space are currently valued by both interviewed youth and adults, because they host a crucial part of the socializing done. That all interviewees see public space as being destined for mainly socializing, confirms Belanger's (2007) finding that immigrants and the working class see public spaces as meant for socializing, whereas for gentrifiers, public spaces are meant for circulation and consumption settings.

Four KNAs, who grew up in Järva, note that they see a difference in where youths socialize, in comparison to where they used to socialize. They observe that youths nowadays mainly spend time in public spaces within Järva. On the contrary, roughly 25 years ago the KNAs would “explore all places in Stockholm”⁶. This observation is possibly explained by the perception of youths of feeling increasingly stigmatized, roughly the last 10 years. All youths mention to perceive a feeling

⁶ Interview with KNA that lives and grew up in Rinkeby. They currently work for the municipality of Stockholm as a youth and parent coordinator, aiming to give advice on how youths stay away from the criminal world.

of being looked down upon and needing to retain themselves when being outside of Järva. Hence, they mention, “we rather hang out there where we are not frowned upon by Swedes.”⁷ The perception of feeling stigmatized as a youth from a segregated area when being in more affluent neighborhoods is supported by Brännström (2006) and Anderson (2015). As noted in earlier studies on the use of public space in Järva (M. Bengtsson, 2018; Mulinari & Wolgast, 2020), the interviews show what I interpret as a gendered aspect. Girls tend to stay more in private spheres in their free time than boys. Especially when it comes to unplanned social gatherings, girls mention they are most often at someone’s house or at one of the meeting points for youths. Guys, on the other side, mention to gather in public spaces, whether it being spontaneous or planned.

All youths describe a sense of home when being outside, depending on, what I distinguish as, local cultural factors and attachment through practice. Firstly, local cultural factors that the youths named were: the ability to speak their version of Swedish (with slang adopted from mainly Arabic, Slavic, and Turkish), being loud, playful (pushing each other), and feeling a sense of community through knowing and greeting most of the people they meet outside, being “direct” in their way of communicating, and offering help to (mostly elderly) neighbors. Cattell et al. (2008) emphasizes the importance of this side of public space, for peoples’ wellbeing. Secondly, youths emphasize on the memories they have made while growing up in Järva, which makes them value public spaces. In sum, youths perceive to be part of, how Butcher (2015) calls it, ‘the critical mass’ of people with similar habits, norms, and values. Also, the youths describe this local culture as being significantly different from Swedish culture. More gentrifiers moving into Järva would result in not feeling at home anymore. “I would completely lose this Järva-feeling”, stated one of the youths. As Bélanger (2007) describes, “individuals, households and groups, through their uses and representations, will appropriate a physical space” (Bélanger, 2007:6).

Youths note that they perceived public spaces to be made more sterile in recent years. This affected their sense of home in public spaces. A reason for this, they mention, is increased police surveillance. Even though all youths agree that acting on crime is necessary, they perceive the current acting of the police as an inadequate solution to the assumed crimes in Järva. All youths tell personal stories of themselves or friends experiencing overaggressive acting of the police.

⁷ Quote from one-on-one interview with youth who has lived in Järva their whole life and does an internship as Folkets Hus in Rinkeby, as part of their bachelor’s in social work.

Youths feel that their behavior is misunderstood and misjudged by the police. This exacerbates a perceived power relation between the youths and the police, which makes it harder for youths to be themselves in public space. Youths emphasize on solutions as voluntary moms walking the streets ('Nattvandrande Mammor') in the evenings to keep an eye on what youths are doing. "We always respect local elderly and especially moms that potentially know us or our parents." Also, they express the want and need to know more about job opportunities, to decrease the number of youths joining the criminal circuit. Besides the increased police surveillance, all (except two) youths note that grilling spots in Järva have consistently been removed. Youths explain that these always have been places of spontaneous socializing.

Further gentrification, thus, poses a threat to youths because they are afraid gentrifiers do not understand their local culture, yet have the means to appropriate physical space and the amenities around it. Losing the sense of home through this cultural change would lead to dissatisfaction among youths, which would make them all want to move away from Järva. That all youths express that they perceive moving because of a cultural change as a negative development, is remarkable since it is in contrast with how 6 of 11 youths seem to be relatively open toward moving away when discussing the increasing rents. Apart from the appropriation of amenities, adult KNAs see exposure to other cultures as positive, especially for local youths. Hence, Butcher (2015) notes that the pace of change plays an important role in the acceptance of new cultures. Lastly, both youths and adults agree on that revitalization of public spaces could lead to an increased feeling of safety.

