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**TITLE:** Working-Class Youth and Higher Education: Narratives of Social Im/Mobility

Author/s: Alexandra Coleman

Affiliation/s: Alexandra Coleman is a HDR Candidate at the Institute for Culture and Society, University of Western Sydney. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts (Dean's Scholars) in 2013 and received a University Medal, Dean's Medal and First-Class Honours. Her PhD research is exploring the experiences of first-generation university students from Western Sydney (a topic that is both near and dear).

Abstract: Advanced Western economies have changed considerably in recent years and there has been a profound shift away from industrial forms of production, towards the rapid expansion of the service sector. Knowledge, rather than labour, has become the chief organising principle of the contemporary landscape and manual forms of employment are being replaced by jobs that require a particular type of theoretical knowledge acquired through tertiary education. The Australian government, in a bid to remain economically competitive, has sought to increase the number of university graduates, and working-class youth (who have been historically underrepresented in higher education), are a primary target of widening participation agendas. This paper attends to these pressure points of neoliberalism and capitalism, and explores the experiences of working-class students and new graduates. Using ethnographic material from conversations with young people in Western Sydney, it considers the ways the participants negotiate social im/mobility. It sits alongside scholarly discussion of youth labour markets in Western Sydney, and draws from work produced by scholars associated with the 'cultural turn' in class analysis.