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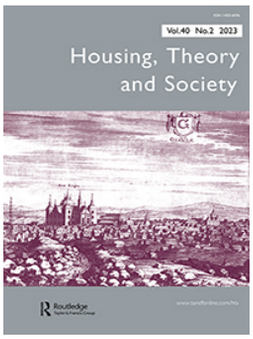
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Understanding the Housing Pathways and Migration Plans of Young Talents in Metropolises–A Case Study of Shenzhen

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ABSTRACT

In the context of skyrocketing house prices and fierce competition for talents between cities, this study explores the housing pathways of young talents and their future migration plans in Shenzhen, China. Using the housing pathways approach and Bourdieu's theory of practice with three concepts, this study uncovers how structural factors and the often-overlooked agency factors together influence the formation of different housing pathways. Drawing on 18 semi-structured interviews with young talents, four different housing pathways were identified: staying at parents' home, private renting to owning, talented renting, and progressive private renting. We found that the interaction of habitus and different forms of capital shapes different housing pathways. In addition, young talents following different housing pathways have various future migration plans. This paper sheds new light on the use of the housing pathways approach and Bourdieu's theory of practice in providing a nuanced understanding of housing and migration behaviour.

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Young talents; housing pathways; migration plans; habitus; capital; field

Introduction

In the knowledge-based economy, cities all over the world are struggling to attract and retain young talents[1] to stimulate cities' social and economic development (Florida 2006). The housing career in the city is regarded as a major determinant of whether young talents stay or leave the city (Aner 2016; Cui, Geertman, and Hooimeijer 2015; Dainov and Sauka 2010; Teixeira and Drolet 2018). Some young talents successfully settled in cities following the upward housing ladder such as "rent-to-own" whereas others left the city due to twisted housing ladder routes, such as "snake", "slide down", or "move backwards" (Bobek, Pembroke, and Wickham 2020; Lennartz, Arundel, and Ronald 2016). In these cases, the housing situation did not improve or even deteriorated over time (Dainov and Sauka 2010). The twisted housing ladder routes are particularly relevant in the case of young migrants in metropolitan areas with high house prices like Amsterdam

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(Hochstenbach and Boterman 2015), Beijing (Wang, Li, and Deng 2017), Helsinki (Eskelä 2018), Klang valley (Hamzah and Zyed 2020), and San Francisco (Kober 2021), etc. In China, for example, an emerging social phenomenon called "Escape from Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen" indicates that the housing pressure in these first-tier cities[2] is so high that a number of young talents are choosing not to go to or leave these cities (Jin et al. 2022; Xu, Wang, and Nygaard 2022). According to a survey among 2,000 respondents (previously) working or studying in first-tier cities, 71% have left or are considering leaving this city, with 64% of them blaming it on high house prices (China Youth Daily 2017).

The above phenomenon reflects two important social problems. From the perspective of metropolitan cities, the loss of young talents is to some extent reducing the innovation and economic growth of cities (Florida 2005; Wong and Yip 1999). From the perspective of young talents, the precarious housing situation in metropolitan cities is equally alarming. In recent years, the shortage of housing supply, rising house prices and rents, increased educational costs, the tight mortgage market, unstable labour market conditions, riskier employment prospects, etc. have exacerbated the housing difficulties of young people all over the world (Hochstenbach and Boterman 2015; McKee 2012). Therefore, examining the housing situation of young talents in metropolitan cities, exploring what factors contribute to differences in their housing situations, and obtaining insight into their future migration plans are necessary and important. The results could help metropolitan cities to attract and retain young talents and to provide suggestions to find tools to improve young talents' housing situations.

Much research has already been done into the housing situation of young people in metropolitan cities. Despite the wealth of literature in this area, there remain two research gaps. First, many existing studies are cross-sectional which tend to examine young people's static housing choices at a certain point in time, such as home-buying (Lennartz, Arundel, and Ronald 2014) and living in shared housing (Maalsen 2019). The cross-sectional approach neglects the changes in the housing situation over time (Coolen, Boelhouwer, and van Driel 2002). The housing conditions attained in the past can strongly influence the present housing situation (Bolt and van Kempen 2002). For example, people who previously had very negative experiences with private rental housing may not choose to continue renting in the future. The dynamic housing pathways[3] approach overcomes this problem by examining the housing situation over a period of time instead of only once at a specific point in time.

The second gap concerns the lack of research into agency factors[4]. A lot of effort has been exerted on exploring the role of structural factors[4] in explaining differences in the housing situation of young people, including the changing housing market, the housing provision regime, the stability of the labour market, the institutional constraints, the intergenerational transfer, and other social-economic factors. For example, Boelhouwer (2020) studied the impact of the housing market on social inequalities and pointed out that the younger generation benefits less from mortgage interest tax relief because of changes in the Dutch housing mortgage policy since 2015. Maroto and Severson (2019) suggested that labour precarity influences young adults in Canada to enter the housing market. The findings of empirical research by Wang, Li, and Deng (2017) revealed that institutional factors, such as the household registration (hukou) system, still play a significant role in accessing social welfare (urban public housing) for skilled young

workers in Beijing, China. Druta and Ronald (2017) explored the housing trajectories of young adults in the UK. They found that homeownership is an "ideal gift" from parents, which smoothens the housing pathway for young adults. The research of Lennartz and Helbrecht (2018) in Germany and Deng, Hoekstra, and Elsinga (2020) in China also show that family financial support becomes increasingly important in shaping youngsters' housing pathways. Xian and Forrest (2020) highlighted the need to focus on the impacts of social-economic factors, such as educational level and the specific local context on forming young people's housing choices. Despite these and other studies, relatively little attention has been paid to agency factors, such as the personal abilities of how young talents think and react to the structural factors that shape their housing pathways. Studies like Clapham (2005), Clapham et al. (2014), and Balampanidis (2020) have demonstrated that agency factors might play an important role in the formation of people's housing pathways.

To fill in the gaps, i.e. the lack of research into the longitudinal housing situation and the exclusion of agency factors, the current study aims to obtain insights into the housing pathways and future migration plans of young talents and to explore differences in these housing pathways by considering both structural and agency factors.

In this study, we conducted a qualitative retrospective study by exploring and analysing the past and present housing narratives of young talents in Shenzhen, China. During the past four decades, Shenzhen has transformed from a cluster of rural villages and townships of about 300,000 people into a metropolitan city with a population of more than 17 million, of which over 70% are migrants (Statistics Bureau of Shenzhen Municipality 2021). In addition, Shenzhen, as an international metropolitan city, has an average population age of 33 years. The proportion of talents reached 44.5% in 2018 (Liang 2020), which represents a typical gathering place for young talents. The diversity of the housing market in Shenzhen also provides a good arena for analysing the different housing situations of young talents (Li et al. 2021). Therefore, as a city with a large number of skilled young migrants, Shenzhen seems to serve as a good case to investigate the housing issues and migration plans of young talents. Specifically, we focus on addressing the following research questions:

(1) What are the housing pathways of young talents in Shenzhen and how do they differ from each other?
(2) What structural and agency factors are capable of explaining these differences?
(3) What are the future migration plans of young talents following different types of housing pathways in Shenzhen?

The housing pathways approach (Clapham 2005) and Bourdieu's theory of practice with concepts of "habitus", "field", and "capital" (Bourdieu 1984, 1986) have been used as a research framework and theoretical basis for this study, respectively. The housing pathways approach allows us to study the housing practices of young talents over a period of time and to identify their different housing pathways. The housing pathways approach is defined by Clapham (2005) as a research framework used to frame thoughts, rather than a theory. While the approach emphasizes that both structural and agency factors influence housing outcomes, it does not reveal how these factors interact in doing so. Therefore, to explain what causes the

differences in housing pathways of young talents in metropolitan cities, we turned to Bourdieu's theory of practice in which people are considered to be active individuals who use different "capital" to generate practice in a certain "field" according to their "habitus" (Bourdieu 1984, 1986). Applied to the field of housing, a young talent's outcome of habitus, such as a need to buy a house, interacts with the acquired level of capital (economic, social, and cultural capital) to generate housing-related practices and outcomes towards the housing field, i.e. the owner-occupied sector. In summary, the housing pathways approach sheds light on the various patterns regarding the previous and current housing situations of young talents. Bourdieu's theory can be used as a solid theoretical framework to explain the differences between these housing patterns.