Concluding, this section highlights youths' awareness of the changing dynamics in public spaces. The current dynamics are in line with a distinct separate culture they highly value and want to preserve. More police surveillance is perceived as a result of authorities wanting to sterilize public spaces and ultimately gentrify Järva. Although youths agree with the need to reduce crime rates, they stress the need for education on their prospects in society instead.

6.4 General perception of change of habitat

As explained in several instances above, both the interviewed youths and adults agree that change is needed in Järva in terms of feeling safer, having better education, and better quality of housing. However, concerning different aspects, they perceive that changes hitherto have been imposed on them top-down and have not resulted in (experienced) improvement for the inhabitants. This generates a general feeling of skepticism by residents towards ongoing and planned developments in Järva. Examples named earlier were Järvalyftet, the perception of power inequality between youths and increased police surveillance, and the renovation of Rinkebystråket. Two KNAs additionally mention the building of a new location of the municipality, as an example of how workers of the municipality are being allocated to a neighborhood, they know little about. Two KNAs and five of the interviewed youths, stated that representatives in the ‘municipal city district management’ (stadsdelsförvaltningen) do not represent the needs of the inhabitants of Järva. According to the interviewees there are only a few policymakers working for this city district that grew up or live in Järva.

The officials come here around 9 in the morning to plan their strategies of gentrification, which they think is the solution for this neighborhood, and then leave around 5 to their safe homes far away from Järva. How could they possibly know what is needed for our neighborhood?⁸

As a way of coping with being imposed to top-down processes, perceived as inadequate changes, KNAs alter the ways changes are brought about traditionally in two ways. Firstly, three of the KNAs are lobbying to have locals for positions within the municipality where they can influence the decision making on the development of Järva. They do this either through being engaged with Vänsterpartiet or conducting participatory research projects where the municipality collaborates with an NGO ‘Initiatives of Change’. Secondly, there are multiple grassroots organizations that voluntarily make Järva a safer place (Nattvandrande Mammor), getting youths more politically engaged (The Global Village Stockholm), help with extra education (Läxo Hjälpen Folkets Hus), and try to unite initiatives like these to share local knowledge (Järva i Samverkan). These efforts

⁸ Quote from interview with a KNA that is engaged in developments happening in Tensta and Järva at large. They hold a MSc in political science, with the focus on gentrification and class-inequalities In Järva. Prior to the interview they showed me around in Tensta, explaining about places where he perceives gentrification tactics are changing their habitat.

ensure empowerment of local knowledge and bring, according to the interviewees, residents of Järva together.

Overall, this study found that gentrification tactics mainly pose a threat to peoples' habitats. Depending on the ways it manifests and whether people feel they can influence processes, people cope with this threat differently. Youths perceive that these threatening changes are the results of top-down policies that facilitate profit. Hence, changes in Järva are mainly perceived not to be beneficial for them, but for the middle- and upper-class. This aligns with how Lefebvre describes that 'urban ideology', influenced by capitalism, results in a reductive practice that limits that what humans and their complexity in lives stand for. Urban ideology results in spaces that bear "a form of class urbanism and incorporate a class strategy" (Henri Lefebvre, 1970:157). Lefebvre's theory, as foundation for this thesis, gets confirmed, as gentrification is conceptualized as an outcome of capitalism and its manifestations are perceived as threats by youths on their habitats. As Lefebvre correctly foresees, people are being pushed further from their nature and all that includes habiting (habitat in this thesis).

Recapitulating the most important insights of this section, all interviewees agree about the fact that change in Järva is necessary. Also, all interviewees agree that the ways current top-down policies are changing their habitats are generating inadequate solutions. They perceive that these changes are not tailored to the needs of the current low-income class but are implemented to benefit the middle- and upper-class. Moreover, they feel that they are not listened to, which leads to a growing disengagement and mistrust in the state. Lastly, this chapter highlight efforts that are made to empower local knowledge.

