Abstract:

‘Bridging the Gap?: What Nightlife Studies Can Tell Us About Youth Transitions’

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Nearly twenty years has passed since MacDonald, Banks and Hollands’ (1993) suggested: ‘One of the most significant tasks facing those involved with the study of youth is to confront the ‘two traditions’ that have crystallized in research on youth in Britain’ – that of youth cultural analyses and the study of youth transitions. Since this time, there have been numerous discussions of how to best integrate these two different approaches to understanding the youth question (for example Gayle, 1998; Cohen and Ainley, 2000; Cieslik and Pollock, 2003). Recent attempts by MacDonald, 2011, and Furlong, Woodman and Wyn, 2011, suggestively discuss possible points of convergence by looking at how changing youth conditions and transitions can inform our understanding of youth cultures. Building on this work, this paper seeks to address this question from the obverse point of view - i.e. what can nightlife studies tell us about changing youth transitions? Whilst avoiding a post-modern analyses and critique (which has its own shortcomings both theoretically and empirically), and utilising his own (Hollands, 2002; Chatterton and Hollands, 2003) as well as other recent research finding on nightlife, this paper argues that there are a number of innovative ways to think about bridging the youth culture/ transition divide.

Biography:

Robert Hollands has worked in the field of urban sociology and youth studies since the early 1980s and is the author of numerous articles and books including The Long Transition: Class Culture and Youth Training (1990), Friday Night, Saturday Night: Youth Cultural Identification and the Post-Industrial City (1995); and with Paul Chatterton, Changing Our Toon: Youth, Nightlife and Urban Change (2001) and Urban Nightscapes: Youth Cultures, Pleasure Spaces and Corporate Power (2003). He is currently engaged in research and writing on alternative nightlife in Geneva, and a study of the egalitarian arts organisation, the Amber Collective (with John Vail).