Compared with previous research using the same theory (Hochstenbach and Boterman 2015), the current study is novel in introducing and examining the role of "habitus" in forming young talents' housing pathways. In addition, the current study links the housing pathways of young talents to their future migration plan, which extends the framework of the housing pathways approach.

Literature Review

Housing Pathways Approach

The concept of housing pathways is often used interchangeably with "housing career" and "housing trajectory" and is defined as patterns of interaction (practices) concerning house and home, over time and space (Clapham 2002). Rather than simply providing descriptions of the individual's or household's housing experiences, the housing pathways approach was developed by Clapham as a structure for analysis in the field of housing studies (Clapham 2002, 2005; Clapham et al. 2014). The housing pathways approach was adopted for this study as it provides a framework for housing research that is 1) dynamic, since it provides a deeper insight and understanding of the housing experience than just static location knowledge, 2) flexible, since it allows for the study of a shorter period of time 3) taking the individual (household) as the creative subject and 4) considering the impact of both structural and agency factors on housing outcomes. Figure 1 illustrates the analysis framework of this study by using the housing pathways approach.

A housing pathway is linked to many other areas of life and runs alongside employment pathways (Clapham 2005). For example, the housing pathway is influenced by changes in household structure relating to marriage, the birth of children, or divorce. In addition, drawing from Giddens's structuration theory (Giddens 1984), the housing pathways approach highlights both structural and agency factors as influencing factors providing opportunities or imposing constraints on the individual's (household's) dynamic housing experience (Opit, Witten, and Kearns 2019). Along the housing pathway, individuals and households make housing choices among the opportunities open to them under the constraints (Clapham 2005).

In recent literature, the housing pathways approach has been used as a tool to unfold various housing phenomena, such as residential stability (Meeus and De Decker 2015), homelessness (Fitzpatrick, Bramley, and Johnsen 2013), and housing of the elderly (Bates

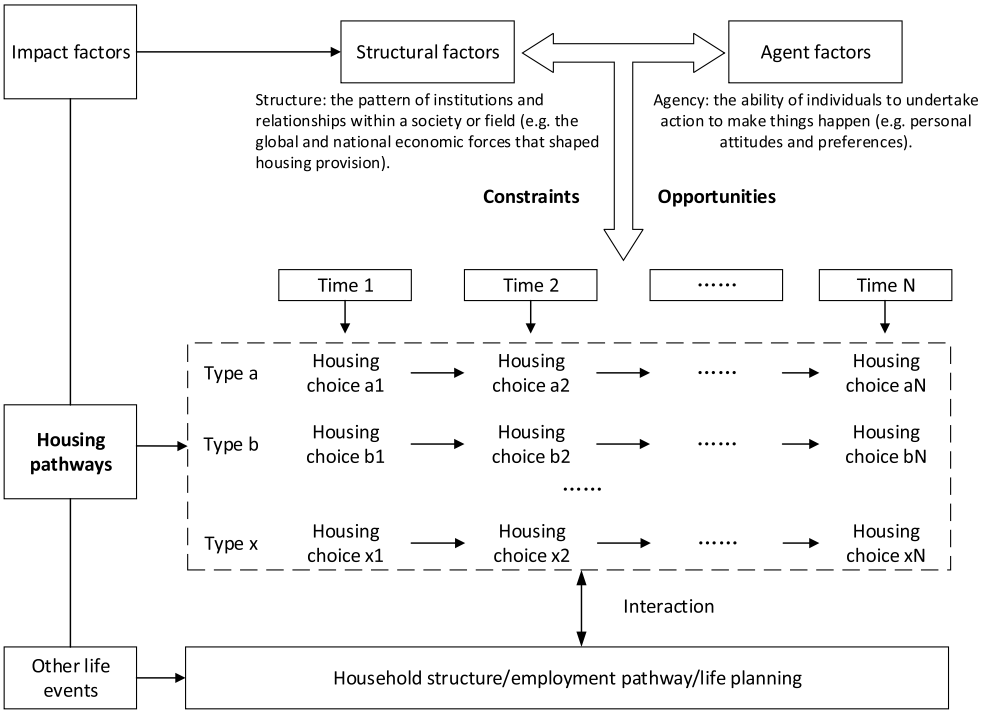


Figure 1. Analysis framework of the housing pathways approach.
Source: adapted from Clapham (2005, 2012) by authors

et al. 2020), young people (Hamzah and Zyed 2020; Hochstenbach and Boterman 2015), and highly-skilled migrants (Balampanidis 2020; Eskelä 2018).

Habitus, Capital, and Field

In the course of research attempting to interpret social phenomena and mechanisms such as class inequality and practical logic of everyday life, the French sociologist Bourdieu developed a set of theories and concepts (Power 1999). Bourdieu's theory emphasizes the interaction of structure and agency. His key theoretical claims are based on the three core concepts of "habitus", "capital", and "field" (Bourdieu 1984).

The concept of habitus forms the core of the theoretical framework of Bourdieu. In the words of Bourdieu:

> The conditionings associated with a particular class of conditions of existence produce ***habitus***, systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures . . . . . (Bourdieu 1990, 53). . . . . it is a socialized body, a structured body, a body which has incorporated the immanent structures of a world or of a particular sector of that world - a field - and which structures the perception of that world as well as action in that world (Bourdieu 1998, 81).

In other words, ***habitus*** refers to a durable, transposable system of dispositions that are ways of being, observing, acting, and thinking, a system of scheme or schema or structures of perceptions, concepts, actions, distinctions, and principles for generating

and organizing practices and representations (Bourdieu 1990, 53). Durable means that habitus is a relatively stable disposition acquired from past life experiences, and transposable means that habitus also adapts to changes in experience and environment. For example, childhood housing experiences shape habitus that affects present housing choices, and present housing experiences shape future housing habitus.

Habitus is also "a way of describing the embodiment of social structures and history in individuals – it is a set of dispositions, internal to the individual, that both reflects external social structures and shapes how the individual perceives the world and acts in it" (Power 1999).

From the above descriptions, it can be seen that habitus is an abstract, complex and multifaceted concept. In our view, habitus can be considered as a mediator between social structures, e.g. family and cultural norms, that influence the individual and the individual's perception of the world and action, which are the outcome of habitus (see Figure 2).

Since habitus is a set of dispositions, which are difficult to describe, measure, and analyse, we have focused on the outcome of habitus in the current study. Specifically, the outcome of habitus consists of at least two components when analysing people's housing pathways. Firstly, the individuals' perception of the world can be operationalized into the attitude towards different housing tenure, such as private renting and owning. The attitude towards housing tenure has been proven to be one the of most important determinants of people's tenure choice (Lennartz 2013; Li et al. 2022). Secondly, individuals' actions can be operationalized into people's strategies for their housing choice. Such strategy can be influenced by habitus and attitudes towards different types of housing. For example, people who are from higher-income families or who always lived in an owner-occupied dwelling might have a habitus that shapes a relatively positive attitude towards an owner-occupied dwelling and they may use strategies, such as saving up or getting a mortgage, to buy a house.

According to Bourdieu (1986), "capital is accumulated labour (in its materialized form or its incorporated, embodied form) which, when appropriated on a private, i.e. exclusive, basis by agents or groups of agents, enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labour". Capital often presents itself in three forms: economic, cultural, and social capital. Economic capital can be directly and immediately converted into money and may be institutionalized as property rights. Cultural capital, in some situations, can be transformed into economic capital and can be institutionalized as educational qualifications. Social capital, accrued from social networks, can, in some cases, be transformed into economic capital and can be institutionalized in the form of titles of nobility (Bourdieu 1986).

In addition to the traditional definition of capital above, other forms of capital also exist. In the housing field, factors like "holding a Shenzhen hukou", "being a young talent", "the willingness to enter the informal housing market" and "being employed by certain companies" are all resources that people can use to access specific housing opportunities. For example, young talents who are employed by a state-owned company have the opportunity to apply for talented rental housing.

