Pathways and Processes: Reviewing the Role of Young Adults in Urban Structure

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Abstract

Challenges arising from changing demographics, expensive housing and precarious labour have prompted recent interest in the residential geographies of young adults. Yet, despite attention to young adults' diverse housing pathways, I argue that greater focus is needed on the place-based and spatial underpinnings and effects of particular housing pathways: connections to urban processes of "youthification" – the concentration of young adults in dense neighbourhoods – and "studentification" – whereby an area becomes dominated by university students – remain underdeveloped, as do linkages between these phenomena and gentrification. I explore these connections through a critical review of extant literature, to show that the enactment of some pathways is associated with particular urban processes, which may foreclose certain pathways for other individuals. Finally, I identify three crucial areas of inquiry: 1) how youthification, studentification, and gentrification interact; 2) how these processes shape and are shaped by diverging individual housing pathways; and 3) how differences among young adults such as race, ethnicity, and gender intersect with age in the course of these processes.

Keywords: *gentrification, housing pathways, studentification, young adults, youthification*

In light of demographic changes taking place in North America and Europe, the young adult phase of the life course – that is, the transition between adolescence and adulthood – is often seen as elongated relative to the past. Young adults are, for instance, living in the parental home longer, spending longer times in post-secondary education, and delaying or rejecting marriage and child-bearing (Clark 2007; Côté and Bynner 2008; Furlong and Cartmel 2007). There is correspondingly a trend toward smaller household sizes and an increase in the number of single-person households (Beer et al. 2011; Townshend and Walker 2015). Considerable recent work has drawn attention to the housing challenges particular to young adults. Compared to previous generations, today's young adults face an increasingly expensive housing market in cities in a number of national contexts across the Global North (Demographia 2015). Neoliberal market reforms have directed support away from social housing (Beer et al. 2011; Sager 2011) while facilitating an increasingly flexible, and therefore precarious, labour market (Arnold and Bongiovi 2013; Vosko 2006).

These trends have implications for the urban spatial patterns of young adults, the full breadth of which remain undertheorized. In this review, I interpret these patterns, and their implications for gentrification and related processes of youthification (Moos 2015) and studentification (Smith 2005), through a framework of housing pathways.[1] Housing pathways are "patterns of interaction (practices) concerning house and home, over time and space" (Clapham 2002, 63), recognizing both the individual meanings and choices associated with housing, and broader structural constraints across the life course, and therefore variegated experiences of housing. The aim is to avoid "the inadequacies of traditional approaches in economics and geography, which assumed universal and simple attitudes and motivations" (Clapham 2002, 63). This represents an improvement on concepts such as housing careers (which assume an upward

trajectory from a single starting point to a universal goal, downplaying structural influences),
housing histories (which focus on structure), and housing biographies (which privilege subjective
experience) (Beer et al. 2011).[2]

I adopt this pathways framework to emphasize their place-based and spatial
underpinnings and effects. Neighbourhood level processes such as gentrification, youthification,
and studentification are bound to shape housing pathways, while simultaneously, the enactment
of certain pathways as opposed to others shapes urban processes. At the same time, the
individual pathways implicated in neighbourhood changes can offer potential insights into the
links between gentrification, youthification, and studentification – illuminating, for example,
how and when these processes do or do not interact or overlap.

I focus on the North American and European context, given their preponderance in
Anglophone scholarship and relative degree of similarity, although references will be made to
other contexts where appropriate. Nonetheless, considerable differences exist between national
contexts. For instance, the importance of familism in certain cultures – where high value is
placed on the family rather than the individual – means it is more common historically and
contemporarily for young adults to live in the parental home for longer than is typical in North
America or northern and western Europe, as is the case in southern Europe and some Asian
countries (Emmanuel 2013; Li 2013; Poggio 2013; Yip 2013). These differences in norms
problematize the notion that the changes taking place in North America and northern Europe are
inherently either good or bad. Rather, these changes may represent more of a convergence with
much of the rest of the world. However, labour and housing market trends in several countries
have placed greater strain on families as a support system for young adults (Emmanuel 2013;
Poggio 2013; Sage, Evandrou, and Falkingham 2013), and in some places where cohabitation

with relatives is common, there is evidence that young adults nonetheless yearn for housing independent of older generations of the family (Zavisca 2013; Yip 2013).

