

# MANAGING UNCERTAINTY DURING UNEMPLOYMENT: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF SOCIAL CLASS DIFFERENCES

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## ABSTRACT

This study explores a crucial transition in the exit phase of the assimilation process, the transition from paid work into unemployment. Specifically, this study had two objectives. The first objective was to understand how people experienced and managed uncertainty during unemployment. The second objective was to explore how unemployment is a socially classed phenomenon. Participants in this study consisted of 17 text workers, 11 body workers, and 3 social class straddlers. Data consists of interview transcripts and 142 photographs which were discussed during the interview using the Photovoice method (Novak, 2010). A thematic analysis was used to analyze the transcripts and the photographs. Three themes emerged from the data. First participants described anticipating certainty that gave way to uncertainty. Second, text and body workers described social class differences in the ways that participants managed their uncertainty and unemployment. Third, participants described being stigmatized and withdrew from interactions with others as a way to manage the stigma.