Drawing on the work of Boterman (2012) and Hochstenbach and Boterman (2015), examples of the economic, cultural, social capital, and other forms of capital – applied to the housing market – are shown in Table 1.

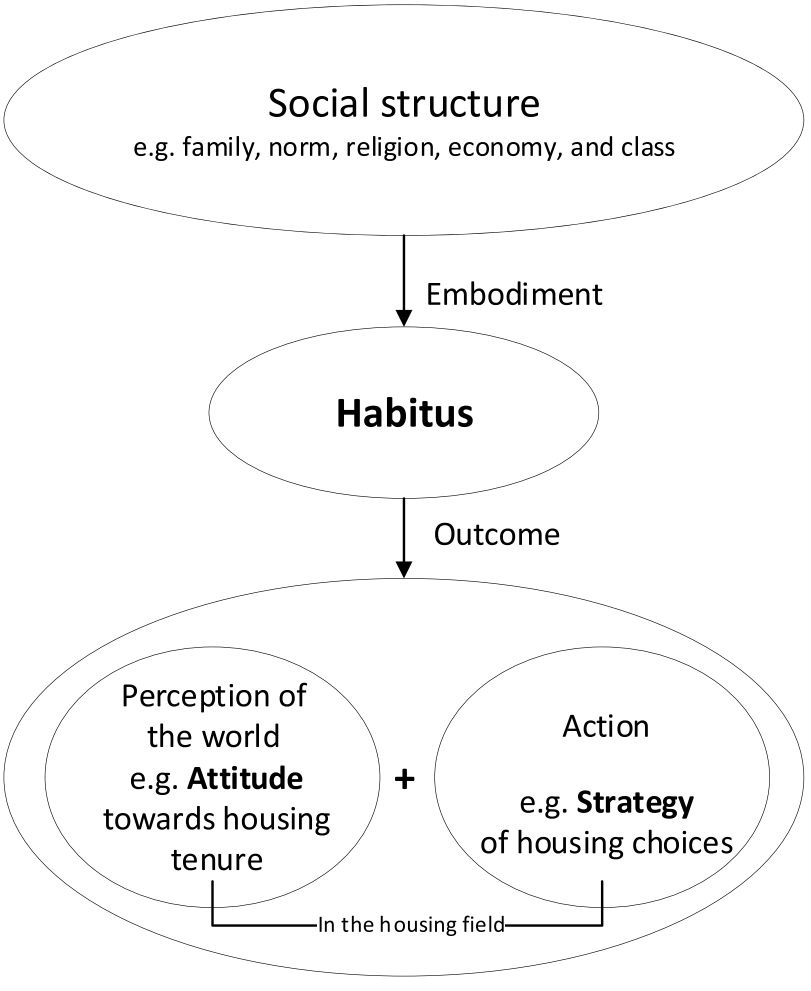


Figure 2. The role of habitus.
Source: drawn by authors

The habitus and capital held by the actor must have a field to deploy. A field is a bounded social space that has its own principles. Bourdieu likens a field to a game that has specific rules and stakes, which includes players who occupy dominant positions according to their habitus and capital (Bourdieu 1984). The fields analysed by Bourdieu include the field of law, the field of art, the field of science, and the field of cultural production, to name just a few. In the current paper, the field refers to the field of housing.

From the above analysis of the concepts of habitus, capital, and field, it is clear that these three concepts incorporate elements of both agency and structure. Bourdieu claimed that practice – what one does in everyday life – is the result of the relationship between an actor's habitus, different forms of capital, and the field of the action (Power 1999).

Table 1. Various types of capital.

Types of capital	Examples
Economic capital	Income (the stability of incomes), inherited assets, financial assistance, other family resources, parents' background (support from family)
Cultural capital	Education, knowledge of the housing market, risk-taking willingness
Social capital	Resources accrued through social networks such as friends and acquaintances. For example, information and/or available housing within the social network, the attributes of the company (the location of the working place/the welfare of the company)
Other forms of capital (in the housing field)	holding a Shenzhen hukou; being young talents; the willingness to enter the informal housing market; being employed by certain companies (for example the state-owned companies which provide talented rental housing for their employees)

Source: adapted from Boterman (2012); Hochstenbach and Boterman (2015) by authors.

The Shenzhen Context

Whereas we explore the housing pathways of young talents in Shenzhen, some information about the Shenzhen housing market situation is needed. Since being designated as one of China's five Special Economic Zones in the 1980s, Shenzhen has experienced phenomenal population growth (from 0.31 million in 1979 to 17.63 million in 2020), which has contributed to a booming housing market. The average annual house price growth in Shenzhen was 11% over the last decade and its average house price is now the world's fifth most expensive (CBRE 2020). In contrast, the presence of poorly built, cheap, and available rental housing in urban villages has kept the average rent in Shenzhen relatively low, which in turn has contributed significantly to the development of the private rental sector (PRS) (Li et al. 2021; Zhou 2019). According to a recent report, 77% of the population lives in the private rental sector in Shenzhen (China Construction News 2022).

The details of the different tenure types in Shenzhen are depicted in Table 2. There are three primary ways of entering the owner-occupied sector. First, to purchase commercial housing. Commercial housing used to be supplied without restrictions. However, since the Purchase Restriction Policy in 2010, entry access is restricted not only by economic capital but also by institutional restrictions including local household registration (hukou) and the years of participating in local social insurance (Gong and MacLachlan 2020). It is important to point out that the Shenzhen Talent Introduction Policy allows highly educated and highly skilled migrants to readily obtain a Shenzhen hukou (HRSSASM 2016). Second, government policy-supported housing can be purchased. Since 2010, the government has mainly supplied Affordable Commercial Residential Housing (ACRH), which refers to housing with limited size, sales price, and transferability period. There are restrictions on buying ACRH, based on the number of years of having obtained a formal Shenzhen hukou and paying local social insurance (Gong and MacLachlan 2020; Li and Shamsuddin 2022). As a result, younger people may rarely enter homeownership through ACRH. The third way is to enter homeownership in an informal way, such as purchasing a small property rights housing (SPRH).[5] By drastically cutting development costs, including land transfer fees and various taxes, the SPRH is priced at 40–60% below regular commercial house prices (He et al. 2019; Wang, Sun, and Li 2014). Therefore, those who have insufficient economic capital and are willing to take risks might choose to buy SPRH

Table 2. Housing sectors (fields) in Shenzhen.

Housing sectors	Subsectors	Provider	Target groups/requirements
Owner occupied sector	**Commercial Housing** (CH, Shangpin Fang in Chinese)	Market	• Shenzhen hukou and has paid social insurance for at least 3 years; • No Shenzhen hukou but has paid social insurance for at least
	Policy supported housing (Mainly **Affordable Commercial Residential Housing** (ACRH, Anjuxing Shangpinfang in Chinese))	Government	• Shenzhen hukou, has paid social insurance for at least 5 years (3 years for talents), and no homeownership in Shenzhen
	Other (such as **Small Property Rights Housing** (SPRH, Xiaochanquan Fang in Chinese))	Market (informal)	• Everyone
Private rental sector	**Urban village rental housing** (UVRH, Chengzhongcun Zhufang in Chinese)	Market (informal)	• Everyone
	Commercial rental housing (CRH)	Market	• Everyone
	Long-term rental apartment (LTRA, Changzu Gongyu in Chinese)	Market	• Everyone
Public rental sector	**Public rental housing** (PRH, Gonggong Zulin Zhufang in Chinese)	Government	• Shenzhen hukou, and has paid social insurance for at least 3 years (1 year for talents), and no homeownership or public housing in Shenzhen
	Talented rental housing (TRH, Rencai Fang[8] in Chinese)	Government (Secondary allocation by the employer)	• Employees in certain companies without homeownership or public housing in Shenzhen
Other	Company provided housing	Employer	• Employees in certain companies

Sources: (Gong and MacLachlan 2020; HCBSM 2016, 2021; Li and Shamsuddin 2022).