Regardless of cultural norms surrounding young adults' housing, the structural, cultural and demographic changes that have altered the nature of young adulthood – in particular by lengthening it and blurring its edges – are likely to be disruptive in some way, and of disproportionate impact. Indeed, while issues of housing affordability and labour market precariousness are not unique to young adults, this period remains the stage in life when most leave the parental home for the first time and make decisions regarding having children and pursuing homeownership (Öst 2012a), and these remain significant life events. Largely due to post-Fordist and neoliberal economic restructuring, the incomes of young adults have declined relative to both older age groups and young adults in the past (Moos 2014a) while the flexibilization of work reduces eligibility for mortgages, independent of income (Öst 2012b).

Buying into the market has therefore become less attainable to many, and homeownership among young adults is increasingly stratified by income and unstable (Beer et al. 2011; Brown and Lafrance 2013; Öst 2012b). In the most expensive metropolitan areas, those able to buy have generally not benefitted from the price appreciation experienced by existing owners, requiring instead large mortgages that put young households in a position of greater financial vulnerability than others (Walks 2013), for instance in the event of a market crash or job loss. Conversely, government interventions to *prevent* real estate crashes via a bailout of that sector can represent a redistribution of wealth from non-owners to owners, with young adults over-represented in the former rather than the latter (Walks 2014).

Amidst these demographic and market changes, the housing experiences and geographies of young adults have also evolved. I begin by charting the diverse housing pathways experienced

by young adults through an overview of recent literature within geography and related fields concerned with the constraints faced by young adults in accessing housing and the strategies used to overcome them. In the subsequent two sections, respectively, I explore the connections between these housing pathways and the changing spatial patterns of young adults generally, and higher education students specifically, bringing these concepts into conversation with each other. In doing so, I critically review the relationship of these trends to gentrification. Finally, I identify some directions for further research before concluding briefly.

Changing Housing Pathways of Young Adults

As a result of the particular challenges facing them, some have argued that since the 1980s, young adults can be conceived of entering a specific "youth" housing market – rather than simply entering the housing market at large – which is characterized by "shared housing, precarious housing, temporary housing and frequent mobility, and which is clearly distinct from accessing and holding housing in a 'mature' or 'adult' market" (Ford, Rugg, and Burrows 2002, 2456). Consequent to this change, there has been a shift in the housing pathways of young adults since the earlier postwar period.

Based on an extensive set of interviews, Ford, Rugg, and Burrows (2002) identify three factors on which such pathways depend: the ability of young adults to plan and control entry to independent living; constraints such as income, access to welfare benefits, local housing market conditions, and so forth; and the degree of family support. They also identify five ideal-type housing pathways. However, more recent work has uncovered a broader range of pathways through the use of cluster analysis, positing the existence of nine pathways, and estimating the population of each within the UK (Clapham et al. 2014). In a study of Amsterdam, others have identified three primary housing pathways (Hochstenbach and Boterman 2015). Presented in

Table 1, these pathways should be considered not as immutable categories, but as common outcomes given individuals' resources, constraints, and choices.

[Insert Table 1 about here.]

This diversity of experience is corroborated by Sage, Evandrou, and Falkingham (2013), who examine, over five years, the migration patterns of former university students in the UK. Reasons for moving were diverse, and not merely for employment. Moreover, nearly half of respondents returned to the parental home during the study period, and doing so remained a common reason to move within the first four moves made by respondents. It would seem, contra Ford, Rugg, and Burrows (2002), that students do not pursue a homogenous pathway. Similarly, chaotic pathways should not necessarily be equated with marginality. While those who are unable to deal with housing constraints may continue to "reproduce" their precarity, alternative housing arrangements (often informal or semi-illegal) and frequent moves can also be a strategy to access housing in ideal neighbourhoods in the absence of adequate economic capital (Hochstenbach and Boterman 2015; see also Mendez 2011).

Despite differences in methodology, geography, timeframe, and the number of pathways identified, some coherent conclusions can be drawn from this ensemble of literature. In particular, it is obvious that the housing experiences of young adults are heterogeneous, often drawing on the "parental safety net" (Sage, Evandrou, and Falkingham 2013) of gifts and loans (Heath and Calvert 2013) and friend networks, through what may be described as social and cultural capital (Hochstenbach and Boterman 2015). There is also an increasing reliance on the private rental sector of the housing market. As young adults spend longer amounts of time in this sector, they increase competition for rental housing, pushing up rents, with negative implications for low income groups (Ford, Rugg, and Burrows 2002). It appears that shifts toward this sector

are producing a convergence in pathways, whereby renting is more common regardless of substantial differences in the context and conditions of – and reasons for – renting (Clapham et al. 2014).

