

Youth Transitions – Future direction for data, methods and theory

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This presentation is intended to introduce and outline a range of issues relating to the study of youth transitions in the 21st Century. It is intended to be discursive and to generate debate. In this presentation I will introduce some general thoughts on the concepts of ‘youth’ and ‘youth transitions’. I will make a series of assertions on the enterprise of sociological theorising. I will provide some prescriptions relating to the collection of appropriate youth data and briefly comment on data analysis methods. The majority of the empirical data presented will be British, but some data from other European states will feature. I will attempt to illustrate that the demographic landscape against which young people grow up and make transitions to adult life is changing.

I will argue that studying youth transition in the 21st Century is still intellectually important. The role and effects of key transitions might be different to previous decades and social structures might be changing, however these changes should not simply be assumed and must be the subject of detailed empirical analyses. I will also argue that more suitable data resources are required, and we require more skilled researchers to undertake comprehensive analyses. I will conclude that the overall goal is to undertake more high-quality empirically informed research into youth transitions.