All in all, this displays how neoliberalism influences policies that lead gentrification, which is negatively affecting youths' habitats. This lays a base for the following chapter where the current state of knowledge on gentrification effects is discussed.

7 Discussion

As one of the effects of capitalist planetary urbanization, Lefebvre (1970) argues that commodification pushes humans further from their nature and habiting. This thesis uncovers how people experience a decreased sense of home in their habitat because of the threat that gentrification tactics pose. Hence, I argue, that gentrification, as a result of the commodification of housing, pushes people further from habiting. Moreover, this study uncovers how people perceive top-down planning as not providing adequate solutions for them and are aware of how this benefits the middle- and upper class. This sheds light on how people from disadvantaged neighborhoods perceive that urban ideology produces spaces that accommodates class urbanism. As Lefebvre (1970) discusses, urban ideology accustoms a practice of urbanism that reduces peoples' habiting. This thesis found that urban ideology affects peoples' perception in two ways: being legitimized by authorities, top-down planned activities disregard the complexity of habiting, and "ideology and its application (by the corresponding institutions) overwhelm actual practice" (Henri Lefebvre, 1970:156). Meaning that use value (closer to the complexity of habiting) – for example of housing – is being pushed away by the development of exchange value, which results in gentrification tactics. This study finds that these tactics are perceived to alter peoples' habitats, which is perceived as a threat. This is mainly because of two reasons: 1) Gentrification tactics put peoples' housing situations in insecure positions about their future and affects youths indirectly. 2) Gentrification affects the sense of home that youths have based of two closely related aspects of their habitat: local amenities and public spaces. The latter two insights form the base to answering research question 1 (1.2).

Urban ideology should, however, not be confused as merely a practice resulting from capitalism and its interests to accumulate capital. Urbanist traditions, like art traditions, academical traditions, or architectural traditions establish themselves as reactions to one another because the previous tradition was unsatisfactory. For example, since the 20th century, neighborhood planning traditions included concepts of sustainability differently with the aim to create living environments that have a positive impact on peoples' wellbeing (Sharifi, 2016). Lefebvre (1970:151) introduces the concept of urban ideology, however, as part of critiquing the "activity that claims to control the process of urbanization". In building this radical critique he states there are several forms of

urbanism, with the state and its technocrats mainly regulating and facilitating modern urban practice. The activities of the state and its technocrats dissociate two aspects: “into will and representation, institutions, and ideologies” (ibid.). These two aspects shaping urbanist theory make urbanists unable to perceive the needs of the urban. Urbanist theory, namely, lacks a dialectic methodology comprehending the twofold of the process of urbanization and, simultaneously industrialization. The needs of the urban grow out of the “extreme complexity and conflict” (ibid.) of this twofold process. “It can hardly be claimed as an asset that urbanists perceive – from afar – the sense of urgency and the problems associated with the new scarcity of space, time, place, and natural ‘elements’” (Lefebvre, 1970:152). In sum, I interpret this as urban ideology and its reductive practices, hence, never have been able to fully do justice to the complexity of habiting. This asks for a more dialectic understanding of what drives the complex needs of the urban. I argue, however, that current neoliberal ideology exaggerates the reductive nature of urban ideology and its applications. As seen globally and in Sweden, neoliberalism has pushed marketization and financialization, and thus commodification of housing (August & Walks, 2018; Byrne & Norris, 2019; Crosby, 2020; Fields & Uffer, 2016; Thörn & Thörn, 2017). In this thesis I argue that – by uncovering that people from a disadvantaged neighborhood perceive top-down planning as inadequate and emphasize the importance of facilitating local knowledge and bottom-up initiatives – people implicitly express the need for a more dialectic understanding of what shapes the needs of their habitats and the urban at large.

This thesis shows that youths from disadvantaged neighborhoods have a general sense of mistrust toward authorities and uncovers how gentrification tactics are perceived as negative and aggravate mistrust and dissatisfaction about the acting of the state. To prevent urban unrest, in the forms of riots, a deeper understanding of how eruptions like these happen is necessary. As of now, answering research question 2, this study articulates youths’ expressions of wanting to abandon their living environment if Järva further gentrifies. This way of coping is explained by the feeling of powerlessness they have because current top-down decision-making leaves them with inadequate solutions – which is exacerbated by gentrification strategies.