The private rented sector can be divided into three sub-sectors according to the variation in housing conditions, neighbourhood environment, and landlord service: urban village rental housing, commercial rental housing, and Long-term Rental Apartment (LTRA) (Li et al. (2021). All housing in these three sub-sectors is supplied by the market and there are no institutional restrictions on who can rent them. Urban village rental housing is informal housing built on collective land. Most urban villages are densely populated and have inadequate lighting and poor infrastructure. The housing conditions can be described as overcrowded, in the lack of basic facilities such as indoor toilets and kitchens (Wu 2016). Commercial rental housing is generally located in a gated community that provides a host of social, commercial, and recreational services which is rented out by the private owners of commercial housing and condominiums (Li et al. 2021; Wu 2012). LTRAs are defined as dwellings rented out and managed by professional companies with a tenancy period that is often longer than one year. LTRAs are usually decorated, furnished, equipped with appliances, ready for immediate move-in, with professional live-in managers, and with rents typically 15% to 30% higher than comparable spaces nearby (Li et al. 2021; Zheng 2018).

There are two main types of social rental housing in Shenzhen after 2010. The first one is Public Rental Housing (PRH), which refers to housing provided by the government with a limited size and rental price. The PRH is offered to low- and middle-income households or single residents with housing difficulties (HCBSM 2014). The rent of PRH is usually 30%

of the market rent. The initial requirements for applying for PRH are to obtain a Shenzhen hukou and to participate in social insurance for 3 years. Those who meet the criteria need to apply first and then they will be put on a waiting list for suitable housing (Gong and MacLachlan 2020). The second one is Talented rental housing (TRH), which is provided for highly educated and skilled workers. The rent for TRH is usually 60% of the market rent. The current supply pattern of TRH requires the key enterprises[6] to apply to the government first. Then the government scrutinizes the application and supplies the TRH to qualified enterprises. The qualified enterprises then set their own allocation criteria accordingly to rent the TRH to their talents[7] (Gong and MacLachlan 2020; Wang and Pan 2019). Thus, the access of young talents to talent housing is directly related to their job opportunities.

There are also other forms of residential housing, such as housing provided by the employer. The employer's housing is either self-built or rented from the market and then supplied to the employees. This is mainly the case in factories and service industries that provide shared accommodation for low-income migrants (Huang and Tao 2015). Or, state-owned enterprises such as hospitals, universities, and other institutions provide specialized housing for talents to attract them (Huang and Tao 2015). The latter applies to the young talents included in the current study. Thus, access to company-provided housing is also mainly related to job opportunities.

Methodology

The data of the current study draws from online semi-structured interviews with 18 young talents[1], sometimes accompanied by their family members (if have), who work and live in Shenzhen. The interviews were conducted in November and December 2021 using social apps such as WeChat video and Tencent Meeting. University students were not included because all students can live in the special dormitories that Chinese universities provide. A combination method of snowball sampling and purposive sampling was adopted to reach the potential interviewees. The interviewees were recruited via personal networks and recommendations from interviewees. Different types of suitable interviewees were purposively selected to ensure a good mix in the resulting sample, based on gender, place of birth, educational background, marital status, occupation, and length of residence in Shenzhen. The characteristics of all respondents are shown in Table 3.

Our interview was a retrospective investigation of young talents' housing pathways after entering employment in Shenzhen and lasted between 30 minutes and 2 hours. The interviewees were asked to reflect in detail on their housing pathways, from the first dwelling after entering employment in Shenzhen to the current dwelling at the time of the interview. More specifically, respondents were asked to provide information on:

(1) detailed characteristics of each dwelling including location, tenure type, size, cost (rent or monthly payment), number of residents, travel convenience, neighbourhood amenities, etc.;
(2) factors that influenced their choice for each dwelling;
(3) perceptions/attitudes concerning each dwelling;
(4) reasons for each move;

Table 3. Personal characteristics.

	Mean/Number	Percentage
Age(mean)	23–33(28.9)	
Gender		
Male	9	50%
Female	9	50%
Place of birth[9]		
Shenzhen	4	22%
Other	14	78%
Educational level		
High school and below	1	6%
Bachelor	6	33%
Master	8	44%
PhD	3	17%
Household type		
Married with child	6	33%
Married without child	2	11%
In a relationship	5	28%
Single	5	28%
Occupation		
Private company	11	61%
State-owned company	4	22%
Other	3	17%
Length of residence in Shenzhen (since starting work)		
<2years	5	28%
2-5years	8	44%
> 5 years	5	28%

(5) changes in life events that were related to housing, e.g. changing jobs, falling in love, and having children;
(6) housing visions/plans for the next 5-10 years;
(7) whether they intended to continue to work and live in Shenzhen in the next 5-10 years.

All the interviews were audio-recorded with the respondents' oral consent and transcribed in Chinese. The names used in the current paper are pseudonyms and any personal information disclosed has been removed.

The Atlas. ti program was used to code the transcripts using both inductive and deductive coding techniques (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane 2006). The coding system was first formulated according to the theoretical frameworks of both the housing pathways approach and the theory of Bourdieu and then developed to reflect the themes that emerged during the interviews. For example, we coded various housing situations according to the scheme provided in Table 2 and coded economic factors that influenced housing choices as economic capital. A coding scheme of various forms of habitus was developed in the course of the interviews. Finally, the built-in Networks function of Atlas. ti was used to construct relationships between the codes to identify, analyse and classify different housing pathways. For instance, the connections between the various housing situations (fields) of a respondent were constructed as a network resulting in the housing pathway of the respondent (see Figure 3). Adding codes to the type of capital, the various forms of habitus, and specific life events to this network further contributed to disentangling the various factors leading to differences in housing pathways. All codes and networks were written in English and quotations were translated from Chinese to English.

Findings

A summary of the 18 housing pathways is depicted in Figure 3. Important housing and other basic features are included in the Figure. Building on the work of Clapham et al. (2014) and Hochstenbach and Boterman (2015), we ultimately identified four different types of housing pathways based on the analysis of the codes and networks outlined in the current interviews. The four are housing pathways "staying at parents' home (SPH)", "private renting to owning in Shenzhen (PRTO)", "(private renting to) talented renting (PRTTR)", and "progressive private renting (PPR)". These four housing pathways are distinct from each other mainly in the past and present predominant tenure (housing fields) occupied by young talents as well as the number and type of moves. A summary of the various housing pathways is shown in Table 4.

We also found that the formation of different housing pathways can be explained by the interaction of the various habitus and the various economic, social, and cultural capital (see Table 4). The next parts describe how habitus, capital, and the housing fields interact to shape different housing pathways.

Staying at Parents' Home (SPH)

Housing Field, Habitus, and Capital

Four respondents, who are Shenzhen locals, are following the SPH pathway, due to the fact that their parents are homeowners in Shenzhen. This group of respondents chooses to continue living with their parents after entering the labour market. For example, Linda has been working in Shenzhen for four years and has always been living in her parents' house.

> Since I returned to work in Shenzhen, I have been living with my other 2 siblings in my parents' house, which is around 200 m^2. [. . . . .] At present, I don't want to live independently because I can't handle grocery shopping, cooking, and washing dishes on my own, for example. [. . .. . .] Basically, I would like to be able to interact closely with my family and I am satisfied with my current housing situation. [. . . . .] I'll buy my own house when I get married. (Linda, female, 28, master, Shenzhen local)

The possession of a Shenzhen hukou is the basic capital for respondents who follow this pathway. The capital allows them to receive many local welfare benefits such as the direct eligibility to buy a house and the possibility of public rental housing. In the case of Linda, she can buy a house when she wishes.

We also found that respondents who follow this pathway have some economic capital of their own, primarily derived from their parents. Because of the intimate relationship between parents and children in China, it is common for children to still live with their parents even after they have started working (Li and Shin 2013; Or 2017). Respondents tend to obtain satisfactory housing conditions through mutual support with their parents. On the other hand, parents get the accompaniment and care of their children. These respondents have always lived in an owner-occupied dwelling, and, consequently, their habitus makes them more positive towards owner-occupied housing. Living with their parents also helped them to save money and get financial support from their parents to buy a house.