There is also a spatial dimension to these trends. Yet despite the inclusion of "space" in their definition (Clapham 2002), little attention has been given to how individual pathways are implicated in neighbourhood changes or vice versa. However, housing pathways unfold in particular places, and young adults have distinct urban geographies that are usefully interpreted through a pathways framework.

Changing Geographies of Young Adults

With changes in young adults' housing pathways, it is imperative to understand broader changes in the geographies of young adults. A burgeoning literature has developed on the geographies of youth, predominantly centred on the everyday spaces of youth as well as contesting the nature of childhood and youth. Much of this has focused on children, or sometimes up to the age of about 25 (although boundaries are, of course, fuzzy – see Valentine 2003) rather than young adults more broadly defined (Evans 2008; Hörschelmann and van Blerk 2012; Vanderbeck 2007). Some have observed that among those who do consider young adults, housing is often overlooked relative to employment and education (Arundel and Ronald 2016; Cuervo and Wyn 2014; Hoolachan et al. 2016), although this may be changing. Gorman-Murray (2015), for example, has examined the diverse relationships between gender (specifically, masculinities) and domesticities to demonstrate how these are spatially constructed at home. Beyond attention to the micro-spaces of home, research has also problematized the extent to which economic factors explain young adults' return to rural home regions, arguing for a greater role of sense of home and place (Haartsen and Thissen 2014; Rérat 2014).

Economic factors, of course, do have some role to play. Hoolachan et al. (2016) found geographical differences in difficulties faced by young adults in the private rental sector in Scotland between urban and rural regions as well as between expensive and less expensive markets. Regional differences in housing systems and welfare regimes also matter (Arundel and Ronald 2016). Some metropolitan areas have higher relative populations of young adults than others: typically, those with strong economic performance and therefore greater opportunity for young adults to begin working careers, although high housing costs in the most "global" of these cities may also be a deterrent. Meanwhile, cities with poorer economic prospects appear less adept at attracting young adults and therefore tend to feature older average populations (Rosenberg and Wilson 2010; Moos 2015).

Patterns of change also exist within cities, and so it is necessary to consider the relationality of these changes to young adults' life course changes (Hall, Coffey and Lashua 2009). In fact, urban change is not entirely external to young adults. Young adults are increasingly found in the denser central neighbourhoods of cities in North America (Moos 2014b; 2015; Generationed City n.d.), the UK (Bromley, Tallon, and Roberts 2007) and continental Europe (Buzar, Hall, and Ogden 2007; Buzar et al. 2007; Kabisch and Haase 2011; van Criekingen 2010), especially those with improved downtown amenities. However, for the most part, young adults have not been the focus of study per se. In an examination of trends in 10 regionally diverse Canadian cities, Meligrana and Skaburskis (2005) found that among factors such as distance to the central business district, income and rent levels, and dwelling characteristics, the presence of young adults was also linked to gentrification. In particular, typical gentrifying households are "young, well-educated, highly mobile and single-person

households" (1585), with gentrifying census tracts seeing an increase in the proportion of those aged 25-39, from 24 to 32 percent.

Re-urbanization, conceptualized as an increase in the population of the core of an urban agglomeration, also appears to be driven by young adults. In four UK cities, Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, and Swansea, policies to repopulate inner cities have resulted in a disproportionate share of young adults and lone-person households within city centres by 2001 (Bromley, Tallon, and Roberts 2007). While increased since 1991, there was already a relatively high proportion of young adults in these areas at that time, and this increase is not entirely the result of increasing numbers of students. Bromley, Tallon, and Roberts (2007, 144) further note that these city centres are of "similar, or of higher, social status than the city districts as a whole," and have experienced a "striking" rise in status since 1991. Meanwhile, in Leipzig, Germany; Ljubljana, Slovenia; Bologna, Italy; and Leon, Spain, re-urbanization has likewise been dominated by single-person households, flat-sharing adults, and young parents (Buzar et al. 2007). The importance of young adults to this process, at least in Europe, is confirmed by Kabisch and Haase (2011), who find that younger, smaller households are a key driver of re-urbanization across the whole continent.