Another pivotal finding is that in this study it was not apparent that youths seem fully aware of how this urban practice manifests itself as a threat for their housing situation. This is remarkable since youths from poorer neighborhoods often support their parents to finance the housing costs

(Andersson & Malmberg, 2016; Brännström, 2006; Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997), and presumably are aware of the financial situation of the household. Neither do the few previous studies (Bélanger, 2007; Butcher, 2015), that focus on how threats of gentrification affect youths' habitats, highlight how youths are concerned about explicitly their housing situation. Because of social desirability bias, youths might not have mentioned their concern for their housing situation explicitly in this study. Additionally, previous studies – as well as this thesis – also have a more general focus on how threats could manifest themselves. How youths perceive the threat it poses to their housing situation and engage in housing justice movements seems to be a blind field. Looking at previous studies that focus on how gentrification affects peoples' housing situations, the focus lies mainly on the lived experiences of parents of a family, the head tenant, and the main 'breadwinner', all typically adults. With this focus, youths are excluded from the scope of analysis. Youths not having the main financial and social responsibility of a household, does not mean that youths' housing situations are not affected or not willing to participate in housing justice movements. I argue the contrary. Studies show that mostly youths are involved in urban uprisings, which are outings of their discontent about their marginalized situations, of which their housing situations are part of. Hence, an explicit focus on youths within the housing justice movement literature, could inspire for solutions on how to channel youths' (often violent) outcries for justice – fueled by discontent – into more effective and less destructive movements of resistance.

As marked by the Nordic Council of Ministers, housing policies are pivotal in solving issues of segregation (Tunström & Wang, 2019). Since immigrants as newcomers to the housing market have less chances on a housing stratified market – with little housing mobility and little affordable rentals – they “frequently settle for overcrowded or economically exploitative living conditions” (Andersen et al., 2013 in Tunström & Wang, 2019:24). This generates socio-spatial conditions of segregation, which affect youths' chances in society with less chances on the job market, increased poverty risks, and higher chances of getting involved in violence and crime (E. Anderson, 2015; Andersson & Malmberg, 2016; Brännström, 2006; Knocke, 2016; Malmberg et al., 2013). Malmberg et al. (2013) shows how urban unrest, like the riots in Husby in 2009, is correlated with a high proportion of youths in segregated areas. As gentrification exacerbates inequalities in the housing market, as well as segregation, and undermines social cohesion, urban unrest will become an increasingly likely outcome of youths feeling deprived of their chances in

society and unheard by authorities (Andersson & Malmberg, 2016; Thörn & Thörn, 2017; Uitermark et al., 2016; van Gent & Hochstenbach, 2020).

Moreover, this thesis uncovers how youths and adults differ in perception about a new culture being introduced to their habitat. The current gentrification effects literature does not focus on this observed difference in perception. The interviewed adults seem to be more justifying of top-down strategies that impose new cultures on ‘their’ youths, because this will expose them to new ideas. Contradicting Butcher’s (2015) finding, this thesis found that youths see this as a negative change and would lose the sense of home and community, when a ‘Swedish white culture’ is being imposed on them. As Belanger (2007) notes, “The acceptance of different people or behaviors will depend on the level of acceptance of differences” (Bélanger, 2007:6). Studying the context of Järva, this study finds that youths experience a distinct culture that does not easily mix with the western/Swedish culture. This displays how current studies fail to uncover how youths’ perceptions of their local culture get affected by gentrification. This requires a thinking that centers youths’ perceptions instead of looking at communities as a homogenous group with similar perceptions. Additionally, this thesis notes that youths’ acceptance of difference also depends on whether this difference is being perceived to be brought about through a top-down way of planning. More adults were found to perceive these more positively – showing, once again how there is a difference in perception within these communities.