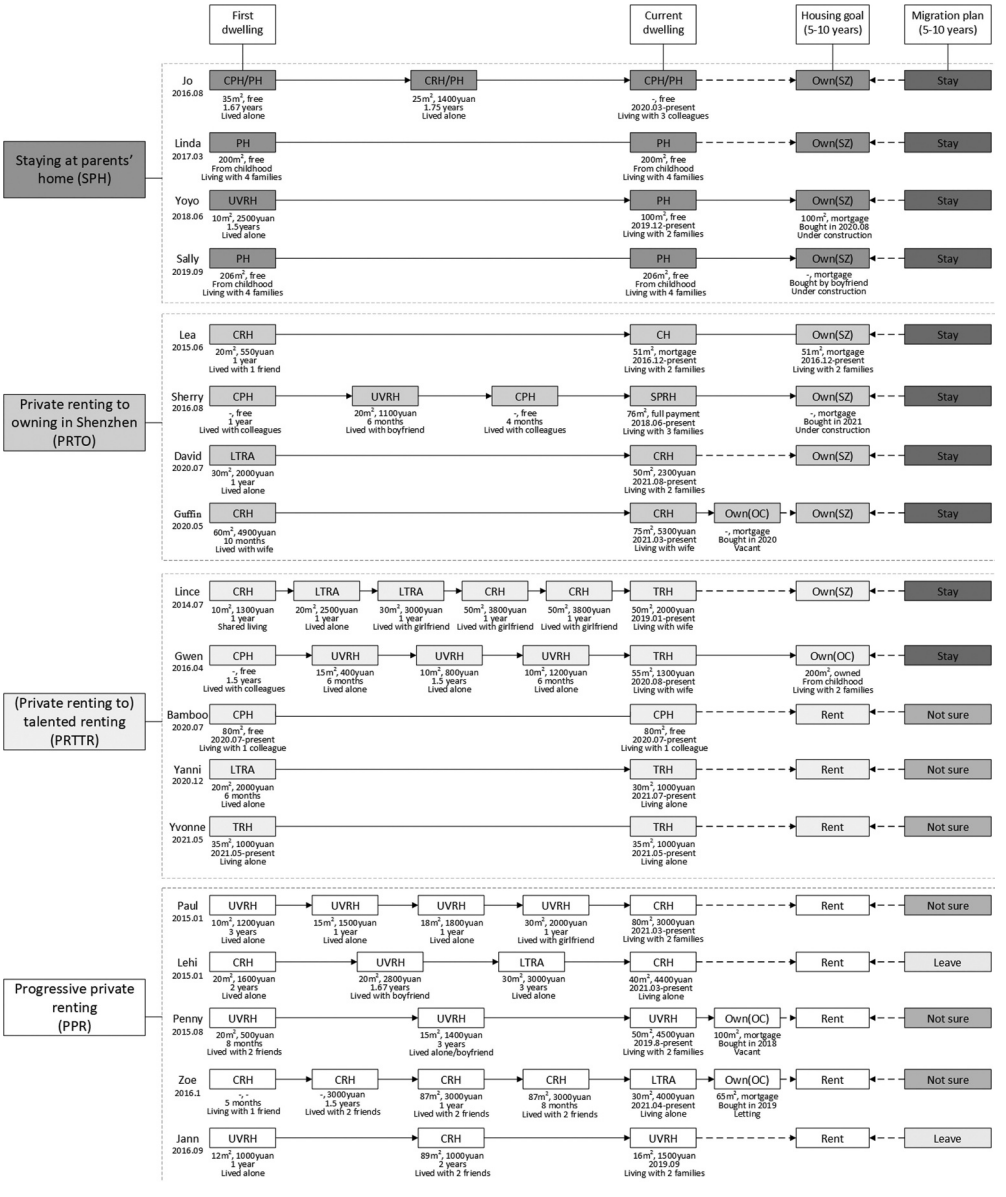


Figure 3. General housing pathways of all the interviewees.
Notes: 1. Meaning of different lines: Past and present: solid line with arrows →; Future: dotted line with arrows ⇢; Remain the same: solid line without arrows —. 2. Codes and description in brackets: PH (Parents' housing); CPH: (Company provided housing); CH: (Commercial housing); CRH: (Commercial rental housing); SPRH: (Small Property Rights Housing); UVRH: (Urban village rental housing); LTRA: (Long term rental apartment); TRH: (Talented rental housing); SZ: (Shenzhen); OC (Other cities).

In addition, some respondents were influenced by their parents' experience of successfully purchasing a house in Shenzhen and developed habitus that shaped their beliefs that homeownership is a good investment and that it is easy to afford a house by themselves in the long run. Respondents might use the economic capital that they can

Table 4. Characteristics of the four housing pathways for young talents in Shenzhen.

Housing pathways	Frequency and types of moves	Main sub-housing fields	Outcome of habitus		Dominant Capital	Future migration plan
			Attitude towards housing tenure and subsector	Strategy		
Staying at parents' home (SPH)	Seldom move. Marriage or having a child	Parents' local housing; (Future) Owner-occupied (Shenzhen)	Deep-rooted belief in homeownership (e.g. as a prerequisite for marriage or as a good investment)	Building close relationships with family members to save or borrow money to buy a house;	Economic capital; Cultural capital; Shenzhen hukou	Stay in Shenzhen
Private renting to owning in Shenzhen (PRTO)	Few moves. Marriage or having a child	Commercial rental/LTRA; Owner-occupied (Shenzhen)	Deep-rooted belief in homeownership (e.g. as a prerequisite for marriage or as a good investment)	Saving or borrowing money from others to buy a house; Buying even in other cities	Economic capital; Social capital; Shenzhen hukou; The willingness to enter the informal housing market	Stay in Shenzhen
(Private renting to) talented renting (PRTTR)	Few moves. Job change	Talented housing/ company-provided housing	Positive attitude towards talented renting (e.g. it is cheaper and has better housing conditions)	Opportunities driven (working for specific companies)	Cultural capital; Social capital; Being employed by certain companies; Being young talents	Stay or not sure
Progressive private renting (PPR)	Frequent move. Job change/better living conditions/in a relationship/ marriage or having a child	Urban village rental; Commercial rental/LTRA; Owner-occupied (other cities)	[For some] Deep-rooted beliefs in homeownership; (e.g. as prerequisite for marriage) [For some] Positive attitude towards private renting (e.g. it is cheaper and more flexible)	Buying even in other cities; Renting is an active or passive choice	Lack of all kinds of capital especially economic capital	Not sure or leave

obtain to acquire homeownership. Thus, habitus is a relevant concept for understanding housing behaviour. As Yoyo said,

> We bought a pre-sale house which is still under construction after we got married. [. . .. . .] At present, we use almost all of our salary to pay the monthly mortgage. I'm grateful that we can now live in my parents' house without paying rent. Otherwise, we'd be overdrawn. Although the monthly mortgage seems very high now, a few years later when prices and wages increase, paying the monthly mortgage will be relatively easier. [. . .. . .] My parents' house was bought in 2005 when the price of 3000–4000 yuan (RMB)/m^2 was considered to be expensive, but now the price appears to be super cheap. (Yoyo, female, 28, master, Shenzhen local)

As locals, the cultural capital of knowing the housing market and system in Shenzhen is another typical feature of young talents who follow this housing pathway. For example, some respondents know how to find both satisfying and cheap housing, as well as which policies to use to obtain maximum benefits.

> I plan to buy a second-hand house in Longgang which is relatively cheap. [. . .. . .]I plan to buy it after I get married. Because as far as I know, a married couple can get a loan of 900,000 yuan, almost twice that of a single. So it will be more cost-effective to buy after marriage. (Jo, male, 26, bachelor, Shenzhen local)

Frequency of Moving and Future Migration

Young talents who follow the SPH pathways have seldom moved. The main reasons for moving in the future are getting married or having children. As for future migration plans, all respondents following this housing pathway stated that they will stay in Shenzhen.