An emerging body of literature, particularly that of Moos, has explicitly considered the location patterns of young adults. Moos (2014b) models the location patterns of young adults in Montreal and Vancouver, in both 1981 and 2006. While household characteristics, such as size, remain the most important determinants of residential location, young adults are increasingly associated with density over time, as well as to rapid transit in Vancouver, after controlling for other factors associated with residential location decisions. However, the models also identify an association between young adult populations and distance from the centre, implying that the

centralized pattern is at least in part a result of demographic characteristics constraining choices rather than a preference for central living. Moos (2014b) argues that the presence of urban amenities and smaller dwelling units in central neighbourhoods draws young adults to these places, while the high costs of living in these areas push them away, tending toward "decentralized concentration" rather than centralization, especially in Vancouver, where housing prices are higher.

In a separate paper, Moos (2015) models urban density as a function of census tract characteristics, including age, household size, household income, the share of immigrants, and the share of potential gentrifiers (as identified by their employment in the quaternary sector of the economy), for both 1981 and 2006 in Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver.[3] Considering density an indicator of urbanity, Moos (2015) finds that the presence of young adults became an increasingly strong predictor of urban living over the period of study, although it bears noting that the share of immigrants remained more closely associated with density. At the same time, the significance of age, distinct from that of the share of potential gentrifiers or of income, suggests a separate – although not necessarily mutually exclusive – process, which Moos terms "youthification."

However, as van Criekingen (2010, 384) argues, largely in response to the re-urbanization literature (e.g., Buzar, Hall, and Ogden 2007; Buzar et al. 2007) – but no less pertinently here – it is important not to "inappropriately [bring] the social class dimension out of the discussion of urban change." Indeed, as Moos (2015) himself notes, youthification appears to be common in areas that are both already gentrified, and that already contained relatively high shares of young adults (see also Moos 2014b). Van Criekingen (2010) also empirically demonstrates that young adults living in central Brussels are generally educated, mobile white-

collar workers. As they are predominantly renters, they have contributed to gentrification by pushing up rents, displacing or further impoverishing low-income groups that traditionally comprise renters in the inner area. This example illustrates concretely that diverse housing pathways are entangled, as some young adults' experiences may exclude others from particular urban spaces, and thereby confine them to a separate set of pathways.

Nevertheless, the concept of "forever young" neighbourhoods (Moos 2015) does seem to carry some weight. "Re-urbanizing" young adults in both Britain and continental Europe express intentions to move out of central neighbourhoods in the long term, often for what they perceive to be better neighbourhoods for raising children (Bromley, Tallon, and Roberts 2007; Buzar et al. 2007). This mobility is facilitated by the high share of these households in rental tenure (Bromley, Tallon, and Roberts 2007; van Criekingen, 2010). The young adults implicated in gentrification of Canadian cities were also characterized by a high level of residential mobility (Meligrana and Skaburskis 2005). It would seem that youthification (and gentrification) by young adults is tied to particular housing pathways associated with mobility and advantaged trajectories. Increasingly, university studenthood plays an important role in shaping these pathways.

Studentification: Studenthood and the Neighbourhood

University students, who largely but not exclusively represent a subgroup of young adults, also possess distinct geographies. Notably, these geographies are expressed through the process of "studentification," which "engenders the distinct social, cultural, economic and physical transformations within university towns, which are associated with the seasonal, in-migration of [higher education] students" (Smith 2005, 73), particularly within specific neighbourhoods. Academically, the subject is most widely documented in the United Kingdom,

although it is evident across the Anglo-American world – as in Melbourne, Australia (Davison 2009; Fincher and Shaw 2009); Cork City, Ireland (Kenna 2011); Waterloo, Canada (Charbonneau, Johnson, and Andrey 2006); Athens, Georgia, USA (Pickren 2012) – and elsewhere, such as in Ciudad Real, Spain (Garmendia, Coronado, and Ureña 2012); Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (Sabri and Ludin 2009); and Guangzhou, China (He 2015).