With Swedish cities nowadays belonging to the most segregated in Europe, segregation is becoming an increasingly pressing issue for Swedish society (Andersson & Malmberg, 2016; Knocke, 2016; Malmberg et al., 2013; Thörn & Thörn, 2017; Tunström & Wang, 2019). This is reflected in the different political discourses on segregation and integration that are coming more to the front of the public debate in Sweden (Hübinette & Lundström, 2015; C. U. Schierup & Ålund, 2011). A growing extremist populism led to less acceptance of foreigners in Sweden (ibid.). As images of hegemonic whiteness have been growing, policies of ‘being hard on crime’ in areas where mostly ethnic minorities are living, have gained support by the public too (Hübinette & Lundström, 2015). Also, in the rest of Europe discourses of ‘too much tolerance’ for youths have gained traction (Martineau, 2006). Simultaneously, this thesis finds that youths from Järva identify strongly with the Järva culture and are neither positive toward the arrival of the ‘Swedish’ culture, therefore people refer to a ‘parallel society’ (parallelsamhälle). This results in a fear of youths

being afraid that ‘white Swedes will take over’ on something that they consider home. The traumatic impact of gentrification tactics, and the fact that these changes are perceived to only benefit upper classes, have an alienating impact on youths from Järva.

Finally, because of low voter turn-outs in segregated neighborhoods and the little leverage youths have for negotiating in processes of gentrification, youths are at risk of becoming subjugated to discourses of ‘too much tolerance’ and ‘being hard on crime’. With the increasing financialization on youth-policies and other social services, meeting points for youths are increasingly at risk of being shut down (C.-U. Schierup et al., 2021). This thesis uncovered the great value that youths attach to local meeting points. Getting rid of meeting points, would be a loss to youths in offering them an alternative instead of engaging in social circles where they easily resort to crimes.



Picture 6 Worn out couch at Fryshuset in Husby. One of the meeting points for youths in Järva. (H. Koetsier, 2022)

8 Conclusion

This qualitative study, using in-depth interviews and observations, critically analyzed how gentrification poses a threat on the habitats of youths living in disadvantaged neighborhoods. Aiming to uncover how youths perceive their habitat is affected by this threat, this study also highlights the different ways of how gentrification tactics as strategies to revitalize poor neighborhoods manifest themselves. Hence, the research questions focus on the perceived threats that youths in Järva experience because of gentrification tactics presenting themselves here. For two weeks I attended gatherings where local issues were discussed among KNAs, politicians, and inhabitants. Furthermore, I got showed around in Järva by KNAs, visiting places where they saw gentrification tactics influencing the area. Six one-on-one in-depth interviews were conducted with KNAs, three with youths, and one group interview with eight youths. This thesis utilizes a Lefebvrian approach for studying the perceptions people have of their urban lives and analyzing the forces behind the processes of gentrification.

Most importantly, this thesis uncovers that youths and adults perceive the different threats of gentrification to their habitats differently. Centering the lived experiences of youths, it studies an under-researched group within gentrification literature and contributes to knowledge with insights in how youths perceive their local culture on which gentrification has a negative impact. Additionally, this study highlights the different ways of coping with this impending threat. An increasingly financialized housing sector in Sweden, results in strategies aiming for profit, where tactics of gentrification are imposed top-down as revitalizations of poor neighborhoods. Answering the research questions, youths in Järva highly value the social milieu they are living in but perceive ongoing and further gentrification as a threat in different ways. Concerning the housing market, mostly adults perceive renovation tactics as a threat to their habitats. Several grass-root organizations have established themselves, demanding justice in the housing sector. This, and previous studies, did not find how youths are represented or engaged in these movements.

Youths mostly perceive gentrification as a threat to their habitat outside of their dwellings – amenities as meeting points, local shops, and public spaces. Gentrification, in the form of revitalizing center areas, increase rents for shop owners resulting product prices becoming unaffordable for locals. Further gentrification would lead to a bigger mismatch between the supply

and demand of local services by a mostly Muslim and relatively poor population. This mismatch is, besides planned revitalizations, perceived to come forth from a changing demand by an increasing number of white Swedes. This cultural change is perceived as a threat mainly by youths and is felt in public spaces. Youths express to lose the sense of home, built up community, and Järva-culture with its specific habits, norms, and values. Top-down planned renovations and revitalizations are perceived, by youths and adults, as inadequate solutions when trying to solve local issues of segregation, crime, and education. Changes like these are perceived to only benefit those who conduct these strategies and upper classes. This exacerbates mistrust in authorities and a feeling of dissatisfaction of their habitat. Hence, all interviewees stress a needs-based policy approach, using local knowledge and empowering marginalized communities. Youths specifically stress the importance of focusing on improving education and job opportunities for them.