Private Renting to Owning in Shenzhen (PRTO)

Housing Field, Habitus, and Capital

On the PRTO pathway, respondents first enter the private rental market and (will) finally acquire homeownership. The respondents more often lived in commercial rental housing or LTRA instead of urban village rental housing. Several respondents mentioned that they could not accept the poor conditions of urban village rental housing. Young talents who follow the PRTO pathway either have usable economic capital or social capital or Shenzhen hukou. For example, the financial support of parents, which is economic capital, helps some respondents to buy a house.

Lea and her husband's housing experience is an example of the PRTO pathway. They are both migrants who chose to work in Shenzhen after graduation. At first, they lived in an old commercial rental house. A year later, they made up their minds to buy a house.

> My husband and I are both migrants. I believe that if we want to settle down in Shenzhen, we must own a house there. I wouldn't get married if we didn't own a house. [. . .. . .] My husband's parents paid the down payment and we decorated the house with the money we saved from work. It's not a big house, but it's enough for us to live in. (Lea, female, 29, bachelor, migrant)

This example illustrates how the habitus shaped the belief about owning a house and how it influenced the way in which they view housing. It also shows how they employed the economic capital that is available to them, i.e. their savings and their parents' financial support, to achieve their goal, namely buying a house.

The case of Sherry and her husband demonstrates how social capital and the readiness to enter the "grey market" of informal housing were used to obtain homeownership in Shenzhen. Sherry and her husband, who are both migrants, started working together in a community hospital in Shenzhen after graduation. At first, they chose to live in the doctors' collective accommodation of the hospital to save money. In their third year in Shenzhen, they bought their first house, a small property rights housing (SPRH). Two years later, they bought a second house, which is a normal commercial house. They used the word "anxiety" to describe their feelings in Shenzhen before they bought their first house.

> The atmosphere that has been created in our social networks before we went to Shenzhen and when we were already there was that the house prices in Shenzhen are constantly rising. We could apply for public rental housing, however, I got to know that there was a very long waiting list and those houses were in remote locations. We believed that we had to buy a house right away or it would become increasingly difficult to afford. We were very anxious. (Sherry, female, 32, master, migrant)

Their determination to buy a house in Shenzhen was reinforced by the signals they received from social networks. Their utilization of information and financial resources from social networks and their readiness to accept informal housing enabled them to enter homeownership successfully. Regarding their buying experience, they said:

> From chatting with some of our colleagues, we learned that it would be cheaper to buy a SPRH. Considering the limitation of our financial resources, we chose to take the risk of buying a SPRH. With our own savings (36%) and the money borrowed from relatives and friends (64%), we had just enough money to pay for a SPRH. (Sherry)

In Sherry's case, the interaction of habitus and social capital can be summarized as follows: first, the anxious atmosphere in their social networks reinforced their belief to quickly buy a house. Then the information and financial resources received from social networks and the readiness to accept informal housing enabled them to buy.

Frequency of Moving and Future Migration

The results of the interviews showed that most respondents on this pathway rarely move, partly because they want to save money by reducing the cost of moving, and partly because they entered homeownership and no longer need to move. The main reasons to move are getting married or childbirth. Respondents stated that they could live alone in a low-quality dwelling but wanted to provide better living conditions for their partners and children. In China, educational resources are usually better for home-owners than for renters (Feng and Lu 2013). The future education of children is therefore one of the reasons why respondents move into homeownership.

As for the future migration plans, those who were already homeowners in Shenzhen explicitly stated that they would stay in Shenzhen, as they had already settled down. However, the relationship between the wish to stay in Shenzhen and the wish to buy a house is not one-directional. Guffin (male, 31, PhD, migrant) and David (male, 25, master, migrant), for example, want to stay in Shenzhen because of the very nature of their work. Both of them are prepared to buy a house in Shenzhen. However, the latest Shenzhen 2020 policy requires migrants to have a Shenzhen hukou and to have paid social insurance for at least 3 years before they can purchase commercial housing.

(Private Renting To) Talented Renting (PRTTR)

Housing Field, Habitus, and Capital

Young talents following the PRTTR pathway enter talented rental housing or company-provided rental housing (hereafter referred to together as talented housing) directly or after experiencing a period of private rental housing. Consistent with the discussion in Section 3 (the Shenzhen context), the results show that many respondents are employed in the public sector such as government departments, state-owned enterprises, and universities. Otherwise, they are employed by key private enterprises such as high-tech enterprises. The opportunity to live in talented housing was identified as a special kind of capital. In general, as long as young talents do not change their jobs, they can stay in talented housing for 6 years at a lower rent (Wang and Pan 2019). Therefore, the tenancy period for talented housing is relatively stable.

According to the results of the interviews, the outcome of the habitus of the respondents on this pathway can be summarized as having a positive attitude towards talented renting and being opportunity-driven. They take advantage of cultural capital and/or social capital and try to obtain satisfying work to follow the PRTTR through the housing opportunities offered by their employers.

Cultural capital in this regard refers primarily to the education received by young talents (Bourdieu 1986). The case of Yanni is an example of a highly educated individual taking the PRTTR pathway. Yanni completed her PhD at a leading university abroad. She joined a university in Shenzhen through an introduction scheme for talents. She first rented in the private rental market as there was a limited number of talented housing units at the university that required queuing. After six month-waiting, she moved into the university arranged talented housing.

> The rent for talented housing is only 60% of the market rent. The opportunity to rent such housing is very satisfying. (Yanni, female, 32, PhD, migrant)

The case of Lince is a good demonstration of how social capital and being employed by a certain company can be used to follow the PRTTR pathway. During his previous years of working in Shenzhen, he moved through the private rental market. Then after he got his present job, he and his family rented talented housing that was supplied by his present company. The information he and his company obtained from social networks (social capital), made it possible for him to enter the PRTTR pathway. Speaking about how he managed to live in the talented housing, he said:

> My current company specializes in consulting services for overseas talents, so we are very familiar with the talent policy in Shenzhen. [. . . . .] Probably in late 2018, the company got information about the pending allocation of talented housing by the Shenzhen government in advance and immediately applied to the government, which ended up with about 11 sets of talented housing. As a senior employee of the company, I also applied to the company for talented housing immediately and was allowed to rent. (Lince, male, 33, master, migrant)

Frequency of Moving and Future Migration

Some respondents almost directly entered the talented housing whereas others had to move repeatedly before they got this opportunity. As mentioned above, a change of job is

the most important reason for them to move in the future, but marriage or childbirth are also reasons.

Our findings showed that some respondents clearly expressed a preference to stay in Shenzhen, while others said that they were uncertain about their future migration plans. The main reasons for the uncertainty are related to work and housing affordability. As Bamboo mentioned,

> Many people come to Shenzhen to earn money. After working in Shenzhen for several years, they may go back to their home city or the capital city of their home province to settle down. They won't and can't stay in Shenzhen for a long time. At least I think this is the case for most of them. [. . . . .] I come from Changsha, Hunan Province. [. . . . .] An important point is that houses in Changsha are much more cost-effective (than in Shenzhen). I would definitely be willing to move there if it was possible to find a satisfying job (in Changsha). Shenzhen is a wonderful city, but if you don't have a place to live, your well-being will be reduced. [. . . . .] But as I just started to work a year ago, I'm not too sure yet. (Bamboo, male, 25, master, migrant)

Progressive Private Renting (PPR)

Housing Field, Habitus, and Capital

Respondents who followed the PPR pathway are all migrants and frequently moved within the private rental sector. In general, the housing quality generally becomes better after each move to a new dwelling or stays the same. Most of them rented a house in urban villages in the early stage of their stay in Shenzhen. Later they moved into commercial rental housing and LTRA, if available. Some respondents own a house in the peripheral cities of Shenzhen or their hometown due to marriage or childbirth. However, they also rent in Shenzhen due to the inconvenience of the long commuting time to their other house.

Those who follow the PPR pathway lack all kinds of capital, especially economic capital, compared to young talents who follow other pathways. This group of respondents has a mixed habitus. Some respondents had deep-rooted beliefs about homeownership shaped by their habitus due to social norms or the family environment in which they were raised. Their strategy was to buy a house in a city with lower prices in the periphery of Shenzhen because of the lack of economic capital. Other respondents' habitus resulted in a positive attitude towards private renting, which was seen as cheap and flexible. These respondents said they did not want to be "kidnapped" by their mortgage. The interaction of their habitus and lack of economic capital makes them stay trapped in the repetitive private rental sector.