Conventionally, studentification has been associated with the expansion of higher education and increasing numbers of students domestically (e.g., Smith 2009), while others have drawn attention to the importance of the increasing number of international students in driving the process in many English-speaking countries as a result of the "internationalisation of 'Western' education systems" (Waters 2006, 1053; Fincher and Shaw 2009). He (2015) in particular has drawn attention to the role of institutional actors in shaping the geographical contingencies of studentification across international contexts, such that the form it takes may be considerably different in different places. Within the UK, such highly-concentrated student neighbourhoods are most common – and most segregated – in cities with higher proportions of students in the total urban population (Munro, Turok, and Livingston 2009). Studentification can proceed slowly, over decades, or quickly, within the span of a couple years (Sage, Smith, and Hubbard 2012), sometimes quietly, and at other times with vocal opposition from local non-student residents (Hubbard 2008).

Such opposition usually centres on the disruption of supposedly "balanced" neighbourhoods by students who are less-than-mindful of noise (e.g., from parties) or garbage pickup routines, the deterioration of the physical environment, the displacement of families and the resultant decline of local schools, pressure on parking due to the increase in houses in multiple occupation, and the pricing-out of other residents (Bromley 2006; Hubbard 2008;

Munro and Livingston 2012; Smith and Holt 2007; Smith 2005). These disruptions have been the impetus for a variety of planning and policy interventions such as thresholds on the amount of student housing permitted within a neighbourhood (Hubbard 2008), limits on the number of unrelated occupants permitted in a single apartment (Bromley 2006; Pickren 2012), licensing procedures for landlords of housing in multiple occupation, regulating property conversions, and identifying sites to develop student housing that will have less impact on established neighbourhoods (Smith 2008). Many communities have also developed "town and gown" committees, including representatives from both the university and the community at large, to manage the impacts of institutions on the local area; these, however, usually extend beyond a narrow focus on studentification to incorporate a broader range of issues (Kemp 2013; Bromley 2006).

Scholars have also focused on studentification as a process of segregation and displacement. Student lifestyles are temporally (e.g. on weeknights rather than weekends) and spatially constructed (in particular parts of the city) (Chatterton 1999). However, these spaces can be sources of tension and conflict, and as traditional students are typically upper- or middle-class, they are best seen as producing exclusive geographies, rather than to be celebrated as exemplars of the "consumption-oriented postmodern city as a stage for the enactment of lifestyle" (Chatterton 1999, 132). Indeed, a common response to the issues posed by studentification is an increase in the amount of purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA). While this may serve to reduce the concentration and proliferation of students living in traditional neighbourhoods (Hubbard 2009) – although certainly not always, as it may in fact draw students to the neighbourhoods surrounding the PBSA (Sage, Smith, and Hubbard 2013) –

the irony is that such a strategy simply reinforces the segregation of students from the rest of society (Smith and Hubbard 2014).

Furthermore, most of these developments take the form of exclusive "student villages" marketed to a particular view of the student lifestyle (Smith and Hubbard 2014), forming "de facto gated communities" (Hubbard 2009, 1920). Those excluded from these high-amenity, high-rent PBSAs are not only non-students, but less affluent students as well (Smith and Hubbard 2014), lending support to the claim that student pathways are not homogenous. In some instances, studentification may even take the form of *actual* gated communities that actively displace working-class populations (Pickren 2012). Once again, we see how particular housing pathways – in this case, those of affluent students – collide with other pathways – those of less-affluent students and the working class – and that these create tangible impacts on the urban environment.

In this way, studentification may be more akin than youthification to "classic" definitions of gentrification, although hopefully this review makes clear that these terms are inherently interrelated in complex ways. Indeed, Smith (2005) outlines the economic, social, cultural, and physical commonalities between studentification and gentrification. For instance, both processes entail revalorization and recommodification of housing, displacement by a generally middle-class population, shared cultural practices of incomers, and physical alterations to properties. The university is thus posited as a "gentrification factory" which grants students access to professional status, with life in studentified neighbourhoods contributing to the development of middle-class cultural practices likely to carry into future housing choices (Smith 2005, 86; Smith and Holt 2007; Sage, Smith, and Hubbard 2013). As Sage, Smith, and Hubbard (2013) observe, through the expansion of higher education and the growth of PBSA, studentification is

increasingly important in shaping the potential housing pathways of a larger proportion of the population, as it creates certain cultural preferences regarding the choice to live on or off campus, and as young adults live in age- and class-segregated environments that may cultivate preferences for such environments in future residential decisions. In the Australian context, early gentrification was in fact shaped by prior studentification associated with the expansion of higher education (Davison 2009). More directly, universities may actively engage in gentrification of nearby neighbourhoods under class-based and racialized discourses of improvement, in the name of student safety and in an attempt to compete globally to attract and retain students through appealing streetscapes (Bose 2015). The enactment of certain pathways therefore can be seen to have exclusionary impacts on more disadvantaged pathways.

