



# **The "Grand Metamorphosis" Myth: Unpacking The Lived Experiences Of College Graduates Transitioning Into The Workplace (Abstract Only)**

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## **Abstract**

Research in psychology, sociology and higher education have increasingly focused on how experiences with social class impact individuals as they transition into and through college (Stephens et al., 2014; Hinz, 2016). The “social class achievement gap,” for example, details the disparities in access to education and performance at higher education institutions based on class background (Dittmann and Stephens, 2017; Fiske and Markus, 2012). Despite this research and a growing recognition of social class as “one of the most meaningful cultural dimensions in people’s lives” (Liu et al., 2004: 3), a second major transition for individuals from lower social class origins—from the university to the workplace—remains largely unstudied (for exceptions, see Rivera, 2016). The goal of this study is to explore the following research questions: What is the experience of individuals from lower social class origins, as they graduate from college and experience upward mobility into the workplaces? How does this transition influence their sense of identity, expectations, and interactions, including maintenance and disruptive class work? For those in transition, how are class-based inequalities maintained and perpetuated by organizational norms and practices? We employed a grounded theory approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) whereby we sampled low income, first generation college students who graduated from college in mid-2019, with the aim of interviewing each participant at three time points: (1) prior to graduation, (2) within 3-5 months of beginning their first post-college work position, and (3) within 8-10 months following graduation. Data collection is ongoing and preliminary results will be discussed.

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