This pathway is well illustrated by Paul, a start-up entrepreneur who has been living in Shenzhen for almost 7 years. Upon graduating from university, he chose to move to work in Shenzhen. By the time of the interview, he has rented a total of five different houses, of which the first four were in urban villages. The first house was only 10 m^2 with one small single room and a tiny bathroom, no sunlight, damp and noisy, where he lived for three years. Later, he moved to a second similar house of 13 m^2 due to his change of workplace. After a year, he switched to the third house of about 18 m^2 for another year because he thought the second house was too small, too dark, and he couldn't stand the noisy surroundings anymore. Because he fell in love and planned to live with his girlfriend, which required more space for two people, they moved into the fourth one-bedroom

house of about 25 m^2. Over a year later, their child was born, and they moved into a relatively remote, old rental commercial housing of 80 m^2. He said:

> I would be fine with renting all the time if the rent was always affordable. [. . .. . .] If you buy a house in Shenzhen, not only yourself but your parents and the whole family (financial resources) are kidnapped by the house. This is not the life that I want, and I do not like too much pressure. [. . .. . .] I'm still wandering about my future housing. (Paul, male, 30, technician, migrant)

It can be seen that Paul had a chequered housing experience in Shenzhen. This is partly due to the constraints of economic capital, but also due to his own habitus and choices, such as his openness and acceptance of continuous private renting.

In addition, our research found that the ability of respondents to buy a house is influenced by the volume of their economic capital, but the conditions of rental housing are more determined by their own preferences. For example, Jann clearly expresses an economic motive. Jann still lives in an urban village rental housing. Regarding buying a house in Shenzhen, he comments:

> Unless I win five million RMB in a lottery, there is no way I can buy a house on my own in Shenzhen [. . . . . .] the house prices are too high [. . . . . .] totally unaffordable for the ordinary worker. (Jann, male, 28, bachelor, migrant)

However, Lehi has decided otherwise. After experiencing several bad rental rooms in urban villages, she is now living in an expensive rental apartment. When asked why she chose the current more expensive rental apartment,

> I moved to an expensive apartment, not because of the increase in my salary or because I became rich but because I was unhappy with my job. So I wanted to live in a better apartment to increase my happiness. (Lehi, female, 32, bachelor, migrant)

Frequency of Moving and Future Migration

Compared to other pathways, our results showed that respondents on this pathway moved more frequently. The reasons for moving vary and could be either because of a wish to move or because they had to move. The main reasons for active moves are changes in the workplace and the desire to improve living conditions. Important reasons for forced moves are the landlord selling or redecorating the house and arbitrary rent increases.

Regarding future migration plans, some respondents on this pathway clearly indicated their intention to leave Shenzhen in the future. Others were not sure about their future migration plans. When asked about the reasons for leaving Shenzhen, the issue of housing affordability was repeatedly mentioned, with respondents stating the following:

> [. . .. . .]I would not stay in Shenzhen [. . .. . .](house prices) are too expensive. You can not afford it so you feel like you do not belong in the city [. . .. . .] (Lehi)

> I have many friends who came to work in Shenzhen for two or three years and then went back to their hometown [. . .. . .] They could not afford to buy a house(in Shenzhen) [. . .. . .] If I go back to Wuhan (hometown), I can put down roots by buying a house there, then find a girlfriend and get married [. . .. . .] (Jann, male, 28, bachelor, migrant)

Discussion

The main aim of the current study is to identify and understand the housing pathways of young talents in Shenzhen, as well as the structural and agent factors that underlie these housing pathways. Using the housing pathways approach and Bourdieu's theory of practice, three research questions were addressed.

Housing Pathways of Young Talents in Shenzhen

Regarding the first research question, four different types of housing pathways for young talents were identified: staying at parents' home (SPH), private renting to owning in Shenzhen (PRTO), (private renting to) talented renting (PRTTR), and progressive private renting (PPR). These four housing pathways are distinct from each other mainly in the past and present predominant tenure (housing fields) occupied by young talents as well as the number and type of moves (see Table 4). These results are consistent with the conclusion of Ford, Rugg, and Burrows (2002) that the degree to which pathways are tenure-specific varies. The first housing pathway (SPH)resembles the "stay at home to own" housing pathways identified by Clapham et al. (2014). However, unlike Clapham et al. (2014), i.e. young people perceive this pathway as a shameful, ad hoc strategy to save for future homeownership, we found that our respondents did not feel ashamed of living with their parents. Instead, both young talents and their parents believe that living together is a better way to take care of each other. This finding can easily be explained by the difference in cultural background, where living with parents is a form of filial respect in China (Yang 2021). The second housing pathway (PRTO) is in line with the traditional linear housing pathway of "rent to own" found in studies by Ford, Rugg, and Burrows (2002), Hamzah and Zyed (2020), etc. The third housing pathway (PRTTR) might be more specific for Shenzhen as it has gradually emerged since the enactment of the Talent Housing Project in 2010. The pathway is different from other studies that refer to young people living in social housing (Hochstenbach and Boterman 2015) or council housing (Clapham et al. 2014). Young talents who follow the PRTTR pathway are not low-income or those who have experienced a long waiting-list. Instead, they meet the conditions to be employed in one of the key enterprises that are supported by the Shenzhen government. The fourth housing pathway (PPR) seems comparable to the "progressive chaotic housing pathway" as outlined by Hochstenbach and Boterman (2015). Young talents in our study who followed this pathway remained in private renting, although most of them gradually improved their housing conditions. Note that our study did not provide indications for chaotic or homeless pathways as identified in previous studies (Clapham et al. 2014), probably because our study was conducted with young talents rather than young people in general. Young talents may have higher incomes or better access to resources than young people in general.

What Structural and Agency Factors Explain Differences in Housing Pathways?

Concerning the second research question, our results show that the formation of different housing pathways can be explained by the interaction of habitus and its outcome and various types of economic, social, cultural, and other types of capital within the housing

fields (also see Table 4). The results are generally in agreement with Hochstenbach and Boterman (2015) and Boterman (2012), who distinguished three different housing pathways, i.e. linear, progressive chaotic, and reproductive chaotic, based on the combination of different search behaviour and different types of capital. The current study explains the role of habitus, which was mentioned only briefly by Hochstenbach and Boterman (2015), in more detail. However, we found that the concept of habitus is abstract, complicated, and difficult to describe. For this reason, we operationalized habitus into its outcomes, that is, the attitude towards housing tenure and the strategy of housing choice. We found that habitus shaped deep-rooted beliefs about homeownership in the first and second types of housing pathways (PRTO and SPH). This is in line with the previous research by Rowlands and Gurney (2000), who found that young people in the UK perceived homeownership as a social norm in British society and the solution to basic housing needs. In China, the meaning given to homeownership is even greater, as it is also considered to be a symbol of status and a prerequisite for marriage (Hu and Wang 2020). Besides from that, these respondents also believed that buying a house is a good investment, based on their parents' prior successful home-buying experiences. Furthermore, in both pathways, economic capital is used to acquire housing, such as borrowing money to buy a house. The two pathways differ with regard to the cultural and social capital. In SPH pathways, the cultural capital is used, which is knowledge of the local housing market. The dominant capital in PRTO pathways is the social capital and the readiness to enter the informal housing market. These differences might be explained by the fact that the respondents following the SPH pathway are Shenzhen locals whereas those following the PRTO pathway are mainly migrants. Young talents following the third housing pathway (PRTTR) rely more on cultural capital (educational attainment) and social capital (advanced information from social networks) and the capital of being employed by certain companies to access talented rental housing. They are characterized as having a positive attitude towards talented renting and being opportunity driven. They may select particular companies because of their housing opportunities, or they may be offered housing opportunities by selecting particular companies. The last housing pathway (PPR) is formed by a deep-rooted belief in homeownership, a positive attitude towards private renting and the lack of all kinds of capital, especially the economic capital. The combination of these beliefs and the lack of economic capital led to differences in housing outcomes. All respondents following this pathway stayed in private rentals in Shenzhen, but some of them also bought a (relatively cheap) house in the surrounding cities of Shenzhen. As for the reasons reported by the respondents for the lack of economic capital, it was partly because of the non-advantageous economic background of their parents. Along with the findings of Deng, Hoekstra, and Elsinga (2020) and Or (2017), our results highlight the important role of intergenerational transmission in young people's housing experiences.