On the other hand, some have conceived of studentification in more ambivalent terms. It may be seen not as a process of privileged gentrification but as one of "spatial marginalisation" due to students' propensity for indebtedness, low current incomes, disconnect with local communities, and separation from "mainstream" cultural spaces (Hubbard 2008, 324; although Hubbard's later writing [2009; Smith and Hubbard 2014], emphasizes the exclusivity of studentified spaces). Perhaps most interestingly, Hubbard (2008) notes the parallels between exclusionary discourses some pre-existing residents have openly employed regarding studentification, and xenophobic and racist sentiments that would normally be considered inappropriate. However, the implicitly class-based reactions to studentification mean students are often exempted from the "near demonisation of young people" for behaviour that in other contexts has received a correspondingly punitive response, such as binge drinking or congregating in supposedly-threatening groups (Munro and Livingston 2012, 1688).

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Studentification, if we are to consider it a form of gentrification (Smith and Holt 2007), is nonetheless a process that upsets conventional definitions of gentrification. It may involve a physical downgrading of the built environment (after an initial upgrading to make housing suitable for multiple occupation) concurrent with socio-economic upgrading (Smith and Holt 2007) and a reversal of tenurial transformation back toward renting rather than owner-occupation (Smith 2005). Therefore, studentification might be considered similar to Rose's (1984) notion of the "marginal gentrifier," whereby despite contributing to the gentrification process, its actors are not fully integrated into the privileged middle class position. Student pathways might therefore be suitably seen as aligning with strategies to leverage social and cultural capital to access housing that would otherwise be unattainable (Hochstenbach and Boterman 2015) and to develop a sense of home and belonging in a largely institutional context (Holton and Riley 2016).

Pathways Forward: Directions for Research

A number of directions for further research emerge from this discussion. The first relates primarily to a need to further explore the connections between studentification, youthification, and gentrification. To begin, research is needed to substantiate the claim that studentification does indeed shape preferences that carry on to later housing choices (Smith 2005; Smith and Holt 2007; Sage, Smith, and Hubbard 2013), and to what degree. This would provide a greater understanding of the extent to which studentification is a driver of youthification and traditional forms of gentrification. Meanwhile, youthification – like gentrification – is likely to have both cultural and economic explanations in terms of both how young adults' identities are constructed and the constraints they face in labour and housing markets. Here, a pathways framework could provide a tool to consider both the individual meanings and choices associated with these processes as well as the structural forces constraining them. The studentification literature has

begun to think through the overlaps with gentrification, as well as some points of divergence between the processes (Smith 2005). However, as the proliferation of PBSA makes clear (Smith and Hubbard 2014), there remains a need to refocus attention on the role of capital in the studentification process, and the continuities between studentification and broader discussions of new-build gentrification and the financialization of real estate (Davidson and Lees 2010; Aalbers 2008). Such a research program would provide a further account of how studentification, youthification, and gentrification play off or contradict each other.

Second, research is needed to explicitly examine the role of studentification, youthification, and gentrification in shaping individual housing pathways, and vice versa, at both a broader societal scale, and that of the individual. For instance, demographic transitions that produce more young, single-person households may – among other factors – drive youthification, while the concentration of young adults in smaller housing stock typical of the phenomenon may simultaneously discourage the formation of larger households. Furthermore, as young adults' differential access to homeownership increasingly contributes to a worsening of disparities in wealth and well-being (McKee 2012), there is a need to explore the potential divergence between young adults' housing pathways over time, and the implications for youthification and studentification. In particular, a greater understanding is required of how these processes place certain pathways in conflict with each other. For example, increased time spent in the rental sector by young adults places differing housing pathways in conflict as it increases the demand for rental housing, in turn pushing up rents, with negative implications for low income households (Ford, Rugg, and Burrows 2002; Clapham et al. 2014; van Criekingen 2010).