Discussing the results, I argue that the transition in the Swedish housing sector, from housing as a common good to housing as a commodity, pushes people further away from their habitats – habiting as Lefebvre (1970) calls is. Attracting investments into housing, amenities, and public spaces, generates a mismatch in supply and demand, leading to peoples’ discontent with their habitat. This, causing a feeling of being let down and being unheard by the state, makes youths in this study want to move. Looking at passed studies, such a situation also makes urban uprising – in the form of riots – more likely as a last resort, engaging mainly youths from disadvantaged neighborhoods. Lastly, this thesis discusses a blind field in the gentrification effects literature. The, few, previous studies discussing on how youths from disadvantaged neighborhoods get affected by gentrification, lack a focus on how youths are resisting the threats gentrification poses on their housing situations. Studying how youths are engaged in housing justice movements, can provide empowering insights on how youths resist and further could contribute to crucial, and by them required justice.

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10 Appendix

10.1 Coding frame, per research question

Coping with the threat:

- Abandon
- Withdrawing
 1. Private sphere
 2. Designated meeting points
- Oppose new arrivals
- Investing in public spaces (as occupation)
- Feeling detached from institutions/politics
- Discussing events (seen as threat from gentrification) with each other

Manifestation of the threat:

Top-Down (instead of using local knowledge bottom-up)

- Investments into middle class dwellings
- Efforts to try to pimp its image by state
 1. More police surveillance
 2. Renovating areas with center function
 3. Higher rents for shop owners
- Not listening to local knowledge/no structure for bottom-up initiatives

Consequence of the marketized housing market

- Appropriating public spaces
- Short term renting contract
- Renovating social housing so it goes up in price category
- Privatization of public social housing
- Demoviction

How would youths experience:

- Feeling looked down upon
- Others would not fit in the existing culture either
- Services would get more expensive
- Would not feel at home anymore
- Pressure to behave differently
 1. Language
 2. 'Playfulness'
 3. Sharing-habits

10.2 Interview questions (in Swedish)

Intro

- Alla åsikter uppskattas (konversation)
- Allt är anonymt
- Intervjun spelas in
- Intervjuen har två delar:
 1. nuvarande livsmiljön
 2. hot av gentrifiering

Nuvarende livsmiljö

- Beskriv din livsmiljö (Vad ger dig din livsmiljö och vad krävs av en bra livsmiljö)
- Vad gör du helst/oftast på din fri tid?
- Vart går du för att utöva denna aktivitet?
- Tillsammans med vem gör du denna aktiviteten?
- Vilka andra är på plats när du är där?
- Vad håller de andra på med?
- Vilka krav har du på din aktivitetsplats (och faciliteterna runtom)?
- Vid vilken tid kommer du här?
- Under vilka omständigheter kommer hit?
- Hur ofta kommer du här?

- Kan du ge mig exempel på vad du uppskattar på det här stället?
- Kan du beskriva varför du uppskattar detta ställe?

- Kan du ge ett exempel på vad du inte uppskattar här?
- Kan du beskriva varför du inte uppskattar detta ställe på dom här momenten?

- Från 1 till 10, hur mycket uppskattar du det här stället?
- Vad behövs för att göra detta betyg högre?
- Vad betyder detta ställe för dig i ditt 'everyday life'?

Hot av gentrifiering

- Hur upplever du hotet av gentrifiering?
- Vilka exempel kan du ge där gentrifiering sker nu?
- Hur skulle du uppleva Järva om det skulle gentrifiera mer?
- Hur skulle du reagera på denna förändringen? (motstå/lämna eller gå mer inomhus)
- Om sån här förändring skulle hända, vem skulle drabbas?
- Om sån här förändring skulle hända, vem skulle gynnas av det här? (nuvarande familjer/nya familjer/ungdomar/lägre inkomst grupper/högre inkomst grupper)

- Kan du ge ett bra exempel på var man har ändrad platser i Järva?
- Vad skulle vara bästa sättet att uppnå önskad förändring i Järva?
- Vem skulle vara involverad i den här processen?
- Vilken myndighet tycker du skulle göra detta?