The Future Migration Plans of Young Talents

As for the final research questions, we found a clear association between future migration plans and the various types of housing pathways. This confirms the conclusion of previous studies that the housing career influences migration behaviour (Aner 2016; Cui, Geertman, and Hooimeijer 2015; Dainov and Sauka 2010; Teixeira and Drolet 2018).

Those who follow the SPH and PRTO housing pathway indicated that they will stay in Shenzhen for the next 5–10 years. We found that staying in Shenzhen is related to homeownership. This is inconsistent with the findings of Eskelä (2018), who stated that homeownership is not an influencing factor for skilled migrants to stay in Helsinki. The difference might be explained by the Chinese concept of putting down roots. In China, you don't have a home without a house (Xie and Chen 2018). In addition, we also found that some respondents living in stable rental housing had plans to stay in Shenzhen. This suggests that the ongoing Talent Housing Project may have some positive effects on talent retention. In contrast, some of the respondents following the PPR pathway have articulated their intention to leave Shenzhen in the future.

Conclusion

The present paper offers a refined comprehension of the housing and migration behaviour of young talents in Shenzhen. Based on the analysis of 18 semi-structured interviews, four distinct housing pathways were identified: 1) staying at parents' home, 2) private renting to owning, 3) talented renting, and 4) progressive private renting. Different housing pathways can be accounted for by the way diverse habitus and its outcome interact with various forms of economic, social, cultural, and other types of capital in the housing field. A clear association between future migration plans and types of housing pathways was found. For example, young talents who have undergone unstable housing situations are more likely to leave Shenzhen. The present paper provides a novel perspective on the application of the housing pathways approach and Bourdieu's theory of practice. We found housing pathways approach to be particularly useful for investigating peoples' housing history/trajectory because it provides a framework of thinking to guide the design of interview questions as well as the collection and analysis of data. Besides, we believe that the graphic housing pathways approach gives the researcher a clear perception and an intuitive understanding of the housing history/trajectory experienced by people.

However, the housing pathways approach is not a theory but a research framework. We then used Bourdieu's three concepts of "habitus", "capital", and "field" as a further development to the housing pathways approach to explain how different housing pathways are shaped by the interaction of different structural and agency factors. The use of Bourdieu's theory helps to improve the depth of the research. Moreover, we present a more operationalized use of the concept of "habitus" that has only been mentioned by other authors but has not been used much in housing studies. Based on the definition of habitus, we found that habitus produces certain outcomes that can be summarized and described. We often cannot capture the specific habitus in housing analysis but we can summarize and describe the different outcomes of different habitus. We believe that this is an alternative way of analysing habitus. Although the study provides detailed information on the housing pathways of young talents in Shenzhen based on solid theoretical approaches, a number of important limitations need to be considered. First, the researchers used a convenience sample, meaning that the interviewees were recruited via personal networks and recommendations from interviewees. There might be a possible selection bias in the final sample. For example, the housing pathways of all our interviewees were eventually progressive. Young talents with regressive or chaotic housing

pathways may have been out of our reach, may have refused participation, or may have left Shenzhen. Further research might investigate the housing pathways of young talents in Shenzhen using a more representative sample and might find additional types of housing pathways, among which are regressive and chaotic pathways as well. Second, with a small sample size of 18 interviewees in Shenzhen, caution must be applied, as the findings might not be representative of Shenzhen and might not be transferable to other cities and countries. Nevertheless, the theory and approach adopted in this paper can be employed by scholars studying this city or other cities in the future. The third limitation concerns the qualitative nature of the current study. Our results are more detailed in information and exploratory. However, a large quantitative study of the housing pathways of young talents is needed to obtain more accurate results regarding the variety of housing pathways and the share of young talents following each housing pathway.

The findings of the current study have a number of important implications for policymakers in Shenzhen. Consistent with the implications statement in the introduction section, the policy implications will be discussed in two aspects: from the viewpoint of the city and that of its residents. The first aspect concerns the implication of how the city might attract and retain young talents. The findings of our research suggest that homeownership is a critical factor for young talents to stay in Shenzhen. It is not realistic to guarantee homeownership to all young talents in a city like Shenzhen with high house prices. However, reducing the barriers to homeownership for young talents, such as the hukou and social insurance requirements may help in attracting and retaining young talents. In addition, further improvements to the process and regulations for the purchase of Affordable Commercial Residential Housing (ACRH, Anjuxing Shangpinfang in Chinese) would also be beneficial in increasing the homeownership rate of young talents. We also found that young talents following the talented housing pathway are less likely to leave Shenzhen in the future. Increasing the supply of talented rental housing is therefore strongly recommended. The second aspect of implications concerns the improvement of the housing situation of young talents in Shenzhen. Our results show that young talents following the fourth housing pathway (progressive private renting) experienced frequent moves in the private rental sector, mainly in urban village rental housing. Their housing problems are well worth being looked at. Urban village rental housing is an important part of the initial housing transition for young talents due to its low rent. Policymakers could work on improving the living environment of rental housing in urban villages, such as the improvement of lighting in rental dwellings and the infrastructure in urban villages.

Notes

1. There is no universal definition of talents. In academic terms, the definition of talent is often defined by educational attainment, vocational skills, and the creativity of the work. Young talents in this study are defined as people aged between 20 and 35, who have a bachelor's degree or above, or have a national vocational qualification certificate, or are professionals or managers of the companies.
2. It is recognized and a common practice to classify China's mainland cities into "tiers". According to the National Bureau of Statistics, four first-tier cities are Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen. There are 31 second-tier cities, which are mostly provincial capital cities (e.g. Wuhan) or sub-provincial cities (e.g. Qingdao).

3. The concept of housing pathway is often used interchangeably with housing career and housing trajectory. Simply put, it is the housing routes(outcomes) that an individual or a household takes over time.
4. According to Clapham (2012), structural factors refer to global, national, social and institutional related factors that can constrain or provide opportunities on individual decision-making such as housing policies, housing market, and social-demographic variables. In contrast, the central subject of the agency factor is the individual. Agency factors mean the ability and power of individual to take action to make things happen such as personal, attitudes, preferences and strategies.
5. Small property rights housing (SPRH) means an informal housing market taking place in the urban villages at the suburban zones of major cities (Liu, Wong, and Liu 2012). SPRH is built on collective land and Chinese law does not allow real estate development on collective land. Its legal validity is highly controversial and the purchase and sale of it in the housing market is not protected by law. In sum, SPRH is informal and characterized by a lack of public services, instability of tenure, and the violation of construction regulations.
6. Key enterprises have different requirements for each district in Shenzhen, for example, Luohu District 2021 recognizes 351 leading enterprises and recommended companies in the industry in the district as key enterprises that can apply for talent housing.
7. A few very outstanding talents and high-level talents designated by the Shenzhen government can apply for special talented housing in their personal names. As the percentage of such cases is low and it is difficult for the young talents we studied to be recognized as above talents, we will not mention it in detail.
8. In order to attract and retain talents to enhance urban international competitiveness and promote sustainable and healthy economic and social development, the Shenzhen government has included talents in the scope of housing security since 2010 with the launch of the Talent Housing Project (Rencai Anju Gongcheng/Banfa in Chinese). Talents are those with a bachelor's degree or above, or a national technician qualification of grade 2 or above, and those stipulated to be included in the shortage catalogue. TH is planned to be available for rent or sale, but as of the time of the survey (13 May 2022), what the authors have learned that TH in Shenzhen is still mainly for rent. Policies and regulations related to the sale of TH are being formulated. Therefore, TH in this study refers to Talented rental housing only.
9. According to the results of the seventh national census in Shenzhen 2021, the proportions of locals and non-locals are 71% and 29% respectively.

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