Attention must also be given to the ways young adults' housing pathways interact with those of other age groups. Age segregation produced by youthification and studentification may

contribute to ageism and reinforce prejudices while hindering socialization and healthy ageing (Valentine 2015; Hagestad and Uhlenberg 2006). Meanwhile, the burdens of high housing costs and/or weak labour market position impact other family members through the "ripple effect," as parents need to support their adult children, potentially diverting support from their own elderly parents (the young adults' grandparents) and affecting the relative well-being of each generation (Sage, Evandrou, and Falkingham 2013). This is in keeping with recent calls to reconceptualise residential mobility as relational practice (Coulter, van Ham, and Findlay 2015) and to incorporate the "from below" experiences of displacement and housing affordability struggles lacking from much of the gentrification (and related) literature (Slater 2011, 580).

Third, attention must be given to forms of difference among youth such as gender, race, and ethnicity (Young 1997, Valentine 2003). Indeed, while the concepts of youthification and studentification arose as a means of adding nuance to debates on gentrification by showing how age and student status themselves matter as a form of difference, these emerging literatures have done little to explore substantive differences between young adults.[4] Likewise, the research on housing pathways reviewed here gives little attention to these forms of difference, despite the fact that a pathways framework is conceptually well adapted to account for meanings and experiences of housing deriving from gender, race, ethnicity, or other axes of differentiation, in addition to those of class or household type (Clapham 2002). Research should make use of this versatility of the pathways approach.

To summarize, a pathways approach could provide insight into the links between youthification, studentification, and gentrification; the interactions between these processes and individual pathways, as well as among individual pathways; and forms of difference that intersect with young adulthood within the youthification and studentification processes. In

studying these issues, it may be valuable to engage with literature on the geographies of age, which focuses broadly on the meanings and politics of age and relationships between generations (Hopkins and Pain 2007; Vanderbeck 2007; Vanderbeck and Worth 2015). Taken together, these areas of research are crucial to a complete understanding of the residential geographies of young adults.

Conclusion

Broadly speaking, changes in demographic trends as well as high housing prices and precarious labour markets have combined to create unique challenges and circumstances for young adults in terms of housing outcomes. In response, young adults may engage in a variety of housing pathways, often depending on family support or social and cultural capital to access suitable housing, but also potentially subject to a certain degree of precarity. This typically entails greater reliance on the private rental sector. These diverse pathways are expressed in urban space, as young adults are increasingly found in denser, inner city areas, through a process of youthification that is distinct from but nonetheless linked to gentrification. Students, as a particular subgroup of young adults, also tend to cluster in particular neighbourhoods, producing their own geographies of segregation. These spatial patterns in turn shape young adults' housing pathways as they exclude certain households from particular spaces, thus constraining the pathways available to them.

Yet, the interconnections between gentrification, youthification, and studentification remain theoretically and empirically underdeveloped, as are the ways these processes simultaneously shape and are shaped by individual housing pathways. Greater understanding is also needed as to how difference, for instance in terms of race, ethnicity, and gender, figures into youthification and studentification. To get at these issues, research must address individual

experience, relationships between individuals, and connections to broader urban and social

processes.

Notes

1. In doing so, I zero in on age (and student status) as a particular form of social differentiation. Detailed discussion of intersecting forms of difference such as race, ethnicity, and gender among young adults is precluded by both space, and the emergent nature of the urban structure literature under review, which has not substantively dealt with these topics. I highlight this as one of several crucial avenues for further research later in this article.

2. In suggesting the metaphor of "belonging" be used alongside that of "transitions" in research on youth, Cuervo and Wyn (2014, 905) argue that the "metaphor of pathways positions young people as navigators who make personal choices to invest in education, valorising the structures and relationships that create failure and inequality. What this approach leaves out of the picture is the overlapping structures and sets of relationships which create meaning for young people and that play a crucial role in their decision-making about education and work." This use of the term pathways, drawn from policies in the UK and Australia, is not the same as that elaborated by Clapham (2002) and adopted in this paper, which is very much concerned with both structures and meanings.

3. Location quotient maps of all 57 metropolitan areas in the US and Canada with population over 1 million suggest some generalizability beyond these three cities (see Generationed City n.d.).

4. A notable exception is an account of studentification in Melbourne leading to the segregation of foreign students (Fincher and Shaw 2009).

Acknowledgments

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